

The Emergence, Development and Role of ASEAN: An Analysis

Saweeda Rahman

Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad

ASEAN can safely be termed as the most successful regional integration exercise in the developing world today. The article analyzes the role of 'State' in determining the degree of integration in ASEAN. It argues that the World Order and the role played by the contemporary major powers in the world-the US and China- determined the pace of integration for the organization historically by creating and enhancing the external threat factor during the Cold War era of bipolarity and post-Cold War era of unipolarity. ASEAN evolved with a slow pace initially however it overcame the internal conflict and problems due to external threat of communism during Cold War era. In the post-Cold War era with the emergence of a unipolar World System and the US as a sole super power it continued evolving with an enhanced speed as a vibrant and dynamic regional organization. World Order and the resultant external threat factor strengthened ASEAN remarkably.

Keywords: ASEAN, Liberal Inter-governmentalism, External threat factor, Bipolar World System, Unipolar World System, role of major powers

ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) commemorated its 50th anniversary on August 8, 2017. ASEAN was created in 1967 after adoption of the 'Bangkok Declaration' with initially five states as members namely Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. Brunei Darussalam however, became member of ASEAN on January 8, 1984. Together these member states were known as ASEAN-6 and regarded as the original founding fathers of the organization. Later on, Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR, Vietnam also joined it. Cambodia on 30 April 1999, Myanmar and Laos on 23 July 1997, and Vietnam on 28 July 1995 (About ASEAN, n.d.). Timor-Leste is also an applicant for the membership.

ASEAN has since then evolved into a close-knit group of states that has held almost 700 meetings per annum on several vital issues pertaining to economic areas, political and security matters and cultural as well as educational spheres of activities. ASEAN's combined population is more than 620 million while its aggregate economic size surpasses US\$2.5 trillion (India ASEAN Trade, 2016). The member countries have long buried their differences in favor of larger interests being part of the ASEAN Community. The organization has established itself as an immaculate example through its wide range of initiatives based on regional integration and cooperation. Kivimaki claims that it to be the most successful organization of the developing states (Kivimaki, 2001). ASEAN can be the model for other regional organizations to follow.

Keeping in view the success of ASEAN despite several challenges that it faced, several pertinent questions arise. First, why and how cooperation between the South East Asian states finally concretized after a number of failed attempts for the purpose? Second, why was there an increased level of cooperation among member states of ASEAN despite internal conflicts and challenges among each other? And finally, how the World Order kept on influencing the level of integration in ASEAN? In order to find answers to the above research questions, the paper focuses on the role of 'state' as the principal element in determining the level of integration within ASEAN. It also takes into account the relevance of World System of bipolarity that had evolved in the Cold War era to the level of integration within ASEAN. It then takes into account the post-Cold War era with unipolar World System as well as multipolarity in the contemporary times and their impact on the level of cohesiveness within ASEAN. It also emphasizes the role of major powers of the world namely the US and China, briefly, in the region in this context.

Theoretical Background

Several theories have been used by scholars and students of Politics and International Relations to analyze the phenomenon of regional economic integration, such as Federalism, Functionalism, Neo-Functionalism, Inter-Governmentalism as well as Liberal Inter-governmentalism. This paper used Liberal Inter-governmentalism theory of regional economic integration. Also, the work has added a new factor into the levels of analysis used by Liberal Inter-governmentalism theory by introducing a new categorization in the levels of analysis through which discourse on integration takes place in Liberal Inter-governmentalism. For this purpose, the article has categorized system level of analysis into Regional Level of Analysis, comprising states of the region as described in the Liberal Integration, and Global Level of Analysis, comprising of World Order and Major Powers of the world - the new subcategory.

Liberal Inter-governmentalism focused on state as the driver and controller of the process of regional integration as opposed to the assumption of 'spill-over effect' of the neo-functionalism theory. According to Liberal Inter-governmentalism the decision making agents within a state form preferences for the state. The state then gets involved with its regional counterparts through an institution in the processes of bargaining and negotiations to achieve the national preferences. The state decides the degree and level of integration with the other regional members on the basis of its national preferences. (Moravcsik, 1998). While emphasizing the domestic and regional actors, the theory somehow neglects the role of external factors influencing the process of regional integration such as World System and the kind of role that is played by the major powers of the world in the region.

The article, in this context, discusses the evolution of regional integration in ASEAN since its creation in the 1967 up to 9/11 emphasizing its functions, structures, historical processes and the relationship between its member states. It argues that in the case of ASEAN the external factor in the form of strict bipolar system of World Order during the Cold War and developments of alliance system by the US and the Soviet Union (now Russia) led to the creation of ASEAN. It further argues that the engagement and disengagement of the external powers within the Southeast Asian region especially the US and China paved the way for evolution of regional integration in the region which finally materialized in the form of ASEAN.

Emergence of Cooperation in ASEAN during Bipolar World Order of the Cold War Era:

The most remarkable development in the field of Regional integration in South East Asian region materialized in the shape of ASEAN. The advent on the course to regional cohesion during the bipolar World Order of the Cold War era can be described as a response to the looming threat of communism due to weak economic conditions of the Southeast Asian countries. Moreover, the several conflicts and hostilities among the states of the region could also prove to be an inviting factor to externally prompted revolution. Therefore security and economy became most important factors on regional level among the states to cooperate with one another.

In 1967, foreign ministers of the five states which would be later identified as founding members of ASEAN¹, signed the Bangkok Declaration by virtue of which the formation of the association for regional economic integration in Southeast Asian region was declared. The two pages long Bangkok Declaration, although brief, having five articles only resolved that peace and stability in the Southeast Asian region would be achieved through quest to improve the socio-economic conditions by ASEAN.

In the beginning when ASEAN emerged it appeared to be more of a non-aggression pact among the Southeast Asian States due to the fact that the whole region was facing instability and conflict among states. There was a case of conflict hit countries of Vietnam, Lao PDR, and Cambodia. Malaysia and Singapore had separated. There was also conflict going on between Indonesia and Malaysia. Malaysia had problems with Philippines over Sabah. Moreover there was the looming threat of Communism as well (Hill & Menon, 2010). Many efforts in the past to make an integration or cooperation organization had failed. Under these

¹ Names of the foreign ministers of the founding states included, Adam Malik of Indonesia, S. Rajaratnam of Singapore, Narciso R. Ramos of the Philippines, Tun Abdul Razak of Malaysia, and Thanat Khoman of Thailand in Bangkok, Thailand.

circumstances when ASEAN took birth, it was viewed more as a temporary non-aggression pact. However, creators of ASEAN were determined to make this organization a success.

The Bangkok Declaration comprised of the aims and objectives of the organization as well as represented its 'modus operandi' (Flores & Abad, 2012). It served as a basic set of principles adopting 'ASEAN Way' to regulate ASEAN till the Charter of ASEAN was adopted in year 2007. It held that the organization would keep its doors open for participation for all the states which subscribed to the very spirit of ASEAN (The ASEAN Declaration, 1967). It meant that ASEAN was envisioned as an organization open to participation for all such states of the region which shared and agreed to its objectives.

Paragraph one of the Bangkok Declaration determined that acceleration and growth of economy would be one of the core objectives of the organization. It also highlighted the importance of social progress as well as cultural development on the basis of equality for transforming the region into one peaceful and prosperous community (The ASEAN Declaration). It was agreed upon to prioritize economic growth and development as main objectives, along with increased collaboration in the social and cultural areas. It also declared protection of mutual interest of all the member states to bring about solidarity in the region. It was emphasized that peace and stability in the region could only be achieved through such measures (Keling, Som, Saludin, Shuib, & Ajis, 2011).

It was further agreed to enhance collaboration on subjects of mutual interest pertaining to economic, social, technical, and administrative spheres. The need to promote and facilitate research and arranging several training opportunities for students, professionals, administrators and technical professionals was also acknowledged. It also pledged an increased cooperation in agriculture, industries, trade, transport facilities as well as means of communication. One of the most important objectives to be attained through regional cohesion in the Southeast Asia would be to improve the living standard of the common people of the region. The promotion of Southeast Asian studies and forging constructive and closer cooperative relations with the other organizations that were already functioning on international as well as regional levels and shared objectives and resolves with ASEAN were also included as significant objectives of the Association (The ASEAN Declaration, 1967).

The creators of ASEAN desired a greater and dynamic regional association since the very day of the organization's inception. It was on the basis of this very first document that ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Cultural Community were later launched. Later on the emergence of extended cooperation in the form of ASEAN + three and ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has been on the basis of ASEAN Declaration that provided for establishing economic and other relations and cooperation not only among the members of ASEAN but to other countries of the Pacific Region as well.

ASEAN creators declared that the organization had firm belief in the principles adopted in the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and ASEAN would encourage peace and stability in the Southeast Asian region in accordance with the UN principles. Industrial and agricultural cooperation were identified as essential part of the integration process along with transportation, development in living standard in member states and trade. Cooperation in Scientific, technological, administrative, and educational and research fields was also included into the scope of ASEAN (The ASEAN Declaration).

ASEAN could not formulate its Charter till 2007. Before that, the 'modus operandi' or 'ASEAN way' was determined by the very brief Bangkok Declaration which was described by Prof. Portela as more of a political nature than a 'legally-binding treaty' (Portela, 2013). Kishore Mahbubani and Rhoda Severino noted that ASEAN developed 'the ASEAN Way' based on the Indonesian concepts of "musyawarah" meaning "consultation" and "mufakat" meaning "consensus" for decision making (Mahbubani & Severino, 2014). The ASEAN Way can said to be marked with bureaucratic minimalism and informal diplomacy. There was no formal elaborate institutionalization and only structures that were created were a Foreign Ministers Annual Meeting, a Standing Committee comprising of representatives of all ASEAN member states and a few other Committees on explicit matters (Mahbubani & Severino). Much of ASEAN's business in its early years was conducted on an interpersonal

basis. National Secretaries from member states, instead of a Secretary General were to perform a coordinating role for the above mentioned formations. Decision making was purely an intergovernmental process, based on consensus and consultation.

In the earlier years from 1967-1976, ASEAN had an ineffective organizational structure. Shee Poon-Kim observed that the ASEAN leaders simply replicated the organizational structure of its predecessor, Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), while adopting the Bangkok Declaration in 1967 (Kim, 1977). The early ASEAN consisted of, ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, which was placed at the top of the organizational structure as declared in the Bangkok Declaration of 1967 (Keling,Som,Saludin,Shuib,& Ajis,2011). It had to meet once a year at least and its main function was to formulate ASEAN policies and stances. Then there was ASEAN Standing Committee which comprised of the Foreign Ministers of ASEAN countries. The several Ad-Hoc and Fixed Committees were tasked with preparing for the meetings of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. ASEAN Secretary Members were assigned the task of preparing reports and proposals on several issues and assist the respective ministers. The Secretary Members had the assistance of the Ad-Hoc and Fixed committees so that precision of the reports and proposals could be assured (Indorf, 1975). The structure thus evolved was not properly defined and was overlapping in functions.

ASEAN made quite a successful attempt to overcome the problem of weak structures by formulating a new elaborate organizational structure at The ASEAN Conference that was convened in Bali from the 23rd to 25th February 1976. The Bali Conference in 1976 provided ASEAN the opportunity to formulate a structure which was much more effective and efficient. Five committees were formed as a result (Fified, 1979). David Irvine detailed the new structure established through Bali Conference (Irvine, 1983) as:

1. ASEAN Head of States meeting was the top most body in the new structure of ASEAN for increased cooperation,
2. ASEAN Foreign Ministers to discuss matters that were political in nature at least once per annum,
3. ASEAN Economic Ministers to deal with issues relating to economy,
4. ASEAN other Ministers were assigned various matters related to social, cultural and other areas.
5. ASEAN Secretariats

It was also decided at the Bali Conference 1976, to establish a permanent ASEAN Secretariat, in Jakarta. The Secretariat was an administrative organ of ASEAN with the delegates of each ASEAN nation. It was also determined at the same summit that ASEAN required a more formal constitutional base to perform its functions effectively. (Declaration of ASEAN Concord, 1976). In a nutshell, Bali conference was a momentous milestone in the development of ASEAN. It was not only the first time after creation of ASEAN that the heads of the states/governments held a summit but it also achieved the status of being a hallmark by adopting measures like formal organizational structure for ASEAN, establishment of a Secretariat as well as an acknowledgement of the need to have a constitution.

Endeavors for Cooperation prior to ASEAN

Today ASEAN serves as a model of successful regional cooperation to be followed by other developing countries of the world. However, this level of success did not come easily and it was not the first time that the South East Asian nations had joined in a bond to achieve some pre-defined goals. Many variables, on regional as well as international level have played their role along with their willingness to let go of their differences by the states of South East Asia to reach the level of regional integration that one witnesses today under ASEAN. There were many endeavors during this journey ranging from cooperation for defense through South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) to economic cooperation in the form of South East Asia Friendship and Economy Treaty (SEAFET). And later on a multipurpose cooperation arrangement through ASA and finally to ASEAN which carved the way for the current pace and progression of regionalism in South East Asia.

SEATO was founded in 1954. It was established for the containment of communism in the Southeast Asian states in the same way NATO was created in Europe. Although it was a 'South East Asian Association', ironically only two of the states from South East Asia were members of this organization; Thailand and Philippines. Rest of the members included Australia, France, UK, New Zealand, Pakistan, and the United States.

(The ASEAN Experience, 2007). Nathan argued that SEATO was instituted to maintain peace in the region as well as to prevent the communist advances in the Southeast Asian region (Abubakar, Kaur, & Ghazali Eds., 1984). It was an alliance for purely military purposes and joint military exercises were held each year among the member states.

However, when it came to an actual participation in wars on different fronts, the member states shied away. When 1965 during war broke out between Pakistan and India, the US chose not to take part in it. This act antagonized Pakistan which at that time was an ally of the US as well as a member of SEATO. The alliance was further weakened when in the late 1960s the US could not win support from France and Pakistan, to justify its Indochina war, and hence from the organization, as unanimity was required according to the Charter of SEATO for any actions. France extracted its armed cooperation from SEATO in 1967 and UK refused to militarily participate in the Vietnam War. This brought the usefulness of the organization itself into question. All the members agreed in 1975 against the continued existence of SEATO, which was finally dissolved in 1977.

However SEATO served as an initiator of integration efforts in the region. The very first step in this direction was creation of South East Asia Friendship and Economy Treaty (SEAFET) in 1959. K.S. Nathan observed that the main focus of SEAFET was on cooperation in the fields of economy, trade and education between the member states (Nathan, 1988). Thambipillai, Pushpa, and Saravanamuttu, noted about SEAFET that although it failed to achieve any concrete results due to the situation in the region, as there were several disagreements between Southeast Asian states, still its importance as a foundation stone for further efforts towards integration cannot be denied (Thambipillai, Pushpa, & Saravanamuttu, 1985). It gave way to more substantial efforts in this regard.

On July 31, 1961, the Association of South East Asia (ASA) was created at a meeting between foreign ministers of Malaya,² the Philippines, and Thailand. ASA was created to achieve the objective of regional stability and peace. It was pledged to promote cooperative relations in the fields of economy as well as social and cultural fields. Moreover the need to generate opportunities for research and training aimed at betterment of all was also acknowledged (Keling, Som, Saludin, Shuib, & Ajis, 2011). Narine noted that the problems began to rise for ASA because Malaya and the Philippines wanted to adopt the structure similar to that of the EU (Narine, 2002). However, Thailand wanted a looser structure for ASA with no legal obligations for the member states. Indonesia did not join the association because it was a supporter of nonalignment and also because it was not included in the processes of the creation of ASA. Absence of one of the largest states of the region hindered the way for the association to be an effective body. Narine observed that the conflict between the member countries, more specifically between Malaya and its neighboring the Philippines, over northern Borneo and Sabah played vital role in the failure of the organization especially when the Philippines withdrew its membership on the issue of Malaya's claim upon Sabah. Once it was evident that ASA could not become functional, it also became clear that a new organization was required to accomplish the goal of enhanced regional cooperation in South East Asia. ASA got dissolved in 1962, but it became a precedent for future integration exercises that occurred later in the region.

Before ASEAN, there had been another effort by Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia to establish a regional organization under the name of MAPHILINDO (MA from Malaysia, Phil from Philippines and Indo from Indonesia). Once again the cooperation was to be in socio-economic and cultural spheres. Moreover, it was assumed that this organization would bring an end to the conflicts between Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia. Patmanathan observed that MAPHILINDO failed because the member states prioritized their national interest at the cost of their regional interests (Patmanathan, 1980). A decisive blow according to Narine occurred only after

²A former country in SE Asia, consisting of the southern part of the Malay Peninsula and some adjacent islands (originally including Singapore), now forming the western part of the Federation of Malaysia and known as West Malaysia. The area was colonized by the Dutch, Portuguese, and the British, who eventually became dominant; the several Malay states federated under British control in 1896. The country became independent in 1957, the federation expanding into Malaysia in 1963.

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Malaya>

a month of the inception of the organization when Malaysian Federation was created (Narine, 2002). Indonesia did not recognize it on the grounds of British involvement in the creation. The Philippines also refused to recognize it because the disputed Sabah was made a part of the Federation. So the organization could not continue.

Internal Conflicts and Challenges

The circumstances under which ASEAN was created were quite peculiar. During the 1950s and 1960s, as an outcome of decolonization almost all the states of Southeast Asia gained independence. Ayoob noted that the newly created states of the Southeast Asian region faced several problems. The multi-ethnic population of the states of the region brought about lack of unity among them which resulted in ethnic problems, instability in the political field, as well as weak defense and security issues (Ayoob, 1995). The 1963 confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia aggravated the situation even further by adding into an environment of mistrust and uncertainty in the region that caused failure of all efforts for regional integration.

Those were the times when the South East Asian region faced the menace of instability, inter-state clashes, and underdevelopment along with all the other problems that were remnants of colonial legacy of manipulation and exploitation (Haque, 1988). Moreover as observed by Acharya the Southeast Asian states had already developed nationalisms even when the process of decolonization was still going on (Acharya, 2000). One of the major issues that emerged in the aftermath of decolonization was the rise of conflicts within the states of the region.

Malaya that had gained independence from the British colonials in 1957 was converted into a larger Federation of Malaysia when joined by Singapore in 1963 and Northern Borneo territories. According to Derek McDougall Indonesia viewed the new Federation as a part of neo-colonial efforts by the British to continue their influence in the region. (McDougall, 2007). As a result, Indonesia under the leadership of its first President, Sukarno, initiated an anti-Malaysia “Konfrontasi” meaning confrontation. It was an undeclared war waged by Indonesia against Malaysia, which was joined by the Commonwealth armies to defend it against military operations of Indonesia. It came to an end in 1965 when President Sukarno was overthrown (McDougall).

The new President Suharto with his ‘New Order’ began purging the communists in Indonesia on one hand, and strived to strengthen relationship with the non-communist states of the region on the other hand. The enhanced interest by the Indonesian leadership in forging close cooperation with the non-communist states hence became one important factor in paving the way for creation of ASEAN. Wey denoted konfrontasi and its aftermath, in the form of Indonesia’s attempt to show its good will towards Malaysia and the Philippines, as important agents in the creation of ASEAN (Wey, 2016). Narine also acknowledged that the grounds for cooperation through developing a regional integration organization were paved due to the fact that Indonesia had recently ended konfrontasi against Malaysia and wanted normalization of relations which proved to be an important factor in creation of ASEAN (Narine, 2008). The member states included Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. The founding members realized that ASEAN could be the most feasible way to strengthen bond between non-communist states and integrating Indonesia into regional affairs (McDougall, 2007).

The internal situation of the region was volatile and marked with conflict. The gaps though continued to exist between countries of South East Asia however the external threat factor was much more critical to be overlooked. The fear of spread of communism and foreign sponsored revolutionary movements proved to be the strongest of factors to bring the states of the region towards enhanced cooperation. Moreover the docile role adopted by the largest state, Indonesia, further paved the way for ASEAN to move on the road to success.

Bipolar World Order during the Cold War

Cold war era gave rise to many new phenomena in the world. In a situation where two super powers of the world, the US and the Soviet Union, were busy in strategizing and planning to compete and overpower each other, as noted by Kenneth Waltz, the World Order became a bipolar one (Waltz, 1979). There were allies of the US and there were satellites of the Soviet Union. The US as a leader of the capitalist bloc established security

based regional organizations on almost all the continents to prevent the spread of communism. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) are a few examples (Waltz). Soviet Union as noted by Deutsh made pacts like WARSAW Pact (Deutsh, 1995). The security organizations and alliances created by the super powers paved the way for creation of organizations for cooperation in other fields as well. Especially in the era where economics was becoming an important variable to determine power status of international actors, it became necessary to gain economic advancement through reaping the benefits of resources available in the neighborhood.

Moreover it was a time when political perspective of a state was being defined through its role and status in the international system. Therefore, to gain support regarding political standing also became a priority for the states of the world. Due to this, there was an unprecedented rise of regional organizations during and after the Cold War era in the developing part of the world to achieve cooperation in much diverse fields. ASEAN can also be safely assumed as one of several such organizations, which had learnt their lessons from the alliances, of which their respective member states had remained a part.

Unlike SEATO, ASEAN consisted of only South East Asian States. Moreover Indonesia, the powerhouse of the region, also joined and actively pursued the implementation of the ASEAN Charter. Narine argued that the change in government in Indonesia changed the country's perspective (Narine, 2002). Suharto's presidency after ending the Konfrontasi, transformed the external policies with a resolve to overcome the differences in favor of cooperation with its neighbors in the region (Narine). Willingness on part of the member countries of ASEAN region has been an important factor to bring it to the level that is witnessed today.

It was when Vietnam War was taking place with full might; that Japan, right in the neighborhood of Southeast Asia, emerged as a giant economic power. The struggling economies of the region felt threatened by the development. Moreover, the US was deeply involved in Vietnam so its presence and role had become quite a point of concern for other states of Southeast Asia. The region had already gone through several experiences of increased level of cooperation in terms of security, economy and cultural purposes. Therefore, the region was ready and the situation in the international as well as regional politics was ripe for the Southeast Asian countries to give rise to a new organization which was more focused regarding regional economic integration and more pragmatic in its approach.

The external threat factor also played a very important role in making ASEAN possible. McDougall noted that geo-political importance of the Southeast Asian region had increased considerably in the bipolar Cold War world (McDougall, 2007). The contention between the two superpowers –the US and the Soviet Union was influencing the region already. Acharya identified that Southeast Asia was exposed to the threat of spread of Communism in the region. The Southeast Asian leaders realized that to prevent the inflow of communism could be possible through eradication of poverty (Acharya, 2000). Ellen. L. Frost argued that in the backdrop of communist threat in the Southeast Asian region ASEAN members did not consider regionalism to be only limited to generate regional identity rather they perceived it more as a means for state building (Frost, 2008).

The Southeast Asian region was heavily conflict ridden, with several failed attempts at regional cooperation and unity. Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos had already come under the communist influence. There was extreme fear of Thailand becoming next in the row. Moreover, the rise of anti-communist Suharto in Indonesia further facilitated the regional economic integration. Tongzon in "The Economies of Southeast Asia" offered a very apt and comprehensive view about the requirement of the Southeast Asian nations to forge closer cooperative relations. He observed that the developments in the region with stronger threat of communist influx, the rise of communist regime in Indo-China and desire of the Western powers to withdraw from the region, created an environment where the states of the region felt the need to enhance economic cooperation along with collaboration in security areas so as to dispel the external threat (Tongzon, 2002).

ASEAN's major objectives included the fast paced economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to promote regional peace and stability. It was agreed upon to prioritize economic growth and development as main objectives, along with increased cooperation in social and cultural

fields. ASEAN also believe in protecting mutual interest and creating regional solidarity as well as promoting regional peace and stability (Keling, Som, Saludin, Shuib, & Ajis, 2011).

The first major breakthrough on ASEAN's credit was considered to be the creation of Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in November 1971. The members agreed to maintain the region as neutral as well as free from all kinds of external influences (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration, 1971). It was then that the practices of consultations and consensus building begun. It was established that no ASEAN State would act alone on behalf of the region without consulting other member states. The declaration was aimed at establishing the neutrality of ASEAN region during the Cold War era which was marked with alliance system by the US and the Soviet Union in order to increase influence in the region.

On February 24, 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) was concluded to deal with several conflicts and disputes that the region faced internally and to consolidate the basis of neutrality in the region (Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, 1976). The treaty was concluded at a time when Vietnam War was going on and was aimed at minimizing the role of the US and Soviet Union in the region. The signing of ASEAN Concord Agreement can be rightly termed as one of most important accomplishments of the ASEAN Summit in Bali which enhanced the cooperation of member states in the field of security.

As far as cooperation in economic and other fields was concerned, many activities had already started, ranging from reports by several committees on commerce, industry, agriculture, tourism, transport and telecommunications to trade fairs, harmonization of trade statistics and industrial complementation. In 1974 the Kansu Report was formally published as a result of a study commissioned by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers and conducted by the UN under leadership of Professor G. Kansu. This report recommended liberalization of trade in a gradual manner addressing tariff of each product separately while in case of large industrial products, a complete package deal was recommended. It also made recommendations to forge financial cooperation between ASEAN members (Hill & Menon, 2010). Kansu report was broadly accepted and its notions of reciprocal policies and actions and joint industrial ventures was welcomed.

Another major development took place in ASEAN's first Summit at Bali in February 1976 where it was decided to take formal measures for cooperation among states of the region. These included ASEAN Preferential Trade Agreement (APTA), to promote trade within ASEAN member states; the ASEAN Industrial Projects (AIPs), aimed at establishing in each member state a large scale intra-governmental project; the ASEAN Industrial Complementation (AIC), for attaining specialization in complementary products and the ASEAN Industrial Joint Ventures (AIJVs) to facilitate resource pooling.

These major developments towards regional integration were also a result of changed political scenario in the South East Asia. Vietnam was reunified in April 1975. Communism had penetrated the region through Cambodia and Lao PDR. Moreover ASEAN's presence in the UN, its stand point on issues like market access for labor intensive manufacturers, its engagement in dialogue with many countries and regions made it an important actor on international level.

ASEAN in the Unipolar World Order in the Post-Cold War era:

ASEAN grew stronger in the backdrop of emergence of a unipolar World Order after disintegration of the Soviet Union and end of Cold War. The newly emerged World Order with a single super power did not mean absence of external threat factor for ASEAN. The US emerged as a sole super power of the world, with little interest in the Asian continent (Narine, 2002). China on the contrary had been striving since 1970s to attain a major power status. The Southeast Asian states were becoming uncomfortable with China's growing economy and its growing influence in the South China Sea. ASEAN developed cooperative relations with China hoping that China's involvement in the regional setting would keep China peaceful towards it (Narine). Moreover it adopted several measures to strengthen the organization from within to be able to cope with any external threat as one unit.

There were regional as well as international realities that led to the increased enthusiasm of ASEAN states to make this organization an effective one. Indonesia, the biggest member state had become more cooperative with its other regional partners. Moreover on international level, other regional integration organizations like EU and NAFTA were making remarkable progresses. Within its neighborhood China was on its way to becoming an economic giant. These developments on regional and international level led ASEAN countries towards drastic steps in its membership as well as economic cooperation with a "renewed vigor" (Hill & Menon, 2010). ASEAN emerged as a norm setter by forging extensive economic and security cooperation with the other countries.

ASEAN evolved rapidly in the post-Cold War era with unipolar World Order. The Southeast Asian states were apprehensive of China's presence in the neighborhood with no other power in the region to keep check on its rapid growth. The external threat factor was enhanced due to loss of the US focus on the region and suspicions on Chinese intent. This led to enhanced integration efforts in ASEAN by forging cooperation between members as well as initiating relations as an entity with other states of the world.

ASEAN reinvented itself by creating new set ups such as Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in the unipolar world order. APEC in fact was a brain child of the Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke in 1989. APEC with the 21 Pacific Rim economies as members was aimed to promote free trade among the members ("Member Economies", n.d.). ASEAN, after the failure of the Uruguay Round developed the fear that European and North American trading counterparts might develop discriminatory policies towards Southeast Asian states (Acharya, 1997). ASEAN thus utilized the forum provided by APEC to strengthen its ties with Japan and the US. It in a way served the purpose of a continued economic cooperation because the two powers had stakes involved in APEC (Acharya). ASEAN took the central stage in APEC and incorporated the "ASEAN Way" into it. The commitments in APEC were on the voluntary basis ("About APEC", 2009). Moreover the decisions were also made after extensive dialogue on the basis of consensus ("How APEC Operates", 2009).

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) emerged in 1993 and its first official meeting was held in 1994. The creation of a security grouping was a lengthy and difficult matter because security of each and every state was a sensitive issue. Narine in his book "Explaining ASEAN" gave a detailed account of the inception and growth of the ARF (2002). Interestingly, he noted that the very concept to create Asia Pacific Security grouping emerged with the idea coined by the Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986. Narine elaborated that the proposal for multilateral regional security grouping was supported by the Australian foreign minister, Gareth Evans and Canadian Foreign Minister Joe Clark. The idea was not readily accepted by the ASEAN in the beginning keeping in view the diversity and complex security situation in Asia. Narine noted that as a result of active track II role played by the ASEAN-Institutes of Strategic Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) network finally ASEAN not only agreed in favor of a security grouping but rather it even took the central role in it. The objectives of ARF included the development of a process of productive dialogue mechanism and consultations on issues of vital importance of political and security nature. Moreover it also aimed to make substantial inputs in the process of 'confidence-building' and 'preventive diplomacy' in the Asia - Pacific region ("The ASEAN Regional Forum", 2005).

In the year 1997, Terms of Reference (TORs) were adopted that pledged to work in the direction of development of mechanisms for Preventive Diplomacy ("Terms of Reference", 2005; see also Acharya, 1997). However nothing concrete could be achieved in this regard. The membership of ARF stands at 27 along with ASEAN-10. Acharya noted change in the behaviors of the major powers of the world once ARF began its dialogue-based activities (Acharya, 1997). The US welcomed the creation of ARF although it was not in favor of a multilateral Asian-Pacific security grouping. Similarly, he added, that China also adopted quite a positive policy towards ARF.

ASEAN took a slow start but as soon as cold war ended and there was witnessed a change in the World Order, from bipolar rivalry to unipolar US hegemony, economic cooperation gained a new momentum with the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1992. The new development prioritized free trade among the regional members. A timetable was given to accomplish the goal of free trade in the region along with

introduction of “negative list” approach, according to which all tradable goods were to be added in AFTA unless “explicitly excluded” (Hill & Menon, 2010).

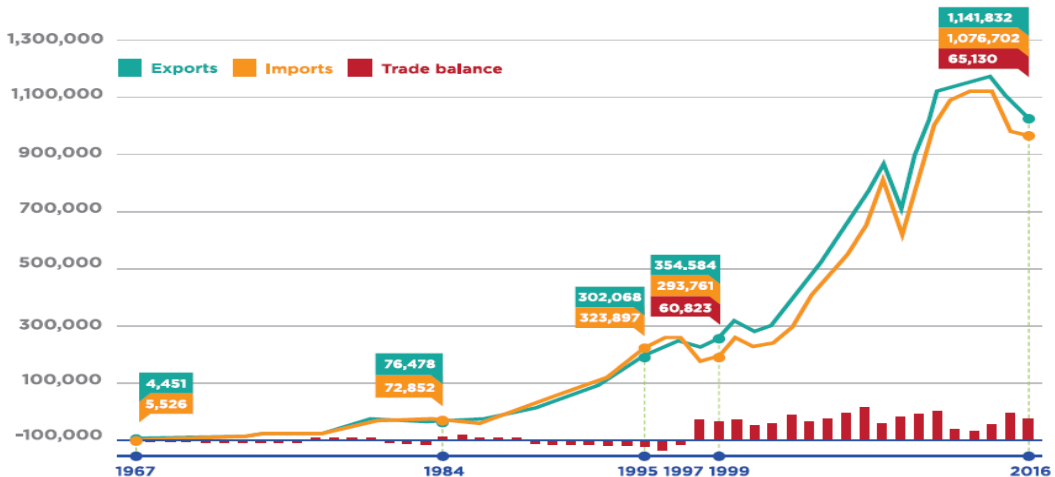
Another major achievement for ASEAN was in 1995 when the member states signed Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (TSANWFZ). The treaty was aimed at preventing the development and spread of nuclear weapons in the Southeast Asian region by obligating the signatories not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons. It also obligated the signatories, not to allow the use of their territories by the other countries to conduct nuclear tests or install nuclear weapons. The treaty came into force in 1997.

In the late 1990s the world order was increasingly becoming multipolar with the emergence of China, Japan and European Countries as major powers. ASEAN kept growing not only internally but externally as well with the inclusion of new member states. It admitted Vietnam into ASEAN. In 1997 Myanmar and Laos also joined it. It was followed by the accession of Cambodia in 1999.

ASEAN adopted vision 2020 on the occasion of 30th anniversary of ASEAN in 1997 in Kuala Lumpur. It was concluded that the goal for creation of ASEAN community would be achieved by 2020. It envisioned the countries of Southeast Asia becoming a group of nations which was “outward looking” as well as peaceful, stable and prosperous (Amador & Teodoro, 2015). The ASEAN vision included provisions regarding peace and stability in the region, strengthening economic integration between the members, keeping the region nuclear free zone, environment, sustainable development, cultural heritage etc (“ASEAN Vision 2020”, 1997). It also envisioned a pivotal role by ASEAN on international level. The vision was later formalized in the Bali Concord II in 2003.

The organization performed remarkably in the economic field as trade among the ASEAN member states increased rapidly. After a span of moderate increase in the trade of goods since its year of inception till 1995, there came a significant downfall during the financial crisis of 1990’s (“Celebrating ASEAN”, 2017). However, after 2001, the organization kept growing rapidly in terms of trade relations, as shown in figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: evolution of ASEAN imports and exports of goods (US\$million)



Source: ASEAN Secretariat.

Note: 1967-1983: ASEAN-5; 1984-1994: ASEAN-6; 1995-1996: ASEAN-7; 1997-1998: ASEAN-9; 1999-2016: ASEAN-10. (“Celebrating ASEAN”).

Southeast Asia became an area of interest for China which extended several cooperative deals in economic as well as diplomatic areas. The US lost its interest in the region. Kishore Mahbubani, a diplomat from Singapore predicted the decrease in US power in the region. (Mahbubani, 2009). He also predicted that US would be replaced by an ‘Asia-centric’ regional order with ASEAN at its center. Meanwhile China showed its

interest in the ASEAN region by attending all the meetings of ASEAN and building positive image by declaring its interest in Asian economic integration- an area ASEAN was most interested in.

Conclusion

ASEAN established itself as a successful regional organization in a very short span of time. It was created during the Cold War era of bipolarity when Southeast Asia was passing through the decolonization phase. The region was filled with internal conflict and problems between the states. The role of the largest state in Southeast Asia, Indonesia was one of confrontation towards Malaysia, which was created through the British annexure of Northern Borneo Islands thus increasing its landmass extensively. Indonesia perceived Malaysia as a threat and refusing to recognize the establishment it began Konfrontasi against it. The other Southeast Asian states faced conflicts of their own especially Singapore after getting separated from Malaysia in 1963, and Malaysia-Philippines conflict over claims of Sabah. Indonesia left its konfrontasi only after the regime change when an anti-communist Suharto became the President through coup d'état against Sukarno. The Southeast Asian leaders, in the light of the imminent threat of communism, which had already reached its doorsteps through Vietnam, chose to adopt regional cooperation and cohesiveness as a tool to eliminate poverty and conflict- the two inviting factors for communist revolution. ASEAN was conceived and created in the backdrop of the external threat posed by the bipolar World Order during the Cold War era.

In the post-Cold War era, the ASEAN members viewed rise of China as an emerging threat due to its status as a major economic and political power. Moreover, the US changed its policies in the world which became unipolar with the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Asia which was the focus of its attention during the Cold War era, because of its potential to be a breeding ground for communist revolution, lost its significance in the absence of a second major power to influence the region. The external threat increased for ASEAN states in these circumstances with apprehensions towards Chinese ambitions and the absence of any other power in the region to counter the Chinese unchecked increase in power. In the wake of these developments ASEAN further enhanced its internal cooperation through formalization of free trade among the members. Moreover, it emerged as a major non-state actor in Asia-Pacific with the creation of APEC and ARF as a central force. ASEAN adopted the vision to become one Community after its expansion to the other Southeast Asian states to extend its area of influence even further and launched ASEAN Economic Community in December 2015 successfully.

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