

*Contribution
to political
and economic
stability*

effort to bring peace to one crucial area of Southeast Asia. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that Canada should decide to commit itself to support a grouping of countries dedicated to the regional development and security of Southeast Asia.

On March 24, 1975, the then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Allan MacEachen, wrote to Tun Abdul Razak, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee, advising him that the Canadian Government wished to work out a program of development assistance with ASEAN. He said that this proposal was prompted in part by the excellent relations Canada enjoyed with all the members of ASEAN and in part by the fact that, by the efforts of its members alone, ASEAN was clearly making a real contribution to the political and economic stability of Southeast Asia.

On April 24, 1975, Tengku Ahmed Rithauddeen, the Malaysian Minister with Special Functions for Foreign Affairs, replied on behalf of the Standing Committee acknowledging the offer and indicating that the Philippines had been chosen as the coordinating point for Canada's communications with ASEAN. In October and December 1975, discussions between Canadian and ASEAN officials were held in Manila in an effort to identify areas in which developmental co-operation could be most usefully pursued. Further exchanges took place early in 1976.

Formal dialogue

In July of that year, the ASEAN side suggested that a formal dialogue should take place in order to put the developing relation on a proper footing. On August 25, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, speaking to the Press Club in Jakarta, confirmed that an important aspect of Canada's policy in the Pacific was support for ASEAN and that Canada was ready to open a formal dialogue "in order to enhance our lines of communication and to facilitate co-operation in the field of development assistance". It was subsequently agreed that the first session of the Canada-ASEAN dialogue should take place in Manila on February 3 and 4, 1977.

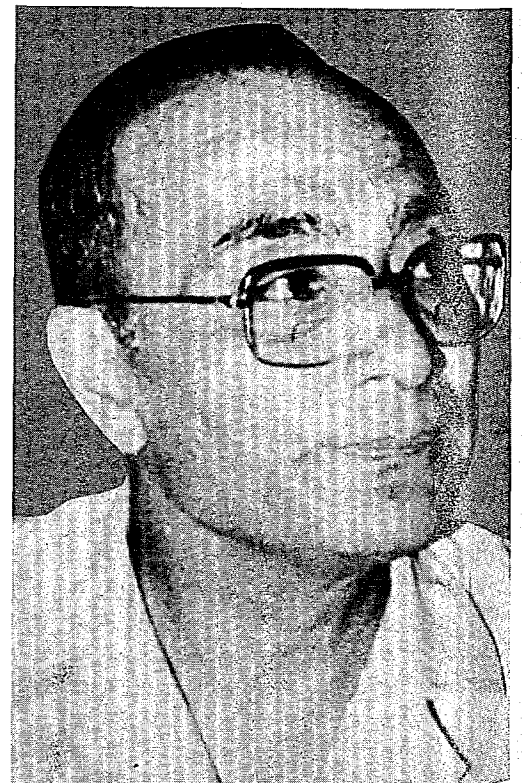
That meeting was an educational affair for both sides. Although ASEAN and Canadian officials were filled with good intentions, the plain fact was that the negotiators needed to become better acquainted with each other if they were going to have any success in giving substance and direction to the relation. From the meeting Canada gained a better understanding of the precise needs and priorities of ASEAN. ASEAN obtained a greater appreciation of

Canada's capabilities. Both sides learned more about each other's principles and procedures.

Agreement was reached at an early stage of discussion on adherence to the following four ASEAN principles governing foreign aid:

- (1) Co-operation with ASEAN should not be at the expense of bilateral assistance to individual members.
- (2) Projects should benefit all ASEAN members.
- (3) Projects should be of a regional character.
- (4) Co-operation should be supplementary to and should not supplant ASEAN capability.

There was detailed discussion of the procedures to be followed in the development of an aid program, and understanding was reached on what was involved for each side in each of the following stages of project identification, request, appraisal, approval, agreement and implementation. Regional satellite communications and regional air-transportation had earlier been identified as two areas that might be suitable for Canadian assistance, and it was agreed that the work already under way on these two projects should be pursued. CIDA informed the meeting that a fisheries project was also being developed, and it was decided that it, too, should be regarded as a priority area for co-operation. The ASEAN side indicated that proposals for devel-



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