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moting the serious long-term changes required to meet what many experts consider imminent environmental collapse.

India's environmental movement has the advantages of Gandhian religion, strong links to native cultural ecomanagement practices, an excellent intellectual and political infrastructure, and multiple points of access to national and local government. But its sophistication and strength is dissipated by a corrupt and bureaucratically tangled government, by a declining economy, and by an ecological and population crisis that surpasses known techniques of environmental repair and management. The movement, far from being a vanguard, is fighting a rearguard action for cultural and ecological survival.

-Günay Değer Asya Uluslar Birliği

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UNDERSTANDING ASEAN

Benefits and Raison d'Etre

_____ Bilson Kurus

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is frequently cited as a shining example of Third World cooperation. Established in 1967, its publicly stated primary objective was to foster intra-ASEAN economic cooperation. However, a closer examination of its performance over the past quarter of a century indicates that ASEAN has been far more successful in the diplomatic and political arena than on the economic cooperation front. The experience suggests that the commitment of the member states has been sustained by benefits and advantages that ASEAN provides beyond the confines of economic cooperation. Nevertheless, in the changing environment of the post-Cold War era, these beneficial factors may prove inadequate for the continued relevance and hence, maintenance, of ASEAN.

One scholar has observed that "international relations in Asia today, to a large extent, consist of a set of mirrors reflecting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations . . . the result is the 'ASEANization' of Asian regional cooperation."¹ This indicates that ASEAN has come a long way since its uncertain beginning in 1967, underlining not only the influential role that it now occupies in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific region but also its staying power as a regional organization. Yet, considering the lackluster performance of ASEAN to date in pursuing its primary and publicly stated objective of fostering intra-ASEAN economic cooperation, such an assessment is obviously not inspired by performance in the economic sphere. In fact, the ASEAN experience strongly suggests that the commitment of the member states to the continued maintenance of ASEAN has less to do with its organizational performance on the eco-

_____ Bilson Kurus was Instructor in the Department of Government and International Studies, University of South Carolina, Columbia, when this article was written.

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1. Michael Haas, *The Asian Way to Peace: A Story of Regional Cooperation* (New York: Praeger, 1989), p. 282.

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During the latter half of the sixteenth century the revered *gossain* (teacher, saint) and Assamese culture hero Shankara Deva inspired a popular Vaishnavite movement that sought to reform the esoteric practices of Tantric Hinduism and to limit the prerogatives of the brahmins attached to the Ahom court. The Ahom came to sponsor an extensive network of Vaishnavite monasteries, whose monks played an important role in the reclamation of wastelands for wet-rice cultivation throughout the Brahmaputra Valley. Because of its repudiation of caste privilege, Shankara Deva's Vaishnavism appealed to the broad tribal base on which the Ahom had erected their state. From 1769, disaffected tribals under the leadership of the Moamaria Gossain took part in a series of uprisings against Ahom rule that devastated upper Assam. At the request of king Gaurinath Singh (r. 1778-1795), the governor-general of British India dispatched a mission to Rangpur, the Ahom capital, which restored peace to the kingdom. Civil strife persisted, however, and in 1817 the Burmese took advantage of dissensions within the Ahom nobility and overran the Brahmaputra Valley. Fearing incursions on their own territory, the British drove the Burmese from the Brahmaputra Valley and, under the conditions of the treaty of Yandabo concluded with the Burmese in 1826, annexed the Ahom kingdom. In 1838, all of northeast India became part of the Bengal Presidency.

Rapid steps were then undertaken to develop the region for agricultural and commercial revenues. The British dismantled the Ahom ruling structure, made Bengali the official language, and staffed administrative and professional positions with educated Bengali Hindus. Coal, limestone, and iron mines were opened and the government offered incentives to European entrepreneurs to start plantations for the production of rubber, chinchona (from which quinine is derived), hemp, jute, and, most importantly, tea. Because the native population of Assam was ill disposed to plantation labor, the British were forced to develop an extensive system of contract labor that recruited impoverished tribals from southern Bihar. By the turn of the century more than one-half million of these "coolies" were employed on 700 plantations producing 145 million pounds of tea annually. [See Tea in India and Sri Lanka.]

Early in the nineteenth century the government of India made vast tracts of land available to predominantly Muslim farmers from the provinces of eastern Bengal for settlement and cultivation. Nepalis were employed as dairy herders and similarly en-

couraged to colonize new lands. The subsequent migration of Indian traders, merchants, and small-scale industrialists, such as Marwaris and Sikhs, stimulated capital development in Assam and strengthened its ties to India. This enormous influx of migrants—Assam has been the fastest-growing region of the subcontinent throughout the twentieth century—transformed the ethnic composition of the state and gradually diminished the political and economic prerogatives of the native Assamese. As a result, ethnicity and migration have become prominent issues in Assamese politics. [See also Marwaris.]

Following Indian independence in 1947 the Assamese won control of their state parliament and launched a campaign to reassert the preeminence of Assamese culture in the region and improve employment opportunities for native Assamese. However, the Indian government's partitioning of former Assamese territories into the tribal states of Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya over the next twenty years was seen by Assamese leaders as a deliberate division of their constituency. Following the Pakistan civil war in 1971, nearly two million Bengali Muslim refugees migrated to Assam. Their settlement and their support of Indira Gandhi's Congress government further aggravated Assamese fears of Bengali cultural domination and central government ambitions to undermine Assamese regional autonomy. Since the 1970s, persistent disputes between the government and a number of Assamese political factions over the rights of these immigrants to citizenship and suffrage have led to some of India's worst communal violence since Partition.

[See also Adivasis; Nagaland; Meghalaya; Burma; Tantra; Vaishnavism; and Ahom.]

S. K. Bhuyan, *The Assamese Buranjis* (1933). A. Cantlie, *The Assamese* (1984). E. Gait, *The History of Assam* (1933). A. Guha, "The Medieval Economy of Assam," in *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, edited by T. Raychaudhuri and I. Habib (1983). M. Weiner, *The Sons of the Soil* (1978) and "The Political Economy of Assam's Anti-Immigrant Movement," *Population and Development Review* 9.2 (1983). RICHARD ENGLISH

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN), organization established by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, to maintain the internal stability of each of its members. Its sixth member, Brunei, joined in January 1984 after gaining independence from Great Britain.

At the time of the organization's inception, the

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
(ASEAN)

HISTORY :

ASEAN was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration. The highest authority of ASEAN is the Meeting of Heads of Government of member countries.

The first summit meeting was held in Bali, Indonesia in February 1976, during which, the five member governments signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord.

The second summit meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in August 1977.

The third summit meeting took place in Manila, the Philippines in December 1987. The member governments made the Manila Declaration and set up the ASEAN Plan of Action. Furthermore, the Protocol Amending the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia was also signed to enable countries outside the ASEAN region to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

AIMS

The Bangkok Declaration sets out the objectives of the Association as follows :

1. To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of South-East Asian Nations;
2. To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
3. To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields;
4. To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres;

rope.¹⁷ The rapid rise of living standards along with the fear of chaos as experienced in East Europe reduced the people's enthusiasm for massive antigovernment political mobilization. On the other hand, the Chinese authorities believe that China's economic achievements have made more countries realize the potential of its market and the importance of restoring and improving relations with Beijing. This was demonstrated by the lifting of economic and political sanctions against China by Western countries, the increasing number of visits to Beijing by foreign leaders, and the dramatic growth of foreign trade and investment in China. The success of economic reform, therefore, is regarded not only as the key to China's internal political stability and communist legitimacy but also as a determinant of its international position. The prospect of economic benefits, then, is believed to be the main reason why the Chinese leadership responded favorably to Seoul's *nordpolitik*.

Conclusion

This article has examined the external and internal factors that help explain the realization and timing of the Sino-South Korean normalization. China's decision to establish diplomatic relations with South Korea is the result of a long-run, cost-benefit calculation. Beijing's policy toward Seoul evolved according to the changing international environment encompassing the dynamics of the five triangular relationships. The domestic crisis of communist legitimacy has also influenced the focus of Chinese foreign policy.

The changing nature of world politics together with the practical requirements of China's economic reform have caused Chinese foreign policy to shift from national security concerns to economic prosperity, from ideological emphasis to pragmatic consideration, and from rigid foreign policy to flexible multidirectional policy. Viewed in the context of the dynamic interaction of the multiplicity of variables—political, strategic, and economic; external and internal; global and regional—the Sino-South Korean normalization emerges as both a well-timed and shrewd move on the part of Beijing and, perhaps, of Seoul as well.

17. Hwei-Ling Huo, "Patterns of Behavior in China's Foreign Policy," *Asian Survey*, March 1992, p. 267.

ASEAN-PRC POLITICAL AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Problems, Proposals, and Prospects

Lee Lai To

Relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the 1990s are on a much better footing than in recent decades. With the resumption of formal ties with Indonesia in August 1991 and the establishment of diplomatic ties with Singapore the following October and Brunei in September 1991, China now has official relations with all the ASEAN states. Numerous ASEAN and Chinese leaders, including heads of state and many officials, bureaucrats, business people, and tourists have visited each other's countries. Even the Tiananmen incident of 1989 did not adversely affect Sino-ASEAN relations; the response from the ASEAN states was muted and "rational," especially when compared with that of the West, and this has been greatly appreciated by Beijing in view of its many domestic and international problems in the aftermath of that event.¹

While China may face temporary setbacks in its Four Modernizations as a result of the Tiananmen incident, it is determined to continue with its reforms and opening to the outside world. In concert with its emphasis on a stable domestic and international environment for development, Beijing reiterates, among other things, the importance of having friendly neighboring states, including those in the ASEAN region. The adjustments China has made in the past few years have produced significant results, as

Lee Lai To is Acting Head, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore, and Vice-Chairman, Singapore Institute of International Affairs. An earlier version of this article was presented at the second ASEAN-PRC dialogue hosted by the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, October 1992, Beijing.

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1. An analysis of the ASEAN response to Tiananmen is in Lee Lai To, "Domestic Changes in China Since the 4 June Incident and Their Implications for Southeast Asia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 13:1 (June 1991), pp. 35-42.

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SUBREGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN ASEAN

*Military and Economic Imperatives
 and Political Obstacles*

Richard Stubbs

As the Cold War recedes and the superpower relationship that underpinned and ordered international interactions in so many parts of the world crumbles, region after region is having to confront the fallout from these global transformations and the disruptions they bring to existing patterns of relations. The ASEAN region—Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand—no less than any other area of the world has been greatly influenced by these events.

Indeed, some important trends in the region's security and economic environment have started to take shape, and it is the purpose of this analysis to outline these trends and to argue that they will produce strains within the ASEAN grouping. More particularly, it is argued that Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia—what may be called the emerging "core" states of ASEAN—will be drawn closer together by security and economic interests that they hold in common and that are markedly different from those of Thailand and the Philippines. Brunei's size severely limits the role it can play, but its strategic location and wealth is such that it could well become something akin to an associate member of the "core" group.

Yet, it will also be argued that the economic and security imperatives that appear to be pushing Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia toward a more integrated defense arrangement will be balanced by political factors

Richard Stubbs is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The author wishes to thank the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the McMaster University Arts Research Board for funding research on which this paper is based. The help of various government officials is also gratefully acknowledged as is the research assistance of Lim Kwan Sui.

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