

malized in 1969. Foreign Minister Ramos expressed the hope that the Association could become an arbiter of future disputes between members. Another dispute, between Singapore and Indonesia, had been smouldering for years, and flared up in October 1968, when two Indonesian marines were captured in a raid on Singapore and executed. Indonesian students retaliated by ransacking Singapore's Embassy in Jakarta.

Progress

Nevertheless, progress was made in economic co-operation. ASEAN established permanent committees to facilitate co-operation in communications, shipping, food-production and aviation. A dialogue between ASEAN and the European Economic Community was announced in April 1972. A United Nations study showed that ASEAN could save \$275 million by co-operating on a few regional projects, rather than by each nation's building small plants in competition with the others. Another study indicated that the ASEAN market was three times as large as the largest single market in the region. In the realm of industrial production, this meant that it could be profitable to produce on a regional scale items that might be uneconomical for only a national market. Project studies suggested that commodity production could be organized on the basis of expanded ASEAN markets, and unit costs reduced by about 20 per cent over production for domestic markets only. If these proposals were implemented, many commodities would be competitive in the international markets of the world, with little or no need for tariff protection.

ASEAN continued to move cautiously in the 1970s and sought consensus before taking any new diplomatic initiatives. The five member nations were also looking to the future and to ASEAN's role in the region after the end of the Vietnam war.

The "threat of peace" in Vietnam was becoming a reality. A conference of the ASEAN foreign ministers (February 1973) did not result in any concrete program, and each country appeared to be making its own diplomatic arrangements with Hanoi and Peking. A suggestion was made that the ASEAN organization be designated as the agency through which all rehabilitation and reconstruction aid for Indochina would be channelled, but implementation of such a proposal was far beyond the capability of the Association.

In April 1975, Communist victories in Indochina required ASEAN to decide on policies towards the new order. By August,

the five nations had recognized the new Government of Cambodia. Both the Philippines and Thailand established relations with Peking, while Malaysia established diplomatic recognition of the new government in South Vietnam, and the Philippines with North Vietnam. Thailand pursued discussions with the two Vietnams towards normalization, and also speeded up withdrawal of U.S. forces. Manila asked the U.S. for a joint review of defence agreements and, on July 24, President Marcos and Prime Minister Pramoj proposed the phasing-out of SEATO. This was not encouraged by the Chinese, however, who felt that too rapid an American pullout might only encourage the Russians to more activity in the region.

Plagued by guerillas

Communist-supported guerilla movements continued to plague the Governments of Malaysia and Thailand, and some observers wondered if the "domino theory" might have some credibility after all. With the defeat of Saigon and the capture of large stocks of military equipment (including an estimated 1.2 million rifles), there were fears that these arms might find their way to revolutionary movements in non-Communist Southeast Asia.

When the foreign ministers of ASEAN met in Kuala Lumpur (May 13-15, 1975), they tried to form a unified front. The Malaysian Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, said that ASEAN was ready to co-operate with the new governments in Indochina, and hoped they would set aside "recriminations over the past and ancient fears born of the Cold War" and work with ASEAN to build a peaceful, prosperous and neutral Southeast Asia. Indonesia's Adam Malik proposed a framework of relations based on the Bandung principles of 1955: territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. General Carlos Romulo of the Philippines saw subversion and infiltration as greater dangers to the region than external aggression, and called for examination of all options to ensure security. Later, Malik called for U.S. withdrawal of forces from bases in the region but opposed any precipitate departure until the Association was strong enough to defend itself. He hoped the U.S. Seventh Fleet would remain in the Pacific as a balance in the region but would stay out of ASEAN waters.

ASEAN's dilemma was becoming clear: the U.S. was defeated in Vietnam, and might easily abandon its commitments to regional security if isolationist impulses

*Attempt
at forming
unified
front*