

THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was originally founded by Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore in 1967. The prior political involvement of the members had been limited and unusually antagonistic. Singapore was expelled from Malaysia in 1965 in the wake of racial riots and concerns over the status of Malays in Singapore. Indonesia had opposed Malaysian independence and had violent territorial disputes with Malaysia over Borneo. Thailand and the Philippines were both members of the American-led South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), an association that proved to be ineffectual. Economic interaction within the region was also limited, with low levels of economic development coexisting with exports primarily of raw materials to the developed world.

Events of the mid-1960s removed some of the political impediments to regional economic cooperation. Indonesian President Sukarno's eclipse by General Suharto led to a reduction in tensions with Malaysia. The *Konfrontasi* between Indonesia and Malaysia was resolved in 1966 and Suharto focused the Indonesian military's attention on suppressing the Communist Party. Indonesia's domestic troubles opened up the possibility of normalizing relations between the largest country in the region and its neighbours. The ongoing Vietnam War threatened to expand the Cold War beyond Indochina and into neighbouring countries in the region. In newly-independent Singapore, Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew remained a supporter of greater regional cooperation in recognition of his city-state's vulnerability to regional political instability and dependence on external markets.

The Bangkok Declaration signed in 1967 was vague on the specifics of what the organization would accomplish. Indeed, the members did not regard ASEAN as an international organization as such, nor did most foreign governments. At the same time, ASEAN's lack of supranational status has limited its interactions with other organizations. The European Economic Community (EEC) was dubious of ASEAN's ability to accomplish anything independent of its members; and, in fact, the ASEAN-EEC Cooperation Agreement was an

agreement between the European Community as a whole and the five individual members of ASEAN.

Both ASEAN and Europe have pursued regional economic and political objectives; however, they have done so with markedly different strategies. While small compared to national governments, the Brussels-based bureaucracies of the European Union employ tens of thousands of employees with a powerful remit to monitor, manage and impose regulations on the domestic economies of the European Union's member-states. In contrast, the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta is deliberately limited to a secretarial support role.¹ Where the EEC has focused on the pooling of sovereignty in a variety of policy areas, the members of ASEAN have rejected the supranational approach to regional economic integration. Unlike the European Union's customs union and common external tariff, the ASEAN countries limited their trade integration to the pursuit of preferential trade agreements with one another, reserving trade negotiation powers to their national governments. The ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) signed in 1992 accelerated the process of tariff reduction in the region; however, the internal regulation of markets and economic activity remained with the members. Plans for an ASEAN Economic Community, part of the organization's 'Vision' for 2020, have made ASEAN an attractive locale for foreign direct investment.² However, again, actual progress on the practical steps of harmonization, mutual recognition, coordination and institutional reform have not occurred.

AFTA retains the intergovernmental features that have characterized ASEAN since its founding. In this regard, AFTA bears greater resemblance to NAFTA than the European Single Market. Although ASEAN members have often looked at Europe as an example of successful regional integration, South-East Asia is a different region with different interests and realities. At the Bali Summit in 1976, Lee Kuan Yew reflected on how much progress the European Community had made in nineteen years and how many differences of opinion remained.³ A similar comparison of the extent of ASEAN integration forty years after the Bangkok Declaration (2007) with the European Union forty years after the Treaty of Rome (1998) would find ASEAN still struggling with a free trade area in contrast to a Europe with a consolidated single market, common external tariff and on the verge of launching a single currency.

The actual economic effects of regional integration are more limited in ASEAN than either the European Union or NAFTA. In 2004, while over two-thirds of the trade of European Union member states was with one another and over half of NAFTA member's exports went to each other, under one-quarter of ASEAN trade was intra-regional. This external focus has not been deleterious to economic development, indeed the opposite has been true. Concentrating on external markets has been part of a successful economic strategy for the ASEAN members as it has for most other East Asian economies.⁴

The diversity of domestic political and economic arrangements was also reflected in differing memberships in key international economic institutions, especially the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Indonesia and Malaysia had long been members of the GATT at the time ASEAN was launched; however, Singapore did not join the international trade regime until 1973, the Philippines followed in 1979 and it was not until 1982 that Thailand joined. Since the 1980s, ASEAN members have experienced rapid economic growth and rising standards of living and all five original ASEAN members were founding members of the World Trade Organization (WTO). As a group, ASEAN members played a collective and positive role in the Uruguay Round negotiations.

ASEAN has experienced modest expansion in membership since its founding in 1967. The original five members were joined by Brunei when it received its independence in 1984. The end of the Cold War ended the security concerns that had overshadowed much of ASEAN's activities from its earliest days.⁵ ASEAN's 'Zone of Peace' could now be expanded to include the nations of Indochina, the countries whose previous status as Cold War battlegrounds had contributed to the original creation of ASEAN. Vietnam (1995), Myanmar (1997), Laos (1997) and Cambodia (1999) all joined ASEAN by the end of the twentieth century. The new members, including the Communist government of Vietnam, have expanded the political diversity of an already diverse group of countries.

However, since the creation of the WTO and the expansion of ASEAN to all ten nations of South-East Asia in 1995, ASEAN has not been as unified. Expansion increased the divisions within ASEAN and made collective action more difficult. The heightened politicization of the WTO likewise increased the salience and conflict over negotiations to levels that were not present under the GATT.⁶ The 1997 East Asian crisis, which started in Thailand, was particularly intense among ASEAN members. In the decade since the crisis, ASEAN economies have proven to be quite resilient and have begun growing rapidly again, albeit not as rapidly as the 'miracle' years of the 1980s and early 1990s.⁷ The slowdown in world trade talks has also led many ASEAN members to pursue bilateral free trade agreements – Singapore has signed one with the United States while Thailand and Malaysia are in negotiations with the Americans and Vietnam is holding talks with the European Union.

Notes

1. P. Tinsulanonda, 'ASEAN: Meeting the Challenges of Asia and the Pacific', in L. G. Martin (ed.), *The ASEAN Success Story: Social, Economic and Political Dimensions* (Honolulu, HI: East-West Center, 1987), p. 5.
2. M. Austria, 'ASEAN's Extra-Regional Linkages', in L. P. Ping, T. S. Yean and G. T. Yu (eds), *The Emerging East Asian Community: Security and Economic Issues* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit UKM, 2006), p. 290.

3. See 'Address by Mr Lee Kwan Yew, Prime Minister of Singapore, at the Opening Session of the ASEAN Summit, Bali, on 23 February 1976', below, pp. 149–51.
4. World Bank, *The East Asian Miracle: Economic Growth and Public Policy* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1993).
5. D. da Cunha (ed.), *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Security* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000).
6. R. Sally, 'Thai Trade Policy: From Non-Discriminatory Liberalization to FTAs', *World Economy*, 30:10 (2007), pp. 1594–620. See also the documents on the Seattle WTO ministerial included in this volume, below, pp. 282–95.
7. World Bank, *East Asia Update: Solid Growth, New Challenges* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006).

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ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS

Statement of S. Rajaratnam (Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore) at the ASEAN Conference, Bangkok, 8 August 1967, PRO, FCO 15/23.

Statement of H.E.S. Rajaratnam
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore
Bangkok, August 8, 1967

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of my Delegation and the Government of Singapore, I would like to thank the Government of Thailand and its people for hosting this Conference of what is today, five countries and in the course of years to come of many more countries of South East Asia. Secondly, on behalf of my Delegation, I would like to extend particular thanks to our Chairman for the tactful, judicious and patient way in which he guided our not always coherent deliberations towards a more than successful conclusion. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers who did excellent work in translating our intentions into more concrete form by way of documents and papers.

So, today, after four days of rather pleasant and friendly discussions, we are about to launch the new ASEAN. It is easy to give birth to a new organization but the creation of an organisation of this nature is the most simple of all tasks. It is a more skeleton that we have erected. Now the really difficult task is to give flesh and blood to this concept. We, in Singapore, are not unmindful of the fact that schemes for regional cooperation will run into more rocks than calm waters. Nevertheless, having had four or five days of discussions with my ministerial colleagues, there is one thing that is uppermost in my mind and that is the conviction of my ministerial colleagues in regard to both the inevitability and the desirability of regional cooperation. However, it would be necessary not

only for ministers or leaders to take this new regional scheme seriously but also to transmit to its people the need for a new kind of thinking.

For twenty years each of us in this region had been compelled to do things purely on the basis of nationalist fervour. And many of us know that after twenty years of decolonisation, nationalism alone has not provided or fulfilled the expectations by way of happier life, more fruitful life, better living standards to our countries and for our peoples. This realisation has grown and, therefore, it is necessary for us if we are really to be successful in giving life to ASEAN to marry national thinking with regional thinking. We must now think at two levels. We must think not only of our national interests but posit them against regional interests: that is a new way of thinking about our problems. And that is two different things and sometimes they can conflict. Secondly, we must also accept the fact, if we are really serious about it, that regional existence means painful adjustments to those practices, and thinking in our respective countries. We must make these painful and difficult adjustments. If we are not going to do that, then regionalism remains a Utopia.

The last point I would like to stress is that there may be, as has happened to other associations of this kind, misunderstandings as to what ASEAN is all about. So, I would like to stress that those who are outside the grouping should not regard this as a grouping against anything, against anybody. We have approached ASEAN as standing for something, not against anything. If there are people who misunderstand the proposed regional grouping, or manifest hostility towards it, let us explain that it can only be because as in Europe and in many parts of the world, outside powers have vested interests in the balkanisation of this region. We ourselves have learnt the lessons and have decided that small nations are not going to be balkanised so that they can be manipulated, set against one another, kept perpetually weak, divided and ineffective by outside forces.

So, as far as we are concerned, we want to ensure a stable South East Asia not a balkanised South East Asia. And those countries who are interested, genuinely interested, in the stability of South East Asia, the prosperity in South East Asia, and better economic, and social conditions will welcome small countries getting together to pool their collective resources and their collective wisdom to contribute to the peace of the world. The more unstable South East Asia is, the more the peace of the world is also threatened.

So, I would urge people outside the region not to misunderstand this coming together of our five and other South East Asian countries. We want to ensure that ASEAN stands for the interests of ASEANS and therefore by implication for the peace and prosperity of the world. That is all we are interested in. And if other countries think of tomorrow and are willing to help us to achieve this objective, they will be welcomed as friends. And we will also be worthwhile friends to them.

However, in order to win over regard and respect from the outside world, we must first take ASEAN seriously ourselves. There are a lot of people watching what all this is going to amount to. So first we must take our own child seriously. We must convince those that are watching us that we are prepared to make the adjustments and sacrifices necessary to achieve our objective and we are serious about it. The message must get through that this time the South East Asian countries are not going to be like the Balkans during the last two World Wars; that they are not going to be pushed around; once other nations take us seriously, just as we take ourselves seriously; once there is acceptance of our role as a united grouping of Asian countries, then we can bring peace and prosperity to this region as well as to the rest of the world.

Information Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Bangkok, August 8, 1967

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**Statement of Adam Malik (Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia)
at the ASEAN Conference, 8 August 1967, PRO, FCO 15/23.**

Statement of H. E. Adam Malik
Presidium Minister for Political Affairs
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Dear Friends,

We have arrived today at another milestone in the history of South East Asia.

As you remember, it was about a year ago that I enjoyed the hospitality of the Thai Government when I met here in Bangkok with my colleagues from the Philippines and Malaysia. I had then the opportunity to exchange views not only with them, but also with you, Mr. Chairman.

It was during those exchanges of views that the idea of a new regional cooperation came up for the first time. During the past year all of us patiently worked towards the implementation of that idea, making haste slowly, in order to establish a sound and firm basis on which to build a new association for regional cooperation. It is therefore a great satisfaction to me that today we are able to formalize the birth of this new association.

Mr. Chairman,

Indonesia's thinking regarding the regional cooperation is well known. It is not necessary to elaborate, but I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to recall that Indonesia always wants to see South East Asia develop into a region which can stand on its own feet, strong enough to defend itself against any negative influence from outside the region. Furthermore, considering our combined natural resources and manpower, such a South East Asia is not just a wishful thinking, if the countries of the region can cooperate effectively with each other.

Of course I realize that differences in outlook do exist among our nations, but I am convinced that we will be able to overcome those differences, provided that we are prepared to approach them with a maximum of goodwill and understanding, of good faith and realism.

Mr. Chairman,

The joint declaration we just signed is only the beginning. Hard work, patience, and perseverance are necessary, if we are to realize the aims and purposes of the association, in order that our peoples will indeed benefit from its achievements.

In conclusion, allow me Mr. Chairman, also on behalf of my delegation, to express my feeling of deep gratitude to the Government and People of Thai-

land for their warm reception and their generous hospitality. I would also like to thank especially you, Mr. Chairman, for the statesmanship you have shown and for the valuable role you have played while presiding over our deliberations. Thanks to your wisdom and your patience we have arrived at the successful conclusion of our meeting. Profound thanks go also to my other colleagues, and their assistants, for their cooperation and understanding.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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Priority Telegram from UK Embassy in Bangkok regarding Declaration Establishing the ASEAN, 8 August 1967, PRO, FCO 15/23, no. 1.

En Clair

PRIORITY BANGKOK TO FOREIGN OFFICE

Telno. 440 8 August, 1967

UNCLASSIFIED

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 440 of 8 August. Repeated for information to: Kuala Lumpur, Djakarta, Manila, POLAD Singapore, BHC Singapore, Canberra, Wellington, Washington

Declaration establishing the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was signed in the Saranrom Palace at 11 a.m. local time today by Malik for Indonesia, Razak for Malaysia, Ramos for Philippines, Rajaratnam for Singapore and Thanat for Thailand.

2. Preamble of Declarations refers to the mutual interests and common problems among the countries of South East Asia and their determination to ensure stability and security from external interference in any form. It also affirms that all foreign bases are temporary and remain only with the expressed concurrence of the countries concerned and are not intended to be used directly or indirectly to subvert the national independence and freedom of States in the area or prejudice the orderly processes of their national development.
3. The Declaration then sets out the aims of the new organization as follows:
 - (a) To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development of the region;
 - (b) To promote regional peace and stability through respect for justice and the rule of law and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
 - (c) To promote collaboration in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields;
 - (d) To collaborate more effectively for the greater utilization of agriculture and industry, the expansion of trade, the improvement of transport and communications and the raising of living standards;
 - (e) To promote South East Asian studies;
 - (f) To maintain close cooperation with existing organizations with similar aims and purposes.
4. To achieve these aims the following machinery is to be set up:
 - (a) An annual meeting of Foreign Ministers;
 - (b) A Standing Committee under the chairmanship of the Foreign Minister of

- the host country or his representative having as its members the accredited Ambassadors of the other member countries;
- (c) Ad hoc and permanent committees of specialists and officials;
 - (d) A national secretariat in each member country. Bangkok telegram No. 440 to Foreign Office
5. The organization is open to all States in the South East Asian region subscribing to the aforementioned aims, principles and purposes.
 6. A Press release accompanying the Declaration states that next year's Ministerial Meeting will be held in Djakarta and that pending and during that meeting the Standing Committee will be located in Djakarta.
 7. Please see my immediately following telegram.

Mr. Bullard

Sent 1000Z 8 August
Recd. 1422Z 8 August

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Restricted Telegram from UK Embassy in Moscow regarding Soviet Response to South-East Asian Regional Cooperation, 14 August 1967, PRO, FCO 15/23, no. 6.

TO FOREIGN OFFICE

14 August 1967

CLASSIFIED

Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 1394 of 14 August, repeated for information to Washington, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Djakarta, Bangkok, Manila, Canberra and Wellington.

ASEAN.

Pravda of 13 August carries an authoritative article on ASEAN by one of its political commentators.

2. Following are main points:

- (a) The stated objects of the new association seem unexceptionable. But behind this façade a new military bloc is being built up. The majority of ASEAN's members have links with aggressive blocs: its doors are open to Australia and New Zealand: and there are signs that preparations are being made for South Viet Nam's entry:
- (b) The United States and Britain will seek to exploit the Association for their own ends. It is indicative that a new meeting should be projected under British patronage at Kuala Lumpur, at which Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia will discuss joint defence plans:
- (c) This new Association has been brought into being because SEATO, ASPAC, CENTO and ASA are compromised in the eyes of independent Asian countries. The United States is particularly anxious to bring in countries which profess independence in foreign policy:
- (d) Many were surprised at the degree of activity in the organisation of the new bloc shown by Adam Malik. The United States hopes according to Rusk, that Indonesia will make a big contribution to developing the political strength of the 'free world' in Asia: and the Djakarta press has spoken of the role of ASEAN in containing Communism. But those who hope to use the Association to achieve regional leadership or strengthen their military position are making a mistake:
- (e) It is significant that Burma and Cambodia have refused to align themselves with the Association:
- (f) Well tried instruments of cooperation exist already in the form of UNESCO and ECAFE. The Soviet Union has consistently supported

ECAFE as a regional organisation. There is too an increasing awareness in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines that normal trade relations with the socialist countries is a way of strengthening their independence.

Sir G. Harrison

Sent 14142 14 August

Recd 15142 14 August

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Confidential Summary on the Association of South-East Asian Nations from Giles Bullard (British Embassy in Bangkok) to George Brown (Foreign Secretary), 15 August 1967 PRO, FCO 15/23, no. 7.

CONFIDENTIAL

(1079/67)

SUMMARY

Association of South-East Asian Nations.

1. The establishment of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is a triumph for Colonel Thanat Khoman, the Thai Foreign Minister (paragraphs 1–3).
2. The Association intends to concentrate on economic and technical problems, but its charter contains the seeds of political disagreement (paragraph 4).
3. Ceylon may join the Association, and possibly Laos also, but no one else, at any rate for the present. Restricting membership to a comparatively small area will help to give the Association a better chance of survival, but a lot will depend on the first year's achievements (paragraphs 5–7)
4. There may be business opportunities for us as a result of ASEAN, but we should not interfere or offer advice. We have already made a contribution; English is the Association's official language (paragraph 8)

BRITISH EMBASSY,
BANGKOK.

(1079/67)

Despatch No. 22

11 August 1967

Sir,

As already reported by telegram a Declaration establishing the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was signed in Bangkok on the 8th of August by the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand and the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia. Copies of the Declaration and its accompanying Press Release are enclosed.

2. The setting up of this new regional organisation represents a personal success for Col. Thanat Khoman the Thai Foreign Minister, who composed the first draft of the Declaration last December and has since pursued his objective with his usual energy and rather more than his usual tact. He has had a number of preliminary meetings with Ministers of the other countries concerned, of which the most important was undoubtedly his brief visit to Kuala Lumpur in May at which the Tunku, in order to get Indonesia back into the main

stream agreed to withdraw his previous objections to the setting up of an organisation which would duplicate the aims and membership of his own brain-child, the Association of South-East Asia (ASA). But the Malaysians had also to be persuaded to agree to Singapore's joining the new organisation and to the holding of the five-power meeting in Bangkok instead of in Kuala Lumpur. It was a feat in itself to get the five Ministers to Bangkok so soon after the meeting of the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) and so near the ASA meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

3. To Col. Thanat also must go the credit for the way in which the meeting was staged. The Ministers met first over the weekend for two days of discussions at Bangsaen, a seaside resort some two hours' drive from Bangkok, with a convenient golf-course at which the emphasis was on ease and informality – 'sports-shirt diplomacy' as Thanat put it. A further day of talks in Bangkok produced an agreed declaration ready for signature on the Tuesday morning. Considering the wide field which had to be covered and the differences of opinion, some of them genuine and deeply felt, which had to be resolved, this is a remarkable achievement. Thanat fully deserves the warm tributes to his statesmanship which were paid to him by the other delegates. His status both in South-East Asia and among his own countrymen in Thailand has been increased by the events of the past week.
4. The Declaration is perhaps less precise than its authors would have liked it to be. As expected its aims and purposes are similar to those of the 1961 Bangkok Declaration which established ASA. References to regional peace and security and to the principles of the U.N. Charter have been added, seemingly at the request of the Malaysians but there are no major changes. The emphasis is still on economic and technical cooperation and the raising of living standards. All this is sensible and practical. It is in the preamble that one can detect signs of possible future trouble. Indonesian dislike of being drawn into any kind of regional defensive grouping, which has prevented them from joining ASPAC, is reflected in a clause about the temporary nature of foreign bases itself probably an Indonesian contribution to the original Thai draft. This clause is unpopular with the Malaysians and Filipines and possibly also with the Thais, though as Sir A. Rumbold has already pointed out the United States' bases in Thailand are strictly speaking not foreign bases. Its inclusion together with the choice of Djakarta for the next Ministerial meeting and the acceptance of M. Malik's suggested name for the association are signs of how far the other four countries were prepared to go to secure Indonesian agreement to the draft. The question of a name for the new association must incidentally have occupied the Ministers for some time: the invitations to Tuesday's ceremony gave it the old name of SEAARC (South-East Asian Association for Regional Cooperation).

5. As well as the foreign bases clause a reference to security from external interference has been included in the preamble. This however can be taken to mean whatever the signatories wish. Thanat no doubt intends it to mean Communist China, while Malik is probably also thinking of the Americans. The wording in any case is sufficiently vague not to have deterred the Government of Ceylon from showing interest in the new association and it is possible that Ceylon's application to join under the terms of paragraph 4 of the Declaration will be the first to be received. There are no other likely prospective members except perhaps Laos. Burma and Cambodia under different régimes might be candidates, but not yet. If ASPAC collapses through inaction or through excessive Australian zeal, Japan might wish to join but she is so large and economically powerful that the other countries would think twice about accepting her. Formosa too is a possibility, but not I would guess either Australia or New Zealand. One of the causes of the unreal atmosphere surrounding ASPAC is the presence of these two countries which, though professing Asian sympathies and loyalties, are in fact much closer to the United States or to Western Europe in their way of looking at the area's problems.
- 6 By contrast the recent ASEAN meeting revealed unsuspected depths of common interest in the participating countries, and a realistic estimate of the difficulties still to be overcome. As M. Rajaratham said in his speech on Tuesday: 'Many of us know that after twenty years of decolonisation, nationalism alone has not provided or fulfilled expectations by way of a happier life a more fruitful life, or better living standards for our countries and for our peoples ... It is necessary for us, if we are really to be successful in giving life to ASEAN, to marry national thinking with regional thinking [and] we must also accept the fact, if we are really serious about it, that regional existence means painful adjustments'. It is this apparently genuine wish for closer cooperation coupled with the limited aims and geographical extent of the new organisation and the realistic approach of the five Ministers concerned which gives the ASEAN Declaration a healthier sound than some of its predecessors and the organisation itself a better chance of survival.
7. What happens now? Presumably the members of ASA will decide at their next meeting to wind up their affairs, perhaps by referring all outstanding projects to the ASEAN Standing Committee, which is already saddled with proposals for regional cooperation in the fields of tourism, shipping, fisheries and trade. Ceylon's application to join, if it materialises will also have to go to the Standing Committee together with any others that may be made. A good deal therefore will depend on events in Djakarta over the next twelve months. ASPAC, after its imposing debut in Seoul in 1966 achieved virtually nothing in the year that followed. We must hope that ASEAN does

not follow the same course. Fortunately M. Malik, who under the terms of the Declaration will be responsible for the Committee's work, seems to have the right approach. In his speech of Tuesday he said. 'I realise what differences in outlook do exist among our nations, but I am convinced that we will be able to overcome those differences, provided we are prepared to approach them with a maximum of good-will and understanding, of good faith and realism ... The joint Declaration we have just signed is only the beginning. Hard work, patience and perseverance are necessary if we are to realise the aims and purposes of the association.'

8. Meanwhile what should our attitude be? As seen from this post it is important that we should not interfere or be suspected of interfering. Colonialism is still a dirty word in South-East Asia, and suspicion of outside interference could fall on non-Communist as well as Communist countries. There may eventually be greater opportunities for doing business in the area, and we should be on the lookout for them. We should also be prepared to help if we are asked, but we should not offer to do so. We should not be well received. If asked whether we approve of ASEAN we need say no more than that we welcome all spontaneous movements of this kind. Our contribution is in fact already a significant one. The Declaration itself, the speeches of the five Ministers, and their discussions at Bangsaen were all in English, their only common language.
9. I am copying this despatch, with enclosures to H.M. Representatives at Kuala Lumpur, Djakarta, Manila, POLAD Singapore, Singapore, Colombo, Canberra, Wellington, Washington, Tokyo, Saigon, Phnom Penn and Vientiane.

I have the honour to be,
with the highest respect,
Sir,
Your obedient Servent,
(Giles Bullard)

Telegram from British Embassy in Manila on the Philippines and ASEAN, 30 October 1967, PRO, FCO 15/23.

CONFIDENTIAL

BRITISH EMBASSY
MANILA
30 October, 1967

Dear Donald,

Before he went off on leave in Japan, the Ambassador took me to call on Ramos, the Foreign Secretary.

The Ambassador had some business to raise with Ramos in his capacity as acting Doyen but apart from this the following points were touched on:

- (i) My telegram No: 188-D44/3 196 reports what Ramos told us about the Cambodian frontiers. We have not seen any copy of the Note delivered to the Cambodians and, since sending that telegram, I have heard through other sources that the Note refers to 'actual' frontiers, not 'present' frontiers. We will try to get the authentic wording; perhaps it is the same (French 'actual'). Ramos was rather pleased with himself over this. He maintained that the formula meant nothing at all in practice and was amused that it had not only satisfied the Cambodians but stimulated an immediate invitation to him to visit Cambodia. Unfortunately he could not now go since he ought to do some electioneering (if the Nationalists fail to win in his area, he will get the blame);
- (ii) The Ambassador referred to reports that ASEAN might acquire some political and indeed military teeth in the future. He asked whether there was anything in this. Ramos said at once that, in his view, this was an economic association and should remain that way. There would be no pressure by the Philippines to convert it into a political or military association.
- (iii) The rest of the discussion was about Sato's visit. Ramos contrived to put the best face possible on this visit and mentioned that the Japanese had promised to lend \$ 60 million, whereas, as reported in our Despatch, the Japanese here have told us categorically that only \$ 30 million was offered. Having guided the press to speculate before-hand that the Japanese were likely to produce aid amounting to \$ 215 million, the Philippines are now somewhat embarrassed and are anxious to conceal the fact that only \$ 30 million will be forthcoming. So Ramos' lie was not unexpected.

(G. C. Foster)

D. P. Murray Esq.,
South-East Asia Dept.,

**Report of British Embassy in Bangkok on EEC Visit to Thailand,
13 September 1973, PRO, FCO 15/1727, no. 21.**

CONFIDENTIAL

BRITISH EMBASSY
BANGKOK

13 September 1973

C W Squire Esq MVO
South East Asian Department
FCO

Dear Bill.

EEC VISIT TO THAILAND

1. Sir Christopher Soames, accompanied by a party of EEC officials, visited Thailand from 4 to 8 September on his way to Tokyo for the meeting of GATT. He came at the invitation of the Thai Government to brief representatives of ASEAN countries and to hear their views on the future relationship between EEC and ASEAN. The following are the main issues they discussed:

- (a) ASEAN allegations of EEC discrimination against them as compared with the Associated African States

Sir Christopher encountered the view that EEC showed greater concern for the developing states of Africa than for those in South East Asia. He explained the Yaounde Agreement and emphasised that the mono-culture of the African states meant that they were far more dependent on EEC support than were the members of ASEAN, whose economies were more developed and more diversified. He refuted allegations that EEC was not sufficiently interested in South East Asia but pointed out that investment in the region was a matter for the individual members of EEC rather than for EEC itself. His various statements on this subject were reasonably well received but it is doubtful whether ASEAN as a whole is yet convinced of EEC's interest and good intentions.

- (b) Institutional relationship between EEC and ASEAN

There was some demand from the ASEAN side for the establishment of a formal and institutional relationship. Since it is only very recently, and not with total enthusiasm, that ASEAN has agreed to 'institutionalise' itself in the form of a permanent secretariat (not yet set up) it seems clear that this request sprang less from a practical need than from the Asian predilection for setting up an organisational structure when they do not

know what else to do. Sir Christopher argued that there was no need for a formal relationship at the present stage. This was accepted only reluctantly and certain sections of the Thai press have interpreted it as a rebuff. I cannot speak for ASEAN as a whole but it seems likely that Thailand will wish to reopen the question before too long.

(c) Preferences on individual commodities

Sir Christopher said that though EEC was aware of and was looking into ASEAN views, or more correctly the views of certain members of ASEAN, on certain individual commodities the attitude of ASEAN as a whole towards preferential treatment seemed more general than specific. At his session to brief resident representatives of the Nine he said that he had asked ASEAN members to specify the commodities which were particularly worrying them, though he had been careful to point out that he was not offering to negotiate on these products but only to listen to the cases and arguments put to him.

2. In addition to the briefing which Sir Christopher himself gave to the resident representatives of the Nine David Hannay called on me on 6 September to fill me in on other details. These were:

(a) The role and attitude of Singapore

Rahim Ishak, the Singapore Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, had brought a personal letter from Lee Kuan Yew to Sir Christopher saying that Lee was sorry that for protocol reasons he himself could not attend the meeting but that Rahim Ishak knew all his thoughts. Mr Hannay said that if Rahim knew all Lee's thoughts when he left Singapore he had clearly forgotten most of them by the time he arrived here. He rambled incoherently and was very ill-at-ease. He however gave a general tour d'horizon of the area and beyond as seen by Lee Kuan Yew: the Indians were being captured by the Left and were in any case incompetent; the Ceylonese were already captured by the Left and were even more incompetent than the Indians; Tun Razak was 'not bad' but the Malaysians were being captured by the Left too. Rahim had nothing much to say about the Thais but spoke highly of the Indonesians and Sir Christopher got the impression that Lee Kuan Yew is now far more favourably disposed towards Indonesia than he used to be.

Rahim Ishak had spoken both at the official meeting and privately to Sir Christopher about the need to get France more closely re-involved in Indo-China. Lee Kuan Yew's thinking appeared to be that as things are now it is the French who will be the most difficult in getting EEC to look favourably upon South East Asia and that the way to overcome this difficulty is to encourage greater French presence and activity in Indo-China. (Mr. Hannay commented on this that if the French did become

more active they would see to it that the advantage accrued to them alone and not to EEC as a whole.)

The Singapore attempt to involve South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in the meetings with Sir Christopher was seen as part of a scheme to coax France into greater activity. The Singapore demarche and Rahim Ishak's persistent and rather clumsy pursuit of it somewhat annoyed the Thais. I later heard General Chartichai, the Thai Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, remonstrating with my Singapore colleague for having raised the question of the participation of the Indo-China countries at so late a stage. He told the Singapore Ambassador that his country had put Thailand in an administratively impossible position. As it was, because of the lateness of the Singapore demarche and the time it took to get the necessary clearance from other participants, the three Indo-Chinese Ambassadors were not invited to the first meeting, which was the one which would have been of main interest to them since it discussed the broad generalities of policy, but were invited only to the second where, as observers, they had nothing to do but listen to the various ASEAN states putting forward their individual shopping lists. Sir Christopher found it necessary to make it very plain to the ASEAN countries and especially to the Thai hosts that whether the Indo-Chinese Ambassadors were invited or not was a matter for the ASEAN countries and not for him. He told me later that he had been at particular pains to make this clear since he sensed that otherwise an attempt would have been made to place the responsibility upon him and upon EEC.

(b) EEC and ECAFE

Mr Maramis, the new Secretary-General of ECAFE, who was already known to Sir Christopher, asked to see him personally. I had no occasion to speak to Sir Christopher or Mr Hannay after the meeting but I understand that Mr Maramis had sent Sir Christopher a message to the effect that he did not share his predecessor's views on EEC. (U Nyun, the former Secretary-General, affected the view that EEC was an organ of economic imperialism.) I told Mr Hannay that while Mr Maramis could hardly help being a better Secretary-General of ECAFE than U Nyun, it was still too early to decide how in fact he was going to shape. He was certainly acting very much as the new broom but he was up against very strong and entrenched bureaucratic factions and he had already offended some of these factions, including the Indians who were the most entrenched of all. I understand that Mr Maramis hopes to associate ECAFE more closely with EEC and that while leaving the initiative to him Sir Christopher is content to see him make the attempt. Maramis will find however that the U Nyun view of EEC is still strong within ECAFE

and this, together with the determination of the various national factions within the ECFAFE bureaucracy to maintain the privileged positions they acquired under U Nyun's regime, will make Maramis' road a very uphill one.

(c) ASEAN, EEC and Japan

At a reception during the proceedings I had occasion to speak to several of the younger members of the various ASEAN delegations and I asked them how things were going. With remarkable unanimity they told me that one of their principal concerns was to impress upon the EEC delegation the fact that the EEC countries, jointly and severally, were rapidly losing ground in this area to the Japanese (and, to a lesser degree, to the Americans). They thought that the extent of the inroads by Japan into the economies of the ASEAN countries was not sufficiently understood either in Brussels or in the various EEC countries. They hoped that the delegation would get the message.

I discussed this later both with Mr Hannay and with Sir Christopher. They told me that the question of Japan's activities had indeed come up quite strongly. Sir Christopher had taken note but had again pointed out that investment in South East Asia was a matter for the individual member countries of EEC rather than for EEC itself.

3. When I went to see Sir Christopher off he told me that while he was not dissatisfied with the visit he wondered whether it had been worth while. I said that as I had not been involved in the meetings I could not comment on their practical value but that if I might speak from my Asian experience I thought the visit had probably been a useful public-relations exercise, and I suggested that at this stage that was about all one could reasonably expect.

Arthur de la Mare