

affiliated research organizations (most notably the Malaysian Institute for Strategic and International Studies-ISIS, the Indonesian Centre for Strategic and International Studies-CSIS, and the Singapore Institute of Southeast Asian Studies-ISEAS).

These institutes have held regular, well-attended symposia, roundtables, and conferences to discuss various aspects of regional security, with emphasis on traditional military security issues.<sup>14</sup>

ASEAN as a group was not in favour of either the Soviet, Australian, or Canadian forays into Asia Pacific security (the Mongolian and Korean initiatives were not seriously considered). While ostensibly discussing issues of regional scope, ASEAN's focus was understandably on South East Asia, particularly Indo-China, the growing influence of Japan, and the necessity of maintaining a stabilizing USA military presence in the region.

The decline of the Soviet threat, the anticipated resolution of the Cambodian conflict, and the seeming willingness of the USA to reduce its military presence in the region contributed to a growing certainty within ASEAN that the Association should exert more influence on regional issues.<sup>15</sup>

A collective decision was reached (driven by Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand) that some serious re-thinking of ASEAN's approaches to regional security was needed and that ASEAN should counter "out-of-region" security initiatives with its own proposals. The result was an increase in government-directed research by the major think-tanks, paralleled by policy papers from several foreign ministries. This, coupled with ASEAN's determination to assume a higher regional profile, in turn lead to an invitation to the Soviet Union and China to attend the 1991 ASEAN-PMC.<sup>16</sup>

Through this action, the entire diplomatic equation in Southeast Asia changed. ASEAN Foreign Ministers announced that the Association was now in favour of using ASEAN as a forum to discuss Asia Pacific security issues, and was contemplating changes in the PMC structure to allow participation not only from USSR and China but, possibly the Indo-China states and Myanmar.<sup>17</sup>

ASEAN's current work plan (being considered in the lead up to the 1992 ASEAN Summit) includes initiatives for an Asia Pacific political dialogue and for a new regional order in Southeast Asia by:

- contributing to the process of reducing conflict and resolving contentious problems;
- contributing to the enhancement and enrichment of understanding, trust, goodwill, and cooperation; and,
- contributing to the constructive management of the emerging international processes in the region, with a view to the establishment of a multilateral framework of cooperative peace.