

the Baltic States."¹⁴ This will be of some importance when comparing the work of the CSCE with that of ASEAN.

THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN NATIONS

Origins and Development

The concept of a region of South-East Asia dates only to the end of World War II. Historically, Southeast Asia has been characterized not by close associations between its very diverse peoples and political systems, but by political fragmentation, and external interference and domination. The ancient kingdoms of Southeast Asia developed largely in isolation from each other because the geography of the area discouraged regular contact and communication. By the nineteenth century, European powers had come to dominate the region and their influence became a further barrier to any kind of regional sentiment or association. Although communications and commerce expanded rapidly, the economies of the area developed as competitive producers.

In more modern times, South-East Asia has been the centre of the

longest and fiercest ideological struggles in the world since the Second World War: nationalism vs. colonial/imperialism, socialism/communism vs. liberalism/capitalism, and religious strife. The region has witnessed not only communist revolutions, wars of independence, and international wars, but also subversions, insurgencies, civil wars, coups and other kinds of civil violence. ...[It is also] one of the most dynamic growth centres of the world. The interests of four major world powers intersect[ed] this region: the United States, the Soviet Union, China, and Japan.¹⁵

There are three dimensions of conflict in South-East Asia. First, there is the domestic, or internal dimension. These are conflicts based on ideology, ethnicity, religion, race, communal loyalties, social economic imbalances, economic inequality and

¹⁴ Ibid., pg. 5.

¹⁵ A. Hasnan Habib, "ASEAN in the Search for Peace and Stability in South-East Asia", in Disarmament: United Nations Regional Disarmament Workshop for Asia and the Pacific. New York, United Nations, 1991, pg. 228.