

been and there will be a proliferation of proposals for multilateral processes and mechanisms involving the Asia Pacific aimed at enhancing stability and securing a richer peace in the region. ASEAN must play a central role in whatever processes and mechanisms arise. It must do more. It should be a creative initiator as well as active participant.

"Asia Pacific must certainly learn from the experience of other regions. But in the process of establishing the appropriate processes for regional political dialogue for cooperative peace and stability in our region, we should not be encumbered by unnecessary intellectual baggage, terminologies, preoccupations and fixed notions that are either inappropriate, irrelevant, or counter-productive.

"It is extremely important that ASEAN's initiative should build upon existing processes and institutions. The processes that we build for Asia Pacific must be established in the context of the specific characteristics of Asia Pacific and must respond to the specific needs of Asia Pacific.

"We believe that any such process of an Asia Pacific political dialogue should have at least the following purposes:

- guided by the aspirations of the Bangkok Declaration and the Kuala Lumpur Declaration, the desire to enhance regional resilience and strengthen the foundation for peace, stability and constructive cooperation, ASEAN should aspire to secure the accession of other regional states to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation for Southeast Asia that was adopted at the first ASEAN summit held in Bali in 1976;

- just as ASEAN should initiate the process of constructive Asia Pacific political dialogue, the Association should initiate at the appropriate time the process of constructive dialogue among all the signatories of the treaty;

- whilst ASEAN must not become a military or security pact, we also believe that it is both appropriate and necessary to expand and enrich the ASEAN process into the appropriate fields of politics, security and defence issues."¹⁸