

# Special Features

## ASEAN: Contributor to Stability and Development

Tan Sri M. Ghazali Shafie

*With this speech, His Excellency Tan Sri M. Ghazali Shafie, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, opened the Conference on "ASEAN — Today and Tomorrow," held at the Fletcher School, 11 November 1981. The Conference was attended by dignitaries from all five members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. The Foreign Minister's address traces the evolution of ASEAN, analyzes its economic and political structures, and discusses the organization's relations with other Asian powers — China, Vietnam and the Soviet Union. Important events in recent Southeast Asian history, from the Indochina conflict to Kampuchea's tragic fate, are dealt with from the perspective of ASEAN. His Excellency also points to ASEAN's emergence on the international scene, as reflected by the extensive ties it has cultivated with the US and Europe, and the active role it has played in the UN. Looking to the future, he expresses optimism about ASEAN's further development and its continuing contribution to peace and stability in the region.*

Let me first of all congratulate Ambassador Unger and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy for convening this Conference on ASEAN — Today and Tomorrow." I think it will be an eye-opener for many Americans to view ASEAN in particular, and Southeast Asia in general, in a fresh light — and perhaps free from some of the hang-ups of your unhappy involvement in the Vietnamese war. Americans have had a long and somewhat masochistic discourse on it in the aftermath of the war. Hopefully, and I am quite optimistic about it, through this Conference you will be able to gain some insights into the expectations of Southeast Asians: That is that, in spite of this unhappy event, normal international intercourse must go on, and that the United States has a particularly important role in these circumstances.

As far as I can recall this is the first time that a Conference on ASEAN has been organized in the United States in this way. In Europe (Zurich), last September, a similar international conference with the theme of

“ASEAN — Your Partner of Tomorrow” was held. That Conference sought to identify ASEAN as a business partner of Europe. From our point of view these two Conferences complement one another.

I am therefore very happy to note this deepening of the dialogues with Europe and the United States, especially the fact that they extend into the business and intellectual worlds. I am sure that in this way our peoples and the international community will have obtained the benefits of new thoughts and ideas in the construction of international peace and development.

But I also have a very personal reason for being pleased to have been invited to address this Conference. As events had it, I was one of those closely associated with the formation of ASEAN, which came into being through the Bangkok Declaration, which was signed in August 1967. Let me recall briefly how events unfolded in Southeast Asia at that time.

You may remember that following the Communist Party Congress in Moscow in 1969, the rift between the Soviet Union and China was no longer reparable. Both parties went in earnest to compete for the allegiance and support of the local communist parties. In many parts of the world, particularly in Asia and Africa, solidarity movements were being pushed forward hand in hand with widening peace offensives.

In Southeast Asia there were immediately two very important fallouts of the Sino-Soviet rivalry. First, there was a change in the attitude of China towards Hanoi and the Vietnamese leadership in the communist struggle in Indochina. The People's Republic of China was no longer willing to allow free passage of military hardware and supplies from the Soviet Union into North Vietnam. This change is extremely useful to the understanding of Chinese policy in Southeast Asia even today.

The second fallout of the rivalry was the galvanisation by China of the Afro-Asian solidarity movement which was first harnessed at the Bandung Conference in 1955, and which by 1960 had reached a high point in Southeast Asia culminating into the so-called “new emerging forces” or NEFO. At the forefront of this movement was the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI), under the leadership of D. N. Aidit, who was pushing the late President Sukarno into a state of “confrontation” (Konfrontasi) over the proposal to form a Federation of Malaysia. The birth of Malaysia in September of 1963 was of profound importance to the question of national freedom in Southeast Asia, and, in all modesty, I was also part of that project.

Malaysia spent almost three painful years in a state of belligerence under *Konfrontasi*, which was spearheaded by D. N. Aidit. During that period China was devising ways of beating the Soviet Union to the seat of power in Indonesia. You may recall also that for years the Soviet Union had been

assisting in the development of the Indonesian Armed Forces and the execution of economic projects, such as the Krakatoa Steel Complex in West Java and the Asahan Dam. But *Konfrontasi* proved to be too costly to Indonesia. The nation was showing signs of breaking at the seams, and well before Colonel Untung of the G-30s Movement struck at the Generals in Jakarta, Malaysian and Indonesian officials were already making clandestine contacts to bring *Konfrontasi* to an end.

The final breakthrough was made when the Commander of KOSTRAD, General Suharto (now President of the Republic of Indonesia), sent a team led by his intelligence officer, General Ali Moertopo, presently Indonesian Minister of Information. He was assisted by General Benny Moerdani, an officer of very high calibre who is now serving in the Indonesian Defence Ministry. On the Malaysian side, I was leading the team, and I had the assistance of Tan Sri Zainal Abidin Sulong, a diplomat of exceptional ability, who is presently Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Of course there were others on both sides, men of very high dedication and integrity, who helped to shape the destiny of our nations.

Ali Moertopo and I, and our assistants, drew the same lessons from our common historical past, i.e., that Indonesia and Malaysia were the kingpins of peace and stability in Southeast Asia. This was a very important conclusion which led us to work relentlessly together to create the *entente cordial* between our two peoples regardless of the temporary abrasions of *Konfrontasi*. Perhaps I could underscore this crucial point as it is extremely important to the understanding of ASEAN — a development out of the pains of *Konfrontasi*.

When Ali Moertopo and I worked on the mechanics of bringing about reconciliation between our two nations following G-30s in 1965, we were asked by General Suharto and Tun Abdul Razak (the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia) to consider the wider perspective and to relate the Indonesia-Malaysia reconciliation to a regional spectrum which would involve our other neighbours, particularly the newly established Republic of Singapore. We were in fact considering an association of countries of Southeast Asia to live as good neighbours and friends so that we would not be pitted by external powers to fight against one another. We were very conscious of the fact that as forerunners of such an organization, Association of Southeast Asia composed of Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines and Maphilindo, an association comprising Malaysia the Philippines and Indonesia had not succeeded on account of their narrow political objectives.

One other factor was also crucial in our consideration to bring about this new Southeast Asian grouping. We were extremely conscious of the

fact that G-30s in Indonesia and the resilience of the new Malaysian nation had struck a fatal blow to the so-called "new emerging forces" in the region. Such forces were completely broken up and in complete disarray — D.N. Aidit was assassinated, Subandrio was imprisoned, Yusuf Ajitrop fled to China. In Malaysia, the front for the so-called "liberation of North Borneo" territories was completely destroyed. On the other hand, the rivalry between China and the USSR for the allegiance of Southeast Asian communists and the hearts and minds of the peoples receded, with China having to embark on a move to minimise her losses with the local communist parties in Southeast Asia, and the Soviet Union counting the debts which could be salvaged from the *Order Baru* (New Order) in Indonesia.

It was soon clear to Southeast Asian leaders that the receding Sino-Soviet rivalry would soon manifest itself in the conflicts of Indochina where, as I mentioned earlier, China had changed her strategy to subvert the national aspirations of the Indochinese peoples in order to align them with her, while the Soviets on the other hand were left to support almost single-handed North Vietnam's war efforts against South Vietnam and her allies. It was extremely vital for the Soviet Union that she not lose the Vietnamese Communists to China. For China it was equally important that the Soviet Union should not have complete control of Indochina through her influence in Hanoi. Towards this objective, China sought to cut Vietnam down to size and to strengthen the national base of the communist parties in Laos and Cambodia, while maintaining fraternal links with the communist parties in the ASEAN states.

Many of us will recall that in 1969 the People's Republic of China made no new commitments to assist Vietnam in either military or non-military (economic and industrial) terms. The Chinese Communist Party also began to restructure its links with the Lao Dong Party of Vietnam. In 1973, perhaps knowing that in the demise of the Vietnam leader, Ho Chi Minh, Chinese influence in Hanoi would be lost for a long while, China wrested the Paracell Islands from South Vietnam. It was also clear to astute observers that the peace negotiations between Hanoi and Washington, made in the Spring of 1973, would herald the early conclusion of the Vietnam war in favour of Hanoi. China had not wanted to lose the opportunity of securing the Paracells before Hanoi had won the day.

On the other hand, Hanoi did not want to lose its grip over the communist struggles in Laos and Kampuchea. She had watched with dismay the infusion of Chinese soldiers in development projects in the northern provinces of Laos. She was also concerned by the neutrality shown by Prince Sihanouk in dealing with the Viet Cong forces in the areas of the "Parrots Beak" and the "Seven Sisters" in the Mekong Delta. Along the "Ho Chi Minh" trails, movements of North Vietnamese troops and supplies ebbed and flowed, as Sihanouk had wanted it.

To Hanoi this was a most frustrating situation for the conduct of their single-minded objective of reuniting North and South Vietnam under the communist system. But Hanoi was also aware that following the split between Moscow and Peking in 1959 the Vietnamese objective was only a pipedream if she did not have the full support of the Soviet Union and her Warsaw allies. And that support was contingent upon conducting the Vietnamese struggle as an integral part of the wider struggle for the establishment of communism in Indochina as a whole. In the Southeast Asian context, this amounted to Hanoi playing a central role in uniting the Communist forces in the Indochina peninsula, as advocated by Ho Chi Minh when he headed the Asian bureau of Comintern II in Moscow in 1923. In Ho Chi Minh's testament he urged his successors in Hanoi to continue with this line of revolution.

And so there was established in the Lao Dong Party a special bureau to promote unity among the communist parties in Indochina. Consistent with this line, in 1969 Vietnam succeeded in convening the first Indochina Summit to form a united Indochinese front against the United States and the so-called forces of neo-colonialism of SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation). The Summit, which was held in Phnom Penh and presided over by Prince Sihanouk, did not bring about the desired result. A second Indochina Summit was held in 1972, also presided over by Prince Sihanouk. This time it was held in Canton when the Prince was living in exile in China. Again the Summit failed to bring about unity among the Indochina parties. The explanation for the failure of the Summits was simply the Chinese opposition to the unity of the communist struggle, with Hanoi playing the central role. China saw in them the seeds of Soviet influence which, if permitted to grow, would undermine . . . the Indochina states, and would also frustrate [China's] long term ambition of an Asian hegemony.

I have elaborated somewhat on the forces at work in Southeast Asia at the time the idea of forming ASEAN was conceived in order to demonstrate the complexity of the situation that ASEAN was and is still faced with. However, there was one common feature propagated by all those communist forces: Whatever their colour, they sought to replace the socio-political systems of Southeast Asian nations with communist regimes, as was the case of the attempted coup in Indonesia.

As we were putting *Konfrontasi* behind us, so was the project of a new regional grouping taking shape. Indeed we did not have a name for it until all leaders had assembled in Bangkok. But the lesson of *Konfrontasi* was extremely important. We had pushed back the tide of communism in the Philippines, in Malaysia and Singapore, and dramatically in Indonesia, while in Thailand the communists had been held in check. It was not military strength that did it, and not the complete denial of

personal liberties. It was a very fundamental experience that people in our societies could best develop their all-round potential, materially and spiritually, through a carefully institutionalised system of free enterprise which is responsive to their rising capabilities and expectations. When the people were assured of these they made a very clear choice, rejecting the communist ideas of social justice and scientific materialism.

The concept of free enterprise as it applies in the ASEAN region underlines the philosophical basis of ASEAN. The appreciation of this is vital in the understanding of ASEAN and its sense of direction. The countries of ASEAN had come together to protect the system of free enterprise as a counter-poise to communism on the one hand and monopolistic capitalism on the other.

We are all aware of the failure of the communist system to satisfy human needs within primitive as well as in industrial settings. And I believe the people in the United States are generally conscious of the evils of monopolistic capitalism. They have institutionalised certain devices to limit the rapacious capacities of monopolistic capitalism, such as the anti-trust laws. In certain circumstances legal and social mechanisms have evolved to impose social conformity.

Nevertheless, in the United States and the Western World such free enterprise system is subsisting in an environment with relatively few constraints. In Southeast Asia, the free enterprise system is evolving at different stages, some countries with more and others with less constraints, but all having the common feature of flexibility and responsiveness to the rising demands and expectations of the individual which the system as a whole helps to promote and to protect. When the leaders of Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand got together in Bangkok in 1967 to officiate at the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, they were in fact making a commitment to jointly strengthen and promote the system of free enterprise in their countries, in the belief that together they could harness the strength of that system to bring about the kind of national and regional resilience that would serve as a bulwark against communism. In these settings the applications of sanctions and interventions are instituted by political leadership purely for purposes of societal engineering, like the Malaysian New Economic Policy, in order to energise the free enterprise system.

Having said that, let us see how the ASEAN leaders stated those objectives and how together they intended to pursue them. For this purpose I can do no better than to quote from the Bangkok Declaration, which, as I said, established ASEAN in August 1967, and in which Malaysian and Indonesian officials, the same people who wound up *Konfrontasi* and now together with their counterparts from Thailand, the Philippines and

Singapore, played a key role. The preambular paragraphs of the Declaration state the case for the Association as a desire

to establish a firm foundation for common action to promote regional cooperation in Southeast Asia in the spirit of equality and partnership and thereby contribute towards peace, progress and prosperity in the region.

This desire was to be pursued with the full realisation that

the cherished ideals of peace, freedom, social justice and economic well-being are best achieved by fostering good understanding, good neighbourliness and meaningful cooperation among the countries of the region already bound together by ties of history and culture.

and further, taking into account

that the countries of Southeast Asia share a primary responsibility for strengthening the economic and social stability of the region and ensuring their peaceful and progressive national development, and that they are determined to ensure their stability and security from external interference in any form or manifestation in order to preserve their national identities in accordance with the ideals and aspiration of their peoples.

The leaders also agreed to stipulate the basic aims and purposes of the Association as follows:

1. To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations;
2. To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields.
4. To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres;
5. To collaborate more effectively for the greater utilization of their agriculture and industries, the expansion of their trade,

including the study of the problems of international commodity trade, the improvement of their transportation and communication facilities and the raising of the living standards of their people

6. To promote Southeast Asian studies;
7. To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.

The quotations would have amplified several important points which helped to buttress ASEAN as a foundation for the construction of peace, progress and prosperity in Southeast Asia. Principally the countries of ASEAN had agreed to a partnership of equality "in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asia Nations," that is to say that they agreed to jointly strengthen the system of free enterprise obtaining in their respective countries. Secondly, they agreed that the strengthening of the economic and social stability of the region was a shared primary responsibility of the countries of the region. In the discharge of this responsibility they undertook to ensure not only "their peaceful and progressive national development," but also to ensure their own stability and security from external interferences in any form or manifestation. And third, they agreed to put their differences aside so as to proceed with "active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest."

In the circumstances of the mid-1960s these declarations by nations which only two years earlier, except for Thailand, were in a state of confrontation with one another could only be regarded as near miracle. They underlined the growing confidence and mutual trust which was emerging among leaders of the ASEAN countries in sufficient quantity to enable them to harness their national and collective potentials in order to safeguard the well-being of their peoples against the common threat of communism. Besides the fact that communist insurgencies in ASEAN countries were already losing the battle for the hearts and minds of the population, it is important to realise one other factor which had a considerable influence in the growing confidence among ASEAN leaders: With the Sino-Soviet rivalry receding from Southeast Asia, and the ineffectual role of SEATO in Indochina, the prospective members of ASEAN were able to come together in Bangkok without undue anxiety about each other's motives nor with handicaps of external pressures. They went to Bangkok out of their own volition. From this experience an important lesson was drawn, that if Southeast Asian countries could act on their own without external pressures, they would be making friends with one an-

other. It is well to remember this point since it was further developed into the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN).

Creating the conditions for national and regional stability was important for ASEAN, but the objective of such efforts was "to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations." That foundation is the free enterprise system.

In its early years, specifically between 1968 and 1975, ASEAN activity was conducted through eleven Permanent Committees which encompassed the social and economic goals of the Association. Basically this was a learning stage of getting to know each other's systems, their strengths and weaknesses and their procedures. The going was slow, because each party was treading gingerly along so as to avoid [offending] sensitivities which were generally created by different colonial pasts, or to avoid disrupting a basic process so critical to the strength and resilience of the other.

They were very useful years to further bind the member countries together. Besides, in the less sensitive areas of cultural exchanges, tourism, research and development, and training on existing institutions, major advances were made. Travel controls within ASEAN were relaxed: special ASEAN package tours were developed; harmonisation of port procedures was initiated; radio and television programmes were exchanged; several festivals of the mass media were launched. Indeed, a popular movement on ASEAN was launched to emphasise the strength of the Association and to relate its activities to the daily life of the people — so as to breakdown the ramparts of history and of prejudice. It was important that our peoples understood the need for togetherness so as to garner support for our efforts to strengthen the system of free enterprise which was serving them well. Indeed, one of the earliest results and heartening features of ASEAN is the growing number of conferences and projects undertaken by private organisations and the business community.

In 1975 North Vietnamese tanks rolled past Danang, Cam Ranh Bay and Ton Son Nut into Saigon. The United States withdrew their last soldiers from Vietnam, and the worst of ASEAN's fears which underscored the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 came to pass. But ASEAN by then had seven solid years of living in neighbourly cooperation. Call it foresight, or what you will, the fact remains that with ASEAN solidarity there were no falling dominoes in Southeast Asia following the fall of Saigon to the communists and the United States withdrawal from Southeast Asia.

In the following year, 1976, the first ASEAN Summit was held in Bali, Indonesia, to assess the new situation in the region and to consolidate ASEAN cooperative efforts. This meeting was an extremely important one

in the development of ASEAN as a foundation for regional stability and development. Members adopted the ASEAN Concord as a comprehensive programme of action in the political, economic, industrial, trade commodities, social development, culture and information fields. In the Joint Press Communique of the Summit, the ASEAN heads of government stated that the adoption of the cooperative programmes was “. . . essential for the member states to move to higher levels of cooperation, especially in the political, economic, social, cultural, scientific and technological fields.”

However, a closer study of the ASEAN Concord would reveal a very significant underlying strategy of promoting security and development as two faces of the same coin, both at the national as well as the regional level of undertaking.

Perhaps at this stage it can be revealed that the ASEAN Concord had a confidential companion which described the developments in Southeast Asia following the American withdrawal from the region, and which examined ways on how ASEAN could respond to them. Special attention was focussed on the situation in Kampuchea, particularly to the position of the Chinese and Soviets which seemed to have brought Kampuchea to a new stage of fluidity. ASEAN decided in favour of prudence and to wait a little longer before taking a definite position collectively. Partly for this reason the heads of government met in a Second Summit in 1977. The existence of this document was later reported by the Japanese press, but the story was never denied or confirmed.

ASEAN used this confidential document extensively in formulating the ASEAN Concord, and the Heads of Governments alluded to it in the Joint Press Communique in the following manner:

They discussed developments affecting ASEAN region. They reaffirmed the determination of their respective Governments to continue to work for the promotion of peace, stability and progress in Southeast Asia, thus contributing towards a world peace and international harmony. To this end they expressed their readiness to develop fruitful relations and mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries in the region. They expressed the hope that other powers would pursue policies which would contribute to the achievement of peace, stability and progress in Southeast Asia.

In the economic field the most significant results were the decisions to establish ASEAN large scale industrial projects and to institute preferential trading arrangements in order to facilitate the expansion of trade among ASEAN countries in basic commodities, particularly in food and

energy and the products of ASEAN industrial projects. Additionally, they also decided to formulate joint approaches to international commodity and economic problems.

Out of these decisions a host of related activities and linkages ensued in subsequent years. In the Second ASEAN Summit, which took place in Kuala Lumpur in 1977, the allocation of regional projects (such as the urea projects) were firmed up, and the dialogues with third countries were also formalised. For the first time the heads of governments of Japan, Australia and New Zealand met the ASEAN leaders collectively.

Significantly ASEAN was becoming an important political force for stability in Southeast Asia. Under these conditions, it has also safeguarded and promoted economic development, thus making the ASEAN countries one of the six important growth centres on the Western Pacific seaboard. In these developments, ASEAN was reaching beyond the region in order to augment its efforts under the system of "dialogues."

Basically, the "dialogue" was a problem-solving forum where ASEAN would meet its trading partners in an effort to promote better commercial and economic relations between them. This system would have eliminated a lot of duplication inherent in bilateral approaches. This original objective has only been partially achieved with practically every one of the dialogue partners. In some cases, particularly with the European Economic Community (EEC), the dialogue has been regarded as a forum for the promotion of two way trade partnership. In other cases, it has been regarded as a forum for the negotiation of financial and technical assistance. The dialogue with Japan underscored this point. In the case of the dialogue with the United States, three meetings have already taken place and one more is in the offing. At these meetings areas of cooperation were reviewed and new ones explored. In general ASEAN is satisfied with the progress of ongoing projects although the implementation of some need to be accelerated.

While on the whole it may be argued that no startling results have emerged from the dialogues with the various countries, ASEAN would continue with them in the hope that it would be able in time to convince the dialogue partners that in the condition of unequal distribution of resources, such as raw materials, capital and technology, the system of free enterprise would stand to gain through working out mutually beneficial cooperation rather than through protectionism. Conversely, free enterprise would collapse if such cooperation is not evolved, as it would inevitably lead to conflicts between those who have with those who have not. A corollary to this is that there is a concomitant need to expand the markets, or the consumer base, for the free enterprise system to prosper.

ASEAN's experience with the more developed partners of free enterprise in this regard compels me to provide a reminder that for free enterprise

to thrive it is vital for the senior members of the free enterprise system to shoulder a serious obligation to jointly support the growth of that system. This is essential in order to nurture and support societies towards viability in the developing regions of the world. Any act or omission willful or otherwise, on the part of the developed countries to restrict the free flow of the products of free enterprise from one region to the other would be self-defeating, dashing the hopes and beliefs of the developing countries in the free enterprise system as opposed to the lure of scientific materialism. In its effort to reach out to third countries, ASEAN is motivated by a very serious intention mutually to assist in the promotion of free enterprise, which is the most viable choice for developing countries to pursue. That is ASEAN's contribution towards the strengthening of international stability, and may yet prove to be a cogent force which would roll back the influence of dialectical materialism.

Earlier, I briefly referred to the 1971 Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). The leaders of ASEAN had drawn a fundamental principle from the circumstances of the birth of ASEAN in 1967: That, given their freedom from superpower dominance, regional States would quickly set aside their differences to forge a common purpose. The leaders had concluded that if this principle could be launched successfully in the form of ASEAN, it could also be the starting point for them to bring about the establishment of a new international order in Southeast Asia on the basis of mutual respect and co-existence irrespective of socio-economic systems, so long as nations abide by the same ground rules. In addition to those well-tested international conventions and precepts, other ground rules were also necessary and had to be formulated which would insulate the region from superpower conflicts.

In 1971, the member countries of ASEAN agreed to set in motion this investigation of a new regional order. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration started in earnest the cooperation in the political field among the countries of ASEAN. A Committee of Senior Officials was created to undertake this activity.

Initially the Committee concentrated on investigating the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality proposal. By the time the first ASEAN Summit was held, the committee had largely completed its task of preparing the basic concept. But by then Siagon had fallen to North Vietnam and a new situation had emerged in Southeast Asia which called for urgent attention. More and more the ASEAN Foreign Ministers needed to consult each other on critical political issues which had a direct bearing on ASEAN. Principally, these issues were concerned with developments in Indochina. The Committee of Senior Officials helped to service such consultations;

and this has become a continuing feature of ASEAN cooperation in the political field.

In a parallel move, the ASEAN countries agreed to instrumentalise their commitment to regional stability and development in the form of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation which was signed by the heads of government in their first Summit in 1976. Article I of the Treaty states clearly that its purpose is "to promote perpetual peace, everlasting amity and cooperation" among the peoples of the signatory States. A very interesting part of the Treaty is Article 18, which stipulates that the Treaty "shall be open for accession by other States in Southeast Asia." It was intended that the Treaty would one day [assume] the function as an instrument for widening the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality.

Consistent with the principles of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration and the spirit of the Treaty of Amity, ASEAN countries extended the hand of friendship towards the new regimes in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea. One after another ASEAN Governments established diplomatic relations with the Indochina states in quick succession, and within one year ministerial visits were exchanged between some ASEAN countries, except Singapore, with Vietnam and Laos. The relentless search by ASEAN was on, so as to stabilise the situation and to find accommodation with Vietnam.

Vietnam was given a heavy dose of peaceful intentions. In our view, an accommodation would have been found but for the fact that Vietnam, in order to obviate a direct Chinese interference in Indochina through Pol Pot, had taken the fateful step of occupying Kampuchea. This she did with the support of the Soviet Union. In that situation, as Mr. Nguyen Co Thach told me during his last visit to Kuala Lumpur, the Soviet Union was "a friend in need" and therefore, "a friend indeed." The Soviet Union presently would want nothing less from Vietnam than her support in the pursuance of the so-called internationalist duties in Southeast Asia. It would appear once again that Sino-Soviet rivalry was destabilising Southeast Asia, this time in the Indochina peninsula.

In our experience, ASEAN was born at a time when Sino-Soviet rivalry was receding from Indonesia. The lesson we have drawn suggest very strongly that such rivalry must be removed from Indochina before any prospect for durable stability could be firmed up. This is the central thrust of the ASEAN effort to resolve the Kampuchea problem through the United Nations and within the framework of ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality). The search for peace is, however, encumbered by the diabolical character of the Pol Pot regime, the *de jure* government of Kampuchea. It must be stated categorically here that ASEAN is not aiming at bringing back into power Pol Pot and his despicable henchmen.

It is aimed at clearing the way for a more representative government to emerge, as envisaged in the ASEAN Resolution in the United Nations on Kampuchea. To actualise the objectives within the Resolution, it becomes necessary that a Third Force should emerge as a party credible enough to represent the Kampuchean people in meaningful dialogues. A Third Force with sufficient beef and teeth to exert its influence could play a vital role in the formation of a coalition government whose representative would legally occupy the seat of the government of Democratic Kampuchea in the United Nations. Such a coalition government should not preclude any Kampuchean patriotic faction.

Of late, China has made some signs in support of the idea of a Third Force and a coalition government although she would not lift a finger to actualise it. The Soviet Union, which has supported the Vietnamese invasion, has shown no sign of relenting in her opposition to such a process. I feel that the Soviet Union must realise that she could hold on to this advantage over China only if Vietnam was willing to play ball. Vietnam must also recognise that the time at her disposal is very limited. Quite soon, when sufficient Laotian and Kampuchean cadres have been trained by the Soviet Union and returned to Laos and Kampuchea, the Vietnam factor will become irrelevant to the Soviet strategy in regard to Laos and Kampuchea, as well as to the whole of Southeast Asia. That is the future scenario which Vietnam and ASEAN must take stock of. For ASEAN and Vietnam, a protracted war in Kampuchea would only serve to destabilise Southeast Asia, with China openly espousing the policy of rotten fish served in sweet and sour sauce.

Apart from ASEAN efforts in the United Nations to promote stability in Southeast Asia, each member of ASEAN has not neglected to lend its support of efforts, wherever appropriate, at bringing about international stability and development, particularly those concerning Afghanistan, West Asia, Western Sahara, decolonisation, apartheid, etc. Similar propositions are also put forward at the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations, the Organization of Islamic Countries, the Commonwealth and other fora.

In reaching out to stabilise the international economic situation, perhaps there is need to particularise only three main areas which have been pursued very firmly and vigorously by ASEAN. They are in the matter of raw materials, economic cooperation among developing countries, technical cooperation among developing countries, and the establishment of a new international economic order.

The central thesis of the ASEAN approach on these matters is simply that for the free enterprise system to survive, there must be cooperation between centres that practice the system. There must also be a willingness for stronger centres to help the weaker ones along. So the sharing of

resources, technology and benefits on more equitable terms would be the main thrust of the ASEAN approach. In the execution of our role in the context of the Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries as well as the New International Economic Order, ASEAN could best fit itself as a bridge in the continuing dialogues to resolve these issues.

ASEAN's collective position on the North-South dialogue in general is not yet firm. But deliberations on the issue point to a probable conclusion that the concept is a gross oversimplification of the actual situation. In any case, the term North-South dialogue suggests a confrontational attitude. The approach to resolve this problem so far would seem to ignore the position of the middle countries whose combined strength would add to a considerable balance in terms of the total resources that could be applied for international development. We believe in applying the aggregate strength of the free enterprise system to firmly secure the balance of international development in its favour.

The time has come for a symbiotic system of cooperation to be evolved, on a regional basis to begin with, and subsequently on a global basis. While ASEAN is cooperating with the stronger European Communities, it is also considering ways of forging cooperation with the weaker countries of the South Pacific Forum. Individual members of ASEAN have embarked on a modest technical assistance programme to beef up the management base for a free enterprise system to prosper in some of the island States of the South Pacific. The United States and the European Community and other developed nations should bolster the resilience of these far-flung countries so as to enable them to harness their own national capabilities. In this regard, ASEAN may be both a donor and a recipient, thus serving as a belt in the context of the North-South relations.

In facing the future, even beyond the present decade, I do not feel that ASEAN would deviate from its commitment to the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality as advocated in the Kuala Lumpur Declaration. Nor do I think that ASEAN will become a military aggroupation on the basis of the traditional system of treaty alliances and contractual obligations. If anything good has been learned in the recent history of Southeast Asia, it is that the old fashioned military alliance is no guarantee against any serious external aggression. It is particularly cumbersome to fight against internal communist insurgency — both rural and urban. At any rate the most immediate challenge to Southeast Asia is the Sino-Soviet rivalry. Any alliance formed in the region would sharpen the rivalry rather than put it at bay. But there exists already a web of interlocking arrangements with respect to security, including border arrangements and bilateral and multilateral exchanges of security intelligence on the basis of mutual trust and need of the ASEAN community.

Of course ASEAN is most concerned with the security of the sealanes — those that pass through the region as well as those which link it with Europe and beyond, and particularly those which connect the main growth centres in the Northwest Pacific — ASEAN, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Republic of Korea and Japan. In the present circumstances the protection of these trade routes could never be performed by one party alone. An adequate capability must be available in the region, particularly with the growth centres, for a limited self-defence. The aggregate regional capability would constitute a high-level deterrence against a possible disruptive intervention. It will be necessary for the United States to consider helping to establish this regional capability as an auxiliary to its global strategy. Japan too should be persuaded to contribute in this direction without compromising her constitutional commitment.

During this decade one could expect a greater preoccupation by ASEAN countries with matters relating to the Law of the Sea. Some would even expect a great deal of friction on the matter between them. I do not share such thoughts. On the contrary, I would venture to suggest the evolution of a large measure of cooperation between them to secure their control of the Exclusive Economic Zone as well as to meet counter claims from non-ASEAN states. For instance, Thailand and Malaysia are already jointly exploiting an area over which there were overlapping claims before. That is the spirit of ASEAN at work.

There is great unhappiness amongst nations with regard to the United States intentions on the Law of the Sea. Perhaps the fear of the United States in the new Convention are not fully relating her position to her need, in global strategic terms, for the passages in a number of straits. She must also recognise the danger emanating from the frustration felt by a large number of small states in the Pacific. For most of them, their most precious resources lie in their seabeds. Rather than denying them of these, it might perhaps be prudent on the part of the United States to seek to consolidate the approaches of these states on the matter with a view to seeking a mutually satisfactory arrangement for a speedy realization of their economic and political potential.

Coming back to the subject of our consideration today, let me draw some conclusions from this discourse. I hope I have made the point that in coming together in Bangkok in 1967 to establish ASEAN, the leaders of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines made a fundamental choice in favour of the free enterprise system as the most appropriate economic system that they would like to promote and to defend together. In so doing they have pioneered a fresh approach not only in meeting the challenges of the ideological conflicts at the national level but also at the international level. Out of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in 1971, ASEAN

was generating very strong and firm confidence among its member states. It has provided the impetus for sustained national development in the member countries, thus [gaining] for the Association a high degree of respect and confidence in the international community. I am completely convinced that the stability and development obtaining in Southeast Asia today is the most important result of the ASEAN system of cooperation; it is also the most important contribution that ASEAN has made to date to international stability and development.

The point has also been made that in economic development an indispensable aspect of the ASEAN system of cooperation is its strong cooperative links with the strongest centres of the free enterprise system. It is vital that this symbiosis continues to be expanded, particularly with a view to facilitating the greater flow of resources and technology as well as greater market access. The full potential of the free enterprise system can be realised on the global scale if the stronger centres are willing to support the weaker ones in a comprehensive manner. In this context I have outlined the positive role that the United States and other developed countries could play, for instance, in strengthening the smaller states in the Pacific area.

The precept of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia has become the yardstick in measuring our thought and action in international relations. The International Conference on Kampuchea which sought to establish a durable political settlement of the Kampuchean problem was an effort highly inspired by the ideals of ZOPFAN.

ASEAN is always prepared to be innovative in its approach, but it is also very consistent in its commitment to the principles of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality. In the present exercise, ASEAN wishes to actualise the proposal in the context of Kampuchea. And this effort is currently taking two principal forms: first by seeking to evolve an acceptable level of "legitimate interests" by all the parties concerned, particularly by Russia and China; secondly, by seeking to strengthen the Third Force working toward a Coalition Government with a broader base in order to enable Kampuchea to move from peace to freedom and neutrality, towards prosperity.

ASEAN is concerned with the lack of response from both Vietnam and the Soviet Union to the international call for them to participate in this political process. However, in the final analysis, I believe Vietnam must come to terms with objective reality and with her own people. As I have stated elsewhere, Vietnam would become irrelevant to the issue of Kampuchea, or for that matter to the Sino-Soviet rivalry, when the Soviet Union attained a position of dominance in Laos and Kampuchea as a result of prolonged Vietnamese occupation there. In the present circumstances in which Vietnam is not willing to exert herself into joining the peace

process within the context of the International Conference on Kampuchea, I see little chance of the Sino-Soviet rivalry receding from Indochina. Its existence in Indochina is like a time bomb placed ironically at the door step of Vietnam itself.

In making these statements, I must quickly add that we do not view United States assistance to China in the form of defense hardware and high technology to enable China to strengthen her position in global strategic terms as inimical to ASEAN interest and security. However, I would like to state very categorically here that the Chinese global position is circumscribed and should not be construed to include a role by China as the sole restraining hand in the security of Southeast Asia. I say this with the firm conviction that China has dangerous ambitions of her own in the region which she has refused to renounce. Indeed, she continues to maintain her links by openly giving moral and political support to the illegal communist parties which are striving to overthrow by violent means the legal governments in ASEAN. It is extremely important for the United States to understand the feelings of ASEAN countries in this regard, and not give the impression that in her anxiety over global strategic need the United States will allow herself to be seduced by China. ASEAN is gratified that the State Department has given the categorical assurance that in her dealing with China, the United States would be mindful that ASEAN security and integrity would in no way be jeopardised.

I have also underscored the importance we attach to the security of the searoutes for the continued stability and development of ASEAN and the Asia and Pacific area. This subject must be unmasked so that Americans would appreciate the need to share many aspects of it with regional countries, particularly with the growth centres on the China seaboard. Central to my thought in this matter is that the United States and Japan must not be tied to institutional arrangements. Instead they must be prepared to accept political commitments as having the same force as treaties and alliances. If this is possible, then the idea of building an aggregate strength on the basis of a shared responsibility and obligation could be a sound basis upon which the security of the searoutes could be constructed.

What can we draw from the experiences of the ASEAN as a contributor towards international stability and development? I think the important lesson for all of us, and particularly for the United States as a superpower, is that we must not allow ourselves to be addicted to old prescriptions of alliances, treaty obligations and the like in order to bring about international stability and development in the present era. Our experiences in Southeast Asia and an analysis of the experiences of others have convinced me of this.

The success of ASEAN cooperation is not based on treaty or contractual obligation. ASEAN is more than an organisation. It is a state of mind. Can this lesson be applied beyond Southeast Asia into the Pacific to take in the important centres, not in a military or defence framework, but in a partnership of common interests and needs? Can a partnership beyond ASEAN be based on a symbiotic fulfillment of the needs of one [party] by the interest and strength of another? These are questions which must cause us to ponder for answers. If the spirit of ASEAN could permeate beyond its present rim, resources of countries such as the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea could be brought to bear on the economic and social development of the countries in the region. In turn [these countries'] own resources could be utilised toward global stability and security through the aggregated resilience of the region as a whole.

To meet this formidable challenge in the present decade and beyond, I earnestly feel and urge that nations must not allow themselves to become prisoners of anachronism in the belief that the strong links between nations can only be brought about by a conventional system of alliances. In a world whose history is littered with the carcasses of creatures of conventions, ASEAN may yet show the way of the future — that friends are better than allies.