

The Third Indochina War and the Rise of ASEAN's Diplomatic Coherence, 1979-1991

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on ASEAN's response to the Third Indochina War from 1979 to 1991. ASEAN came up with a comprehensive political solution to the conflict which involved a Vietnamese withdrawal via negotiations and UN supervised elections to restore the self-determination of the Cambodian people and acted with a newfound cohesiveness to achieve this. ASEAN's concerns were motivated by several factors including sovereignty violation, fear of Soviet/Communist expansionism, self-determination and the internal security of its member states of the time, which were the original five members, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Brunei which joined after gaining independence in 1984.

Whereas before, ASEAN existed merely as a "talking shop" without a coherent aim, its decision to respond to the Third Indochina War and the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia, ultimately resulted in ASEAN becoming a more coherent group by the war's end in 1991. This was because ASEAN became the driving force to keep the Khmer Rouge seated as Cambodia's representative government at the United Nations. This later included non-Communist Cambodian factions when it became the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, though the inclusion of the Khmer Rouge remained an obstacle in the peace process. ASEAN also played a leading role in organizing several important meetings and conferences to solve the war such as the 1981 International Conference on Kampuchea and the Jakarta Informal Meetings. At the same time, divisions between the ASEAN members became obvious during some of these meetings. While this meant that these initiatives were not sufficient to end the war, they were nevertheless beneficial in helping ASEAN establish itself on the international stage. Cold War studies regarding ASEAN have been few and far between and this study, with its unique usage of Bruneian and ASEAN Secretariat sources aims to fill in that gap.

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Abbreviations

ASA = Association of Southeast Asia

ASEAN = Association of Southeast Asian Nations

FEER = Far Eastern Economic Review

CGDK = Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea

EC = European Community

FRETELIN = Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente

FUNCINPEC = "Front uni national pour un Cambodge indépendant, neutre, pacifique, et coopératif"

ICK = International Conference on Kampuchea

JIM = Jakarta Informal Meeting

KPNLF = Khmer People's National Liberation Front

MCP = Malayan Communist Party

NAM = Non-Aligned Movement

PKI = Partai Komunis Indonesia

PRK = People's Republic of Kampuchea

SNC = Supreme National Council

TNA =The National Archives (in footnotes for repeated use of sources)

UN = United Nations

UNAMIC = United Nations Advanced Mission In Cambodia

UNGA = United Nations General Assembly

UNSC = United Nations Security Council

UNTAC = United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia

USA = United States of America

USSR = Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

ZOPFAN = Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

Introduction

The date is 17 February 1979, and the armed forces of the People's Republic of China have just entered Vietnam. For the first time since 1789, China and Vietnam are at war again, just four years after the fall of Saigon, at a time when the Vietnamese Communists had spent about three decades fighting against the French and the Americans for independence and unification. This was largely with Chinese aid, without which they would not have been able to defeat the United States¹. Now after having just been allies in a way that had fitted the typical communist vs non-communist narrative of the Cold War, the reality in Indochina between the two countries had drastically changed. What made this border clash between former allies so surprising is that at the height of the Cold War, Vietnam was now facing attacks from fellow Communist countries, China and Cambodia, an unusual occurrence for the time. What was more significant to note was the reaction of ASEAN, a political and economic union in Southeast Asia, which had recently reached a decade of existence after its formation in 1967 but had hardly done anything of political significance up to that point. ASEAN was now playing an active role in response to the conflict despite the fact that none of its member states had any military forces directly involved in the fighting between Vietnam, the Khmer Rouge and China in 1979.

The Third Indochina War was named as such because it is the third in a series of conflicts which follows both the First Indochina War from 1946 to 1954 and the Vietnam War, sometimes known as the Second Indochina War from 1955 to 1975. The outcome of the first two Indochinese Wars eventually led to Vietnamese independence and reunification after the end of the Vietnam War or Second Indochina War, with the fall of Saigon in 1975. The Third Indochina War can be divided into two separate but linked theatres; the Cambodian-Vietnamese conflict and Sino-Vietnamese conflict. Taking place from 1978 to 1991, with China and Cambodia's Khmer Rouge as allies fighting against Vietnam, which at that time allied itself with China's rival, the USSR, much of the conflict was between the Cambodians and Vietnamese. Although the Third Indochina War took place during the Cold War, instead of the Communist forces fighting against non-Communists, here, as mentioned before, all three countries

¹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*. (University of North Carolina Press, 2001) p.229.

involved were Communist states fighting each other, though with ASEAN's influence, the Cambodian resistance would later incorporate non-Communist factions as well.

In the aftermath of the Vietnam War, all three of the Indochinese countries ended up under Communist rule. This apparent triumph for the Communist side during the Cold War was a pyrrhic victory as Cambodia under the leadership of Pol Pot, still retained anti-Vietnamese animosity that had been present in pre-colonial Cambodian regimes, resulting in conflict between both countries². The Khmer Rouge launched attacks against villages and towns in Southern Vietnam in 1977 because Pol Pot was concerned that Vietnam aimed to create an Indochinese Federation consisting of the three countries. He also desired to take back lands which he believed belonged to Cambodia, an aim which had very little to do with promoting the Communist ideology. This was the immediate cause of the Third Indochina War.

Further tension was driven by the Sino-Soviet split between former allies, China, and the Soviet Union which began in the late 1950s. With the Vietnam War ongoing, both the Chinese and Soviets provided aid to the Vietnamese, seemingly in the name of Communist solidarity but actually in competition with one another in order to gain influence over Vietnam and to prove to the rest of the Communist world that they could be relied upon to support an ally and defend and advance global Communist revolution³. While American President Nixon's visit to China in 1972 led to the improvement in relations between the United States and China, North Vietnam's decision to form an alliance with the Soviet Union resulted in frustration for China, souring relations between North Vietnam and China. These events eventually culminated in the Third Indochina War which began after Vietnam invaded Cambodia in December 1978 in retaliation to Pol Pot's attacks. This was soon followed by China launching a brief invasion of Vietnam in February 1979 in response to Vietnam's actions against their Cambodian ally⁴. China eventually withdrew a month later, but the war continued throughout the decade due to the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia which did not end until the middle of 1989⁵. The war itself did

² Penny Edwards, *Cambodge*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2007), p.5.

³ Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War, Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972-79*, (Routledge, 2006), p.158.

⁴ Xiaoming Zhang, *Deng Xiaoping's Long War, The Military Conflict between China and Vietnam, 1979-1991*, (The University of North Carolina Press, 2015) p.90.

⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.21.

not officially end until the Paris Peace Agreements of 1991 because arrangements to reach a comprehensive political solution that ASEAN wanted such as the UN supervised elections between all Cambodian parties, national reconciliation which the Cambodian resistance leaders wanted and a UN peacekeeping force were not reached until the final peace agreements could be signed in Paris in October 1991⁶.

None of the ASEAN members were actually involved in the Third Indochina War when it broke out, but the conflict nevertheless prompted a response from the regional grouping due to the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia which occurred as a result of it. ASEAN choose to respond to the Third Indochina War due to a combination of concerns about the internal security of its member states and violations of the UN Charter principles of sovereignty and self-determination especially since Cambodia had been a UN member since 1953, more than ten years before the formation of ASEAN. This contrasts with previous Cold War events in Southeast Asia such as the Indonesian invasion of East Timor since East Timor was not a UN member at the time. In addition to this, there was a fear of Soviet/Communist expansion slightly influenced by the domino theory, which caused them to view the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia as a potential set up for attacks on Thailand and other states in the region. While this was preposterous, it needed to be understood in the general context of the situation in the region at that time where Communist insurgencies were still active in the ASEAN states. The thinking of the ASEAN member states was greatly influenced by the ongoing conflict in Indochina since the later stages of the Vietnam War which as mentioned before was linked to the various internal/domestic Communist threats in each of the ASEAN member states. Even the insurgencies themselves often varied in terms of intensity with some such as in Malaysia, being more threatening than others such as Singapore, which due to its urbanized nature, was practically non-existent. This also depended on geographic distance, especially for Thailand which shared a direct border with Cambodia. This was why the violation of Cambodian self-determination via the forced installation of the PRK by Vietnam to a fellow UN member like Cambodia, unlike the Portuguese colony of East Timor was particularly of great concern to ASEAN. Therefore, ASEAN felt the need to respond by supporting the

⁶ Mohammed Bolkihah, *Association*, (Brunei Press, 2013) p.94.

Khmer Rouge and later, including them in a coalition in 1982 which ASEAN would use to continue pressuring the Vietnamese to withdraw, therefore preventing a Vietnamese *fait accompli* in Cambodia.

On the other hand, ASEAN's response can also be explained by the association's desire to establish its preferred state of affairs in Southeast Asia, based on respect for those UN Charter principles of sovereignty and self-determination as mentioned before which had been broken by Vietnam due to its occupation of Cambodia. The precedent set by the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia was a problem from ASEAN's perspective because it violated these UN Charter principles and undermined regional stability from the ASEAN viewpoint. Regional stability here was important as one of the key goals of ASEAN since its formation. This was because this stability was being threatened by the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia which affected both ASEAN member state related security concerns of internal stability and other UN Charter related issues as well.

This dissertation also demonstrates that ASEAN's adherence to their preferred solution did however, end up prolonging the war since their inclusion of the Khmer Rouge as part of this solution indicated a refusal to take Vietnamese security concerns into account. This was because the Third Indochina War had been preceded by various attacks on Vietnamese troops by the Khmer Rouge in the months prior to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. This meant that Vietnam defined the Khmer Rouge as a threat to its own national security and could not accept a return of the Khmer Rouge to power because the Vietnamese government did not believe that the group would stop its aggressive military attacks towards the Vietnamese state if they returned to lead Cambodia after the war. Any solution which included the Khmer Rouge was a non-starter as far as the Vietnamese were concerned but paradoxically ASEAN felt a need to continue military pressure on them to withdraw. It is also important to note that a portion of the Cambodian population themselves did not wish to see a return to Khmer Rouge rule⁷. This complicated matters because only the Khmer Rouge had military forces which were of sufficient strength to fight Vietnam effectively, especially at the start of the conflict as they had been fighting the Vietnamese military, as the sitting Cambodian government known as Democratic Kampuchea at the

⁷ Eva Mysliwiec, *Punishing the Poor: The International Isolation of Kampuchea*, (Oxfam, 1988) p.15.

time of the Vietnamese invasion of their country in 1978. The Khmer Rouge's military strength made it difficult for ASEAN to discard them despite the concerns of Vietnam and a significant number of the Cambodian population and thus, a solution to the conflict would take longer to be reached.

Direct support for the Khmer Rouge from some ASEAN member states such as Thailand undermined ASEAN's peace efforts as well. As the Third Indochina War continued over the years, the inclusion and support for the Khmer Rouge was justified by the ASEAN member states in terms of the need to liberate Cambodia from the Vietnamese Occupation since the Khmer Rouge continued to be the strongest military faction within the Cambodian resistance even after 1982. This was especially true with regards to the other two Cambodian resistance groups, former Cambodian King Sihanouk's Front uni national pour un Cambodge indépendant, neutre, pacifique, et coopératif and former Cambodian Prime Minister Son Sann's Khmer People's National Liberation Front which were initially weaker and could not have challenged the Vietnamese Occupation by themselves. However, given Vietnam's own position of wanting a non-return of the Khmer Rouge, this made a solution very difficult to achieve as evidenced by the war continuing for more than a decade after 1979.

Ultimately it was not until Sihanouk himself opted to meet the Vietnamese backed Cambodian leader Hun Sen directly in 1987 that Vietnam and ASEAN as well as all four Cambodian factions on both sides agreed to meet at the negotiating table in the latter half of the decade. Although ASEAN and Sihanouk both distrusted the Khmer Rouge just as Vietnam did, the question of strategic priorities proved to be an obstacle to peace throughout the conflict as neither side was able to compromise for several years. In this sense, the coming new leaders, Gorbachev to power in the Soviet Union and Nguyen Van Linh in Vietnam proved important as this prompted signs of an incoming end to the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia, increasing chances of negotiations between both sides happening. ASEAN coherence alone was not sufficient to end the war since the association would not drop support for the Khmer Rouge without any chance of the Vietnamese Occupation ending and Gorbachev and Van Linh's changes meant that was more likely to happen.

A positive impact of the legacy of ASEAN's attempts to solve the Third Indochina War was that ASEAN achieved coherence through its key role in the eventual solution of the conflict through its promotion of a political solution via meetings and negotiations between the warring parties, instead of a military solution. ASEAN had taken such a stance since the very beginning as evidenced by ASEAN's role as the driving force behind the 1981 International Conference on Kampuchea in New York which established an initial framework for a solution. This was further built upon during later meetings organized or promoted by ASEAN such as the three Jakarta Informal Meetings in 1988, 1989 and 1990 and the Paris Peace Conferences of 1989 and 1991, the last of which officially ended the conflict with the key components that ASEAN wanted included as part of the solution. Differences in terms of the bilateral relations of the individual ASEAN member states with the warring parties of China, Vietnam and the four Cambodian factions also made solving the war difficult. Some such as Thailand and Singapore saw Vietnam as the biggest threat to regional security and stability while others such as Malaysia and Indonesia placed a greater emphasis on the threat posed by China. Further complicating matters was China's support for the Khmer Rouge, while ASEAN, committing to supporting the entire Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea without dropping the Khmer Rouge at first, did prioritize support for the two non-Communist factions but was unwilling to drop the Khmer Rouge from the coalition government without a Vietnamese withdrawal. Tensions between China and ASEAN, as well as between the Cambodian resistance factions was present during the war as well, and this also proved a hinderance in ASEAN's search for a solution without outside help from the international community. Ultimately a combination of these factors meant that ASEAN itself could not achieve an immediate solution to the conflict, though the significance of ASEAN's efforts could still be found in the framework for the eventual solution which came about due to the meetings that ASEAN encouraged.

In addition to this, ASEAN unity was also shown when they consistently stuck to their position as expressed in the UN resolution calling for a Vietnamese withdrawal which they backed from 1979 to 1988. Even when this resolution required modifications after the JIM meetings, ASEAN, as a whole still committed to the revised version of the UN resolution from 1989 to 1991 which acknowledged a non-return of the Khmer Rouge. This highlights evidence of ASEAN unity which remained until the

official ending of the conflict. Bilateral differences between some member states such as Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand did become more obvious at the JIM meetings, but ASEAN's continued adherence to their preferred comprehensive political solution of a Vietnamese withdrawal, UN supervised elections and a UN peacekeeping force and their constant united position at the UN served as evidence of a united ASEAN position based on this solution throughout the entire war, even though this was more loose in the final three years of the conflict. The fact that ASEAN received support from most of the international community at the UN every year from 1979 to 1991 encouraged them to display this united position despite the complications caused by the two main JIM meetings and bilateral differences of the ASEAN member states. I argue that the overall legacy of ASEAN's response to the Third Indochina War was ultimately positive as the war eventually resulted in ASEAN becoming a more coherent organization compared to the years before the war broke out. ASEAN had ultimately evolved from a taking shop to a more politically active association with influence in Southeast Asian politics largely due to the Third Indochina War.

With that being said however, the ASEAN member states were ultimately unable to solve the Third Indochina War by themselves. As mentioned before, ASEAN's inclusion of the Khmer Rouge who had started the war in the first place due to their attacks on the Vietnamese prior to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, had the effect of prolonging the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia due to the Vietnamese security concerns which came about as a result of Khmer Rouge aggression towards Vietnam. ASEAN's stated emphasis on diplomacy to end the conflict was thus, undermined by its continued support of the Khmer Rouge as part of the coalition. This can also be considered as evidence that despite its newfound coherence, ASEAN's search for peace in Cambodia was affected by differences regarding each individual state's policies towards Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge, which depended on each country's own security interests, also influenced by the Sino-Soviet Split.

Because of this, ASEAN itself realized that assistance from outside parties such as the two superpowers of the USA and USSR, along with China and the UN Security Council was also necessary to solve the conflict. This was especially true with regard to the Soviet Union since changes to the Soviet and Vietnamese position were still needed for the eventual solution of the conflict, along with the

involvement of countries outside of ASEAN, both to provide support to the resistance and to facilitate and convince Vietnam and the other warring parties to negotiate. Ultimately this meant that ASEAN's preferred solution of a Vietnamese withdrawal, UN supervised elections to restore Cambodian self-determination and a UN peacekeeping force was eventually achieved at the end of the war, but ASEAN required help from other parties to achieve this since they were not strong enough to do so on its own. The influence of the three major powers of the USA, USSR, China and the UN Security Council, and particularly its five permanent members, which included both superpowers mentioned before, was just as vital in ending the conflict as ASEAN's role was.

The approach in terms of chapter order is chronological, with each chapter being organized around the key events. Chapter Two will begin by providing a brief background of ASEAN and the Third Indochina War itself before focusing on the events from 1979 to 1981 leading to the first key event in ASEAN's steps to a comprehensive political solution, the 1981 International Conference on Kampuchea. It will argue that ASEAN, in the immediate aftermath, felt threatened by the violation of the sovereignty of a fellow Southeast Asian country, even though Cambodia was not an ASEAN member at the time. ASEAN was concerned at the precedent that the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia would cause, involving the armed overthrow of a government. Additionally, ASEAN which was made up of all the non-Communist countries of Southeast Asia at the time with the exception of Brunei which was still a British protectorate who would later join after achieving independence in 1984, feared the threat of Soviet and Communist expansion. In fact, the association valued the presence of Cambodia as a buffer to Vietnam, since ASEAN at that time was concerned about the "Domino Theory", which the interviewees cited as a threat to their countries. This was another factor which explains ASEAN's reaction to the Third Indochina War and the Vietnamese occupation that followed. Communist insurgencies in the ASEAN states were another issue as this caused concern for each state's internal security. In trying to deal with the conflict, ASEAN emphasized a Vietnamese withdrawal and became a driving force for an international conference which eventually took place in 1981, to solve the conflict. The 1981 Conference was ultimately unsuccessful as it did not immediately end the Third Indochina

War, though ASEAN continued to make use of the elements reached at that conference while also keeping Vietnam informed of them.

Chapter Three will concentrate on the first three years of the existence of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) from 1982 to 1984. ASEAN was the driving force behind the creation of the CGDK as well. Once the CGDK had been established, issues regarding the leadership and arming of the CGDK came into focus and ASEAN was forced to help the Cambodians deal with these. Needed to move the peace process forward, ASEAN eventually declared the 1983 Appeal for Kampuchean Independence in recognition of that fact that they had to adopt a conciliatory position to encourage the Vietnamese to negotiate with the Cambodian resistance. The 1981 Conference, 1983 ASEAN Appeal and attempts by ASEAN to form the CGDK led to greater coherence from ASEAN than any year before since ASEAN's formation in 1967. Despite this, it ultimately was not enough to end the conflict as the lack of guarantees to prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge meant that there were no changes in the Vietnamese position.

Chapter Four will highlight the period from 1985 to 1987 as the time in which the Soviets and the Vietnamese themselves adopted more conciliatory approaches to ASEAN largely influenced by Mikhail Gorbachev's Vladivostok Speech on 29 July 1986 which included the encouragement of reconciliation between the Chinese and Soviet governments. Vietnamese economic reforms known as Doi Moi which were introduced in the same year, convinced ASEAN that a resolution to the war was easier to achieve. ASEAN meanwhile, through its members Indonesia and Malaysia came up with various proposals for talks which were presented to Vietnam in 1987 by Indonesia as ASEAN's interlocutor, paving the way for the Jakarta Informal Meetings. This highlighted ASEAN's determination to search for new strategies to solve the conflict, which now seemed to have borne fruit thanks to Vietnam's acceptance of the proposal.

Finally, Chapter Five will focus on the three Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM) which took place in the years 1988 to 1990. According to the interviewees, these meetings were ASEAN's most important contribution to the peace process as they were said to lead up to the final Paris Peace Agreements which ended the war in 1991. This study will also point out that the JIM meetings were significant due to

inclusion of elements towards a solution that were carried over from the 1981 ICK which continued all the way to the last of the JIM meetings in September 1990, such as a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN-supervised elections between all four Cambodian parties. However, there were also a number of unresolved matters such as the role of the Khmer Rouge which undermined ASEAN solidarity due to certain members different stances on the matter. Overall, it has to be said that the involvement of outside parties was still necessary for the final solution to the conflict to be reached due to ASEAN's own limitations. Nonetheless, this can be seen as a positive, given the fact that ASEAN had originally wanted the UN Security Council's involvement and a wider international conference in order to reach their desired comprehensive political solution. Given that the eventual solution largely included the conditions that ASEAN had preferred since the 1981 ICK and the JIM meetings, ASEAN's role and the JIM meetings were nonetheless significant in solving the Third Indochina War, though they were not sufficient on their own to achieve this goal.

The study places ASEAN at the centre of its research, looking at the organization's diplomacy regarding the Third Indochina War which was transformative for the regional grouping which transformed from a taking shop to a major player in Southeast Asian affairs, providing most of its countries with a general set of aims to solve the conflict and establish a preferred status quo, centred around neutrality and the UN Charter, though each individual state's interests with regard to the war could vary as some were friendlier towards Vietnam such as Indonesia while others such as Singapore and Thailand were friendlier towards China and the deposed Khmer Rouge government. ASEAN's coherence thus, actually had the effect of prolonging the war due to these differences as concerns regarding the Khmer Rouge threat to Vietnamese security and Vietnam's violation of Cambodian sovereignty and self-determination had to be carefully balanced. Nevertheless, a single comprehensive political solution brought about by ASEAN was reached in the end, though with the differences mentioned in mind, the group could not do so on its own and needed help from other parties from outside the region to do so, most significantly from the UN Security Council itself.

Methodology:

This thesis analyses ASEAN's policy towards the Third Indochina War between China and Cambodia on one side, and Vietnam on the other between 1979 and 1991. Due to my language capabilities, being fluent in English and Malay, this study will focus on four ASEAN member states i.e. Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore which are Malay speaking countries with substantial archived documents written in both languages. With this usage of these sources, of which I am one of the first to consult. The dissertation demonstrates how Singapore and Indonesia played a leading role in ASEAN's response to the Third Indochina War, through key protagonists, foreign ministers, S Rajaratnam of Singapore and Ali Alatas of Indonesia. Sources from the Bruneian Ministry of Foreign Affairs are also something that needs to be bought in to give a more comprehensive picture of the narrative of ASEAN's response to the conflict, which is why it is also very relevant to include them in this research as very few previous researchers have used them. With this, this research will fill in the gaps of the study of the Third Indochina War and Brunei history by pointing out Brunei's role as well, which has also been ignored by prior scholars. Also, since this research primarily looks at the Third Indochina War through ASEAN's lens, the thesis itself will not be structured in strict Cold War terms, as ASEAN aimed for a solution which would disentangle Vietnam and Cambodia from the Cold War mindset and Sino-Soviet Split with both countries having more friendlier relations with ASEAN. This is important since ASEAN itself had its own vision for the region as a neutralized part of the world, not completely committed to any superpower. This allows ASEAN to be put in the centre of this narrative, unlike most previous works.

This study makes use of documents from various sources from within the United Kingdom, Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei. Firstly, files available at the British National Archives in London, pertaining to Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia will be studied. For ASEAN related information, the work also examines various documents and meeting reports from the ASEAN Standing Committee, ASEAN Ministerial Meetings and ASEAN Heads of Government Meetings which was made available at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia together with relevant files and sources which access was given to me at the ASEAN Department and East Asia Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei Darussalam. The authors mentioned previously have not used sources at the ASEAN Secretariat

or the Bruneian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They also have not studied sources at the Bruneian, Singaporean and Malaysian National Archives in their research, hence this study seeks to complement their work. The final argument as a result of the usage of these sources was that it shows that the topic of the Third Indochina War can be understood as key for how ASEAN became a more coherent organization and thus, the war is a key event in the making of the modern day ASEAN which exists today, while also establishing and maintaining its commitment to UN Charter principles in the region. ASEAN also took steps to establish its vision for neutrality, which also varied and was not completely reached by the time the Third Indochina War ended, though more progress had been made than ever before by then.

These sources all provide information regarding ASEAN's position which as mentioned before, are rarely granted to researchers, enabling me to produce a relatively comprehensive understanding of ASEAN's policies towards the war. However, for the purposes of this thesis, it should also be noted that access to ASEAN Secretariat sources was given to me with permission with the added requirement of anonymizing the sources accordingly when used. Since this was a condition attached by the ASEAN Secretariat, which came with my use of the sources in this study, some footnotes and citations are only permitted to disclose limited information. This is also true for certain Brunei Ministry of Foreign Affairs sources, as they are government files, also necessitating a level of anonymization when required.

Newspapers at the Bruneian National Archives together with documents available at the Singapore National Archives and Malaysian National Archives such as the *Borneo Bulletin* and *The New Straits Times* regarding ASEAN and Vietnam, have also been consulted, as well as copies of *The Straits Times* newspapers available for viewing at the Bedok Public Library in Singapore. Copies of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* at the University of Leeds, available as both physical copies and online via the University of Leeds Library website are used as well to address any lack of information in the primary sources being used. This has resulted in certain chapters relying more heavily on newspaper sources than others, as in some cases I have only been able to find and use secondary sources from newspapers such as *The New Straits Times* for these specific time periods. This is due to a number of factors such as inability to access specific places such as the Indonesian National Archives, inability to access some

sources even from those which I could, such as restricted files at the National Archives of Singapore and a lack of people to interview. Thus, overreliance on some sources was necessary for some parts of this thesis. It is also important to note here that in most cases the various archives that I was able to access did not permit me to take photographs so this has meant that some citations in this thesis from the Malaysian archives will be limited while attempting to adhere to the School of History's MHRA standard to the best of my ability.

Other secondary sources including books from various libraries are used in the study as well since as mentioned before there are significant limitations in obtaining restricted information from archives in Southeast Asia, such as the Indonesian and Singaporean archives in which case I was either only able to access making it necessary to draw upon the work of other historians and researchers, including those mentioned in the literature review since I have been unable to obtain such information from the primary sources which I have been able to consult.

In terms of interviews and oral histories, interviews with Lim Jock Seng, the former Brunei Second Minister of Foreign Affairs and former ASEAN Secretary General Ong Keng Yong are included, while former Singaporean Representative to the United Nations, Tommy Koh and Brunei former Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pengiran Osman Patra, who were present at the Jakarta Informal Meetings gave their consent to be interviewed online to clarify some issues in the study. The knowledge provided by these individuals who have directly been involved in ASEAN's peace process greatly contributes to a newer understanding of the Third Indochina War's impact on ASEAN which has not been done before especially since as the literature review has shown, comprehensive research on ASEAN's policy on the Third Indochina War is relatively rare and even those who did such as Shee Poon Kim and Evans and Rowley did not interview these individuals as they did not have access to them at the time, given the fact that their books came from a time in which the war was still ongoing and these individuals that I interviewed were still active in ASEAN's policymaking at the time. The usage of sources from these archives allows for a more multi-perspectival analyses of ASEAN's evolving posture than before, accounting for the viewpoints of a wider range of actors in the region. For example, sources from the Singaporean archives combined with British archival sources focused on

Singapore, while still confirming Bilveer Singh's finding that Singapore followed a more pro-American position, as was common in its foreign relations during the Cold War, also hint a more flexible position whereby the Singaporeans were willing to compromise this during ASEAN meetings throughout the formulation of a general ASEAN position, trying their to best to be more neutral, rather than being explicitly on the side of the United States. Another example is how the Malaysian sources, largely drawing on newspapers like *The New Straits Times* and *The Star*; due to this thesis's chronological structure, gives an idea of Malaysia's shifting position in between Singapore's and Indonesia's opposing positions were balanced out by Malaysia, and Brunei to a degree, influencing ASEAN initiatives such as the 1985 Proximity Talks Proposal which represented these opposing positions coming together through compromise with the other members to formulate the general ASEAN position towards the Third Indochina War.

Due to language limitations, financial constraints and difficulty in accessing the archives of other ASEAN states, unfortunately I have been unable to obtain access to any archival materials in Thailand and the Philippines which explains their absence from the content chapters. This is also in part, because in the case of Thailand, the Cold War has remained a sensitive topic of research and in her 2017 journal article "The Anniversary of a Massacre and the Death of a Monarch", Tyrell Haberkorn, a specialist in Thai history, covering one such event of that period, the Thammasat University Massacre, notes that archives in Thailand have remained closed to Cold War researchers⁸. The interviewees also mentioned that in the case of the Philippines, the country was not really involved in the war due to its geographic distance from the states which were directly involved in the fighting during the conflict. In addition to this, military historian Aaron Morris has pointed out that during that time, the country was dealing with two separate insurgencies from the Filipino Communists and Moro separatists, focusing the Filipino Government's attention elsewhere⁹. Nevertheless, I have used the sources above as mentioned including those from the ASEAN Secretariat itself, anonymised accordingly, to provide insight into their

⁸ Tyrell Haberkorn, 'The Anniversary of a Massacre and the Death of a Monarch', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 76.2 (2017), pp.269-281 (p.275) doi: 10.1017/S0021911817000018.

⁹ Aaron Morris, *Counterinsurgency in Paradise: Seven Decades of Civil War in the Philippines*, (Helion and Company Limited, 2016), p.17.

respective roles in the search for a solution, providing the most complete account of ASEAN's response to the conflict as possible. Language limitations have also played a part in me not being able to a large number of Vietnamese and Cambodian sources and thus, some information which is only possible to obtain from those sources such as Vietnamese and Cambodian primary sources regarding the position of the Vietnamese government and that of the Vietnamese backed People's Republic of Kampuchea's perspective is unfortunately unavailable in this thesis. Because of this, I have had to use the secondary sources which were available to me to the best of my ability to provide as much accurate and comprehensive information to fill in the gaps as much as possible.

Chapter 1:

Literature Review: Historiography of the Third Indochina War

As the war was being waged, a vast amount of scholarship soon emerged giving different perspectives of the conflict. Literature on the Third Indochina War lacks the extensive coverage of the other two Indochina Wars. This was potentially because it did not fit into Vietnam's nation building narrative. The First and Second Indochina Wars proved integral to the making of the modern-day country of Vietnam while the Third Indochina War was instead centred around a divide in the Communist bloc expressed here between Vietnam and China, which was damaging for Vietnam due to its isolation. The available literature also does not go deeply into how the war affected Vietnam and Cambodia's relations with other countries.

From 1979 onwards, this scholarship can be divided into several different phases. Initially, with the conflict very much still ongoing, commentators, journalists and scholars largely interpreted the conflict through a Cold War lens. This first phase of the scholarship relied heavily on secondary sources such as newspapers. Given the fact that the Third Indochina War involved three Communist countries at war with each other, sources grouped into this phase can be seen as largely dated by today's standards, as many of them were written while the war was still ongoing and do not go into depth on certain topics due to the lack of archival materials available. This scholarship tended to view the conflict as a proxy war involving the three major players in the Cold War, the non-Communist USA, the Communist USSR and China, who began as a Soviet ally but who had become, by this point, an American ally. Thus, scholarship in this phase such as Shee Poon Kim's 1980 book, *The ASEAN's states relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam*, Peter Schrier's 1982 article, "The Indochina Conflict from the Perspective of Singapore" and King C Chen's 1987 book, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979, issues, decisions and implications* is prone to blaming Vietnam, who were Soviet allies as will be elaborated later.

In 1984, the release of books such as Micheal Vickery's *Cambodia* and Craig Etcheson's *The Rise and Demise of Democratic Kampuchea*, led to the emergence of another phase which will be referred to as

the “humanitarian” school of thought, popular in the 1980s and 1990s. This phase focused on the genocide carried out by Cambodia’s ruling Khmer Rouge government under their leader Pol Pot. Like the previous phase, books and articles focused on the humanitarian situation approached the conflict as a contemporary event in the beginning, though books in this phase continued to be written well after the war ended in 1991. Information during this phase was provided mostly by eyewitness accounts and interviews used by journalists such as Michael Vickery and Elizabeth Becker. The main limitation of the scholarship using this approach is that it places the Third Indochina War in the background, with the Khmer Rouge’s genocide overshadowing the war. Because of that, this phase can also be considered just as one-sided as the previous phase but in the opposite way, portraying Vietnam in a positive light, in contrast to the previous anti-Vietnamese “Cold War” phase.

More recently, from 1999 onwards, a newer group of scholars started to take advantage of the opening of archives in places such as the former Soviet Union and China to produce several newer works focusing on different aspects of the Third Indochina War. These scholars studied topics such as the war’s impact on Chinese society as well as how it impacted Vietnam’s strategic thinking. What this has resulted in is that greater understanding about the implications and ramifications of the Third Indochina War, which prior to 1999, did not enjoy the same amount of attention as the First Indochina War or the Vietnam War and less focus on the Cold War proxy narrative or humanitarian narrative. That being said, while there is much greater understanding of the Third Indochina War through these new areas of focus, there are still areas which are quite under-researched until today such as the lack of archival information from the archives of ASEAN and its members. This means that the viewpoint of these governments and peoples and their responses to the Third Indochina War have unfortunately not received much coverage in depth. As a result, the significance of the war on ASEAN have been understated. By bringing in information from sources from the ASEAN Secretariat, the Bruneian, Singaporean, Malaysian and even some sources for the British archives, this thesis will make more sense of the reaction of most of the other countries of Southeast Asian to the conflict. This dissertation will also address the full role of ASEAN in the conflict, which has been neglected since Kim’s 1980 work.

1. The Cold War Lens

With the Third Indochina War occurring during the Cold War, initially scholars tended to unsurprisingly produce work based on contemporary secondary sources which were fixated on the superpower competition between the USA and the USSR. Newspapers would inevitably be drawn into this trend while publishing their articles. As a result, several early sources viewed it from a typical Cold War angle, focusing on the tensions between the USA and the USSR and putting a lot of the blame on Vietnam, which is not necessarily a fair argument as evidenced by later schools or phases.

A good example of this tendency was in 1979 when in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of the war, John Funston, 1979 Parliamentary Political Science Fellow, Canberra, Australia, wrote the journal article “The Third Indochina War and Southeast Asia” in “*Contemporary Southeast Asia*”. The article provides an overview of the conditions after China’s attack on Vietnam, taking a contemporary approach to the topic, rather than a historical one. Funston states that ASEAN benefited due to a sense of newfound unity due to the common problem of refugees which had begun in the Vietnam War. Even as early as 1979, the idea of increased unity within ASEAN is noted shortly after the war broke out. Other writers such as Laura Southgate of Aston University in her 2015 article “ASEAN and the dynamics of resistance to sovereignty violation” would continue to agree with this portrayal with regards to the war’s significance for ASEAN. Funston concludes by suggesting that while ASEAN had moved closer to China, the door to improve relations with Vietnam was not yet closed. However, Funston’s article is lacking, and indicative of his era, as he only used sources from around that time such as issues of *Asiaweek* magazine. Nevertheless, the article does prove to be somewhat accurate whereby Funston’s statements of ASEAN benefiting from unity and continuing to move closer to China turned out to be true, as well as his mentioning of ASEAN leaving the door open to Vietnam. But this was largely dependent on each ASEAN member state.

The following year in 1980, Shee Poon Kim, a lecturer from the Department of Government and Public Administration at Nanyang University in Singapore published his work, *The ASEAN States Relations With The Socialist Republic of Vietnam*, which details the original ASEAN members relations with the newly unified Vietnam. Kim, a lecturer in public administration rather than history, approaches the topic

as a current event similar to Funston and focuses mostly on the original five ASEAN members, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. He mostly discusses about the association's relations with Vietnam up until the Third Indochina War where he highlights the fact that mostly Thailand, due to its geographical position and Singapore, due to its small size and ethnic composition, were largely opposed to Vietnam after the Third Indochina War. Meanwhile Malaysia and Indonesia were considered less hostile because Indonesia saw Vietnam as a potential barrier against Chinese expansionism¹⁰, a view that was shared by Funston¹¹. This shows that there were differing views within ASEAN on how to deal with Vietnam, though the war itself changed that as the association ended up adopting a tougher posture because of it.¹² This is a view also shared by Funston¹³. This is a significant similarity between both sources, as each takes note of the seemingly unified position of the association but also the differing views which existed between the member states with regards to their views on China or Vietnam being the bigger threat to their security. Both Funston and Kim also agree that the refugees were an issue with Funston citing this as a reason for increased unity within ASEAN¹⁴.

Shee Poon Kim uses articles from sources such as newspapers including Singapore's *The Straits Times* from the 1970s and various academic articles from that period largely written by Singaporeans. This highlights a limitation in the type of sources he chooses to use, as this would mostly be of a Singaporean perspective. Both similarly conclude that cooperation with Vietnam could still potentially happen, and while this turned out to be true, it would not be so for quite a long time due to how the war would end up playing out. This is to say that the occupation of Cambodia by Vietnam made it impossible for any cooperation between Vietnam and ASEAN to occur for nearly an entire decade. This gives the impression that in the view of certain media such as Singaporean newspaper reporters and

¹⁰ Shee Poon Kim, *The ASEAN States Relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam*, (Chopmen, 1980) p.13.

¹¹ John Funston, 'The Third Indochina War and Southeast Asia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 1.3 (1979) pp.268-289, (p.280).

¹² Shee Poon Kim, *The ASEAN States Relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam*, (Chopmen, 1980) p.17.

¹³ John Funston, 'The Third Indochina War and Southeast Asia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 1.3 (1979) pp.268-289, (p.281).

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 289.

correspondents, Vietnam, due to its occupation of Cambodia was now seen as the greater threat compared to China.

It is worth pointing out that the Cambodian genocide being carried out by the Khmer Rouge is not given any attention at all by Kim or Funston with the general focus seeming to be on the political implications that the war had on the region. Given Funston and Kim's respective areas of study, this inattention is not surprising, but it does reflect the general trend in academia in the immediate aftermath being more about its political implications for the rest of Southeast Asia with implications on the country of Cambodia itself being secondary considerations, if at all.

Two years after Shee Poon Kim's work, Singapore's view of the Third Indochina War was expanded upon by Peter Schrier from the Institute of Asian Affairs, Hamburg with his article "The Indochina Conflict from the Perspective of Singapore", published in "*Contemporary Southeast Asia*" in September 1982. He agrees with Kim about Singapore's reasoning to oppose Vietnam being based on its ethnic composition as one of the factors. Although Singapore, like China was a Chinese majority country, the Singapore government needed to manage the country's ethnic composition and interplay of three different races, Malay, Chinese and Indian. In Schrier's analysis, a pro-China image was something for Singapore to avoid and this was related to a refusal by Singapore to deal with a large refugee problem which would have been an additional issue related to stability that the government did not want to deal with. Schrier adds that Singapore's commitment to maintaining ASEAN solidarity was also based on economic considerations. As the smallest ASEAN member state in terms of land area, Singapore's interest in a stable ASEAN was linked to its economic development. After leaving Malaysia in 1965, and thus losing access to the Malaysian states as its readily available market, the ASEAN countries became the easiest replacement market as they were all Singapore's immediate neighbours. This idea is supported in the article itself when Schrier writes that Singapore's "fortunes are inextricably intertwined with our neighbours", quoted from the country's foreign minister, Dhanabalan¹⁵.

¹⁵ Peter Schier, 'The Indochina Conflict from the Perspective of Singapore', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 4.2 (1982), pp.226-235 (p227).

Schrier also writes that Singapore condemned Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia as it was a "flagrant violation of the basic principles of the UN Charter."¹⁶ But Singapore's concern to maintain ASEAN's stability for economic reasons such as foreign investment and trade accessibility was more important. What also made the war particularly important to Singapore was that it was a threat to fellow ASEAN member Thailand due to Thailand's shared border with Cambodia, giving the Vietnamese potential access via a land route through the Thai-Cambodian border.¹⁷ Schrier nonetheless notes that this did not mean that Singapore did not view China as a threat because Lee Kuan Yew still believed that China could become one in the future, after the conflict¹⁸. Like Kim, Schrier proves what Singapore's national interests were at the time, opposing Vietnam's attack mostly for the sake of ASEAN solidarity to protect their economic interests in the region.

Schrier expands upon Kim's work by stating that the Singaporean government's preferences to end the conflict was for an independent, neutral and non-communist Cambodia though they considered the return of the Khmer Rouge as a "lesser of two evils" compared to the Vietnamese backed People's Republic of Kampuchea¹⁹. Like Kim, Schrier is highly reliant on Singapore-based sources, such as *The Straits Times* and interviews and contemporary statements made by Lee Kuan Yew and S. Rajaratnam. This tendency highlights the limited number of sources being used in the 1980s as Funston, Kim and Schrier each drew from a similar type of source to produce their research. They managed to formulate an understanding of the conflict as it happened and the immediate conditions right after the outbreak of the war. But their perspectives are comparatively limited as the lack of primary sources only enables the event to be seen through the eyes of the news media, which seem to be Cold War oriented, without a deeper look into the actual sentiments of the Vietnamese or Singaporean governments. My study will build on this by consulting archival sources to see how much of this is borne out.

The field of studies of the Third Indochina War, including ASEAN's policy towards the conflict took important steps forward with the publication of the book *Red Brotherhood of War* in 1984 by Grant

¹⁶ Peter Schier, 'The Indochina Conflict from the Perspective of Singapore', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 4.2 (1982), pp.226-235 (p228).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, p.232.

Evans, a lecturer in Sociology at the University of New South Wales, Sydney and Kelvin Rowley, a lecturer in social and political studies at Swinburne Institute of Technology, Melbourne. Their book also included a section on ASEAN where they described ASEAN's stance as trying to pressure Vietnam into withdrawing from Cambodia while assuring the Vietnamese they recognized their security interest in Cambodia²⁰. Like Funston, Kim and Schrier implied before, it can be said that ASEAN nations had found themselves in an "uneasy alliance with the USA and China" as a result of them opposing Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia²¹. This alliance was perhaps uneasy since as mentioned before by Funston and Schrier, ASEAN did not share a single unified view with regards to the question of China or Vietnam being a bigger threat to the association. In the book itself, Evans and Rowley acknowledge it as a work of contemporary history and mostly rely on sources such as the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, ending their account at a point in which Southeast Asia is still divided between ASEAN and the Indochinese bloc.

Arguably however, the most important work in this Cold War-influenced school of Third Indochina War literature comes from 1987 with King C Chen's book, *China's War with Vietnam*, because it is one of the earliest books devoted to the war itself, although it only focused on the conflict between Vietnam and China. King C Chen was a professor of Political Science at Rutgers University who specialized in Asian politics and international relations and mostly wrote his book from the Chinese perspective. This is shown by the structure of his book which he begins by talking about the framework of Beijing's foreign policy in chapter one before focusing on the issues in dispute between the two countries including the Sino-Soviet split and the Cambodia issue in chapter two and territorial disputes and Vietnam's treatment of its ethnic Chinese community in chapter three.

In terms of the sources he used, most of Chen's sources appear to come from either Chinese or English-language sources, though he does cite sources from Radio Hanoi and the Vietnam News Agency. Given the fact that the war would not be officially over until 1991, Chen's focus on the Sino-Vietnamese part of the Third Indochina War is understandable as it was very likely that access to Cambodian, Vietnamese

²⁰ Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, *Red Brotherhood at War: Indochina Since the Fall of Saigon*, (Thetford Press, 1984) p.215.

²¹ *Ibid*, p.210.

and Soviet sources were not readily available to him. He inferred that Vietnam wanted to dominate Cambodia by quoting some findings from one of Sihanouk's books, coming to the conclusion that "Vietnam's dream of a special relationship had come true²²" and "was being maintained by force."²³ While Chen uses one of Sihanouk's books allowed him to understand Sihanouk's point of view that Vietnam wanted to dominate Cambodia, this can still be considered as a one-sided way of looking at things given Sihanouk's own negative views of the Vietnamese.

Like Funston, Kim and Schrier, Chen has once again, shown a reliance on newspaper reports for his work, the only difference being based on American newspapers and one Thai newspaper. However, given the alliance between the USA, Thailand and Singapore, it can be said that the reports are likely to have similar viewpoints of hostility towards Vietnam. This reinforces the fact that he viewed the conflict through a typical Cold War perspective, as the sources used to write his book give the impression of a continuation of how the Vietnam War had been portrayed by the American government as part of the move to contain communism and the Third Indochina War is being seen in a similar light by Chen's analysis as a result of him using such sources. The dissertation will fill in this gap by bringing in archival sources from the ASEAN countries which will cover the war from ASEAN's lens, which Chen does not do despite his work coming after Kim and Evans and Rowley, who at very least, did so up to the point of the year of publication of their books while the Third Indochina War was ongoing. The Third Indochina War was more than just a Cold War conflict centred around the three major powers of the USA, USSR and China due to ASEAN's security concerns involving a combination of its fear of the Vietnamese Occupation and the Communist insurgencies that the ASEAN member states had to deal with and its UN Charter centric considerations in responding to the conflict as well. This differs from an ideological Communist vs non-Communist approach, typical of the Cold War, though the ASEAN members during the war, were all non-Communist states which were very apprehensive about Communism. It is also worth noting that most combatants of the Third Indochina War, with the exception of Sihanouk and Son Sann's factions were Communists fighting each other, which itself made

²² King C Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979, issues, decisions and implications*, (Hoover Institution Press, 1987 p.37.

²³ *Ibid*, p.38.

the war unique, even without ASEAN's involvement. In 1991, Micheal Haas, a professor of Political Science at the University of Hawaii, published the book *Genocide by Proxy*, with sections explaining how the conflict affected Cambodia, China, Vietnam and ASEAN. Although he and Schrier use similar sources, such as the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and sources which came from people such as Lee Kuan Yew, one difference is that Haas suggests the importance to Singapore of maintaining an alliance with the USA.²⁴ This is unlike Schrier's argument of Singapore not wanting to follow a "too independent or too one-sided policy."²⁵ Haas does not write in his book about Singapore having maximum and minimum objectives and instead, he outright states that Singapore took a hard line and established a strategic relationship with the United States.²⁶

Haas's referencing style, which includes some in text quotations but with only a few footnotes organized by section instead of being grouped together at the end and a list of references at the end of the book, makes it difficult for to understand which sources he used to come up with his analysis as he sometimes does not place an in text reference next to some of the events he has chosen to mention. This, along with his writing style and a few errors, such as his reference to the Singaporean politicians arrested during February 1963's Operation Coldstore as Malaysia's Malayan Communist Party rather than the Barisan Sosialis which was the name given to the Singaporean Communists contrast with that of Schrier's more thorough approach²⁷. Schrier uses statements by Singapore government officials such Lee Kuan Yew and Rajaratnam and makes no mention of Singapore's eagerness to maintain an alliance with the USA. Despite the differences, Haas does agree with Schrier's argument that economic considerations were Singapore's main concern in joining ASEAN²⁸.

Haas appears to hint at a new way of viewing the events. While still very much similar to Funston, Chen and Schrier in terms of the context of the events where China, Cambodia and Vietnam are again placed in the typical "Cold War" narrative, Haas does present an argument that Vietnam attacked in self-

²⁴ Michael Haas, *Genocide By Proxy: Cambodian Pawn on a Superpower Chessboard*: (Praeger, 1991) p.97.

²⁵Peter Schier, 'The Indochina Conflict from the Perspective of Singapore', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 4.2 (1982), pp.226-235 (p227).

²⁶Michael Haas, *Genocide By Proxy: Cambodian Pawn on a Superpower Chessboard*: (Praeger, 1991) p.174.

²⁷ Ibid, p.97.

²⁸ Ibid, p.60.

defence²⁹, as opposed to Chen's earlier argument of Vietnam trying to establish an Indochinese Federation.³⁰ Haas's conclusion suggests a new idea of an Asian solution to what he describes as an Asian problem, in this case being the war. What Haas meant by this is that ASEAN wanted to come up with the solution to the Third Indochina War by itself, without the involvement of the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR. In that regard, it is important to note that this source came out in 1991, the year Cold War ended with the dissolution of the USSR. Nonetheless, in many ways, this book is still a product of its time as in every section, Haas still places China, Cambodia and Vietnam in a similar "Cold War" context to Funston twelve years earlier. This is due to his similar use of journalistic sources such as the *Bangkok Post* and the *New York Times*. Writing after the war concluded, he surpasses the speculative conclusion that Chen, Funston and Schrier had. His idea of an "Asian way" in the conclusion makes it possible to suggest he was leaning towards a newer idea which slightly differed but still somewhat agreeing with the general "Cold War" framework of the scholars mentioned before.

This study will expand upon Haas's work and complement it with an archive-based research project to further explore how much of an ASEAN identity had been established by the members of the association by the time of the war's conclusion and how close they were to realizing the idea of an ASEAN solution to an ASEAN problem to resolve the conflict³¹. It takes advantage of newer sources from the ASEAN Secretariat and Bruneian, Singaporean and Malaysian archives which Haas did not have access to before. In addition to this, a number of interviews with prominent individuals involved in ASEAN during the Third Indochina War will also be included in the study, providing further information that Haas was not able to obtain.

Another significant source from this "Cold War" school is Leo Suryadinata's 1991 article, "Indonesia-Vietnam relations under Suharto". Suryadinata was a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science at the University of Singapore. The sources he used were articles, interviews, memoirs and newspapers, both Indonesian and from abroad such as Malaysia, Singapore and Japan. He writes that

²⁹ Michael Haas, *Genocide By Proxy: Cambodian Pawn on a Superpower Chessboard*: (Praeger, 1991), p.60.

³⁰ King C Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979, issues, decisions and implications*, (Hoover Institution Press, 1987) p.38.

³¹ Michael Haas, *Genocide By Proxy: Cambodian Pawn on a Superpower Chessboard*: (Praeger, 1991) p.97.

Indonesia seemed to view Vietnam with more positivity compared to Singapore as they saw Vietnam as a buffer against China³². Though ultimately, the Indonesians were disappointed when Vietnam refused to respond to their overtures³³. As for ASEAN on the other hand, they valued the leadership role and political stability the organization offered and thus, sided with ASEAN and their anti-Vietnamese stance on Cambodia³⁴. This shows that ASEAN seemed to be a higher priority for Indonesia compared to improving relations with Vietnam. This study aims to complement this article with my research on Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia as well as some findings on Indonesia's relations with Cambodia and China during this period.

Also worth pointing out are that Grant Evans and Kevin Rowley and John Funston are from Australia while Shee Poon Kim and Leo Suryadinata are based in Singapore, illustrating that several sources in this phase are produced from in and around the region which seemed to have an interest in the effects of the conflict, which would have a direct impact on those countries. The work by non-Singapore or Australia based scholars in this phase such as Schrier and Haas's work which included Singapore's concerns regarding the war further prove this point. A lot of these "Cold War" influenced sources appearing to be reacting to the outbreak of the Third Indochina War, by the countries such as Singapore and Australia who felt the war was of greatest concern to them as they were near Vietnam in terms of distance.

The main strength of this first school is that it gives a good idea of the political situation in Southeast Asia resulting from the Third Indochina War. Newspapers, as they report on contemporary events, do involve reporters asking questions to politicians and writing stories largely detailing the politics of the region they report on.

However, the main weakness of this phase is an over reliance on secondary sources such as newspaper articles. This results in not only limited overall understanding of the conflict but also a certain bias depending on the specific newspaper's political inclination. Newspapers being used such as King C

³² Leo Suryadinata, 'Indonesia-Vietnam Relations under Soeharto' 12.4 (1991) *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, pp.331-346, (p.342).

³³ *Ibid*, p.343.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

Chen's usage of the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, and *Bangkok Post* and Micheal Haas's reliance on the same newspaper companies would inevitably result in an anti-Soviet viewpoint given the USA and Thailand's view of the USSR at the time. Thus, the articles being produced would predictably follow this line of thinking without any input from primary sources which would have enabled a more in depth look at the conflict and perhaps more impartiality. These newspaper-based sources do not reveal much about ASEAN's policy making and also provide no information regarding Vietnam's side of the conflict and are only providing a limited view solely from the American Anti-Communist aligned bloc of the Cold War. This thesis focuses on ASEAN's response which, while still reflecting suspicions of the USSR, promotes a more conciliatory approach to the Communist states of Vietnam and Cambodia at that time, due to the certain ASEAN member states having friendly relations with either Vietnam or Cambodia.

While the first school may be dated by today's standards, it still plays an important role in this study since a number of works produced during this time have greatly influenced the topic of this thesis. This is especially true with regards to Shee Poon Kim's work and Micheal Haas's 1991 book as well. The Third Indochina War is undoubtedly a Cold War conflict due to its origins which can be found in the First Indochina War and the Vietnam War but what this study seeks to distinguish is that the Cold War is more multifaceted than what the first school of thought tends to commit to. What this means is that the Cold War, covering several decades of world history, is not simply a story of competition between the two superpowers of the United States and the Soviet Union, but that other historical narratives were taking place as well, each of which had their own significance to the time period. In this thesis's case, the claim being made is that the Cold War also largely influenced the development of ASEAN and Southeast Asia as a whole as evidenced by the Third Indochina War.

2. Focus On The Khmer Rouge And Genocide/Atrocities: Humanitarian Approach

Beginning in 1984, a Cambodia-centred humanitarian phase in the scholarship regarding the Third Indochina War was introduced. These sources, while still being written during the "Cold War", are more focused on the situation in Cambodia itself and have more to do with the conditions of the Cambodian people rather than the war against Communism. Like the previous "Cold War" phase, journalists are the

major writers of these books and journal articles, though now, several of them have set foot in Cambodia itself and carried out interviews with the locals, enabling the creation of this new “humanitarian” phase. While the earlier phase had treated the non-Communist Southeast Asian states such as Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia as potential targets of Vietnamese or Soviet aggression, in these accounts, it is the Cambodians who suffered under the Pol Pot regime who are treated as the victims. This is especially significant when considering that ASEAN from 1982 to 1991 eventually opted to take a more conciliatory approach to Vietnam by suggesting UN-supervised elections providing alternatives to the Khmer Rouge and creating a coalition government so that Sihanouk could replace Pol Pot as Cambodia’s head of state.

Two important sources from 1984 are Micheal Vickery’s *Cambodia* and Craig Etcheson’s *The rise and demise of Democratic Kampuchea* which highlights the humanitarian concern and literature mostly centred around Cambodia during the 1980s. These sources reflect a growing awareness of the humanitarian catastrophe which was becoming a more popular topic than the war itself, possibly due to the issue of human rights becoming very important at the time. For example, Etcheson, who was then a research associate with the Institute for Transnational Studies at the University of South California, covered the history of Cambodian communism in his book, giving the view that Vietnam’s invasion was because of “humanitarian considerations³⁵”, instead of Vietnamese imperialism. Meanwhile, Vickery’s book makes use of his interviews with various people living in the country at the time, which described their experiences in different parts of the country including their suffering under Khmer Rouge rule in their daily lives, instead of looking at politics or foreign relations.

Overall, Vickery appears to be sympathetic to the plight of the Cambodian people and not afraid to consider them worse off under the Khmer Rouge compared to the PRK that replaced them. This shows that certain scholars covering the Third Indochina War did not see Vietnam’s act of “sovereignty violation” as the main issue of concern. For example, in his first contact with Cambodian peasants in May 1980, Vickery asked, “general questions about life” and the peasants told him they preferred the

³⁵ Craig Etcheson, *The Rise and Demise of Democratic Kampuchea* (Westview, 1984), p.194.

PRK to the Khmer Rouge because of the personal freedom allowed and the absence of physical oppression³⁶. Probably due to his personal experience having witnessed the damage caused the Khmer Rouge, unlike most western media at that time, Vickery does not have any sort of anti-Vietnamese rhetoric. For example, when he investigated Stephen Heder's claim that the Vietnamese were stealing rice from the locals, he found this to be untrue and that the local Cambodians were "free to take what they wanted and there was enough to eat"³⁷. With this, we can see that Vickery's interviews enabled him to get a more complete picture of the situation in the country rather than relying on what others such as Heder, were telling him. Sources from the likes of John Funston did not pay much attention to the genocide or humanitarian aspect, instead choosing to focus on Vietnamese aggression in attacking and occupying Cambodia, which although as Schrier had pointed out was a violation of the UN Charter, was not in a completely negative light as shown by Vickery.

For scholars placed in the earlier Cold War influenced phase, such as Funston, the idea of preventing a Vietnamese hegemony in Indochina was more important than the genocide. Though given his usage of English language newspapers and printed media with a pro-western outlook such as *Asiaweek* and *Far Eastern Economic Review*, and his position as a "Parliamentary" Political Science Fellow, which suggests political influence in Funston's work, this is not surprising and shows the distinction between the two phases, with Vickery and others in the humanitarian phase, now more concerned with the Khmer Rouge atrocities instead of Cold War politics.

This humanitarian theme was continued in 1988 when Eva Mysliwicz wrote the book *Punishing The Poor*, complementing Vickery's work by focusing on conditions in Cambodia under the rule of the PRK government. The book, as an Oxfam publication, is more in the form of an appeal for peace in the country with recommendations for aid organizations to consider. The PRK itself is perhaps one of the least researched topics with regards to the Third Indochina War and it is interesting to note that Mysliwicz appears to see them as an improvement over the Khmer Rouge just as Vickery had done, pointing out the stability and improvement in the quality of life³⁸ brought about by improvements in

³⁶ Micheal Vickery, *Cambodia, 1975-1982*. (South End Press 1984), p.211.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p.220.

³⁸ Eva Mysliwicz, *Punishing the Poor: The International Isolation of Kampuchea*, (Oxfam, 1988) p.23.

agriculture which contributed to a better rice harvest in 1986³⁹; improvements in the private sector in the economy⁴⁰ and education which Eva writes to be the most significant revival under the PRK⁴¹ with the opening of higher educational institutions such as the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy which reopened in 1980.⁴² This seems to suggest that the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia could be viewed as positive to some degree, in Cambodian history rather than negative due to improvements compared to the poorer situation under the Khmer Rouge. Mysliwec complemented Vickery's work since Vickery did not cover the PRK, enabling a more in depth look at the situation in Cambodia after the PRK had replaced the Khmer Rouge.

Sources from the 1980s tend to be speculative, treating the war as a contemporary event and limited in scope. Another issue that is important to take note of is that the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge, rather than the war itself, appears to be the main concern of that decade, to the point that some writers such as Mysliwec seem to focus solely on the humanitarian situation in Cambodia, without any reference to Cold War affairs. Other matters such as the war's effects on Vietnam and China and its impact on the Cold War in general, may not have been possible in the 1980s due to the sensitive political climate at the time which might have prevented scholars from addressing the war itself further.

The trend of writers focusing on the humanitarian situation in Cambodia, instead of the Third Indochina War as a conflict, continues on from the 1980s to the 1990s. This is shown for example, when David P Chandler wrote his book *The Tragedy of Cambodian History* in 1991. An Associate Professor of History and Research Director at the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University, who had spent time as a Foreign Service Officer in Phnom Penh, Chandler writes what can best be described as a post-colonial Cambodian history from the end of the Second World War until the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in 1979. Chandler gives an understanding of the mindset of Pol Pot which included an emphasis on Cambodia's glorious past, the uniqueness of the Cambodian race and a supposed universal hatred for Vietnam while emphasis on the war itself is quite brief.⁴³ This hints that the roots of the

³⁹ Eva Mysliwec, *Punishing the Poor: The International Isolation of Kampuchea*, (Oxfam, 1988) p.28.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.35.

⁴¹ Ibid, p.38.

⁴² Ibid, p.40.

⁴³ David Chandler, *The Tragedy of Cambodian History* (Yale University Press, 1991) p.238.

conflict which were Pol Pot's feelings toward the Vietnamese which were based on factors which pre-date the Cold War, give the impression that the conflict can be understood as a continuation of a rivalry between countries which went back centuries, instead of just a Cold War proxy conflict. Chandler still devotes more attention to the atrocities in Cambodia itself showing that the humanitarian situation in Cambodia is still just as important as it had been in the 1980s.

Also, worth noting here is the 2007 book *Cambodge* by Penny Edwards. Like Chandler, Edwards provides an insight into Pol Pot's mindset. Penny Edwards's contribution to this topic chooses to place this idea in the French colonial period itself. Edwards's decision to start with the French "discovery" of Angkor Wat and their subsequent emphasis on that building as evidence of Cambodia's past greatness as the Khmer Empire, followed by French policies which encouraged the usage of Khmer as the national language and Buddhism as the "National Religion" in her subsequent chapters, she gives the impression that the French were largely responsible for the nationalist mindset that later leaders, including Pol Pot, who is referred to in the book by his previous name of Saloth Sar, would adopt. Edwards complements Chandler's work, making it possible to argue that the French may have paved the way for Pol Pot's hypernationalist mindset which unfortunately led to the genocide. However, it should be noted that it was Sihanouk and not Pol Pot who was Cambodia's first leader after gaining independence in 1953, so the genocide should not necessarily be considered inevitable once the French had left, since exposure to influences other than the French Colonial Education System, especially Mao Zedong's policies, are equally important in shaping Pol Pot's views as well.

This point is further supported when in 1998, the year of Pol Pot's death, Elizabeth Becker, a journalist who had covered Cambodia since 1973, wrote *When the war was over*. Becker included interviews from those who had suffered during the conflict. She also carried out interviews with every Cambodian leader of the past quarter century at the time. This enabled her to produce a detailed account of Cambodia's situation from the era of French colonialism to independence. This was followed by the civil war and the rise to power of the Khmer Rouge and their downfall and replacement by the PRK, concluding with the end of the war itself, going further than previous writers had done. Chandler, Haas and Becker were able to produce sources which are instructive about the Cambodian situation, with the

Third Indochina War itself covered at varying degrees. Becker made a significant contribution in her own right since her book appears to conclude the work started by Etcheson and Vickery.

In the 2000s, the dominant issue surrounding the Third Indochina War appears to be the genocide and the need for a tribunal for the Khmer Rouge to be held accountable for their crimes. Two good examples of this are the books, *Why did they kill, Cambodia in the shadow of genocide* from 2004 by Alexander Laban Hinton, a renowned expert on Genocide from Rutgers University and *After the killing fields, lessons from the Cambodian Genocide*, another work by Craig Etcheson, who is by this point, the principal founder of the Documentation Centre of Cambodia in Phenom Penh and former Program Manager and acting Director of the Cambodia Genocide Program at Yale University. This work was released the following year in 2005 and presented as a description of the centre's work.

Nonetheless in the 2000s there were still some books that generally focused on the Pol Pot regime. One such example is Ben Kiernan's *The Pol Pot Regime*, which has gone through three editions, with the latest published in 2008. He criticizes Vickery's lack of peasant sources⁴⁴ as well as David Chandler for ignoring ethnic minorities including ethnic Vietnamese⁴⁵. Kiernan states that only one of the interviewees Vickery presented in 1984's *Cambodia* was a peasant with the majority coming from male urban evacuees. Kiernan himself was able to interview these groups of people in order to provide a more extensive look at the conditions under the Pol Pot regime than ever before, improving on Vickery's and Chandler's respective work. His critique of Vickery and Chandler shows how greater access to resources such as a larger number of interviewees, made possible by being written several years after the war's end, helps to create a bigger and more comprehensive picture of the events. However, like many others within the humanitarian approach, he does not say much about the development of Cambodia's relations with ASEAN members including Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia which this study will cover to varying degrees throughout each chapter.

⁴⁴ Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime, Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge 1975-1979*, (Yale University Press 2008), p.165.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p.251.

The main advantage of the “humanitarian” phase is that it provides a more detailed look at the actual situation in Cambodia during the Third Indochina War. Pol Pot’s atrocities are given more prominence by this group of scholars, and this allows a more balanced analysis of the situation when combined with the sources in the previous “Cold War” phase. Eva Mysliwiec in *Punishing the Poor* even takes the step of pointing out the damage the internationally supported regime of the Khmer Rouge did to the country even though support for the Khmer Rouge persisted throughout the 1980s as the Vietnamese refused to withdraw from Cambodia. On the other hand, the main limitation of the “humanitarian” phase is that in comparison to the other two, it places too much emphasis on the Khmer Rouge atrocities and casts the Third Indochina War aside, even though the conflict itself was ongoing throughout the 1980s. As a result, these sources do not really give any indication as to the implications of their research on the war itself. It is still important to take note of them, however, as ASEAN and the rest of the international community’s acknowledgement of Khmer Rouge atrocities from 1983 onwards proved to be key in reaching a breakthrough after the initial response of the ASEAN member states had been overly focused on the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia without addressing Vietnam’s own concerns of the Khmer Rouge own hostile policies towards the Vietnamese.

While this school has the least amount of relevance to this thesis compared to the other two, it is still important to note nonetheless due to a need to present a more balanced view of the conflict. Vietnam’s own concerns need to be understood as well in finding the reasoning for why the Third Indochina War was very difficult to solve, given the fact that it continued for a decade despite ASEAN’s efforts. While this study is not really focusing on the Cambodian genocide, the importance of this second “humanitarian” school of thought regarding the Third Indochina War helps to provide an understanding of Vietnamese concerns about the Khmer Rouge. This is particularly significant when information from Eva’s *Punishing the Poor* is taken to account. A basis for a critique of ASEAN, China and their allies can be found due to the fact that the Khmer Rouge also deserved some blame for the war breaking out, not just due to their aggression against Vietnam prior to the 1978 invasion but also the suffering of the Cambodian population during their period of rule over the country as well.

3. Sources Since 1999: The New “Archive-Based” Phase

From 1999 onwards, a newer school of writers began to emerge, taking advantage of the opening of archives including the former Soviet archives as well as those found throughout China in order to produce newer works regarding the Third Indochina War, contributing to its increased popularity as a topic for research. That year saw perhaps one of the most important books on the Third Indochina War being written when Stephen J Morris, a visiting fellow at the John Hopkins University, wrote *Why Vietnam invaded Cambodia*. To an extent, this new phase returns to viewing the event as part of the larger Cold War context while including newer information and a focus on other aspects not researched in years before. Morris expands on King C Chen’s work in the sense he includes that Cambodian-Vietnamese conflict in his research, which Chen did not cover.

A major improvement of this is that Morris unlike Chen, has made use of the archives of the former Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This enables him to use Russian language sources which had not been available to Chen, allowing a more comprehensive and detailed account of the conflict. Apart from this, it is also important to note that Morris is also able to use sources in other languages such as French, further adding to a more complete picture, supplemented by information from Vietnamese defectors as well.

Overall, though, it does not appear that he has moved away from Chen’s belief that Vietnam had a desire to dominate Cambodia, as the sources he used show clearly. For example, information from defectors, told him that the Khmer Rouge felt the Vietnamese had abandoned them when they did not get all the aid they wanted as the Vietnamese felt they were not popular enough among the Cambodian people⁴⁶. Morris’s analysis being similar to Chen can further be highlighted by secret reports⁴⁷, such as one from Hoang Anh, a senior Vietnamese communist official, encouraging the Vietnamese communists to devote more attention to Cambodia in the aftermath of Lon Nol’s coup. Also further illustrating this

⁴⁶ Stephen J Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia, Political Culture and the Causes of the War*, (Stanford University Press, 1999) p.43.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p.48.

point, is Morris's usage of communist documents⁴⁸ from the Vietnamese which criticized the Khmer Rouge as "incapable" and wrote of a need for the Vietnamese to "strengthen the revolution" and sources from the Soviets such the statement by Soviet Ambassador to Vietnam at that time Ambassador Scherbakov's, that Vietnam's "narrowly nationalistic" approach was "too obvious" highlighting Vietnam's patronizing attitude⁴⁹. As a result, Morris concluded that the Khmer Rouge's resentment of their Vietnamese counterparts caused the rift which eventually led to the war. Other sources however, would lead to Morris's and Chen's view being questioned.

Another important book on the Third Indochina War from the 2000s is *The Third Indochina War, Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972-1979*, edited by Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge. What can be noted from this, is that while some articles still have focused on Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge regime, Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge also included chapters articles on other issues. Therefore, there is perhaps a beginning of a shift away, although not completely, from the Cambodia-centric works of the past to other areas of concern, both politically as well as economically, such as the Sino-Soviet Split, and its effects on the conflict and the occupation.

Released in 2006, this book is a collection of nine articles, written by several scholars, on various facets of the Third Indochina War. These include the likes of Christopher Goscha, with his article, "Vietnam, The Third Indochina War and the meltdown of Asian Internationalism", which emphasized on the breakdown of Communist solidarity from 1950 when the Soviets, the Chinese under Mao and Ho Chi Minh's Indochinese Communist Party worked together committed to an internationalist cause to spread Communism, to its breakdown. This was in the later stages of the Vietnam War when signs of tension began to appear between the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot and the Vietnamese Communists which coincided with the Sino-Soviet split. This led to the fracturing of the Communist movement in which the Third Indochina War ended up becoming one of the culminating events of this split. This shows that the Sino-Soviet split was a significant factor in the outbreak of the Third Indochina War. It resulted in the breakdown of Communist solidarity and the Khmer Rouge resentment of the Vietnamese

⁴⁸ Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War, Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972-79*, (Routledge, 2006), p.50.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.51.

Communists and would only worsen the situation in Indochina that was already complicated due to Sino-Soviet tensions.

Other articles include Chen Jian, with the article, “China, the Vietnam War and the Sino-American rapprochement, 1968-1973” which attempts to focus on one of the major events which he saw as an important cause of the eventual conflict between Vietnam and China. This was the beginning of a Sino-American alliance against the Soviets which was already happening in the final stages of the Vietnam War when Vietnam still fighting against the USA. This caused tensions between Vietnam and China. Like Goscha’s article, the Sino-Soviet split is once again highlighted as a major reason for the Third Indochina War. China’s reproachment with the USA, a major enemy of Vietnam and the USSR was seen as a Chinese betrayal of fellow Communist countries. These two articles give the impression that the Sino-Soviet split was perhaps the major factor leading to the international situation in which the Third Indochina War broke out.

Another notable article from the 2006 book is Sophie Quinn-Judge’s article, “Victory on the Battlefield, Isolation in Asia, Vietnam’s Cambodia decade, 1979-1989” which is quite similar to Goscha’s article. Sophie Quinn-Judge even quotes from Goscha’s work, though her focus is more on how Vietnam’s occupation of Cambodia resulted in isolation diplomatically and a negative effect on the country’s economy while also taking note of the effects of the Sino-Soviet split and Vietnam’s own deteriorating relations with Cambodia. This ultimately led to the Third Indochina War and how the Cold War itself shifted from conflict between Communists and Non-Communists narrative to a struggle between the USA, who China allied with on one side, and the USSR on the other. Sophie Quinn-Judge’s article then covers Gorbachev’s leadership and how it forced changes that ultimately led to the end of the Third Indochina War.

Gorbachev’s vision to help the USSR recover after economic stagnation in the 1970s, along with the burden that the alliance with Vietnam placed on the USSR, influenced the Vietnamese to abandon the economic ideas of Communism by implementing economic reforms known as Doi Moi in 1986. His policy of reproachment with China also influenced the Vietnamese to withdraw from Cambodia. Another article worth noting is Nguyen Vu Tung’s “Paris Agreement and Vietnam-ASEAN relations”

since it covers relations between both sides prior to the war, so this thesis complements it as well. Nguyen Vu Tung emphasizes that ideological differences between Vietnam and ASEAN prevented positive relations from being established between the two, which likely influenced relations between both sides once the Third Indochina War broke out later. Even in a work which covers multiple different facets of the Third Indochina War, Westad and Quinn-Judge's 2006 volume features a lack of coverage on ASEAN's role in the conflict, which this dissertation will cover instead. This shows that interest of the Cold War from ASEAN's perspective was not very significant even in 2006 which necessitates more work to cover ASEAN's role in the conflict. This is especially because of their leading role as a driving force behind key events like the 1981 International Conference and the formation of the Cambodian coalition government in 1982.

Another work which utilized the greater access to newer archives is Xiaoming Zhang's book *Deng Xiaoping's Long War*, written in 2015 which mostly told the story of the Third Indochina War from the Chinese perspective. With access to various Chinese archives such as the Sichuan and Yunnan provincial archives, he chooses to focus on the Sino-Vietnamese conflict just as King C Chen had done, but rarely ever mentioning the Cambodian-Vietnamese conflict. While this gives a limited point of view, it nonetheless opens up a new way of looking at how the Third Indochina War affected China in particular, even looking at Chinese literature, cinema and songs on the conflict. These are all aspects previous authors had not delved into very much. In fact, the previous year, Andrew Mertha's *Brothers in Arms, Chinese Aid to the Khmer Rouge* had similarly touched on newer aspects such as China's relations with the Khmer Rouge government, the aid they provided and their role in developing Cambodian trade during the Khmer Rouge era, more areas which had never been researched before. As for ASEAN's relations with China, this was not examined, further highlighting a shift away from the previous two schools which had dominated the preceding three decades with newer areas of research on the Third Indochina War.

The 2010s also saw books focusing on general Vietnamese history such as David Elliott's *Changing Worlds* in 2012 and Goscha's *A history of Modern Vietnam* in 2016 and books about the Cold War itself, most significantly Ang Cheng Guan's *Southeast Asia's Cold War, An Interpretive History* in 2018. What

these contributed to Third Indochina War literature is that in his thirteenth chapter, Goscha concludes by saying that Vietnam had in fact abandoned Communism, at least from an economic perspective during the Third Indochina War⁵⁰ through their adoption of the economic reforms such as Doi Moi in 1986⁵¹ and due to Gorbachev's decision to improve relations with China the same year, a change in foreign policy which became less focused on the Soviet bloc and more Asia-oriented.⁵²

Elliott elaborates on this, with his second and third chapters providing significant detail of the steps taken by the Vietnamese government under the leadership of Nguyen Van Linh and Vo Van Kiet to adopt Doi Moi while taking note of Vietnam's responses to the changes in the Eastern/Communist bloc by 1989, which in themselves would be important to ASEAN's policy towards the Third Indochina War as well since a changing of position by the Vietnamese was also necessary for ASEAN to eventually achieve the solution that they were aiming for⁵³.

Ang Cheng Guan's book also highlights the changes in the dynamics of Cold War politics around this time by pointing out Ralph Smith's words that ASEAN was now in a marriage of convenience with China against the Indochinese bloc⁵⁴. This is a good way to describe the last stages of the Cold War in Southeast Asia which Chen Jian had stated was effectively over at that point.⁵⁵ This was due to the Sino-Soviet Split and Third Indochina War dividing the former Communist allies who ended up in conflict with one another as the Soviets and Vietnamese found themselves fighting against China and Cambodia for the rest of the Cold War period. At that point, the only reason for the Cold War still considered to be ongoing is due to the continued superpower rivalry between the USA and USSR but with China now allying with the USA instead of the USSR. This meant that Communist solidarity in Southeast Asia had ended with the USSR and China no longer fighting alongside each other to spread Communism in the region.

⁵⁰ Christopher Goscha, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam*, (Penguin Books, 2016) p.442.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.437.

⁵² *Ibid*, p.440.

⁵³ D. W. Elliott, *Changing Worlds: Vietnam's Transition from Cold War to Globalization*. (Oxford University Press, 2012) p.48.

⁵⁴ Ang Cheng Guan, *Southeast Asia's Cold War, An Interpretive History*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2018) p.178.

⁵⁵ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*. (University of North Carolina Press, 2001) p.278.

Ang Chen Guan's book, which covers the Cold War in its entirety in the region, is a very comprehensive account which includes some information from works such as Chandler's *The Tragedy of Cambodian History*. It does not however cover Bruneian events such as the Brunei rebellion, regarded as an event which was important in the beginning of Konfrontasi between Malaysia and Indonesia which he does cover. However, with Brunei's role in the Cold War being possibly the most minor due to its small size, this is perhaps understandable. This study will aim to fill in some of the gaps regarding Brunei's role throughout the Third Indochina War, in which it largely followed ASEAN's lead, prioritizing ASEAN solidarity.

Also in 2012, Lee Jones, a lecturer in international relations at Queen Mary University of London wrote *ASEAN, Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia* which covered various case studies of ASEAN dealing with sovereignty violation in Cambodia, East Timor and Myanmar. This is a relevant source which concludes that ASEAN's response was conditioned by concerns regarding sovereignty violation and internal security. This dissertation complements his study and builds on it by arguing that two other factors, such as concerns over Soviet/Communist expansion and self-determination were also vital to understanding ASEAN's mindset regarding their reaction to the Third Indochina War. It also goes further into depth on individual events that Jones covered only briefly such as the ICK and the JIM meetings to provide a more comprehensive study of the ASEAN reaction to the conflict. This dissertation will also challenge his view of scepticism of ASEAN unity, by looking into ASEAN's position regarding the Third Indochina War with more depth using archival sources, proving ASEAN's greater coherence achieved during the conflict.

The following year, Ang Cheng Guan's book, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict, 1978-1991*, provided a look into Singapore's role in formulating the ASEAN position regarding the Third Indochina War. It provides a useful insight into all the key events and the rationale for why ASEAN and Singapore in particular, took the position that it did. This book is also a huge influence on this study, which will then complement it with the usage of Brunei based sources, as Ang did not mention Brunei very much in that book in comparison to the rest of the ASEAN states, despite the fact that Brunei was already an ASEAN member from 1984 onwards, a time period of which a lot is covered in his book.

With this, the dissertation serves to build upon his work, which is highly significant and informative. Where this thesis differs from Ang's book is how it will assess the JIM meetings, including a smaller but significant third JIM meeting that was brought to the author's attention in interviews with significant individuals from the Bruneian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This research draws on information from interviews from figures at the Bruneian and Singaporean Foreign Affairs Ministries. Ang's overall assessment of the JIM process was overall more negative⁵⁶ than even fellow Singaporean Tommy Koh who was one of the interviewees for this thesis and agreed that the JIM meetings were a success for ASEAN⁵⁷. This was due to the divisions that emerged between the ASEAN members and the Cambodian resistance factions at the first two JIM meetings⁵⁸. While this research agrees with Ang on the significance of ASEAN's role, it will instead argue that the JIM meetings should be seen in a positive light, after taking several factors into consideration, including the initial aim of it being a preparatory meeting for an international conference, which Ang himself noted⁵⁹. In that sense, this thesis agrees with the view of Tommy Koh than Ang Cheng Guan on the JIM meetings, which appear to be a commonly held view of ASEAN politicians, statesmen and diplomats who were involved in the Cambodian peace process at the time. Even though ASEAN had to hand over the issue to the UN Security Council by the end, this did not necessarily diminish their effectiveness as their preferred solution was taken into account by the UNSC.

Given the fact that this thesis covers an ASEAN-related topic, Singapore Management University's Wen Qing-Ngoei's 2017 Journal Article 'A Wide Anti-Communist Arc: Britain, ASEAN, and Nixon's Triangular Diplomacy' from *Diplomatic History* is relevant to mention here as well, given its claim that ASEAN became part of a pro-US anti-Communist arc, and given ZOPFAN's prominence in Qing-Ngoei's article where he claims it was influential in understanding Zhou Enlai's point of view during US-China normalization talks as well. This thesis will place emphasis on ZOPFAN given how important

⁵⁶ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.121.

⁵⁷ Tommy Koh, *The Tommy Koh Reader, Favorite Essays and Lectures*, (World Scientific Publishing, 2013) p.73.

⁵⁸ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.121.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.108.

it was in understanding ASEAN's perspective on the Third Indochina War as well, thus contributing to further understanding of the ZOPFAN Declaration as ASEAN dealt with the war throughout the 1980s, a decade after the time period that Qing-Ngoei covered in his article.

The latest significant contribution to the study of the Third Indochina War came in 2020 with Kosal Path's book *Vietnam's Strategic Thinking During the Third Indochina War*. Using new evidence from Vietnamese archives, Path comments on sources including Morris's 1999 study where he states that imperialist ambition was not necessarily the main reason for the war and that Vietnam's leaders in fact, reacted to events as they happened. Path also says that the occupation was not as inevitable as Morris seemed to make out by pointing out that in Westad's 2006 book, that the invasion was not based on ancient resentments or predicaments but resulted from political decisions made by leaders who were bound by what they saw as the changing realities of their time.⁶⁰ Like Kiernan, Path looks to improve on prior sources with newer information from Vietnamese archives. He concludes that the war itself was rational given Vietnam's need for aid from the Soviets during a financial crisis⁶¹.

Path presents the important reasons for the conflict being due to Vietnamese national security and economic concerns and disagrees with Chen and Morris's views of the Vietnamese wanting to establish their historical ambition of hegemony⁶². He even uses these documents to present fears on the Vietnamese side that China wanted to provoke a war between Vietnam and Cambodia, instead of Vietnam being the main instigator of the war.⁶³ Given the fact that he had access to more sources from Vietnamese archives than Chen, who relied more on Chinese sources, and more access than Morris did as well, this has enabled Path to explain the war more clearly from the Vietnamese perspective which pointed out Vietnamese security concerns about the Khmer Rouge as well. As a result, he appears to be less anti-Vietnamese and puts the blame just as much on China and the Khmer Rouge for starting the war as well. The only aspect lacking in his book is foreign relations which this study aims to cover, both

⁶⁰ Kosal Path, *Vietnam's strategic thinking during the Third Indochina War*, (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2020) p.53.

⁶¹ Ibid, p.204.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid, p60.

in terms of ASEAN's reaction to the war as a group, and Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia's bilateral relations with the combatants as well.

The third phase has made use of archival materials to a greater extent than the two that came before. This has resulted in newer information becoming available regarding many different features of the Third Indochina War not covered in both the previous "Cold War" phase and the "humanitarian situation" phase. The only disadvantage is that since the archival materials have only begun to be used, several gaps in the literature are still yet to be covered and this is where the case for an ASEAN archive-centred research on international relations can be made as this is one of the areas that has been under-researched amongst others. My study largely fits mostly into the third "archive-based" approach, with some influence from the first "Cold War" approach. This is because ASEAN is one of the newer subjects that has not been explored as a main topic by the previous authors, though the association has been mentioned by some of them, to varying degrees. While ASEAN had been in existence since 1967, a lot of the writers mentioned did not have any access to several primary sources consulted in this thesis. For the "Cold War" influenced school of thought, this is understandable since most of their work came out while the Third Indochina War was ongoing, and thus, ASEAN was still actively playing a role in trying to solve the conflict. This meant that writers working on the war at the time, were most probably unlikely to be granted access to materials covering such a politically sensitive event at the time so their exclusion of ASEAN from most of their work is understandable. On the other hand, the "archive-based" school has so far also focused on other aspects of the war and thus, this study contributes to that by focusing on the ASEAN perspective though it should be noted that the links of Ang Cheng Guan and Lee Jones have also provided an understanding of this to some extent with their work.

Nearly all of these sources did not cover ASEAN's position regarding the conflict, as none of them are ASEAN centric, though Shee Poon Kim, Grant Evans and Kevin Rowley, did take note of their eventual reactions at the war's outbreak, though given the fact that these are contemporary sources, this is understandable as the war was not over at the point in which these sources were written. This study is then intended to use more up to date sources such as archival materials and interviews to highlight ASEAN's success of their attempt to solve the Third Indochina War and all the steps they had taken to

achieve that goal. It intends to serve as a complement and continuation of some of the previous works mentioned, with a focus on ASEAN and its policies, while also analysing the policies of Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia towards the conflict, according to what new information the accessible sources include. The dissertation will cover ASEAN's reasoning for reacting to the conflict, their newfound coherence in responding to the war and their successes and shortcomings in doing so.

Of all the sources highlighted in this literature review, one of the most significant is Shee Poon Kim's *The ASEAN States Relations With The Socialist Republic of Vietnam*. This thesis improves on this work, firstly with the usage of primary sources that were not yet available to Kim at the time from the British and Malaysian national archives, as well as from the ASEAN Secretariat from Jakarta which Kim did not use. The interviews used in this research contribute to the improvements being made as well as they provide information that was not available in Kim's book.

Another source with a major influence on this research is Micheal Haas's *Genocide by Proxy* from 1991. Like Kim, Haas was reliant on journalistic sources such as the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, *Bangkok Post* and *New York Times*. Thus, this research also builds on Haas's work with the use of the sources that were able to be accessed. Of more importance here, however, is that this thesis also argues that through an ASEAN "comprehensive political solution" consisting of a Vietnamese withdrawal, UN supervised elections and a UN peacekeeping force, Haas's vision which was expressed in his book's conclusion of an Asian solution to an Asian problem was achieved to a degree since ASEAN's solution was ultimately reached at the end of the conflict. However, it should be noted that since ASEAN needed help from outside parties such as the UN Security Council, it can be argued that Haas was ultimately only partially correct since ASEAN's efforts alone were insufficient to achieve their comprehensive political solution, though the eventual peace agreements signed in 1991 did eventually incorporate ASEAN's demands.

Ang Cheng Guan's *Southeast Asia's Cold War, An Interpretive History* in 2018 and Lee Jones's *ASEAN, Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia* in 2012 are particularly important to this study. This thesis will also provide a few additional points to Ang and Jones's work by making the argument that ASEAN's reaction was due to a combination of factors, not just threats to the national security of the

ASEAN states as Lee Jones emphasized, but also concerns about violations of the UN Charter principles of self-determination, which the interviewees of this study also emphasized as important in understanding ASEAN's response, especially with the addition of Brunei's perspective in this study, which neither Jones nor Ang covered. While this study does not necessarily seek to disprove Lee Jones's claims, my analysis instead points out that a combination of both factors, of which he may not have found convincing, such as commitment to sovereignty, also need to be understood in addition to his point about security reasons, rather than excluding it as a factor. This means that while Jones's claim that ASEAN's prioritization of national security over commitment to sovereignty may be correct, UN Charter principles cannot be excluded as part of the reasoning for ASEAN's response to the conflict.

Lastly it is important to note the work of a more relatively recent author in Vu Minh Hoang's 2020 Cornell University PhD thesis on 'The Third Indochina War and the Making of Present-Day Southeast Asia. This thesis can be considered similar to Hoang's given the title of his work, but while Hoang focused more on the Vietnamese perspective, using sources available from Vietnam and the United States, this research will complement his work, by providing an alternative viewpoint, this time from ASEAN and its member states. This is particularly important since ASEAN and Vietnam's views regarding key events in the narrative could differ from one another, and thus this research could further add to the understanding of the Third Indochina War, by observing its effects on the other states of the region as shown by ASEAN's response.

Chapter 2

1979-1981: The International Conference On Kampuchea

Introduction

From its formation in 1967, ASEAN was still finding its feet as an association as the 1970s came to an end. How did ASEAN become a more coherent group? The Third Indochina War was an important event which resulted in ASEAN becoming a more cohesive international organization due to its response to the conflict. It is true that there has been a perception in the West that ASEAN was generally a pro-Western alliance as noted by sources at the British National Archives⁶⁴, which was unsurprising given the fact that the original members, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines were the majority of non-Communist states located in Southeast Asia at the time⁶⁵. This thesis will dispel this by proving that ASEAN's response highlights more balanced concerns which involved the search for more cordial relations between the ASEAN states and Communist Vietnam and Cambodia/Kampuchea. This is also centred around the fact that ASEAN's response was conditioned more by concerns about sovereignty violation and the internal security of its member states as opposed to any pro-American agenda. Initially the ASEAN members were disunited in their response though a number of factors such as sovereignty violation and apprehensions regarding Communism were shared by their member states. Eventually, ASEAN's response evolved from initial division to a growing consensus which ultimately contributed to a more coherent ASEAN by 1981, particularly because the conflict's threat to Thailand meant that ASEAN was able to decide on a preferred solution to the conflict by that year.

Although the ASEAN states reached a consensus on how they chose to respond to the conflict, there were differences between the ASEAN states which ended up prolonging the war. At times, their rigid adherence to their position and support for the Khmer Rouge made things difficult. Support for the

⁶⁴ The National Archives of the UK, Brunei country assessment paper, 22 April 1980 in FCO 58/1978 Brunei and the UN.

⁶⁵ ASEAN, *ASEAN The First 20 Years*, (ASEAN Secretariat), 1987 p.47.

Khmer Rouge was justified by several factors, including how each individual country perceived Vietnam and the two major Communist Powers, China and the USSR as a threat to its security. Certain events like the Kuantan Principle, an agreement reached specifically between the two ASEAN member states of Indonesia and Malaysia in 1980 also reflected these differences as for some, an accommodation with Vietnam would prevent Chinese expansion while for others, the Khmer Rouge provided a barrier against Vietnamese expansion. However, by 1981, when this chapter concludes, the ASEAN states had agreed on a comprehensive political solution and maintained their commitment to this until the end of the war. It is important to note that on 23 June 1980 a Vietnamese incursion into Cambodia prompted by the repatriation of Cambodian refugees back into the country, under suspicion they were Khmer Rouge members greatly helped ASEAN in this regard as well. This chapter will explain ASEAN reached this comprehensive political solution aiming to restore Cambodian independence and self-determination. This solution is the foundation for the modern-day Kingdom of Cambodia which would emerge after the war, since it largely established the present-day Cambodian government of a Constitutional Monarchy, albeit without the Khmer Rouge.

The International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) in New York was the first step in the successful comprehensive political solution which ASEAN desired. It is interesting to note that while some authors like Micheal Haas⁶⁶, have written about later meetings in the narrative, the 1981 ICK has not had as much coverage despite its significance. What was the significance of the ICK for ASEAN's development? While the ICK did not bring the war to an end, it helped ASEAN come into its own through ASEAN's role as the driving force for the ICK in the UN which later provided the basis for a coherent ASEAN policy.

This conference resulted in a framework for future negotiations to take place regarding solving the Third Indochina War. The ICK became the basis for future negotiations and meetings that ASEAN would organize, becoming internalized by ASEAN until the conflict's end. While the ICK was ultimately not enough to bring about an immediate end to the conflict, since some combatants refused

⁶⁶ Micheal Haas, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia 1989', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23.2 (1991), pp.42-53, doi: 10.1080/14672715.1991.10413150.

to attend, the agreement reached at its conclusion would have a lasting impact on ASEAN's solution since elements of the ICK were carried over to future events such as the 1988 and 1989 Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM) and the Paris Agreements of 1991 as evident in later chapters of the thesis. Ultimately, via its initiative in organizing such meetings, the war caused ASEAN to become a more cohesive organization. ASEAN had both its intense lobbying of UN member states, and united position at the UN during the Third Indochina War and its constant organizing of various meetings to bring the warring parties together to thank for this. It was also during this time that ASEAN took the first steps to encourage the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, which will be very important as will be shown in the next chapter.

The methodology used here primarily consists of official documents from the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, the British, Bruneian, Singaporean and Malaysian National Archives and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brunei, as well as content from various books and journal articles as secondary sources. A background of both ASEAN and the Third Indochina War will start the thesis before a section covering its initial response, centred around ASEAN's ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace Freedom and Neutrality) Declaration and the Kuantan Principle. It will then be organized on sections focused on the individual members of focus, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia to provide a better understanding of their differing positions, since ASEAN did not supersede each state's independent foreign policy. It will then be followed by sections on the ICK and formation of the coalition based on these sources, since these were major elements of ASEAN's comprehensive political solution which is vital to understand how ASEAN attempted to solve the conflict, why it chose to respond the way that it did, and the coherence that ASEAN achieved which resulted from this aim.

Background: What is ASEAN? (1967-1978)

ASEAN is a regional grouping, initially made up of its original members during its formation in 1967, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. The Cold War caused these states to come together to promote peace and stability in the region and to work towards their mutual benefit⁶⁷. It was

⁶⁷ ASEAN, *ASEAN The First 20 Years*, (ASEAN Secretariat, 1987), p.47.

inspired by similar groups around the same time period, such as the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), and Maphilindo, two smaller groups, consisting of only three members with Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines making up ASA, and Indonesia replacing Thailand alongside the other two in Maphilindo⁶⁸. Both groups were short lived, with ASA failing due to disputes between member states, namely Malaysia and the Philippines which had a dispute over the Malaysian state of Sabah and Maphilindo due to hostilities which culminated in an undeclared war between Malaysia and Indonesia from 1963 to 1966⁶⁹. By 1966, improving relations between Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines due to the replacement of Sukarno with Suharto as Indonesian president led to improvements in the situation⁷⁰. That year, the foreign ministers of the founding members met in Bangkok to discuss the formation of a viable regional organization to replace ASA since Indonesia refused to join due to ASA's association with the Vietnam War conflicting with Indonesian emphasis on non-alignment⁷¹. This meeting led to the creation of ASEAN.

ASEAN was formed to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the region, safeguard the stability of the region against big power rivalry, and to serve as a forum to resolve intra-regional differences⁷². Political concerns regarding Communism including the Sino-Soviet split also played a part in ASEAN's formation⁷³. ASEAN's aims were to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development and breaking down barriers of suspicion and mistrust and defusing tension and was also important for ASEAN⁷⁴. Its members endeavoured to ensure that ASEAN would not become a security alliance unlike the previous Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)⁷⁵. During its early years, ASEAN suffered from functional ineffectiveness and by its tenth anniversary in 1977, nothing substantial was achieved with ASEAN being seen as a talking shop rather than a supranational actor⁷⁶.

⁶⁸ ASEAN, *ASEAN The First 20 Years*, (ASEAN Secretariat, 1987), p.48.

⁶⁹ Donald E Weatherbee, *ASEAN's half-century*, (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019), p.49.

⁷⁰ ASEAN, *ASEAN The First 20 Years*, (ASEAN Secretariat, 1987), p.49.

⁷¹ Donald E Weatherbee, *ASEAN's half-century*, (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019), p.55.

⁷² ASEAN, *ASEAN The First 20 Years*, (ASEAN Secretariat, 1987), p.50.

⁷³ Donald E Weatherbee, *ASEAN's half-century*, (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019) p.60.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p.67.

This meant that its first decade was considered a failure though ASEAN managed to survive unlike its predecessors.

In 1971 ASEAN introduced the ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality) Declaration signed by the original ASEAN members, proclaiming ASEAN's neutrality in superpower conflicts involving the USA, USSR and China to ensure Southeast Asia would not be pulled into competition between major powers⁷⁷. Future ASEAN members had to agree to these aims as well, as a condition of joining the group⁷⁸.

At the 1975 ASEAN Ministerial Meeting from 13 to 15 May, not long after the fall of Saigon, ASEAN called for a harmonious relationship with the Indochinese states based on adherence to the principles of peaceful coexistence, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity⁷⁹. In December 1975, ASEAN found itself facing an event similar to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia when Indonesia invaded East Timor due to fears that the Timorese would become a Communist ally under the leftist FRETELIN, who had links to the Filipino Communists⁸⁰. Indonesia attempted to justify the invasion as consistent with decolonizing East Timor⁸¹, which was still a Portuguese colony at the time of the invasion, unlike Cambodia, which was a fully-fledged UN member by 1979, and claiming Timor as an internal affair afterwards. ASEAN accepted this for the sake of protecting the region from hostile Communist influences⁸². For the most part, East Timor's status as a Portuguese colony rather than a UN member like Cambodia was, gave ASEAN justification from their perspective for Indonesia's invasion. The fact that Indonesia's invasion of East Timor also took place in 1975, eight months after the fall of Saigon also suggests a preoccupation with a fear of Communist expansion was still strong then as the ASEAN states strove to protect their internal security.

⁷⁷ Mohammed Bolkiah, *Association*, (Brunei Press, 2013), p.38.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Anonymized source, Meeting Report, 18 October 2022.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.75.

⁸⁰ Lee Jones, *ASEAN Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.62.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, p.71.

⁸² *Ibid*.

The end of the Vietnam War led to the first ASEAN summit meeting of heads of government in 1976 which led to a clearer sense of direction for ASEAN⁸³. 1976 also saw the signing of the Treaty of Amity and Co-operation by ASEAN which aimed to lay the framework for peace in the region based on mutual respect for one another's sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, the peaceful settlement of intra-regional disputes and effective co-operation⁸⁴. Sovereignty in particular, would be very important with regard to ASEAN's response to the Third Indochina War.

A much greater basis for ASEAN coherence can now be detected here, though it would not be until the Third Indochina War, that the member states would have an issue to rally around. It will be evident in this thesis though that while ASEAN achieved cohesion, they also took sides with the Cambodian resistance to liberate Cambodia from Vietnam. This was justified from their perspective as the Vietnamese occupation involved violations of values such as sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs.

Background Of The War

The Third Indochina War initially broke out when Vietnam invaded Cambodia on 25 December 1978, resulting in a Vietnamese occupation of the country⁸⁵. It is important to note however, that this was in retaliation to several attacks that the Cambodian Communists known as the Khmer Rouge had launched on several Vietnamese villages and towns in the preceding years from 30 April 1977 onwards⁸⁶. Nonetheless, Vietnam's readiness to occupy a sovereign nation i.e., Cambodia raised alarm in the non-Communist ASEAN states who feared that the conflict and thus, Soviet or Communist expansion could spread to other Southeast Asian states, including neighbouring Thailand⁸⁷ and Singapore⁸⁸. In response

⁸³ ASEAN, *ASEAN The First 20 Years*, (ASEAN Secretariat, 1987), p.57.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.19.

⁸⁶ Stephen J Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia, Political Culture and the Causes of the War*, (Stanford University Press, 1999) p.98.

⁸⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Southeast Asia's Cold War, An Interpretive History*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2018) p.19.

⁸⁸ Ibid p.20-21.

to Vietnam's attack, China launched a brief offensive into Vietnam from 17 February to 16 March 1979 which was criticized by ASEAN members Malaysia and Indonesia⁸⁹.

ASEAN states were also fighting insurgencies in their respective countries such as the Second Malayan Emergency and Sarawak insurgencies in Malaysia⁹⁰, as well as similar conflicts in the Philippines⁹¹ and Thailand⁹² which added to their fears over their internal security, particularly with regards to the potential spread of Communism in their own countries if Vietnam's policies encouraged the local insurgencies to continue their struggles. In this sense, ASEAN felt the need to contain the Third Indochina War as a result, for the sake of their own internal security as well. ASEAN's concerns were motivated by a fear that their local insurgencies could obtain support from outside sources including Vietnam and the USSR, though it is important to note that throughout the Third Indochina War, this was highly unlikely to happen.

ASEAN's Initial Response: ZOPFAN (Zone Of Peace Freedom And Neutrality) And The Kuantan

Principle

ASEAN was initially divided on its response. Singapore's Ong Keng Yong, then a young officer at Singapore's Foreign Affairs Ministry and future ASEAN Secretary General, commented that the invasion and occupation did not immediately create cohesion within ASEAN since certain quarters in ASEAN states initially sympathised with Vietnam⁹³. These included some officials from Indonesia and the Philippines who said that they 'did not consider that Vietnam posed any threat to ASEAN'⁹⁴. Notably at the Special Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers on the Current Political Development in the Southeast Asian Region in Bangkok on 12 January 1979, the Philippines, represented by Deputy Foreign Minister Tolentino, took longer than its counterparts to agree on an ASEAN Joint Statement which condemned Vietnam for its occupation of Cambodia⁹⁵. Ong reflected that the Philippines relative

⁹⁰ Ang Cheng Guan, *Southeast Asia's Cold War, An Interpretive History*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2018), p.144.

⁹¹ Ibid, p.133.

⁹² Ibid, p.135.

⁹³ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

⁹⁴ Ong Keng Yong, Email to the Author 10 February 2023.

⁹⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.21.

distance geographically from the warring parties contributed to this⁹⁶. This contrasted directly with Thailand, which shared a direct border with Cambodia, and Singapore which was geographically not very far away from Thailand and shared their concerns as a result.

Later at the Twelfth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, a greater sense of ASEAN solidarity could be detected when the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, in their Joint Communique reiterated their support for the right of the Kampuchean people's right to self-determination and called for the immediate and total withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchean territory⁹⁷. This shows that ASEAN members eventually reached a common view of the situation and were able to come together to agree on a comprehensive political solution which became a starting point for ASEAN cohesion. Tommy Koh, Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, asserted that the principles of the UN Charter such as sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence were the basis for ASEAN to come together to oppose Vietnam⁹⁸. As Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew later stated in 1981, ASEAN aimed for a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia and elections that would result in an independent and neutral Cambodia, not siding with China or Vietnam⁹⁹.

During the Twelfth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, its Foreign Ministers also voiced concern about the situation in Thailand due to likely Vietnamese incursions into Thailand through its shared border with Cambodia¹⁰⁰. This caused apprehension amongst ASEAN who did not want the war to spread to any member states. Ang Cheng Guan, a lecturer from Nanyang Technological University points out that Lee Kuan Yew felt that ASEAN had to be concerned whereby Singapore "had an affinity of feeling for Cambodia as Cambodia's problems could become Singapore's problems in the future"¹⁰¹. This was a major reason why Sinnathamby Rajaratnam, Singapore's then Minister of Foreign Affairs railed ASEAN to oppose the occupation. Singapore feared a war could spread to their shores should Thailand

⁹⁶ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

⁹⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Joint communique of the 12th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting 28-30 June 1979.

⁹⁸ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

⁹⁹ National Archives of Singapore, ASEAN Newsletter, March 1981, p.8.

¹⁰⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Joint communique of the 12th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting 28-30 June 1979.

¹⁰¹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.20.

fall victim to a Vietnamese attack. While fears of a Vietnamese attack on the other ASEAN states was far-fetched, as this chapter will show later, an attack on Thailand was a real possibility.

Another reason why ASEAN came together to oppose Vietnam was what Brunei's then Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lim Jock Seng described as the "Domino theory", an American concept in origin¹⁰². Both Lee Kuan Yew and the then former King of Cambodia Norodom Sihanouk supported this sentiment¹⁰³. The ongoing Communist insurgencies gave ASEAN more reason to be apprehensive should there be Vietnamese or Soviet aid to the local insurgents, no matter how likely or unlikely this was by 1979¹⁰⁴. Because of this, the Joint Communique stated that ASEAN members wanted to preserve their own independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and Vietnam should withdraw forces from the Thai-Kampuchean border¹⁰⁵. There was concern amongst ASEAN that Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia would lead to a spread of Communism in their respective countries. An example of this sentiment was Lee Kuan Yew expressing scepticism that Vietnam would stop after occupying Cambodia, worried that this could encourage an upsurge of Communist insurgencies after the war¹⁰⁶. This ultimately did not happen, but it proved that internal security was also a key concern of the ASEAN states in their response to the Third Indochina War.

By contrast, ASEAN's response to China's invasion of Vietnam was not unified. This was because ASEAN did not consider China's action to be a threat to them, though Malaysia and Indonesia showed concern regarding the matter. While Lee Kuan Yew admitted he was thankful that China punished Vietnam as was Thailand¹⁰⁷, Malaysia and Indonesia's suspicions of China were enhanced instead as illustrated when Malaysian Home Affairs Minister Ghazali Shafie voiced fears of China pursuing hegemonism¹⁰⁸. Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad acknowledged that China's

¹⁰² Alex M Spencer, *The Vietnam War, The Definitive Illustrated History*, (Dorling Kindersley, 2017) p.58.

¹⁰³ The National Archives of the UK, "Gist of Airport Press Conference of Prince Norodom Sihanouk President of CGDK" 16 March 1984 in FCO 15/3891 Visits by Prince Norodom Sihanouk to ASEAN countries.

¹⁰⁴ Phillip Matthews, *Chronicle of Malaysia, Fifty Years of Headline News*, (Editions Didier Millet, 2013) p.134.

¹⁰⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Joint communique of the 12th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting 28-30 June 1979.

¹⁰⁶ *New Straits Times*, 10 February 1979. (All copies of this newspaper are obtained from the Malaysian National Archives, no photograph available to cite additional details).

¹⁰⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013), p.22.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

attack on Vietnam had a salutary effect on Vietnam but expressed concern over what he called China's willingness to act regardless of the usual norms of world opinion¹⁰⁹. Malaysia and Indonesia's concern can still be considered as proof that ASEAN still held some element of suspicion towards China because of this, and even Singapore avoided endorsing the action due to the concerns of its fellow members. On 16 March, China eventually withdrew from Vietnam much to ASEAN's relief¹¹⁰. This would no longer be an issue, and they could continue with their common goal of ending the Vietnamese Occupation.

In late 1979, the Soviets and Vietnamese tried to reassure ASEAN that they had no hostile intentions. This occurred during Malaysian Prime Minister Hussein Onn's visit to the USSR in September¹¹¹. The following month in October, according to Malaysian Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen Ismail, Vietnam reiterated it "will not do anything to upset ASEAN's stability and integrity."¹¹² It should be noted however, that this implies that Vietnam did not take the situation as seriously as they should have given the fact that it took them several months to address ASEAN's concerns.

One of the areas where a coherent ASEAN response was most apparent is in the realm of ASEAN relations with the United Nations. Understanding its limitations, ASEAN needed the support of other countries to achieve its aims and considered the UN an appropriate organization to turn to for assistance. The ASEAN members, Singapore in particular, made sure they did so via UN lobbying every year from 1979 onwards. On 14 November 1979, a UN General Assembly resolution supported by ASEAN and twenty-five other countries, called for foreign forces to withdraw from Cambodia and requested the UN Secretary General to explore the possibility of holding an international conference¹¹³. The UN would be the major focus of ASEAN's policy, aiming to keep the issue Cambodian alive in the international community¹¹⁴. This was because since both the USA and USSR and the vast majority of sovereign states at the time were members of the UN and this would ultimately decide the international community's perception of the conflict.

¹⁰⁹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013), p.22.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ The National Archives of the UK, FO 973/132 *ASEAN and the Communist States*, December 1980 p.3.

¹¹² *New Straits Times*, 17 October 1979.

¹¹³ The National Archives of the UK, FO 973/132 *ASEAN and the Communist States*, December 1980, p.2.

¹¹⁴ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

Also key to understanding ASEAN's initial response was the ZOPFAN Declaration which conditioned ASEAN reaction to the Third Indochina War. ZOPFAN was meant to be nonideological, applying equally to all major powers without being hostile to them¹¹⁵. Weatherbee also calls it a conceptual denial of a permanent strategic division between Indochina and ASEAN¹¹⁶, though the Vietnamese Occupation forced ASEAN into opposing Vietnam, due to what ASEAN perceived as Vietnamese aggression in occupying Cambodia, which from their perspective, was a threat to ASEAN's security due to Vietnam's violations of the UN Charter by occupying Cambodia.

It should be noted however, that in practice, individual ASEAN members could have differing interpretations of ZOPFAN. For example, Singapore, according to Philippe Regnier¹¹⁷, a professor of Global Studies from the University of Ottawa, and Micheal Leifer¹¹⁸, a professor on international relations in Southeast Asia from the London School of Economics, interpreted Singapore's view of ZOPFAN as referring to a situation where all major powers had equal engagement with Southeast Asia, creating a balance of power with no major power having a clear advantage over others in the region. This was ASEAN's position throughout the Third Indochina War, due to the belief that the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia gave the Soviets an advantage compared to the others due to US disengagement from the region after the Vietnam War, though the Americans retained bases in the Philippines¹¹⁹. Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia and its installation of the People's Republic of Kampuchea government further highlight ASEAN's concerns about violation of Cambodian sovereignty and self-determination which added to ASEAN's fears, causing them to define the Vietnamese and Soviets as a greater threat to their security than China or the USA due to the precedent this was in danger of causing at that time if ASEAN did not respond.

In a 1981 interview, Lee Kuan Yew even outright stated that he believed the USSR aimed to dominate Southeast Asia while the USA did not¹²⁰, and the events of 1979 to 1981 caused ASEAN to have this

¹¹⁵ Donald E Weatherbee, *ASEAN's half-century*, (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019) p.72.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Phillippe Regnier, *Singapore, City State in Southeast Asia*, (Hurst, 1987) p.219.

¹¹⁸ Micheal Leifer, *Singapore's Foreign Policy, Coping with Vulnerability*, (Routledge, 2000) p.59.

¹¹⁹ Donald E Weatherbee, *ASEAN's half-century*, (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019) p.74.

¹²⁰ National Archives of Singapore, ASEAN Newsletter, March 1981, p.8.

view as well, though other members such as Indonesia and Malaysia still pursued friendly relations with Vietnam, if not the USSR. It is important to note that Moscow held negative views of ASEAN since its formation which contributed to ASEAN's suspicions of them¹²¹. Weatherbee also mentions that Vietnam was similarly hostile during that time as well such as when Vietnam was critical of the policies of ASEAN's states such as the Malaysian government's response against Communist insurgents¹²². This caused ASEAN to have a hostile view of both countries which only worsened due to the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia.

It is also important to take note of each member state's bilateral foreign policy with the combatants as ASEAN did not overrule any member's Foreign Ministry¹²³. It also helps to better understand their somewhat divergent positions despite the unity they showed during ASEAN meetings. This was since the main countries of focus, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, did not always have similar views of China or Vietnam.

Singapore: ASEAN's Harshest Critic Of Vietnam

To understand Singapore's bilateral relations with the countries involved, it is important to note its foreign policy orientation to understand how this influences its reaction to the conflict. In his 1990 book covering relations between Singapore and the USSR, Bilveer Singh defines Singapore as largely a non-socialist, even anti-Communist, predominantly capitalist state with a free market economy having close economic and political relations with capitalist countries¹²⁴. This is important to keep in mind when understanding its foreign policy, particularly during the Cold War. The fact that Singh defines Singapore as an anti-Communist state indicates why it reacted negatively to the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia and even Ong Keng Yong describes the then Singaporean foreign minister at the time of the outbreak of the Third Indochina War, Rajaratnam as "basically an anti-Communist"¹²⁵. Thus, it is not surprising that Singapore would adopt a hardline position towards Vietnam.

¹²¹ Donald E Weatherbee, *ASEAN's half-century*, (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019), p.72.

¹²² Ibid, p.78.

¹²³ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

¹²⁴ Bilveer Singh, *The Soviet Union in Singapore's Foreign Policy*, (Institute of Strategic and International Studies 1990) p.5.

¹²⁵ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

Singh points out the key aspects of Singapore's foreign policy. These were making as many friends and as few enemies as possible¹²⁶. To trade with any country for mutual benefit regardless of ideology or system of government. Singapore should remain non-aligned, cooperating with ASEAN members to achieve regional cohesion. To safeguard the right of every country to establish their own form of government in accordance with the wishes of their own citizens and hold inviolable the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of a country and working with any country irrespective of ideology whose interests coincide with Singapore's interests. Also important was to rally international support for Singapore's causes and that of other countries who supported Singapore and whose causes are not harmful to Singapore's interests¹²⁷. This meant that Singapore strove to create a balance of power in the region between the USA, USSR and China, preventing any of them from being too dominant in Southeast Asia¹²⁸, though Singh points out that Singapore tends to favour the USA in such a scenario¹²⁹, due to the fact that the other two were Communist states. This is supported by Schrier who stated that reducing communist influence in the region is one of Singapore's regional goals¹³⁰. And with this, a better understanding of Singapore's approach to the Third Indochina War can be formulated through its relations with the USSR, Vietnam's primary backer. Singapore under Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and Foreign Minister, later Deputy Prime Minister Rajaratnam was undoubtedly harsher on Vietnam than others including Malaysia and Indonesia, who were more committed to ZOPFAN than they were¹³¹, and the moderating influence of Malaysia and Indonesia was needed to formulate the ASEAN position as mentioned before.

Also key to understanding's Singapore position on the war is how Singapore's economy influences its foreign policy, as highlighted by Singh and Schrier¹³². Singapore plays a vital role in Southeast Asia's

¹²⁶ Bilveer Singh, *The Soviet Union in Singapore's Foreign Policy*, (Institute of Strategic and International Studies 1990), p.3.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Peter Schier, 'The Indochina Conflict from the Perspective of Singapore', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 4.2 (1982), pp.226-235 (p.227).

¹²⁹ Bilveer Singh, *The Soviet Union in Singapore's Foreign Policy*, (Institute of Strategic and International Studies 1990) p.5.

¹³⁰ Peter Schier, 'The Indochina Conflict from the Perspective of Singapore', *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 4.2 (1982), pp.226-235 (p.227).

¹³¹ Micheal Leifer, *Singapore's Foreign Policy, Coping with Vulnerability*, (Routledge, 2000), p.132.

¹³² Ibid.

economy, encouraging the growth of other economies in the region¹³³. Singapore strives for open markets and political stability in the region¹³⁴. For economic as well as security reasons, Singapore normally cannot afford to pursue a policy hostile towards any state¹³⁵. But in the case of the Third Indochina War, it was willing to make an exception due to the perceived danger that Communism would have both politically and economically to ASEAN. Compounding these problems was the fact that a group of Communists known as Barisan Sosialis existed in Singapore¹³⁶. At the same time, Singapore was also attempting to shield itself from a spillover of the Second Malayan Emergency in neighbouring Malaysia¹³⁷. This gave it sufficient reasons to be concerned about any growth of Soviet or Communist influence including from Indochina¹³⁸. This explains why Singapore, while declaring neutrality¹³⁹, placed greater emphasis on its ties to capitalist nations such as the USA for their survival, meaning fear of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia also needs to be understood with these factors in mind when trying to understand Singapore's perspective.

Rajaratnam linked the Third Indochina War and the Soviet War in Afghanistan as components of a Soviet led strategic offensive of world Communism to highlight Soviet aggressive policies and keep the Cambodian crisis relevant in the eyes of the international community¹⁴⁰. Vietnam accused Singapore of acting as an American and Chinese accomplice and sabotaging the Non-Aligned Movement¹⁴¹ believing Singapore to be leading a faction of moderate NAM members¹⁴² to oppose Vietnam. Hence, Vietnam viewed Singapore more negatively compared to other ASEAN members. On 17 July 1980, Nguyen Co Thach declined an invitation to visit Singapore, even though he visited several other ASEAN states the

¹³³ Bilveer Singh, *The Soviet Union in Singapore's Foreign Policy*, (Institute of Strategic and International Studies 1990) p.12.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ang Cheng Guan, *Southeast Asia's Cold War, An Interpretive History*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2018) p.99.

¹³⁷ Ong Weichong, *Malaysia's defeat of Armed Communism*, (Routledge, 2015) p.152.

¹³⁸ Ibid, p.25.

¹³⁹ Bilveer Singh, *The Soviet Union in Singapore's Foreign Policy*, (Institute of Strategic and International Studies 1990) p.3.

¹⁴⁰ The National Archives of the UK, FO 973/132 *ASEAN and the Communist States*, December 1980 p.6.

¹⁴¹ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000175W, Vietnam Volume 11, (Malaysian archive source, no photograph available to cite additional details).

¹⁴² Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013), p.28.

month before¹⁴³. This decision was likely because Rajaratnam had said Vietnam's incursions into Thailand showed that Vietnam could not be trusted, accusing Thach of trying to divide ASEAN¹⁴⁴. Fear of Communism was the reason for Singapore's response while Vietnam accuses them of being a firm ally of the USA or China. Overall, it can be concluded that largely due to Singapore's foreign policy orientation and capitalist economy, they became Vietnam and the USSR's harshest critics within ASEAN.

Malaysia: A Slightly More Moderate Position

Like Singapore, Malaysia was dependent on foreign economic participation and the health of the international economy for its prosperity, due to its capitalist structure and free market orientation¹⁴⁵. For most of the Third Indochina War, Mahathir Mohammad was Malaysia's Prime Minister, and his foreign policy was focused, in order of importance, on ASEAN, Islamic Countries, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Commonwealth while working for a more visible role on the international scene, remaining anti-Communist and committed to democracy¹⁴⁶. Thus, it can be summarized that Malaysia's views on the Third Indochina War were similar to Singapore, though Malaysia viewed China as the main threat to Southeast Asia's security and stability, rather than the USSR¹⁴⁷.

Sources at the British National Archives referred to Mahathir as an anti-Communist due to the expulsion of Soviet Embassy staff members for spying, the first time that Malaysia had expelled foreign diplomats for espionage activities. This along with Malaysia's principle that the sovereignty and integrity of a nation must always be respected, meant that it still appropriately viewed the Cambodian and Afghan conflicts with concern and remained committed to the general ASEAN position despite their more

¹⁴³ *New Straits Times*, 17 July 1980.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ K.S. Nathan, Malaysia and the Soviet Union, A Relationship with a Distance, *Asian Survey* 27.10 (1987) pp.1059-1073 (p1060), doi: 10.2307/2644845.

¹⁴⁶ The National Archives of the UK, British High Commission Letter 15 June 1983 in FCO 15/3556 Malaysia's Foreign Policy.

¹⁴⁷ Bilveer Singh, *The Soviet Union in Singapore's Foreign Policy*, (Institute of Strategic and International Studies 1990) p.32.

positive relations with Vietnam since the incidents meant mistrust of the USSR was still present in Malaysia's government¹⁴⁸.

On 9 April 1980, Malaysia's Deputy Foreign Minister Mokhtar Hashim said Vietnam welcomed dialogue with Malaysia to promote peace and stability¹⁴⁹. The following month, Thach opted to visit Malaysia first out of all the ASEAN members because he considered it to be the most moderate towards Vietnam¹⁵⁰. It was important to note that at the time, Malaysia was chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee meaning this visit could prove beneficial to Vietnam¹⁵¹. An openness to dialogue can be detected here from both sides, though ultimately subsequent circumstances did not permit this. Nevertheless, it is evident here that Malaysia is more moderate than Singapore since they were more willing to pursue this, and Vietnam trusted Malaysia as a result.

Later, signs were not promising as dissatisfaction on Malaysia's side appeared when Malaysian Foreign Minister Rithauddeen expressed concern over the lack of progress in implementing the ASEAN sponsored UN Resolution¹⁵². Thach claimed that this was because both sides had differing views of the cause for instability in Southeast Asia¹⁵³. Vietnam considered China's aggression as the main problem while Malaysia focused on Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia as the key issue instead, just as ASEAN normally did. Malaysia made it clear that they would not sacrifice ASEAN solidarity for the sake of favours from Vietnam¹⁵⁴. While willing to consider dialogue with Vietnam, Malaysia's primary consideration remained ASEAN solidarity and solving the Cambodian problem¹⁵⁵. Nevertheless, Thach appreciated Malaysia's friendly position towards Vietnam as Vietnam needed good relations with Southeast Asian countries to offset their isolation¹⁵⁶. Friendly relations with Vietnam among some ASEAN states did not necessarily mean the association's cohesion was affected.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, British High Commission Letter 15 June 1983 in FCO 15/3556 Malaysia's Foreign Policy.

¹⁴⁹ *New Straits Times*, 9 April 1980.

¹⁵⁰ *New Straits Times*, 1 May 1980.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Malay Mail*, 3 May 1980. (All copies of this newspaper are obtained from the Malaysian National Archives, no photograph available to cite additional details).

¹⁵³ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000175W, Vietnam Volume 11.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Malaysian Prime Minister Hussein Onn also viewed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with concern¹⁵⁷. The events in Afghanistan and Cambodia led him to conclude that Vietnam and the USSR were the more immediate threat than China to ASEAN at that moment¹⁵⁸. Like Rajaratnam, Hussein linked the two invasions as examples of the USSR's expansionist foreign policy. Malaysia remained suspicious of the USSR just as the rest of ASEAN did and continued to emphasize the importance of sovereignty. Malaysia's distrust of all Communist powers stemmed from the Second Malayan Emergency and the Third Indochina War which threatened ASEAN stability. The willingness of the Soviets to use military force in Afghanistan only increased Malaysian fears of Communism, in particular the USSR even more than before, just as it did for Singapore. Vietnam were not necessarily Soviet puppets, as an independent sovereign state with its own agency, so this suggests that the internal situation brought about by the Second Malayan Emergency combined with apprehension about the Third Indochina War caused Malaysia and Singapore to connect these events to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This ended up becoming part of ASEAN's perspective because of the prominence of both countries within the association. There was no doubt that doing this link between these events helped ASEAN's cause in the UN as mentioned before, which justified Singapore and Malaysia doing so for the sake of ASEAN's continued fight to keep their preferred Cambodian government in the UN¹⁵⁹. This was especially the case when a Cambodian coalition took shape later during the war, as this thesis will show.

Regarding Vietnam-Malaysia relations, as October 1980 began, Mahathir believed that although Vietnam was unlikely to launch an assault on the rest of Southeast Asia, an attack on any ASEAN member could happen and ASEAN should retain the option for direct dialogue with Vietnam.¹⁶⁰ Hence Malaysia remained committed to dialogue as the best method for a solution to the Third Indochina War but like Singapore, worried about further Vietnamese incursions while keeping up its constructive approach towards Vietnam.

¹⁵⁷ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000175W, Vietnam Volume 11.

¹⁵⁸The National Archives of the UK, South East Asian Department Information Paper 12 February 1980 in FCO 15/2686 Malaysian Foreign Policy.

¹⁵⁹ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

¹⁶⁰ *New Straits Times*, 3 October 1980.

As for Malaysia-China relations, even though the Cambodian conflict continued to be an important issue in which China and ASEAN supported each other in the UN, the Second Malayan Emergency and Sarawak Communist Insurgency were ongoing with China refusing to renounce its support for both insurgencies¹⁶¹. These conflicts were cited as reasons why Malaysia could not trust China as much as Thailand and Singapore did, despite Malaysia already recognizing China's Communist government while Singapore did not¹⁶² and explains Malaysia's more moderate stance towards Vietnam since they distrusted China. Nevertheless, China's support for the insurgencies decreased as the Third Indochina War continued¹⁶³. Malaysia also viewed China as a threat due to China's refusal to forego its support for the MCP¹⁶⁴ but had more reason to fear Vietnam at that time and with China reducing support for the MCP, it was easier for Malaysia to justify allying with them as the war continued.

Malaysia's position towards the conflict was that it would not recognize the People's Republic of Kampuchea government but only supported Pol Pot to prevent the PRK from occupying the UN seat, while using dialogue as its main method of choice¹⁶⁵. Malaysia and Indonesia were uncomfortable supporting China, due to their suspicions towards Communism¹⁶⁶. Malaysia's policies in dealing with the war were centred on violation of sovereignty and self-determination and fear of Communism as well as its effects on Malaysian security rather than an anti-Vietnamese agenda. On the whole Ong has credited Malaysia for balancing Indonesian and Singaporean views throughout the war which was helpful whenever ASEAN came together in international fora to reiterate its position throughout the war.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶¹ The National Archives of the UK, FO 973/132 *ASEAN and the Communist States*, December 1980 Malaysia: Background Brief 11 January 1979 in FCO 15/2494, Communist threat in Malaysia.

¹⁶² *New Straits Times*, 14 November 1981.

¹⁶³ Ong Weichong, *Malaysia's defeat of Armed Communism*, (Routledge, 2015) p.65.

¹⁶⁴ *New Straits Times*, 23 August 1981.

¹⁶⁵ *Malay Mail*, 21 October 1980.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

Indonesia: Dual Track Policy

Under Suharto, Indonesia abandoned the aggressive, anti-Western foreign policy of his predecessor Sukarno¹⁶⁸. Indonesia became more sympathetic to the West and relations with China were severed in 1967¹⁶⁹. China's support of the Partai Komunis Indonesia¹⁷⁰ (PKI) together with anti-Chinese feeling amongst the Indonesian populace resulted in them sympathising more with Vietnam¹⁷¹. This meant that Indonesia's perception of Vietnam differed from other ASEAN members¹⁷². However, ASEAN was important to Indonesia because it was able to assume a leadership role in Southeast Asia while also providing the region with the political stability necessary for economic development¹⁷³. Also, important to note was that despite Indonesia's positive view of Vietnam, Suharto shared Thailand and Singapore's concerns regarding the Viet Cong¹⁷⁴ and also considered the USSR to be a threat to Indonesian security¹⁷⁵.

As an ASEAN member, Indonesia supported Thailand's right to self-defence, wanting Vietnam to withdraw while believing the Cambodians should choose their own government for the future, a position which was consistent with the rest of ASEAN¹⁷⁶. Indonesia was determined to establish ZOPFAN despite its moderate stand towards Vietnam.¹⁷⁷ Despite being ASEAN's interlocutor, even Indonesia showed concern about Vietnam's incursion and supported Thailand accordingly, so it appeared shortly after the outbreak of the war, Indonesia and Thailand thought on the same wavelength despite their significantly different perceptions of Vietnam and ASEAN coherence remained.

¹⁶⁸ Mattias Fibiger, *Suharto's Cold War: Indonesia Southeast Asia and the world*, (Oxford University Press, 2023), p.70.

¹⁶⁹ Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Suharto*, (ISEAS Publishing, 2022) p.35.

¹⁷⁰ Taomo Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution, China, Indonesia and the Cold War*, (Cornell University Press, 2019) p.157.

¹⁷¹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Southeast Asia's Cold War, An Interpretive History*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2018) p.117.

¹⁷² Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Suharto*, (ISEAS Publishing, 2022) p.36.

¹⁷³ Ibid, p.134.

¹⁷⁴ Lee Jones, *ASEAN Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.79.

¹⁷⁵ Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Suharto*, (ISEAS Publishing, 2022) p.152.

¹⁷⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Joint Communique of the 14th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting 17-18 June 1981.

¹⁷⁷ *New Straits Times*, 23 October 1980.

China's acceptance of any solution to the Cambodian problem was crucial according to Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar, though he was aware of Vietnam's reservations regarding China¹⁷⁸. Because of this, Mochtar said that China had to adopt a reassuring position towards Vietnam¹⁷⁹. In addition, Mochtar also felt that the USSR would have to be consulted¹⁸⁰ since ASEAN acknowledged that the Third Indochina War was part of the Sino-Soviet Split and thus, the USSR had to be brought into the search for a solution¹⁸¹. In this sense, Indonesia proved important in balancing the views of more hardline members like Thailand and Singapore, ensuring a more neutral position from ASEAN, though it would raise questions about ASEAN cohesion which were fortunately never an issue at their ministerial meetings.

Some Indonesian parliamentarians believed that ASEAN needed direct dialogue with Vietnam.¹⁸² This shows that apart from heads of state and government as well as foreign ministers, there were other politicians in the ASEAN states proposing alternative solutions to the conflict. ASEAN as a whole was not prepared to pursue this tactic while the occupation was ongoing since they felt Vietnam's withdrawal was essential for advantageous conditions for negotiations to take place. Indonesian scholar Leo Suryadinata maintains that the Indonesian military and foreign affairs ministry had different views of the Cambodian conflict, which was not uncommon for foreign policy making in Suharto-era Indonesia¹⁸³. Overall though, Indonesia did not stray away from ASEAN's position since Suharto considered ASEAN to be a high priority in his foreign policy¹⁸⁴ meaning Indonesia's dual track policy was manageable for ASEAN without damaging the general position.

Overall, it can be concluded that emphasis on ASEAN solidarity and sovereignty and each country's internal security was important to Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and their fellow ASEAN members who all had an apprehension towards Communism. While Malaysia and Indonesia took a moderate

¹⁷⁸ *New Straits Times*, 23 October 1980.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ The National Archives of the UK, Interview with Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew by Mr. Amir Daud, Senior Editor and Mr. Zulkifly Lubis, Journalist of Tempo on 27 June 1980 At the Istana Annexe in FCO 15/2674, Singapore Foreign Policy.

¹⁸² National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000796W ASEAN-INDOCHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 3.

¹⁸³ Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Suharto*, (ISEAS Publishing, 2022) p.128.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.134.

stance towards Vietnam, the negative attitudes in both countries towards Communism meant that the USSR, as the birthplace of Communism would always be treated with suspicion by ASEAN. This was understandable, as ASEAN states were reluctant to support a superpower promoting an ideology followed by insurgencies against their governments. There was a fear that while local insurgents were influenced by China instead of the USSR, there was potential that any insurgency could obtain support from the Soviets if that became possible.

Malaysia and Indonesia emphasised ZOPFAN when dealing with the conflict. This was shown when Indonesia's Mochtar said the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia became an excuse for superpowers to meddle in Southeast Asian affairs, repeating how it was an obstacle for the implementation of ZOPFAN and reminding ASEAN to persist with negotiations¹⁸⁵. ASEAN's fear of the USSR and to some extent, China due to concerns regarding Communism are very evident here. Malaysia and Indonesia were more committed to ZOPFAN than other members, given it was of Malaysian origin¹⁸⁶ and Indonesia's key role in the Bandung Conference¹⁸⁷, though ASEAN found it beneficial to reiterate ZOPFAN throughout the narrative given Soviet involvement as Vietnam's backer. ZOPFAN in this sense referred to the removal of the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, even though the USA was arming Indonesia, but not backing or carrying out direct military aggression against a fellow UN member state.

By December 1979, the beginnings of a coherent ASEAN could be seen with Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia leading the way. Indonesian Foreign Minister, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, still prioritising ASEAN neutrality, became the driving force to initiate communications with Vietnam. He went to Singapore to meet Rajaratnam for talks regarding Cambodia¹⁸⁸. Meanwhile, Rithauddeen was preparing to visit Hanoi, which Mochtar hoped would reduce tension between both sides, and at the same time

¹⁸⁵*New Straits Times*, 11 March 1980.

¹⁸⁶ The National Archives of the UK, Information Paper from the British High Commission Kuala Lumpur in FCO 15/2686 Malaysian Foreign Policy.

¹⁸⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Southeast Asia's Cold War, An Interpretive History*, (University of Hawaii Press, 2018) p.79.

¹⁸⁸ *New Straits Times*, 22 December 1979.

ASEAN members decided it was vital to begin dialogue with Vietnam, opting for a non-military solution to the conflict¹⁸⁹.

Rithauddeen visited Hanoi in January 1980 and indicated to the Vietnamese that ASEAN was ready for a dialogue¹⁹⁰. While Rithauddeen found that the Vietnamese would agree to talks regarding ZOPFAN¹⁹¹, he concluded that Vietnam was unlikely to withdraw at this point in time and unwilling to accept the existence of a Cambodian problem¹⁹², implying that Vietnam approached ZOPFAN and the war as separate issues, though Malaysia and Indonesia did not. After returning Rithauddeen informed the Dewan Negara, the upper house of the Malaysian Parliament, that Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong and Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach assured him that Vietnam would not attack Thailand. Although Thai Prime Minister Kriangsak accepted Vietnam's assurances in 1979¹⁹³, when Hussein went to Thailand in February 1980, the Thai parliament informed him that they did not believe these assurances which he himself also found difficult to do so¹⁹⁴. This suggests that although Vietnam was not opposed to ZOPFAN, it still refused to withdraw from Cambodia as ASEAN desired. As a result, the apprehension of ASEAN's members including Thailand and Malaysia were not addressed and both continued to mistrust Vietnam due to Vietnam's refusal to acknowledge the existence of the Cambodian problem. This meant that any hope of solving the problem was unachievable for that moment, since ASEAN saw Vietnam's occupation as violating the principle of sovereignty and self-determination through use of military force against a UN member like Cambodia.

While ASEAN continued to condemn Vietnamese and Soviet military campaigns, in the early part of 1980, Vietnam acknowledged that war spreading to Thailand was one of ASEAN's key concerns as evidenced by Rithauddeen informing the Vietnamese that ASEAN wanted a political solution to the war and they in turn told him that they would honour Thai independence, attempting to reassure ASEAN that the conflict would not expand to Thailand¹⁹⁵. As mentioned before, with a Vietnamese withdrawal

¹⁸⁹ *New Straits Times*, 26 December 1979.

¹⁹⁰ The National Archives of the UK, FO 973/132 *ASEAN and the Communist States*, December 1980 p.3.

¹⁹¹ *New Straits Times*, 12 January 1980.

¹⁹² TNA, FO 973/132 *ASEAN and the Communist States*, December 1980 p.3.

¹⁹³ Lee Jones, *ASEAN Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.78.

¹⁹⁴ *New Straits Times*, 20 March 1980.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

being key to ASEAN's solution to the war¹⁹⁶, Thailand did provide aid to Khmer Rouge forces since military pressure had to be put on Vietnam to withdraw because ASEAN considered the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia to be a violation of Cambodian sovereignty and self-determination with Cambodia being a fellow UN member state¹⁹⁷. This, combined with ASEAN's apprehension over its member states internal security served to justify support for the Khmer Rouge for the time being, though ASEAN did not want to restore them exclusively to power¹⁹⁸.

With this, it would be appropriate to highlight the introduction of the Kuantan Principle or Formula in March 1980, as another element of ASEAN's earlier attempts to solve the conflict. The Kuantan Principle, named as such because it was declared in the Malaysian city of Kuantan, was proposed by Malaysia and Indonesia, who were the ASEAN members most willing to settle differences with Vietnam through dialogue, with Indonesia enjoying a special relationship with Vietnam as both had fought for independence from a foreign power¹⁹⁹. The Kuantan Principle involved persuading Vietnam to loosen ties with the USSR and for China to stop supporting the Khmer Rouge. The Kuantan Principle aimed for a neutral Vietnam and Cambodia independent of Soviet or Chinese influence²⁰⁰. This was in line with ZOPFAN's principles and hence would increase the likelihood of its implementation, as well as for ASEAN's comprehensive political solution, as neutralization of Vietnam and Cambodia would decrease the risk of direct superpower military actions in the region and address the issues on both sides, including ASEAN's concerns about the occupation and Vietnamese fears of the Khmer Rouge.

Moreover, it was not just Chinese and Soviet influence that ASEAN aimed to reduce. In synergy with the aims of ZOPFAN, the Kuantan Principle initially had an objective, proposed by Suharto, for a Vietnam that was not dependent on the major powers of the USSR, China and the USA, motivated by fear of the Soviet-backed Vietnamese military which was now occupying Cambodia²⁰¹. This was reiterated by Lee Kuan Yew on 4 July 1980 in a meeting with the press at Istana Jogjakarta, Indonesia

¹⁹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Joint communique of the 12th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting 28-30 June 1979.

¹⁹⁷ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ong Keng Yong, Email to the Author 10 February 2023.

²⁰⁰ TNA, FO 973/132 *ASEAN and the Communist States*, December 1980 p.3.

²⁰¹ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

after his meeting with Suharto²⁰². Since ZOPFAN aimed for neutrality between all major powers in Southeast Asia, the Third Indochina War prevented ZOPFAN from being realised, since it brought the USSR into direct involvement in Southeast Asia by supporting Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia, which was viewed by ASEAN as threatening to their security. China's retaliatory invasion of Vietnam also concerned ASEAN to a degree as evidenced by the Indonesian and Malaysian reactions to it.

The Kuantan Principle illustrates that ZOPFAN is related to ASEAN's approach to the war. ASEAN's determination to pursue efforts towards achieving ZOPFAN was repeatedly emphasised in ASEAN Ministerial Meetings during the Third Indochina War. Hence, it can be concluded that a major reason ASEAN responded the way that it did to the war can be seen through the lens of the desires of its members to achieve the implementation of ZOPFAN.

However, there is a key difference between ZOPFAN and the Kuantan Principle. Once the Kuantan Principle was introduced to the Vietnamese, the Americans were not mentioned in the proposal²⁰³. This was presumably because the Americans were not a threat to ASEAN's security at that time. This, along with the fact that Vietnam was militarily in a strong position in Cambodia caused it to fail. This was evidenced by Vietnam's response on 27 May 1980 when Thach was reported to have criticized the Kuantan Principle as "inaccurate" because it did not make any mention of the USA while putting China and the USSR on the same footing²⁰⁴. Given the fact that both the USSR and China were Communist countries, this was unsurprising since Malaysia and Indonesia feared Communist expansion especially since Malaysia was still dealing with the Second Malayan Emergency. On the other hand, the USA, playing a major role in ASEAN's economy as an ASEAN Dialogue Partner since 1977, enjoyed better relations with ASEAN compared to the USSR and China.²⁰⁵ When added to the fact that ASEAN's main concern was the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia might not have judged the USA to be a threat at the same level as China and the USSR. Vietnam however, having recently

²⁰² The National Archives of the UK, "Unofficial Transcript The Prime Minister's Meeting With The press Istana Jogjakarta 4 July 1980" in FCO 15/2674 Singapore Foreign Policy.

²⁰³ *New Straits Times*, 27 May 1980.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000175W, Vietnam Volume 11.

fought a war with the Americans, was unlikely to view American influence positively compared to ASEAN and thus, unsurprisingly rejected it.

Given the fact that the war had been kept between China, Vietnam and Cambodia at this point, there was still room for assurance by Vietnam towards Thailand and the rest of ASEAN. In April 1980 for example, Malaysia and Thailand explored the possibility of direct talks between ASEAN and Vietnam as Thai Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda travelled to Kuala Lumpur to meet with Hussein Onn²⁰⁶. On 24 April 1980 it was reported that during talks with Thach, Malaysia would seek Vietnam's reassurance that it would respect Thailand's sovereignty²⁰⁷. Malaysia, considering itself a friend of both countries supported Thailand's call for a conference to solve the conflict, showing that Malaysia wanted to be neutral between both, in keeping with ASEAN's goal²⁰⁸. In this instance, they attempted to follow up on Vietnam's assurances given to Hussein by urging the Vietnamese to convince Thailand that Vietnam was not a threat to them. Malaysia, influenced by its emphasis on ZOPFAN, was keen for Vietnam and Thailand have friendly relations.

In assessing ASEAN's initial response to the conflict, the following is apparent, in the beginning, ASEAN was not united in its position as evidenced by Indonesia and the Philippines more relaxed position compared to the other members, thus cohesion was not immediate. Secondly, the 1971 ZOPFAN Declaration was reiterated since ASEAN considered this to be the first major challenge ASEAN faced since its formation, given the fact that the Indonesian invasion of East Timor was viewed as an internal Indonesian issue and combined with Indonesia's lack of a formal alliance with any superpower, were not seen as such. Lastly, ASEAN also came up with the Kuantan Principle/Formula to ensure the neutralization of Vietnam and Cambodia but Vietnam, still looking to solidify their occupation of Cambodia was unlikely to withdraw at this point, and this combined with the Kuantan Principle's lack of mention of the US resulted in its failure.

²⁰⁶ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000795W ASEAN-INDOCHINA STATES RELATIONS VOL 2.

²⁰⁷ *New Straits Times*, 24 April 1980.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

23 June 1980: Vietnamese Incursion Into Thailand

However, on 23 June 1980 an event which would unify ASEAN's response to the war, solidifying its solidarity and ensuring its greater cohesion would occur. In response to an organized repatriation of Cambodian refugees back towards the border because of suspicions that they could constitute Khmer Rouge reinforcements, Vietnam launched an incursion into Thailand²⁰⁹. This caused consternation amongst ASEAN members²¹⁰ and Rithauddeen said it was imperative that Vietnam cease the incursion²¹¹. Mochtar appealed to UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, requesting for a special representative to coordinate humanitarian efforts in Cambodia and along the border, while reiterating that friendly relations between every Southeast Asian country was essential for enhancing peace and stability in the region²¹², once again implying ASEAN's emphasis on ZOPFAN.

On the other hand, Rajaratnam's successor as Singapore's Foreign Minister, Suppiah Dhanabalan accused Vietnam of subtly trying to divide ASEAN²¹³. From the perspective of its members, ASEAN considered this to be the sovereignty violation of one of their own. Rajaratnam, now Deputy Prime Minister suggested that Vietnam should adopt a policy of even handedness towards the USSR and China, and that ASEAN had nothing to lose by waiting for Vietnam to withdraw²¹⁴. Meanwhile, the more moderate Indonesia preferred getting the UN involved at the earliest available opportunity. Once again, this highlights the importance of the UN to ASEAN's peace efforts since ASEAN needed outside help to solve the war. Thach stated Vietnam would withdraw from Cambodia once the Chinese threat was over²¹⁵, similar to the assurance he gave Hussein in January²¹⁶. Vietnam, despite ASEAN's fears, planned to withdraw at some point in the future. However, because of the timing of his statement, it did

²⁰⁹ *New Straits Times*, 24 April 1980.

²¹⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Joint Communique of the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, 25-26 June 1980.

²¹¹ *The Straits Times*, 24 June 1980 (This copy was obtained from the Malaysian National Archives, no photograph available to cite additional details).

²¹² *New Straits Times*, 26 June 1980.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000175W, Vietnam Volume 11.

²¹⁶ *New Straits Times*, 9 June 1980.

little to calm matters down since the incursion had already caused considerable alarm within ASEAN, bringing them together and making ASEAN a more coherent group.

Two months later, Vietnamese Information Minister Phan Hien said Vietnam was ready for dialogue with ASEAN to discuss peace and stability in the region as reported by Radio Hanoi according to Malaysian sources²¹⁷. This shows that Vietnam continued attempting a friendly stance towards ASEAN despite the apparent negative atmosphere in Southeast Asia which came about due to their incursion. Given the fact that Malaysia and Vietnam had positive relations at the time, it is understandable that Vietnam informed Malaysia of this idea though nothing came of it, which was an indication of how serious ASEAN took the incursion, even for the more moderate Malaysia who did not take Vietnam's suggestion seriously given how badly timed it was. The incursion galvanized ASEAN into committing to their goal of a Vietnamese withdrawal as they saw it as sufficient reason to fear Vietnam's presence in Cambodia.

ASEAN's Moves Towards The ICK August 1980-July 1981

On 17 August 1980, it was reported that at the UN General Assembly, Vietnam and Laos called for peace talks under their own UN resolution with the support of some other countries such as Cuba and Hungary which did not address Cambodia²¹⁸. This complicated matters for ASEAN, as Vietnam was prepared to come up with its own resolutions to challenge ASEAN at the UN. In response ASEAN tabled a draft resolution on the Cambodian problem at the UN which included guidelines for the Secretary General to continue his peace efforts²¹⁹. As the Cambodian problem continued to be discussed at the UN, in a statement, Filipino Foreign Minister Carlos Romulo, a noted anti-Communist and anti-imperialist²²⁰ said that ASEAN needed to study the Vietnamese proposal carefully²²¹. Romulo reiterated that while ASEAN was against Pol Pot's genocidal policies, it also wanted to defend the principles of

²¹⁷ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000795W ASEAN-INDOCHINA STATES RELATIONS VOL 2.

²¹⁸ *New Sunday Times*, 20 August 1980 (All copies of this newspaper are obtained from the Malaysian National Archives, no photograph available to cite additional details).

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Lisandro Claudio, 'The Anti-Communist Third World, Carlos Romulo and the other Bandung', *Southeast Asian Studies*, 4.1 (2024) pp.125-156 (p138).

²²¹ *New Sunday Times*, 30 August 1980.

the UN Charter, which included non-interference in domestic affairs and self-determination which had been broken by Vietnam²²². He criticized Vietnam's UN resolution as ignoring the root cause of the problem which was their occupation of Cambodia²²³. Because of this, he went on to say that Vietnam's proposals could not form a basis for a durable solution to the Kampuchean problem and the establishment of lasting peace and stability in Southeast Asia²²⁴.

ASEAN was not pleased that Vietnam tried to undermine its UN resolution and Romulo's response summarized how ASEAN felt the Vietnamese occupation had rendered Vietnamese arguments invalid as Cambodian independence had been undermined by Vietnam. ASEAN was emphasizing sovereignty violation because of the Vietnamese Occupation instead of Pol Pot's hostility towards Vietnam which meant a solution was not immediate.

Meanwhile Thailand was expected to draw attention to the Vietnamese incursion into its territory to highlight the existing threat to their security to the international community²²⁵. The cancellation of Lee Kuan Yew's visit to the USSR reinforced ASEAN suspicions of Soviet intentions²²⁶. Some sources stated that it was viewed by observers as a move by the Soviets to cut dialogue with ASEAN to permit Vietnam to launch another attack into Thailand.²²⁷ At the same time, ASEAN would explore Vietnam's offer to hold talks to reduce tension in the region²²⁸. However, this offer went nowhere due to fears of another Vietnamese attack, meaning for ASEAN, there was genuine concern that the war was spreading to its member, Thailand and thus ASEAN was cautious towards Vietnam and unwilling to consider the offer.

Ultimately ASEAN took the initiative in prompting a response to the Vietnamese occupation, but their goal was to provide the means for the Cambodian resistance to liberate Cambodia as evidenced at the beginning of November 1980 where Singaporean Foreign Minister Dhanabalan stated that ASEAN

²²² *New Sunday Times*, 30 August 1980.

²²³ National Archives of Singapore, ASEAN Newsletter February 1981, p.8.

²²⁴ *New Sunday Times*, 30 August 1980.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ *Ibid.*

²²⁸ *Ibid.*

could only suggest proposals but not implement them on behalf of the Cambodians²²⁹. He urged them to take the initiative to solve the Third Indochina War since the outcome of the conflict directly affected their future. Furthermore, ASEAN did not want to be involved militarily, only backing the Cambodian resistance for the sake of the values of the UN Charter and Bandung Conference²³⁰. Although ASEAN had reacted very strongly to the conflict, Dhanabalan's comments suggest that from ASEAN's perspective it was the Cambodians themselves who had to play the main role instead of ASEAN.

Also important to note was that in its response, ASEAN was not treating Vietnam as an enemy since it was pushing for Vietnamese neutralization. Vietnam would not have seen it in that way, as they continued to occupy Cambodia due to Vietnamese concerns about the Khmer Rouge. Evidence of ASEAN attempting a friendlier approach was displayed by Rithauddeen who said the ASEAN-backed Resolution for a framework of peace in Indochina was not anti-Vietnam in nature²³¹. Instead, it promoted peace for all Southeast Asian countries including Vietnam²³². ASEAN did not submit it with the intention of defending the Khmer Rouge, but to defend the concept of self-determination for Cambodia²³³, a view echoed by Tommy Koh years later²³⁴. Rithauddeen also made it clear that, Vietnam's future lay with a mutually beneficial relationship with ASEAN²³⁵. This highlights that ASEAN's solution aimed for both Vietnam and Cambodia to have friendly relations with ASEAN and be neutral in the Cold War, despite the hostile posture that some ASEAN members such as Singapore were taking towards Vietnam. ASEAN's goal, according to Rithauddeen was for the neutralization and disentangling of both Vietnam and an independent Cambodia from the Sino-Soviet split, which was in line with ZOPFAN.

In terms of political matters, ASEAN solidarity manifested because of the Third Indochina War which provided a political issue for ASEAN to rally around. This emphasizes its significance, as ASEAN continued to emphasize the resolution of this conflict for the entire decade. ASEAN Secretary-General,

²²⁹ *New Straits Times*, 8 November 1980.

²³⁰ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.36.

²³¹ *New Straits Times*, 8 November 1980.

²³² *Ibid.*

²³³ *Ibid.*

²³⁴ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

Narciso G Reyes provides evidence for this in a statement where he claimed that the Third Indochina War had strengthened the political cohesion and solidarity of ASEAN²³⁶. This suggests that the effects of the conflict on ASEAN itself could be seen in a positive instead of a negative way, at least politically due to the greater unity that resulted amongst its members.

One element to ASEAN's plans to liberate Cambodia was the formation of a coalition government. Since ASEAN were aware of Pol Pot's genocidal policies, changes were necessary for the internationally recognized Cambodian government to be considered acceptable²³⁷. In May 1980, Rajaratnam told former Khmer Rouge Minister of Social Affairs, Ieng Thirith that the Khmer Rouge could not garner sufficient support due to their poor reputation internationally. This showed Rajaratnam's awareness of the Khmer Rouge being problematic for the peace process despite his consistently hardline position towards Vietnam.

ASEAN was willing to keep their options open but focused on their main priority to resolve the Third Indochina War through negotiations. While ASEAN allowed individual members to continue dialogue with Vietnam, as an association it promoted the idea of a coalition and an international conference to avoid a Vietnamese *fait accompli*. Parties outside Southeast Asia took an interest in the Cambodian situation as shown when Soviet ally India proposed a regional conference between ASEAN and Indochina to solve the issue²³⁸. At the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting from 5 to 7 January 1981, ASEAN retained the Indian proposal as an option but decided against combining it with their International Conference proposal. This was because ASEAN was worried that this would give Vietnam an excuse not to attend or even the UN Secretary-General himself a reason not to convene it²³⁹. Singapore and Malaysia rejected a Soviet appeal for ASEAN to consider proposals by Vietnam, Laos and the PRK for a regional peace conference²⁴⁰ instead reiterating ASEAN's call to implement the UN resolutions on Cambodia.²⁴¹ Regarding regional conferences, Dhanabalan said the idea of "regional

²³⁶ National Archives of Singapore, ASEAN Newsletter 15 December 1980, p.15.

²³⁷ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

²³⁸ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.29.

²³⁹ *Ibid*, p.37.

²⁴⁰ *Malay Mail*, 25 February 1981.

²⁴¹ *New Straits Times*, 28 February 1981.

conferences should only be held at consultation level and could not be a substitute for the international conference”²⁴². This shows that ASEAN was willing to accept the idea but only to complement and not replace an international conference as ASEAN wanted a negotiated settlement for the war with the involvement of the three major powers of the USA, USSR, China and other countries playing major roles in the conflict. Later, Singapore and Malaysia agreed that the international conference could proceed without Vietnam’s participation²⁴³. Even without Vietnam, ASEAN felt that ideas reached during such a conference could prove beneficial to the eventual solution of the conflict later²⁴⁴. It also eventually enabled ASEAN to understand the views of outside parties better, as the later chapters will show.

Other parties outside ASEAN also suggested compromises. In his talks with the Vietnamese, UN representative Essafi said Vietnam appeared flexible but did not give a clear indication regarding a political settlement.²⁴⁵ He felt ASEAN’s proposal for an international conference and Vietnam’s preference for a regional conference was converging and both could be modified to pave the way for a compromise solution²⁴⁶. A press statement on 10 April 1981 from ASEAN’s side, however, stated that a regional conference was not appropriate to discuss the issue since the conflict had international dimensions referring to the involvement of the USA, USSR and China who had an interest in the conflict²⁴⁷. Given China’s direct involvement in the war in 1979 and its continued clashes with Vietnam throughout this narrative, this was true, though ASEAN treated China as an ally due to their shared goal of Vietnamese withdrawal. This can be considered further proof of ASEAN’s cohesion as they stuck to their preferred solution and refused to accept suggestions from outside parties, at least at this moment in time.

On 23 April 1981, ASEAN’s efforts received a boost when Sihanouk indicated support for an international conference, allowing for his involvement in the peace process.²⁴⁸ This was in line with

²⁴² *New Straits Times*, 28 February 1981.

²⁴³ *New Sunday Times*, 5 April 1981.

²⁴⁴ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

²⁴⁵ *New Straits Times*, 9 April 1981.

²⁴⁶ *New Straits Times*, 11 April 1981.

²⁴⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.37.

²⁴⁸ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000796W ASEAN-INDOCHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 3.

ASEAN's desire for a more internationally acceptable leader than Pol Pot and a coalition. ASEAN also wished that apart from their own representatives and those from Vietnam and the Cambodian factions, representatives from the UN Security Council members should attend the international conference to give credibility to decisions made there²⁴⁹. ASEAN wanted to garner as much support as possible for any proposed solution that such a conference could bring. On 23 May 1981, Vietnam responded to ASEAN's idea by stating that it would promote China's interests and outside interference in Cambodian affairs²⁵⁰. This effectively confirmed that Vietnam would not attend the conference, due to a fear of China, which originated from China's 1979 attack on Vietnam. ASEAN's reasoning to proceed was motivated by their determination to ensure a Vietnamese withdrawal though they were not yet fully aware of Vietnam's own concerns regarding the Khmer Rouge.

With Vietnam not attending, ASEAN focused on increasing international pressure and avoiding negotiations with Vietnam and the Soviets²⁵¹. ASEAN was unwilling to budge from its position of wanting an international conference and would not accept any alternatives. The ASEAN Standing Committee decided the conference would go ahead although Indonesia and Malaysia would continue dialogues with Vietnam to inform them of developments²⁵². Vietnam was said to respect Indonesia's position, allowing Indonesia to become ASEAN's interlocutor²⁵³. This is evidence of an ASEAN dual track policy since it was advantageous for them to keep all options open in the search for a solution.

Malaysia expected the conference to be the first in a series of meetings regarding ASEAN's solution to the Third Indochina War, since a single conference, especially without Vietnam and the USSR was insufficient²⁵⁴. Malaysia also hoped that as many countries as possible should attend to ensure most of the international community could support for ideas for a solution.²⁵⁵ Despite the tension in the region and Vietnam's refusal to join the ICK, ASEAN understood the importance of improving relations with

²⁴⁹ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000796W ASEAN-INDOCHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 3.

²⁵⁰ *New Straits Times*, 23 May 1981.

²⁵¹ The National Archives of the UK, Cambodian Conference Information Paper 13 April 1981 in FCO 15/2875, Cambodia: Discussions between ASEAN Countries.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

²⁵⁴ *New Straits Times*, 16 June 1981.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Vietnam, even during the war, since ASEAN wanted to encourage them to be more flexible about the Cambodian problem. This was the reason why ASEAN also planned to propose that a committee be set up to pursue future negotiations with Vietnam²⁵⁶. This shows that ASEAN did not want Vietnam to be excluded as its participation in the overall peace process was necessary.

The 1981 International Conference on Kampuchea

ASEAN was eventually able to hold the International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) in New York from 13 to 17 July 1981, attended by seventy-nine countries²⁵⁷. The ICK, largely driven by ASEAN, adopted a consensus declaration with no mention of disarming factions or establishing a Cambodian interim administration²⁵⁸. An ad hoc committee including Malaysia and Thailand was formed to find a comprehensive political settlement and advise the ICK President when to reconvene²⁵⁹. It laid down a framework for future negotiations among the parties involved in the war²⁶⁰. Importantly, both Thailand's and Vietnam's interests were considered by the ICK, as shown when ASEAN wanted to help Vietnam find an honourable way out instead of restoring the Khmer Rouge²⁶¹, thus addressing one of Vietnam's concerns which was the return of Pol Pot. Emphasizing the Cambodian role in solving the war²⁶², Rithauddeen regretted the absence of Vietnam and the USSR at the conference while Dhanabalan said the ICK would pave the way for an independent, nonaligned and neutral Cambodia²⁶³. In this sense, ASEAN was more of a facilitator rather than the final arbiter for a solution to the conflict though their role was still important in making sure the ICK went ahead. ASEAN's leading role in doing so, did however, contribute to its increasing coherence as an association.

The ICK's framework for a comprehensive political settlement included UN supervised free elections to provide Cambodians their right to self-determination²⁶⁴. It called for the dispatch of UN peacekeeping

²⁵⁶ *New Straits Times*, 18 June 1981.

²⁵⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.38.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.41.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² *New Straits Times*, 14 July 1981.

²⁶³ *New Straits Times*, 15 July 1981.

²⁶⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Joint communique of the 15th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, 14-16 June 1982.

forces to Cambodia to supervise withdrawal of foreign forces in the shortest time possible and disarming of all Khmer factions immediately after²⁶⁵, showing that ASEAN also wanted direct UN involvement to prevent any potential breakdown of law and order in Cambodia once the conflict was over as well as to prevent takeover from any faction by force in the aftermath. ASEAN would continue to adhere to this for several years until the conflict was eventually solved ten years later.

Malaysia supported the proposal for UN supervised elections to ensure a fair outcome that reflected the wishes of the Cambodian people.²⁶⁶ Rajaratnam added that the PRK or the People's Republic of Kampuchea government set up by Vietnam in Cambodia could participate in the planned elections which ASEAN wanted to be open to all Cambodian parties, to form a government after the war²⁶⁷. ASEAN showed flexibility regarding the PRK but not recognize them beforehand since this would be the equivalent of accepting a Vietnamese *fait accompli*.

Was the ICK ultimately a success? It was in the sense that kept the Cambodian problem alive as an issue in the international community and ASEAN managed to put together a reasonable framework for negotiations to Vietnam, while proving that they were not colluding with China and taking note of Vietnam's concerns²⁶⁸. However, it failed in its main goal as it did not end the war though it must be said this was expected given the fact that ASEAN opted to go ahead with the conference despite Vietnam and the USSR's refusal to attend. It nonetheless gave ASEAN a greater sense of credibility on the international stage after the failings of the previous decade, since they were the driving force of the ICK, and provided ASEAN with confidence to pursue peace efforts in the years ahead, thanks to the support they received from other countries at the ICK. The ICK framework would provide a basis for the solution that was eventually reached in Paris in 1991.

²⁶⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Joint Communique of the 14th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting 17-18 June 1981.

²⁶⁶ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000796W ASEAN-INDOCHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 3.

²⁶⁷ *New Straits Times*, 24 September 1980.

²⁶⁸ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.41.

Forming the CGDK

ASEAN acknowledged that neither the PRK or Khmer Rouge could maintain peace in Cambodia and new leaders were needed. Lee Kuan Yew told Suharto that it would be unfair to expect a solution where China or Vietnam lost face and the PRK and Khmer Rouge were both unacceptable.²⁶⁹ This led to the idea to form a coalition government made up of the Khmer Rouge, the KPNLF or Khmer People's National Liberation Front under former Prime Minister Son Sann and National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia or "*Front Uni National Pour Un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique, Et Coopératif*" (FUNCINPEC) led by Sihanouk. ASEAN decided that Sihanouk and Son Sann had to be brought in to assist with the liberation of their country despite Sihanouk having turned on the Khmer Rouge in January 1979²⁷⁰. Despite Singapore's hardline position towards Vietnam, this was evidence that Lee Kuan Yew understood that the Khmer Rouge would be ineffective in maintaining peace in Indochina, thus he understood Vietnamese concerns to a degree, but continued supporting Pol Pot for the sake of liberating Cambodia despite Vietnamese concerns.

On 4 September 1980, Lee Kuan Yew convinced the Thais that the de jure Cambodian head of state, Khieu Samphan, now Cambodian Prime Minister since December 1979, had to be replaced while Sihanouk and Son Sann had to get to centre stage within a year²⁷¹. At this point, ASEAN's focus was to pressure Vietnam to end their occupation of Cambodia even though ASEAN wanted a solution that was fair to Vietnam as well, while the CGDK's purpose was to ensure Sihanouk would take the lead from Pol Pot, under the assumption Vietnam would find Sihanouk acceptable as Cambodia's leader. It is important to note that Vietnam and Sihanouk had been on good terms with Vietnam during the Vietnam War as noted by Morris when he allowed the Vietnamese Communist forces to use Cambodia as a transshipment area²⁷². Thus, it was hoped that Sihanouk's return would compel Vietnam to return to the negotiating table, though as the thesis will show, this took much longer than initially anticipated.

²⁶⁹ *New Straits Times*, 9 July 1980.

²⁷⁰ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.49.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.36.

²⁷² Stephen J Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia, Political Culture and the Causes of the War*, (Stanford University Press, 1999) p.40.

On 5 February 1981, Rajaratnam unveiled the coalition plan backed by the USA and China. He also stated that ASEAN was not punishing Vietnam and promised economic aid for them if they withdrew from Cambodia²⁷³. Here Rajaratnam was trying to appear supportive from Vietnam's viewpoint instead of antagonistic, hoping to convince them to adopt a position more in line with that of ASEAN. By May 1981, the coalition plan was included in the Chairman's Statement at the conclusion of the Informal Meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in Jakarta. This statement mentioned that the Ministers "welcomed the efforts of the Kampuchean people in the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country in accordance with the principles of the United Nations."²⁷⁴ Once again, ASEAN's Foreign Ministers emphasized the principles of the UN Charter in its goal to solve the conflict and the coalition is central to this idea since it was planned for them to take the UN seat. Also important to note here was that even Rajaratnam with his hardline views, followed through with ASEAN's attempts to convince Vietnam to negotiate and withdraw shortly after the ICK.

On 4 September 1981, Sihanouk, Son Sann and Khieu Samphan agreed in principle to form a coalition government in the Singapore Joint Statement²⁷⁵. This was the first step to form what the CGDK or Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. ASEAN needed this to place Sihanouk or Son Sann at the forefront to remove the problem of supporting the Khmer Rouge. Hence ASEAN could no longer be accused of returning a genocidal regime to power as well as addressing Vietnamese concerns about Pol Pot's provocations towards them. ASEAN's role as a driving force behind a Cambodian coalition government was important here, when contrasted with American and Chinese support for the Khmer Rouge at the 1981 ICK, was one element which showed significant success in its response to war and its overall coherence which came about as a result.

ASEAN however continued to face criticism for including the Khmer Rouge in the coalition. Tommy Koh on ASEAN's behalf denied that ASEAN was paving the way for Pol Pot's return through the ICK²⁷⁶. He justified this by stating they had no choice but to include them because they were the most

²⁷³ *New Straits Times*, 5 February 1981.

²⁷⁴ National Archives of Singapore, ASEAN Newsletter, May 1981, p.15.

²⁷⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.56.

²⁷⁶ *New Straits Times*, 22 July 1981.

powerful in terms of military capability compared to the other coalition members in a pragmatic alliance for the sake of liberating Cambodia²⁷⁷, similar to ASEAN's relations with China throughout the Third Indochina War, which while putting ASEAN on one side in the conflict, was only to ensure Cambodia's liberation and not a deliberate hostile position towards Vietnam. It did however, mean that Vietnam did not attend the ICK and the war was prolonged as a result, meaning it failed in its overall aim, which was to be expected, and the war would continue for the remainder of the decade as ASEAN still needed to address the issue of the Khmer Rouge which would not come about until 1989 after various external factors which will be covered later such as changes in the Soviet government.

Some ASEAN members opted to provide support to the Cambodian resistance without confronting Vietnam militarily. After the ICK, Mochtar tried to avoid the impression that ASEAN was becoming more confrontational towards Vietnam, to maintain Indonesia's dialogue with them²⁷⁸. Singapore on the other hand, wanted countries supporting the Cambodian resistance to provide military aid²⁷⁹. ASEAN members had different views regarding arming the coalition, which was unsurprising as they wanted to avoid the risk of alienating Vietnam who they wished to continue to be involved in the search for peace. Nevertheless, ASEAN coherence was not significantly damaged since all ASEAN members aimed for a coalition to be formed.

Regarding this subject, Mochtar elaborated that individual ASEAN members could provide aid for the Cambodian resistance but not in the name of ASEAN as a group.²⁸⁰ He criticized Singapore for suggesting that ASEAN provide arms and even the type of aid the Cambodian resistance obtained varied by country²⁸¹. Malaysia did not provide military aid for the coalition with Malaysian aid only based on humanitarian grounds, though he would not object if other countries gave aid to the resistance in any form²⁸². It can be concluded that ASEAN members as a matter of policy, did not give aid in the name of the association, though some members would do so and the type of aid differed as each country

²⁷⁷ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

²⁷⁸ *New Sunday Times*, 13 December 1981.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *New Straits Times*, 16 December 1981.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² *New Straits Times*, 17 December 1981.

would only choose to give what they felt appropriate. ASEAN did manage to keep the CGDK afloat throughout the war despite this. Moreover, several outside powers had better military capabilities to assist the coalition than ASEAN did.

Malaysia's newly appointed Foreign Minister Ghazali stated that he knew several non-ASEAN countries willing to give military and financial aid to the KPNLF, meaning the coalition could obtain help from others outside the region which was what ASEAN members such as Singapore wanted anyway²⁸³. He added that some Khmer Rouge supporters backed a Third Force, led by the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC within the coalition and showed this by defecting to the KPNLF.²⁸⁴ This would undoubtedly please ASEAN as it would increase support for their desired solution to the conflict while also reducing support for the Khmer Rouge. More importantly, this would increase chances of Vietnam's concerns about the Khmer Rouge being addressed and thus, ASEAN pushed for the CGDK's formation.

Conclusion

For the first three years of the Third Indochina War, this chapter has shown that from the beginning, despite differing views within ASEAN over the question of Vietnam or China being a bigger threat to the region, ASEAN did have an overall preferred solution to the war which was a political one based on dialogue. This solution proved to be the starting point for greater ASEAN coherence. The ICK was important because it was the first in a series of events towards this. Although Vietnam did not attend, the ICK provided a framework for the comprehensive political solution that ASEAN would concentrate on achieving. The fact that ASEAN came together to organize the ICK was an early example of its newfound coherence. Since this framework had been internalized by ASEAN, they were prepared to state it to Vietnam once the Vietnamese were ready to negotiate.

The next course of action that ASEAN would take was the formation of the CGDK. This would unite resistance to the Vietnamese occupation and create an internationally acceptable government with

²⁸³ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

²⁸⁴ *New Straits Times*, 28 December 1981.

Sihanouk as its leader. This would facilitate ASEAN in the long run, as it would give the non-Communist Cambodian leaders a foothold in the Cambodian government, increasing chances of them replacing the Khmer Rouge in the planned UN supervised elections that ASEAN wanted, which had been responsible, not only for atrocities against the Cambodian people but provoking the war in the first place by attacking Vietnam. Sihanouk was seen as a suitable leader since he had been King of Cambodia from 1941 to 1955, during which Cambodia achieved independence from France, as well as somebody who Vietnam could work with thus it was hoped that all sides would be more willing to find a political solution with Sihanouk as Cambodia's leader.

In addition, the inclusion of the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC would improve the reputation of the internationally recognized Cambodian government while still including the Khmer Rouge, for its military strength. Non-Communist elements would be part of the CGDK meaning that the risk of the Khmer Rouge's genocidal policies returning after the war would be reduced especially if ASEAN's desired UN-supervised elections went ahead. ASEAN at this point, on the surface may have appeared to have taken steps to address Vietnamese concerns by bringing in KPNLF and FUNCINPEC but the war itself would continue until 1991, meaning the formation of the CGDK by itself was insufficient but it nevertheless provided a basis for a non-Khmer Rouge postwar Cambodian government.

With this, ASEAN's main rationale for reacting to the war the way that it did was primarily motivated by the internal security of its member states and the violation of Cambodian sovereignty and self-determination, key aspects of the UN Charter. This was especially relevant in the case of Cambodia, which unlike East Timor was a UN member state. Tommy Koh also mentions territorial integrity as another UN Charter principle that was key to ASEAN's response²⁸⁵. ASEAN wanted a Vietnamese withdrawal to improve the security situation in Southeast Asia and even cited other Communist threats such as the Second Malayan Emergency and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to emphasize their concerns about both internal and regional security further, in aid of preventing a Vietnamese fait accompli by denying Cambodia's UN seat, thus protecting Cambodia's right to self-determination

²⁸⁵ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

which itself was a key aspect of the UN Charter. Subsequently, ASEAN's push to convene the ICK proved beneficial for their standing as an international organization as they started to develop a greater coherence that they never had before. Though the ICK did not succeed in achieving its main goal due to Vietnam's absence, at least ASEAN managed to benefit from the conference from its own perspective, establishing their key position at the UN, which would remain for the rest of the decade. More importantly, the CGDK itself would provide the structure for the government of Cambodia which would emerge after the war, with the PRK replacing the Khmer Rouge, competing with KPNLF and FUNCINPEC in elections.

Chapter 3

A More Conciliatory Approach.

Introduction

After the 1981 Conference, the ASEAN states realized that the Cambodian resistance would need to be in a militarily and diplomatically stronger position to convince Vietnam to come to the negotiating table, prompting the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). The CGDK would occupy Cambodia's seat in the United Nations for the remainder of the Third Indochina War. This goal would further encourage ASEAN to become a more coherent organization as they were the driving force for the CGDK as well as the ICK. As seen in the previous chapter, ASEAN, in the aftermath of the ICK, took steps to encourage the formation of a coalition government, which would replace the Khmer Rouge as sole governing authority but still include them in coalition due to their military experience. This would address concerns ASEAN's allies had about the genocidal policies of the Khmer Rouge previously carried out by Pol Pot to an extent, as ASEAN was partially addressing Vietnamese concerns here. It would also enable, the former King of Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, and former Prime Minister, Son Sann, to play a larger role in resisting the Vietnamese occupation and to regain control over the country to prevent the Khmer Rouge returning to power, the preferred outcome for Vietnam and the international community. However, as will also be shown, this would not be enough to convince Vietnam to negotiate immediately as the Khmer Rouge were still members of the coalition.

The fact that the CGDK was eventually formed on 22 June 1982, despite the Khmer Rouge's initial rejection of the coalition idea on 18 February, highlights how ASEAN's method of carrying elements forward for further discussion proved beneficial in its attempt to solve the conflict since the process was eventually brought forward to the coalition's eventual formation. More importantly, the formation of the CGDK, like the holding of the ICK before it, proved to further strengthen ASEAN's coherence as an association as the war continued.

Ultimately this situation caused a slight change in ASEAN's strategy with the 1983 ASEAN Appeal for Kampuchean Independence, implying a more conciliatory approach to Vietnam by ASEAN aiming to find a way for Vietnam to withdraw while also addressing Vietnamese concerns. Ang writes that this was centred around self-determination via the UN supervised elections and Cambodian reconciliation in addition to a Vietnamese withdrawal. The Appeal would enable ASEAN to convey the message to Vietnam, that they would also be willing to address Vietnamese concerns with the hope that the UN supervised elections could prevent the Khmer Rouge from coming to power with national reconciliation assisting in this regard by putting Sihanouk in a stronger position within the coalition. A shift from the focus strictly on a Vietnamese withdrawal to also adding the prevention of the return to power of the Khmer Rouge in a comprehensive, political solution had now taken place with the Appeal. It also provides further evidence of ASEAN coherence as they were able to rally around another proposal for a solution. Like the ICK, the 1983 Appeal has not been covered in detail in books or journal articles regarding the Third Indochina War, though Ang Cheng Guan did briefly mention it in his work in 2013, presumably due to its perceived lack of success. Both the ASEAN Appeal and the formation of the CGDK was further evidence of ASEAN coherence since they were the driving forces of these just as they were for the 1981 ICK. This further allowed ASEAN to contribute to the peace process, though the war would not completely end just yet, though the key components of ASEAN's solution would become even more clear as a result.

Given the lack of coverage in books and articles regarding this point in the narrative, most probably due to no significant development in the peace process happening during this time, this chapter relies mostly on primary sources from the Malaysian and British archives, including *The New Straits Times* newspapers from Malaysian government files to draw up for an understanding of the years 1982 to 1984 in the narrative of ASEAN's goal to solve the Third Indochina War. For each year, the individual states will all be given separate sections in order to better understand their bilateral positions and how this influences ASEAN's overall perspective of the war.

The Formation Of The CGDK (1982-84) and the 1983 ASEAN Appeal For Kampuchean Independence

As mentioned before, talks regarding the arming of a future Cambodian Coalition government were already taking place towards the end of 1981. This meant as ASEAN entered the year 1982, the association's main concern was for a Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea to be officially proclaimed and recognized as Cambodia's internationally recognized government to occupy the country's seat at the United Nations which was already held by the Khmer Rouge under the name Democratic Kampuchea. This chapter will cover the years 1982 to 1984, highlighting the creation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and its first two years of existence. This chapter will also highlight the significance of the 1983 ASEAN Appeal for Kampuchean Independence as part of ASEAN's aim to solve the Third Indochina War. The ASEAN Appeal took a more conciliatory approach to the Vietnamese, emphasizing its importance to the narrative of solving the Cambodian conflict since at this point, ASEAN now realized the need for a friendlier approach to Vietnam to gain their cooperation in solving the Cambodian conflict and the ASEAN Appeal signalled a shift towards that position. The Third Indochina War, however, continued, proving that like with the ICK, the ASEAN Appeal alone was not sufficient for ASEAN's success though, elements of the eventual solution later reached in 1991 were included in the 1983 ASEAN Appeal.

As 1982 began, thanks to the Singapore Joint Statement, an agreement in principle between Sihanouk, Son Sann, Pol Pot and Khieu Samphan regarding the formation of a Cambodian coalition government, ASEAN made progress in its efforts to solve the Third Indochina War. Such actions would reduce the chances of international criticism resulting from restoring Pol Pot's regime and would also address Vietnamese concerns. However, while there were already talks between the ASEAN members and other countries regarding arming a Cambodian coalition government, the three groups were still in the process of forming the coalition as 1982 began. It seemed that the achievement of that goal proved more difficult than expected. This was important to ASEAN as they now realized a restoration of the Khmer Rouge to power would be unacceptable to Vietnam and the international community, hence the inclusion of the two non-Communist parties in the CGDK.

Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Rajaratnam was still in contact with the Khmer Rouge when on 27 January 1982, he stated the Khmer Rouge had not closed the door on efforts to form a coalition. This was because they had suggested further discussions about the matter, in particular regarding the concerns they had about the effectiveness of such a coalition, since the Khmer Rouge wanted well defined principles and rules for how a coalition government would operate.²⁸⁶ Malaysia interpreted this as good news and its Foreign Minister Ghazali Shafie stated his country was willing to help in whatever way possible to find a political solution to the Cambodian problem²⁸⁷. His Indonesian counterpart, Mochtar, while briefing British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Peter Carrington on the views of Indonesia and ASEAN on the Cambodian issue²⁸⁸ said the ball was in the Khmer Rouge's court, and that they had only rejected the loose coalition²⁸⁹ recommended by Singapore. Some ASEAN members like Singapore and Malaysia were also actively trying to move ASEAN's efforts forward in encouraging the formation of a coalition, hosting events such as the Singapore Joint Statement to bring Cambodian leaders together to encourage them to oppose the Vietnamese. This further contributed to ASEAN's development as an association.

One obvious bargaining tool ASEAN had in the process was the fight to keep the Khmer Rouge in occupation of Cambodia's UN seat. This was especially important since it indicates the need for ASEAN to understand Vietnamese concerns, and the rejection also proves that the Khmer Rouge could defy ASEAN at times, raising concerns about the Khmer Rouge's reliability as an ally. It also shows that like Vietnam, ASEAN itself had tensions with the Khmer Rouge at times. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad made a statement where he hinted that Malaysia would drop its support for the Khmer Rouge occupying Cambodia's UN seat if they continued to be an obstacle to the formation of a coalition government²⁹⁰. Malaysia and Indonesia then warned the Khmer Rouge that they would withdraw their support at the UN if they refused to make concessions to the other two parties planned to be in the Cambodian coalition, the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC²⁹¹. UN recognition was undoubtedly

²⁸⁶ *New Straits Times*, 27 January 1982.

²⁸⁷ *New Straits Times*, 28 January 1982.

²⁸⁸ *New Straits Times*, 29 January 1982.

²⁸⁹ *New Straits Times*, 28 January 1982.

²⁹⁰ *New Straits Times*, 3 February 1982.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

important to the Khmer Rouge and ASEAN mostly focused their efforts on enabling them to keep Cambodia's UN seat. Knowing this, Mahathir used it to threaten the Khmer Rouge's continued inflexibility. Since ASEAN proved to be the driving force allowing the Khmer Rouge to maintain external support in keeping the UN seat, Mahathir's threat to the Khmer Rouge suggests that there was a sense of dissatisfaction on his part as regards to the Khmer Rouge's inflexible position.

The Khmer Rouge initially rejected ASEAN's coalition idea²⁹². Despite this pushback, for the most part, ASEAN still aimed to solve the issue without being confrontational towards the Vietnamese, with the establishment of the coalition still high on its agenda. Dhanabalan was then selected to coordinate ASEAN policy regarding the matter²⁹³. Despite the Khmer Rouge's rejection, ASEAN wanted to maintain a helpful stance towards them as well as shown by their attempts to encourage its formation. Patience was needed but regardless, ASEAN would remain committed to their goal, despite this setback. Dhanabalan said ASEAN would not force their views on the Khmers but was prepared to assist them.²⁹⁴ By the end of the month, the outlook was encouraging for ASEAN as Dhanabalan felt that the Khmer Rouge was softening its stand on the coalition²⁹⁵. ASEAN tried to be friendly towards both Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge here, wanting to keep their comprehensive political solution of a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN supervised elections on track with a Cambodian coalition being part of this.

Despite the progress made towards a coalition, Vietnam did not appear to be wanting to change its view or to be more flexible. From ASEAN's perspective, as the aggressor through its occupation of Cambodia, Dhanabalan felt the Vietnamese had to come up with more proposals to solve the issue²⁹⁶. However, in May, Vietnam decided to send Thach to Indonesia and Singapore for talks regarding Cambodia²⁹⁷. This shows that Vietnam continued to communicate with ASEAN and in doing so, maintained a willingness for friendly relations, especially since one of the countries Thach was sent to was Singapore, ASEAN's most vocal critic of the war. It also shows that Vietnam did attempt to address

²⁹² National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ *New Straits Times*, 12 February 1982.

²⁹⁵ *New Straits Times*, 31 March 1982.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

ASEAN's concerns as well, but ASEAN, failing to detect any substance of a conciliatory position from Vietnam, remained concerned about Vietnamese and Soviet actions in the region. For instance, Vietnamese Vice Foreign Minister Vo Dong Giang denied that Soviet bases had been established at Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang²⁹⁸. This was an attempt to reassure ASEAN that there was no need to fear Soviet expansion which was what ASEAN members, especially Thailand and Singapore feared the most. However, the fact that the Soviets were allowed access to the facilities made this difficult to believe.

As Vietnam appeared to show little desire to compromise, Indonesia, as the largest and one of the most militarily powerful ASEAN members felt that they had to adopt a tougher line in order to encourage Vietnam to negotiate with the Cambodian resistance, in keeping with Indonesian ambitions to be a leader in the region. Indonesia warned Vietnam that ASEAN would form a military alliance if Vietnam continued to threaten the sovereignty of its members²⁹⁹. However, it should be noted that ASEAN never really considered this an option throughout the rest of the war. There was no acknowledgement of Vietnamese concerns yet as shown here in May 1982, though without a coalition, ASEAN would have judged its position, and that of the Cambodian resistance to be weaker relative to the Vietnamese so that is understandable.

As mentioned before in the previous chapter, after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, ASEAN now subscribed to the Singaporean interpretation of ZOPFAN³⁰⁰, which involved allowing all major powers into the region in order to achieve a balance of power. ASEAN felt the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia now gave the Soviets an unfair advantage over the others, in addition to the concerns regarding the violation of the UN Charter³⁰¹, which also motivated its response to the Third Indochina War. The reason for ASEAN's apparent pro-American position in the context of solving the Third Indochina War could be explained as part of their aim to use American influence to counter the Soviet-backed influence of Vietnam and the PRK in the hope of convincing Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia. Furthermore, this was also justified from ASEAN's viewpoint, acknowledging that ASEAN

²⁹⁸ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

²⁹⁹ *New Straits Times*, 20 May 1982.

³⁰⁰ Phillipe Regnier, *Singapore, City State in Southeast Asia*, (Hurst, 1987) p.219.

³⁰¹ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

was not militarily strong enough to do so on its own³⁰², taking advantage of its dialogue partner relationships to discuss steps to end the occupation with its major economic partners in international fora³⁰³.

Malaysia, having placed hope in the Khmer Rouge not outright rejecting a coalition in February, now aimed to encourage progress in keeping with ASEAN's policy of carrying elements of discussions forward to improve solutions to regional problems. Ghazali said Malaysia offered to host the summit of the three Khmer factions with no conditions³⁰⁴. This included substance of the coalition which suited their thinking, in an effort to follow up on the Khmer Rouge's desire for further meetings expressed at the start of 1982. Malaysian media reported that this showed that the Khmer Rouge did care about the opinion of the international community, and by offering to host this summit through Malaysia, ASEAN had shown the value of personal contacts rather than conventional meetings in order to solve the Third Indochina War. What this shows is that ASEAN's policy on maintaining dialogue, even with all three parties holding different views, proved to pay dividends in ASEAN's search for a comprehensive political solution to the conflict.

Difficulties were still present however, when on 10 June 1982, it was reported that there was still friction between ASEAN and China over the Khmer Rouge, frustrating Singapore and Malaysia³⁰⁵. Mahathir warned the Khmer Rouge not to take ASEAN's support for granted while Indonesia's Mochtar said that ASEAN should reciprocate any Vietnamese gesture that addresses their concerns³⁰⁶. It is important to note that Malaysia was a member of the ad hoc committee set up by the ICK so they would have had an important role in deciding the next course of action³⁰⁷. Malaysia's membership in the ad hoc committee explains why Mahathir was keen to take on a leading role in its aftermath. It is also important that Mochtar was still encouraging ASEAN to have a mutually beneficial relationship with Vietnam in

³⁰² The National Archives of the UK, British Embassy Letter Jakarta 1 May 1984 in FCO 15/3972 Ministerial visits from Indonesia to the Soviet Union.

³⁰³ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

³⁰⁴ *The Star*, 4 June 1980 (All copies of this newspaper are obtained from the Malaysian National Archives, no photograph available to cite additional details).

³⁰⁵ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

³⁰⁶ *New Straits Times*, 11 June 1982.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

the peace process here. Mochtar's involvement proves Indonesia's role in ASEAN was important to maintain an understanding with Vietnam despite the situation in 1982.

Taking Malaysia and Indonesia's positions into account, ASEAN saw the need to engage outside parties to help them solve the war. Ghazali Shafie hinted that the ASEAN members wanted western military support for non-Communist resistance forces in Cambodia, similar to the request that had been made at the end of 1981³⁰⁸. Military support from outside sources was needed to ensure the success of the coalition. In this sense, the only reason why ASEAN seemingly abandoned their professed neutrality was because of their aim to ensure a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia for which American support was required, as previously emphasized by Tommy Koh³⁰⁹ and Mochtar³¹⁰. Dhanabalan said Vietnam had to understand that the ICK which had been attended by ninety-three countries, proved the large extent to which most of the international community supported ASEAN's position³¹¹. In terms of the reaction of ASEAN's dialogue partners, it was said that Canada would not give arms while the European Economic Council agreed to give aid for development, but no arms³¹². Australia did not seem keen on supporting the Khmer Rouge, even if they were part of a coalition with non-Communist parties³¹³. The USA on the other hand, welcomed the coalition but would not supply arms, even to Sihanouk or Son Sann, even though Singapore and Malaysia wanted them to provide weapons to the coalition³¹⁴. This is evidence of a general reluctance³¹⁴ to provide arms to the Khmer Rouge, due to their previous genocidal policies. Ang does note however, that at this point, the Khmer Rouge was much stronger than Sihanouk or Son Sann's factions, and ASEAN realized the need to aid FUNCINPEC and KPNLF once the coalition was formed to strengthen the position of both non-Communist Cambodian resistance groups³¹⁵.

³⁰⁸ *New Straits Times*, 12 June 1982.

³⁰⁹ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

³¹⁰ The National Archives of the UK, British Embassy Letter Jakarta 1 May 1984 in FCO 15/3972 Ministerial visits from Indonesia to the Soviet Union.

³¹¹ *New Straits Times*, 14 June 1982.

³¹² National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

³¹³ *Ibid.*

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.62.

Singapore emphasized that the coalition would dissolve after a Vietnamese withdrawal, in time for UN conducted free elections. The Khmer Rouge rejected this despite Mahathir's earlier warning even though these elections had been included in the ASEAN-sponsored UN resolutions which had also been agreed to during the ICK³¹⁶. Some analysts pointed out that the coalition was a replacement and not a continuation for the Khmer Rouge's government, though they would still be a part of it due to their status as a resistance group against the Vietnamese Occupation³¹⁷. This was important since the presence of the Khmer Rouge would always be an issue to Vietnam and dissolving the coalition after the war would reduce their chances of coming to power. Vietnam was not quite convinced at this point and the Khmer Rouge's occasional defiance of ASEAN did not help matters.

ASEAN's work in forming the coalition improved its cohesion as a group and further established its credibility as a major player in Southeast Asian politics. Ghazali Shafie said that with the coalition, there was a legality to which any country wishing to help the resistance could channel their assistance in any form to make the internationally recognized Cambodian government viable. Apart from ASEAN, other countries aiming to end the Vietnamese occupation would be supporting a government led by Sihanouk instead of Pol Pot, which most of them preferred. Ghazali credited the formation of a Cambodian coalition to the encouragement of ASEAN's Foreign Ministers, particularly Dhanabalan and Siddhi³¹⁸. ASEAN's stance was that the coalition was to be formed on an equitable sharing of power to achieve ASEAN's aim of preventing the domination of the Khmer Rouge³¹⁹. Ghazali felt a solution to the Cambodian problem must also be honourable for Vietnam³²⁰, once again highlighting ASEAN's desire to address Vietnamese concerns and this was why ASEAN pushed for the dissolution of the coalition after a Vietnamese withdrawal to ensure fair elections, though this was not obvious to Vietnam just yet.

³¹⁶ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.62..

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ *The Star*, 19 June 1982.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

The Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) was officially formed on 22 June 1982 in Kuala Lumpur³²¹ for which the Khmer Rouge thanked ASEAN for their support³²². ASEAN's position had been strengthened for its comprehensive political solution. The coalition was important for ASEAN as it had changed the situation at the UN with most of the EC members voting for them to occupy the UN seat now occupied by the CGDK³²³. Ghazali Shafie pledged ASEAN's support to the CGDK, having played a key role in coordinating their efforts³²⁴. Ghazali hoped the CGDK would be a first step to a political solution to the conflict³²⁵. Singapore and Malaysia advocated for the CGDK to be given arms and material supplies. Thai Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda believed countries such as Australia, which dropped recognition of the Khmer Rouge, would change their minds if the CGDK proved to be successful and noted that Thailand was prepared to meet any fallout after its formation³²⁶. Clearly, Thailand, the frontline state, saw benefits in the formation of the coalition for their own security too. The proclamation of the CGDK took place on 9 July 1982 at an unidentified, neutral site, chosen by Thailand, near the Thai-Cambodian border³²⁷. This was because a proclamation on Cambodian soil instead of another country would be more effective in providing legitimacy to the CGDK. Due to the combined effort of all its members, such as Singapore hosting the Joint Statement and Malaysia hosting the formation of the CGDK, ASEAN deserved credit for its founding which contributed to ASEAN's own development and their preferred solution to the war.

Lee Kuan Yew informed Sihanouk that Singapore wanted to provide him with aid, and Sihanouk, not knowing what form such aid would take, would be thankful for whatever they could offer³²⁸. Mahathir warned the CGDK's leaders not to take ASEAN's support for granted, adding that ASEAN was not satisfied with the Khmer Rouge's uncompromising stand over concessions to the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC³²⁹. For Mahathir, the Khmer Rouge was still very dangerous even after the CGDK's

³²¹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.57.

³²² *New Straits Times*, 22 June 1982.

³²³ *New Straits Times*, 19 June 1982.

³²⁴ *New Straits Times*, 23 June 1982.

³²⁵ *The Star*, 23 June 1982.

³²⁶ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

³²⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.59.

³²⁸ *New Straits Times*, 23 June 1982.

³²⁹ *The Star*, 24 June 1982.

formation. The Americans shared this view too, since they refused to give aid to the CGDK due to its inclusion of the Khmer Rouge³³⁰. The fact that Sihanouk and the Americans had been on negative terms at certain points during the Vietnam War explains why his inclusion did not appear to have any effect on the American position for the time being³³¹. What should be noted here is that even after the CGDK's formation, ASEAN, like Vietnam, did mistrust the Khmer Rouge at times despite them being a key component of it.

Through Thailand, there was an instance of ASEAN offering direct help to the CGDK since the Thais were willing to give military aid to the CGDK, understanding the security situation better than most, especially since they had been backing the Khmer Rouge for the last two years in resisting the Vietnamese occupation.³³² Given the fact that Thailand and the USA had been allies since the Vietnam War, it can be assumed that Thailand could at least supply US-made arms to the Cambodian resistance. This would compensate for American reluctance to arm the CGDK, improving its chances of succeeding in the battlefield.

Singapore and Malaysia wanted Son Sann to assume leadership of the CGDK but unity among the three groups still proved elusive even after the coalition's formation³³³. This was an additional problem which ASEAN had to face in view of the great disparity in the personalities, outlook and programme of each faction's leaders as well as each faction's individual strength³³⁴. Lee Kuan Yew was keen on the CGDK becoming stronger in terms of unity before providing it with aid, as was Ghazali Shafie³³⁵. This could be seen as evidence that Singapore and Malaysia were willing to address Vietnamese concerns by placing Son Sann at the head of the CGDK, though this would never happen as ASEAN focused on the more charismatic Sihanouk instead of Son Sann which managed to achieve the same goal.

³³⁰ *New Straits Times*, 24 June 1982.

³³¹ Stephen J Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia, Political Culture and the Causes of the War*, (Stanford University Press, 1999) p.40.

³³² *New Straits Times*, 25 June 1982.

³³³ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

³³⁴ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013), p.60.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

By the end of the year there appeared to be better prospects for peace since China was now treating all factions in the CGDK as equals, not committing to favour one over the others³³⁶. There was more good news for ASEAN as it looked as though Vietnam was softening its tone on Sihanouk though not necessarily about the Khmer Rouge or CGDK so as a result, prospects for ASEAN's comprehensive political solution in Cambodia improved³³⁷. The CGDK appeared to have made a significant impact when the UNGA Credential Committee met on 6 October 1982 and accepted the CGDK's credentials as Cambodia's government without a vote for the first time, largely thanks to Sihanouk's presence³³⁸. This highlights how much Sihanouk was still held in high regard as a Cambodian patriot by the international community. His presence was helpful to ASEAN's cause, in addition to their usual intense lobbying efforts in the UN³³⁹. All this ensured ASEAN cohesion remained strong at the end of 1982.

The most important event in 1983 related to the Third Indochina War was the ASEAN Appeal for Kampuchean Independence released by Mochtar on 21 September 1983 in Jakarta. Mochtar again is shown to be taking the lead in ASEAN's attempts to find a solution. ASEAN's Foreign Ministers said the Appeal offered a reasonable basis for a comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia. The essential elements included were the total withdrawal of foreign forces, the exercise of self-determination and national reconciliation in Cambodia³⁴⁰. What was now significant here was that national reconciliation was being added to the ASEAN solution with the Appeal. This was an aim shared by Sihanouk as well³⁴¹. ASEAN believed that Cambodian national reconciliation would contribute to the security of its neighbours including Vietnam. ASEAN felt that the CGDK with Sihanouk as its head of state would not continue with Pol Pot's pre-war hostile foreign policy after the conflict. The ASEAN Appeal was significant because it marked ASEAN trying to take a more conciliatory approach to Vietnam with the emphasis on self-determination and national reconciliation indicating ASEAN's

³³⁶ *Asiaweek*, 3 December 1982 (All copies of this news magazine are obtained from the Bruneian National Archives, no photograph available to cite).

³³⁷ *Asiaweek*, 17 December 1982.

³³⁸ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.60.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Joint communique of the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, 9-10 July 1984.

³⁴¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Position and background brief for the eighteenth ASEAN ministerial meeting Kuala Lumpur, 8-9 July 1985 (political matters).

emphasis on replacing the Khmer Rouge as Vietnam wanted. No dialogue had taken place between Vietnam and ASEAN yet, but ASEAN now aimed for a solution that was acceptable to Vietnam with the Appeal providing a framework to reach that aim³⁴². The ASEAN Appeal was also evidence of greater ASEAN cohesion as the war continued. The lack of guarantees to prevent the Khmer Rouge from returning would continue to be an issue though, and the Appeal was unsuccessful as a result.

Hostility by China and Vietnam also remained a major obstacle in the search for peace that the ASEAN Appeal tried to emphasize. China wanted the Khmer Rouge to be ensured a place in the new Cambodian government which would be unacceptable to Vietnam who remained unconvinced by the ASEAN Appeal which failed to end the war³⁴³. Nevertheless, 1983 also saw an idea to reconvene the ICK, touched upon in the previous chapter, which can be interpreted as early moves towards dialogue amongst all the warring parties³⁴⁴. ASEAN believed that the Appeal was a step towards a successful solution and circulated it to the ad hoc committee of the ICK, the UN Secretary-General's special representative and to all UN permanent representatives in an attempt to highlight ASEAN's flexibility in the search for a solution³⁴⁵. The ASEAN Appeal refocused international attention on the need to establish self-determination of the Cambodian people via the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia and restoration of Cambodian independence, elements that would be repeated in other ASEAN peace efforts after 1983.

With the ASEAN Appeal now into the picture, the bilateral positions of each of the three states being focused on will now be considered. Since the ASEAN Appeal was supposed to have indicated a more conciliatory position from the group itself, it is important to take into consideration if the ASEAN states of this thesis's focus, reflected this general idea of being more conciliatory.

³⁴² The National Archives of the UK, "An Appeal for Kampuchean Independence" 21 September 1983 in FCO 15 3627 Cambodia ASEAN relations.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ The National Archives of the UK, MYTELNO54, Telegram, March 1983 in FCO 15 3433 ASEAN Vietnam talks on Cambodia.

³⁴⁵ The National Archives of the UK, United Nations Letter dated 21 September 1983 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General in FCO 15 3627 Cambodia ASEAN relations.

Malaysia: Not Anti-Vietnam But Anti-Communist

Malaysian foreign policy continued to be dominated by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad instead of his foreign minister, Ghazali Shafie³⁴⁶. With this, Malaysia would remain firmly anti-Communist, and it is a sign of their commitment to this principle that the USSR and its allies were generally given short shrift in their attempts to win favour with Malaysia while links with the West remained strong despite Mahathir's criticisms of them³⁴⁷. Mahathir's attitude was unlikely to drastically affect ASEAN's position regarding the Third Indochina War, if at all. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Malaysia's response was conditioned by adherence to ASEAN's ZOPFAN Declaration, which itself was Malaysian in origin, even as ASEAN adopted Singapore's interpretation of ZOPFAN after the Cambodian conflict broke out³⁴⁸. ASEAN would continue to be Malaysia's main consideration for foreign policy decisions made regarding the Third Indochina War with Malaysian ideas never detracting from ASEAN's solution.

The Malaysians informed the Singaporeans that they were still supporting the idea of a coalition when the Khmer Rouge showed continued inflexibility in 1982³⁴⁹. They also emphasized the point about the Khmer Rouge testing ASEAN's patience since Malaysia felt the Khmer Rouge needed ASEAN's support more than ASEAN needed to support them.³⁵⁰ They also reminded Singapore that Malaysia would not stand for either Vietnamese or Chinese aggression³⁵¹. By repeating these points, the Malaysians reminded the Singaporeans that a comprehensive political solution had to be found, and ASEAN should not delay this for any reasons whatsoever. It is important to note in this statement that Malaysia was critical of all Communist sides, both China and Vietnam as well as the Khmer Rouge, demonstrating a sense of neutrality regarding the Sino-Soviet split, similar to Indonesia in the previous chapter. While this suggests divisions between the ASEAN members in terms of approach, both Malaysia and Singapore were committed to the formation of the coalition and ASEAN solidarity was

³⁴⁶ The National Archives of the UK, British High Commission Letter 15 June 1983 in FCO 15/3556 Malaysia's Foreign Policy.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Phillipe Regnier, *Singapore, City State in Southeast Asia*, (Hurst, 1987) p.219.

³⁴⁹ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

not badly affected, though Malaysia reacted more harshly to the Khmer Rouge's delaying tactics than Singapore did.

On 18 February 1982, Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Musa Hitam recapitulated the importance of ZOPFAN to prevent foreign intervention, urging all Cambodian faction leaders to find a speedy solution for peace in the country³⁵². Malaysia could not accept any action which could lead to big power rivalry in the region thus threatening among other things, peace and stability which would disrupt Malaysia's goal to strengthen national resilience which would contribute towards regional resilience. This was related to the fact that Malaysia was a strong supporter of the Non-Aligned Movement, a major reason for its continuing commitment to ZOPFAN as well. Because of its position in NAM, Malaysia maintained diplomatic relations with the major Communist nations of China, Vietnam and USSR at the same time despite the severity of the situation in Indochina³⁵³. A lot of the rationale repeated by Musa was consistent with ZOPFAN's aim to prevent big power rivalry and foreign intervention which would affect the ASEAN members. This allowed Malaysia to remain friendly with Vietnam while being committed to ASEAN's united position.

Mahathir hailed the summit of the Cambodian leaders which led to the CGDK as a successful Malaysian government effort saying the coalition could lead to a political solution in line with the ASEAN backed UN resolutions³⁵⁴. However, Mahathir also said that Malaysia would not extend military aid to the coalition because they did not want to interfere in military affairs in Cambodia³⁵⁵. The Malaysians felt that the stalemate in Indochina was inherently unstable and would suit all parties concerned except ASEAN³⁵⁶. Thus, a solution to the conflict was required to assure ASEAN's long-term stability and security³⁵⁷.

³⁵² *New Straits Times*, 18 February 1982.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ The National Archives of the UK, "A National Settlement, Thinking The Thinkable 20 January 1984" from FCO 15/3557 Malaysia's foreign policy.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Sources at the British archives indicate that Malaysia, whilst preferring a neutral, non-aligned regime in Cambodia, was likely prepared to accept a solution where Cambodia would be under Vietnamese influence reinforcing the buffer which Vietnam already provided between China and Southeast Asia. Hopes also existed of such an alignment opening the way to the development of economic and political relations between ASEAN and the Indochinese bloc³⁵⁸. Malaysia's general position at that time was that a political solution was essential and that the sort of component elements to a political solution which ASEAN was aiming for had to be consistent with ICK principles, highlighting Malaysia's commitment to the ICK just like the rest of ASEAN³⁵⁹. In the end, the assumption that Malaysia would come to an accommodation with Vietnam was proven wrong as Malaysia continued to maintain its commitment to the general ASEAN position throughout the conflict.

Malaysia was still concerned about China because of continued Chinese support for the Malayan Communist Party despite the closing down of the MCP's radio station in Southern China³⁶⁰. Hence even though Malaysia and China established relations in 1974, they were not on good terms due to the ongoing Second Malayan Emergency which gave Malaysia reason to still fear China. The establishment of relations between the two countries did not seem to change this for the time being³⁶¹. At this point, the Malaysians were also looking for improvements in Sino-Soviet relations, as this would be a major factor in deciding how the Third Indochina War would play out. By 6 October 1983, there was an improvement in Malaysia's security situation due to the marked decline in moral support from China to the MCP³⁶². This was likely because the two insurgencies in West and East Malaysia both declined over time as a result, potentially improving Malaysia's perception of China which contributed to ASEAN's success.

³⁵⁸ The National Archives of the UK, "A National Settlement, Thinking The Thinkable 20 January 1984" from FCO 15/3557 Malaysia's foreign policy.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid.

In terms of Malaysia's relations with the USSR, on 20 April 1983 there was an anti-Soviet protest in Kuala Lumpur³⁶³. Even as the Second Malayan Emergency was ongoing, the USSR were distrusted just as much as China by Malaysians. On 10 May 1983, the USSR worsened matters by threatening to support insurgencies such as the MCP in response to ASEAN's support for the CGDK. The Malaysian press reported that the Soviet threat to ASEAN would be opposed to the last³⁶⁴. This was an indication of how Malaysia felt about the USSR, distrusting them even though Malaysia, as mentioned before saw China as the bigger threat between the two Communist powers. It can therefore be inferred that the Malaysian people were anti-Communist in general, regardless of where the source of Communist support came from, and thus, for the Malaysian public neither China nor the USSR could be trusted. Malaysia, realizing it was no match for Vietnam also continued to support the Five Power Defence Agreements which included Singapore, Australia, the UK and New Zealand as a useful deterrent against Vietnam³⁶⁵. Malaysia under the leadership of Mahathir and Musa Hitam, was unlikely to drop its guard given the Soviet threats mentioned earlier³⁶⁶. This effectively meant that any hope that Malaysia would come to an accommodation with Vietnam and break away with ASEAN would never happen.

All this evidence suggests that Malaysia was still taking a cautious position towards Vietnam and the USSR since Malaysia was still suspicious of them. This was altogether not surprising since ASEAN was still aiming for a softening of the Vietnamese/Soviet position by 1983, and it is important to take Malaysian's commitment to a more coherent ASEAN into account. It also shows how Malaysia was as constructive as possible to the further strengthening of ASEAN even in 1983.

Indonesia: ASEAN's Interlocutor

Like Mahathir, Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar felt ASEAN's priority regarding the Third Indochina War in 1982 was to help the Cambodians in the formation of the CGDK³⁶⁷. Being the

³⁶³ The National Archives of the UK, Information Paper in FCO 168-6095 Information Department: press operations in Malaysia; Soviet threat to support insurgents in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ *The Star*, 20 June 1982.

interlocutor, it made sense for Indonesia to have this point of view. Mochtar also admitted it would be necessary to hold talks with Vietnam to understand their views on the Cambodian issue, but he continued to rule out dialogue between ASEAN and Vietnam, Laos and the PRK as two separate groups which Vietnam would have preferred³⁶⁸. Mochtar did however, also point out that ASEAN recognizes that every country in the region has security concerns³⁶⁹. This was because as the interlocutor, he tried to convince Vietnam that ASEAN understood their concerns, though in 1983, Vietnam was not prepared to believe ASEAN just yet, since the ASEAN Appeal did not fully address their concerns.

By 1983, Indonesia, due to Vietnam's friendly view of them, was firmly established as the ASEAN interlocutor, becoming the main channel of communication between ASEAN and Vietnam which also highlights their importance during the narrative. Indonesia's position by that time was showing diplomatic support for the CGDK out of solidarity with fellow ASEAN members but not sending any military aid³⁷⁰. This was because they still did not want to jeopardize their role as interlocutor which was also important to ASEAN's efforts of solving the Third Indochina War, whereby at least one of their member states was communicating with Vietnam directly throughout the conflict.

Singapore: Continued Tensions In 1983

In contrast to Malaysia and Indonesia, Singapore was less favourable towards Vietnam and continued to pressure them to end the occupation. Singapore even tried to encourage more outside help for ASEAN in this regard as evidenced in January 1983 when Lee Kuan Yew attempted to convince Japan to increase its military strength due to his fears of increased Soviet military power³⁷¹. Lee Kuan Yew believed that Japan, like the USA, could oppose the USSR in Southeast Asia. He also wanted a stable balance of power amongst three groups, the USA and Japan, on one side, allied with each other, and China and the USSR, each grouped separately, akin to what had been emphasized by Regnier³⁷². An analysis of Lee Kuan Yew's grouping of China as separate from Japan and the USA suggests that he still viewed China

³⁶⁸ *The Star*, 20 June 1982.

³⁶⁹ *New Sunday Times*, 27 June 1982.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid*.

³⁷¹ The National Archives of the UK, British High Commission Singapore letter "Lee Kuan Yew's Interview with Asahi Shimbun" in FCO 15/3536 Foreign Policy of Singapore.

³⁷² Phillipe Regnier, *Singapore, City State in Southeast Asia*, (Hurst, 1987) p.219.

as a threat, though not with the same level of concern that Malaysia and Indonesia did. The fact that he did however, does suggest a coherence of views with them as fellow ASEAN members.

Although the CGDK had already been formed by 1983, Lee Kuan Yew still felt that ASEAN needed outside help against the USSR and Vietnam. An increasingly strong non-Communist Japan would be useful for ASEAN and Cambodia's protection, and since Japan was already an ASEAN Dialogue Partner, this would not be difficult to achieve since economic relations between ASEAN and Japan were already firmly established. Singapore was now aiming for Japan to assist in ASEAN's efforts to solve the Third Indochina War. This was in keeping with the Singaporean interpretation of ZOPFAN as explained by Regnier, with Japan being considered a major power in Lee Kuan Yew's grouping as mentioned above. It can also be interpreted as Singapore not being fully confident that ASEAN could succeed in solving the conflict without outside help.

Lee Kuan Yew also said that as long as Vietnam was unable to win the conflict, the rest of Southeast Asia would be free from Communist subversion and added that with an independent and non-Communist Thailand, China would not be a threat to Singapore³⁷³. This statement indicates that he was downplaying the Chinese threat due to China's closeness to Thailand, allowing the Thais to be a more effective "buffer" to protect Singapore. With the MCP and PKI, both supported by China, increasingly on the decline as evidenced earlier in the section on Malaysia for example, there was a high chance that Lee Kuan Yew's statement was true, as China, now increasingly closer to ASEAN, would have less reason to support either. Thus, Vietnam and the USSR could have been the only feasible allies for both parties, and with Vietnam continuing to be bogged down in Cambodia, it would reduce the MCP's and PKI's already low chances of obtaining aid from them. In turn, ASEAN could count on China, as well as Japan, as an ally for more external help to end the Third Indochina War.

With all this it can be concluded, that understandably, Singapore led by Lee Kuan Yew like Malaysia under Mahathir, continued to take a hardline position towards the USSR in 1983 since events that year were not encouraging for the improvement of relations. On the whole, as Tommy Koh's describes,

³⁷³ TNA, British High Commission Singapore letter "Lee Kuan Yew's Interview with Asahi Shimbun" in FCO 15/3536 Foreign Policy of Singapore.

Singapore-Soviet relations were correct but lacked substance³⁷⁴, meaning they were not broken off, but continued to be filled with tension, just as they had been since the outbreak of the war in 1979. Overall, taking Singapore, Malaysia and even Indonesia's positions into account, it can be concluded that ASEAN's reaction to the war was motivated by fears regarding their internal security linked to fear of the USSR.

Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia And The Non-Aligned Movement In 1983

The NAM was a key battleground for ASEAN and in particular, its three members within the movement at the time, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. The NAM constituted a large number of UN members and thus, it was vital for ASEAN to get as much support as it could for its position from the NAM. Their tireless efforts proved vital in ASEAN obtaining support at the UN every year, as well as to counter Vietnam's own efforts to gain support from the NAM. In particular, the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit in New Delhi from 7 to 11 March 1983 deserves emphasis here³⁷⁵. Singapore aimed to reverse a prior decision by the NAM at a previous meeting in Havana in September 1979 to remove the Khmer Rouge from the movement at the prompting of Cuba, the then host.³⁷⁶ Rajaratnam felt this meeting was an opportunity to steer the NAM back to its initial non-aligned stand which he believed was important for them going forward as he felt allowing the Vietnamese backed PRK to join would imply a pro-Soviet stance. During the meeting, Rajaratnam circulated a pamphlet titled "Havana and New Delhi, What's The Difference" to argue against this decision³⁷⁷. Sources at the British archives described the pamphlet as a frontal attack on Cuba's perversion of the movement, particularly as regards their handling of the Havana Summit, when the Democratic Kampuchean delegation was excluded³⁷⁸. This was because a loss of support for the CGDK at NAM would potentially have a negative impact on ASEAN's solution since it could result in the CGDK losing significant support in the UN.

³⁷⁴ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 30 November 2022.

³⁷⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.60.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ The National Archives of the UK, British High Commission Singapore letter/telegram 21 June 1983 titled Non-Aligned Summit from FCO 15/3536 Foreign Policy of Singapore.

Rajaratnam also attacked the NAM's reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia³⁷⁹. Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was angered at the terms in which the pamphlet discussed India's foreign policy and attitude to the movement as well as questions it posed regarding whether India could be relied upon to exercise the right moral choice in the trade-off between diplomatic expediency and principle³⁸⁰. She also felt that Rajaratnam spoke condescendingly about what he called India's "modest but creditable attempt to resist Cuba's attempts to steer the NAM in a pro-Soviet direction"³⁸¹. In the end, twenty-eight countries supported ASEAN's position, nineteen supported the PRK and twelve favoured leaving the seat vacant³⁸². This shows that several members supported ASEAN but despite this, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia were unsuccessful in getting the Khmer Rouge back into the NAM.

However, since the seat was left vacant, they were at least able to prevent the PRK joining the NAM, despite the host country, India recognising the PRK over the Khmer Rouge. Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia succeeded in preventing the PRK from obtaining legitimacy in the NAM despite Vietnam, Cuba and India's efforts to do so. This prevented the PRK from obtaining a valuable source of votes for future UN General Assembly meetings. ASEAN then continued with its successful attempts to keep the CGDK seated in the UN from the remainder of the war. This contributed to ASEAN coherence as well since the three states worked as one unit in the NAM.

1984: Stalemate And Sihanouk's Visits To ASEAN Countries

With the CGDK entering its second full year of existence, Norodom Sihanouk, now back into his role as the internationally recognized Cambodian head of state as accepted by the UN, visited the ASEAN states around this time. The visits seemingly emphasized how firmly Sihanouk was behind ASEAN's efforts to solve the war, even suggesting attempts at improving relations between the CGDK and Vietnam, despite Vietnam's refusal to recognize the CGDK. Sihanouk's attitude towards Vietnam here

³⁷⁹ The National Archives of the UK, British High Commission Singapore letter/telegram 21 June 1983 titled Non-Aligned Summit from FCO 15/3536 Foreign Policy of Singapore.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.61.

suggests that at this point, he had similar views to the ASEAN leaders, attempting to appear friendly to Vietnam and supporting ASEAN's efforts. Despite this, it is important to note that the Khmer Rouge remained the strongest Cambodian faction on the battlefield, even though Sihanouk was now the officially recognized leader instead of Pol Pot³⁸³.

At a press conference at Manila Airport on 12 March 1984, Sihanouk said that ASEAN was helping him to search for a solution, but Vietnam rejected all of ASEAN's proposals³⁸⁴. Sihanouk indicated that he wanted either another international conference as a follow up to the 1981 ICK, this time involving Vietnam or direct negotiations between Vietnam and the CGDK³⁸⁵. He also added that the CGDK was ready to sign a treaty of peace and friendship with Vietnam but for the time being there was a deadlock. The Cambodian resistance was more successful than the year before, achieving penetration into areas under Vietnamese and PRK control³⁸⁶. The fact that the genocidal Khmer Rouge was the most successful in this regard, would not have been encouraging to ASEAN since they, like Vietnam, mistrusted the Khmer Rouge.

As established earlier in the chapter, Indonesia had been serving as ASEAN's interlocutor to Vietnam. Benny Murdani, the Commander of the Indonesian military was communicating to Vietnam, as part of Indonesia's dual track policy to solve the issue³⁸⁷. Indonesia was able to continue as ASEAN's interlocutor for the remainder of the war despite confusion created by its dual track position. At a news conference, Sihanouk welcomed all efforts made by what he called friendly people including former Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Adam Malik to help solve the Cambodian problem³⁸⁸. He added that he felt that Adam's idea of a meeting between China, the USSR and Vietnam regarding Cambodia, similar to his own ideas would be good for peace³⁸⁹. This explains why despite Murdani's earlier actions, Sihanouk had good reason to believe Indonesia was still on his side since others in the Indonesian

³⁸³ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.62.

³⁸⁴ TNA, "Gist of Airport Press Conference of Prince Norodom Sihanouk President of CGDK" 16 March 1984 in FCO 15/3891 Visits by Prince Norodom Sihanouk to ASEAN countries.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.73.

³⁸⁸ The National Archives of the UK, Prince Sihanouk's Press conference at Changi Airport on departure from Singapore in FCO 15/3891 Prince Sihanouk's visit to ASEAN countries.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

government were helpful towards him. In discussions with Acting Filipino Foreign Minister Collantes on the 7 March 1984, Sihanouk reiterated his support for Indonesia's efforts as the interlocutor between Vietnam and ASEAN³⁹⁰. On 20 February 1984, when a reporter brought up the fact that Benny Murdani had said that Vietnam was not a threat to ASEAN, Sihanouk pointed out that Indonesia gave the CGDK humanitarian aid just as they promised back in 1982³⁹¹. This proved that Indonesia did not depart from the ASEAN position despite Murdani's statement.

When Collantes asked Sihanouk if he would accept Vietnamese participation in an international peacekeeping force for Cambodia, Sihanouk replied that the CGDK would prefer a neutral commission without Vietnam and the USSR showing Sihanouk clearly harboured suspicions of them³⁹². Later in a call with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, he revealed that some ASEAN countries had offered to train Cambodian cadets though he did not reveal which of them made these offers, while adding that several Cambodians had already undergone guerilla training by that time³⁹³. Apart from humanitarian aid and diplomatic support, some ASEAN members were in fact, assisting the CGDK with military training, a departure from what had been suggested in 1982, when some members such as Malaysia, refused any military support as this had been equated to military interference, thus compromising ASEAN's professed neutrality³⁹⁴. At this point, ASEAN's interpretation of neutrality in this specific context meant avoiding the direct involvement of the military forces of its member states but giving military aid to the resistance would not compromise this in their view as they needed Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia.

At another press conference, this time at Changi Airport when leaving Singapore on 20 February 1984, Sihanouk even implied tensions between the component parties in the CGDK, the Khmer Rouge on one side and Son Sann's KPNLF and his own FUNCINPEC on the other³⁹⁵. But he also stated that he was

³⁹⁰ The National Archives of the UK, Prince Sihanouk's Press conference at Changi Airport on departure from Singapore in FCO 15/3891 Prince Sihanouk's visit to ASEAN countries.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ National Archives of Malaysia, File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4.

³⁹⁵ TNA, Prince Sihanouk's Press conference at Changi Airport on departure from Singapore in FCO 15/3891 Prince Sihanouk's visit to ASEAN countries.

successful in getting FUNCINPEC and the KPNLF to unite³⁹⁶. At the very least, Sihanouk's successful efforts to promote unity between both his and Son Sann's parties were beneficial for ASEAN's aim of a stronger coalition as it at least ensured greater unity which would allow the CGDK to function more effectively compared to the years before.

Overall, as Sihanouk emerged as a key player in the peace process, in 1984 he adopted a pro-ASEAN stance, supportive of efforts made by key individuals within ASEAN such as Adam Malik, and ASEAN dialogue partners like Australia and Belgium as well, while adopting ASEAN's attempts at being conciliatory towards Vietnam. This suggests that he was firmly supporting ASEAN's position, unsurprisingly because ASEAN's efforts enabled him to obtain a leading position in the Cambodian resistance.

While Sihanouk's visit to Singapore implied tensions between the Khmer Rouge and the other parties even two years after the CGDK's formation, within ASEAN itself, there were also differences between the member states, which ended up prolonging the Third Indochina War. As well be shown in the next two sections below, some members had viewpoints of the war which were at the very opposite ends of the spectrum, as evidenced by the interlocutor Indonesia and the far more hardline Singapore.

Singapore's Relationship With The USSR 1984: Correct But Lacking Substance

In Singapore's case, by 1984, both Lee Kuan Yew and Rajaratnam had not visited the USSR since outbreak of the Third Indochina War³⁹⁷. As Singapore was Vietnam's most fierce critic within ASEAN, this reflects how much of a threat Singapore viewed the Soviets at the time. A combination of the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia and their incursions into Thailand along with the USSR's invasion of Afghanistan helped solidify Singapore's negative views of Vietnam and the USSR as a threat to Singapore's security as a sovereign state³⁹⁸.

³⁹⁶ TNA, Prince Sihanouk's Press conference at Changi Airport on departure from Singapore in FCO 15/3891 Prince Sihanouk's visit to ASEAN countries.

³⁹⁷ The National Archives of the UK, Singapore Soviet Relations information paper 27 August 1980 in FCO 15/3919, Political relations between Singapore and the Soviet Union and Eastern European Countries.

³⁹⁸ The National Archives of the UK, Unofficial Transcript, The Prime Minister's Meeting with the Press, Istana Jogjakarta in FCO 15/2674 Singapore Foreign Policy.

In addition to this, according to sources at the British archives, the arrest of Alan Wee, a cypher officer or translator at the Singaporean Embassy in the USSR who passed secrets to a Soviet agent named Luba Lobov Maluba caused Singapore to reassess the nature of the Soviet threat and their appropriate response to it³⁹⁹. Despite that, Singapore took no retaliatory action against the Soviets in response. It should be noted that cases of espionage by the USSR were common in neighbouring Malaysia as well⁴⁰⁰, due to the domination of both countries Communist parties, Malaysia's Malayan Communist Party, North Kalimantan Communist Party and Singapore's Barisan Sosialis by China-influenced Communists. Espionage was one of the only ways in which the USSR could have any influence in the Singaporean and Malaysian Communist movements, and the fact that one of them was caught as illustrated by the Alan Wee case, only increased suspicions of the Soviet and thus, Vietnamese threat to the security of Singapore and ASEAN as a whole.

Overall, a combination of numerous events, including the Third Indochina War, meant that relations between the USSR and Singapore were still not positive in 1984 similar to the year before. As proven by the Thirteenth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1980⁴⁰¹ and Lee Kuan Yew's interview with the ASEAN Newsletter in March 1981⁴⁰², Singapore and ASEAN's apprehension of Vietnam were linked to its alliance with the USSR who Lee Kuan Yew feared was aiming to dominate Southeast Asia⁴⁰³. The Alan Wee spying incident and Soviet and Vietnamese aggressive foreign policy helped solidify this view further from Singapore's perspective. Not all ASEAN states still maintained suspicions by 1984 however, as shown below, Indonesia became more open to communicating with Vietnam than before, meaning some of them did not take a hardline position towards Vietnam and the USSR, allowing the general ASEAN position to be balanced out.

³⁹⁹ *New Nation*, 25 March 1980 (All copies of this newspaper are obtained from the Malaysian National Archives, no photograph available to cite additional details).

⁴⁰⁰ K.S. Nathan, Malaysia and the Soviet Union, A Relationship with a Distance, *Asian Survey* 27.10 (1987) pp.1059-1073 doi: 10.2307/2644845.

⁴⁰¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Joint Communique of the 13th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, 25-26 June 1980.

⁴⁰² National Archives of Singapore, ASEAN Newsletter, March 1981, p.8.

⁴⁰³ National Archives of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew's interview with Amir Daud, and Zulkiefly Lubis, Journalists of TEMPO on 27 June 1980.

Indonesia: Continued Communication With Vietnam

At this point, according to Ong Keng Yong, Indonesia under Suharto from 1984 onwards was placing more emphasis on the NAM instead of ASEAN wanting to be one of its leaders⁴⁰⁴. However, it mostly stuck to the general ASEAN position agreed upon at the ICK, just as every ASEAN member would, throughout the narrative despite differing bilateral stances, to the surprise of the Vietnamese. Vietnam and the USSR continued to interact more often with Indonesia due to its role as interlocutor.

While giving a briefing to the British Embassy in Jakarta regarding talks with Soviet Foreign Affairs Minister Andrei Gromyko during a visit to the USSR from 1 to 4 April 1984, Mochtar made it clear that ASEAN's long-term strategy was not just to restore Sihanouk but also to help both Vietnam and Cambodia rebuild after the conflict, which would then lead to Vietnam reestablishing relations with the USA⁴⁰⁵. This would achieve another ASEAN objective of disengaging Vietnam from the USSR. This visit by Mochtar was only the second by an Indonesian Foreign Minister to the USSR since 1974. This shows that for Indonesia at least, their lack of trust of the USSR did not necessarily mean that they regarded Vietnam as a hostile country in the long term. This is an apparent difference compared to Singapore but since Singaporean leaders did occasionally display diplomatic language towards Vietnam as well, it is possible that Singapore was open to a friendly Vietnam, just as Indonesia was. The differences did not however, indicate a breaking up of ASEAN's position as both Indonesia and Singapore remained committed to ASEAN's goal. Nevertheless, it was beneficial for Indonesia, as an ASEAN member to maintain friendly relations with Vietnam to keep Vietnam updated on any new ASEAN peace proposals.

Vietnam's main backer, the USSR, showed signs of being accommodating to Indonesia's views while communicating with them. During the meeting with Gromyko, Mochtar emphasized the need for good neighbourly relations and peaceful co-existence as the reason why the Vietnamese occupation of

⁴⁰⁴ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

⁴⁰⁵ The National Archives of the UK, South East Asian Department letter 17 April 1984 titled Indonesian Foreign Minister's Visit to the Soviet Union in FCO 15/3972 Ministerial visits from Indonesia to the Soviet Union.

Cambodia was unacceptable for Indonesia⁴⁰⁶. He reminded the Vietnamese and Soviets that Vietnam claimed to adhere to those very same principles as ASEAN did⁴⁰⁷. He also emphasized that the USSR, as Co Chairman of the Geneva Conference was also said to subscribe to the idea of a sovereign, independent, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia just as ASEAN was aiming to achieve⁴⁰⁸. And with this, it is worth noting that Gromyko, while still defending the Vietnamese fait accompli, expressed appreciation of ASEAN's policy⁴⁰⁹. This implied that the USSR would not rule out changes made to the Cambodian government, meaning they were open to replacing the PRK which was an early encouraging sign for ASEAN, but it would not be until 1986 that the USSR would take steps towards this.

Mochtar's visit allowed the USSR to give Indonesia the impression that the Soviets were supportive of negotiations and that they desired to improve relations with ASEAN. The Soviets hoped that Indonesia's influence would be enough to convince ASEAN to accept them as an ally. As there was a stalemate in 1984, Indonesia seemed to be intent on reminding the Vietnamese and Soviets of their subscription to similar principles to ASEAN, and it is worth noting that the Soviets in some cases even showed diplomatic, rather than hostile language towards ASEAN, which encouraged the Indonesians to do so. Brezhnev at the Twenty-sixth Soviet Communist Party Congress seemed to suggest that the USSR no longer saw ASEAN as American stooges⁴¹⁰. Related to this, during his visit, Mochtar even implied that ASEAN was well disposed to the USSR, hoping that the Soviets would support similar ideals as ASEAN including ZOPFAN⁴¹¹. Events like Mochtar's visit to the USSR suggested improvements in the situation regarding the Third Indochina War could potentially be happening in the years after 1984 since the Soviets attempted to be more accommodating or at least implied such a position. As the next chapter will show, Gorbachev's arrival would ultimately result in this happening, benefiting ASEAN in their goal to solve the conflict.

⁴⁰⁶ The National Archives of the UK, South East Asian Department letter 17 April 1984 titled Indonesian Foreign Minister's Visit to the Soviet Union in FCO 15/3972 Ministerial visits from Indonesia to the Soviet Union.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

With this being said, however, it should be noted that Soviet and Vietnamese propaganda could at times differ from what they told ASEAN publicly during meetings between both sides⁴¹². Thus, it is understandable that despite the seemingly positive actions by the Soviets, ASEAN continued to be wary when dealing with them. This is further emphasized when sources at the British archives implied that relations between Indonesia and the USSR were correct but not as good as the Soviets claimed⁴¹³. This can be attributed to Suharto and Mochtar's adherence to the ASEAN position.

Mochtar's visit to the USSR also served the purpose of giving more substance to Indonesia's non-aligned status. This shows that while the USA was an ASEAN Dialogue Partner and thus an ally to Indonesia, a visit to the USSR itself was a step taken to assure the Soviets that Indonesia as a country did not take sides. At the same time, the visit would enable ASEAN to better understand Soviet views which would undoubtedly be important in trying to solve the conflict, since the USSR had a major stake in it. Since Indonesia was already ASEAN's interlocutor with Vietnam, it made sense for the Soviets to focus communication with them and a non-aligned posture would be helpful in this regard. When he visited the USA on the way back from the USSR, Mochtar found American policy to be unclear at the time⁴¹⁴. In 1984, the USA was supporting China more than ASEAN due to their wish to cultivate China⁴¹⁵. Mochtar wanted to convince the Americans that ASEAN's strategy would prevent the occurrence of the "Domino Theory" that both ASEAN and the Americans and their allies feared as well as reducing Soviet gains in the region after the Americans had withdrawn after the fall of Saigon in 1975⁴¹⁶. What can be understood from this is that ASEAN was willing to co-exist with a Communist state in the form of Vietnam but also wished to detach them from the USSR. This further proves the point that ASEAN's main concern in opposing Vietnamese actions during the Third Indochina War was actually motivated by fear of the USSR rather than Vietnam itself whom certain members of the group such as Indonesia were open to improving relations with⁴¹⁷.

⁴¹² The National Archives of the UK, FO 973/265 ASEAN and Cambodia, September 1982 p.4.

⁴¹³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

⁴¹⁷ Ong Keng Yong, Email to the Author 10 February 2023.

The USSR, on the other hand, was friendly towards Indonesia but wrongly believed the Indonesians would agree to the replacement of Pol Pot with Heng Samrin when in fact, Indonesia wanted them both to participate in UN supervised elections instead of the Vietnamese forcibly installing Heng Samrin⁴¹⁸. This shows that ASEAN was not completely opposed to the PRK being part of the Cambodian government. As mentioned before, ASEAN's main concerns for regional security came from the USSR, and not necessarily from Vietnam or the PRK though they refused to recognize the PRK unless they took part in the UN supervised elections that ASEAN wanted.

The Khmer Rouge remained a problem for ASEAN since they were militarily too strong to be cast aside as their forces were superior to that of FUNCINPEC and the KPNLF, a fact acknowledged by Lee Kuan Yew⁴¹⁹. ASEAN still needed the Khmer Rouge to accomplish their goal of a Vietnamese withdrawal and thus, an earlier peace in Cambodia was not possible. As Stephen J Morris pointed out, there was a time during the Vietnam War in the 1960s when Sihanouk practised friendly policies towards Vietnam⁴²⁰, so it was possible that both Vietnam and China would find him acceptable to work with. The USSR would not pressure Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia but nonetheless wanted improved relations with ASEAN. With all this going on, it was possible that the Soviets were trying to establish friendly relations with ASEAN or at least Indonesia by 1984, though there was little in common regarding their positions about the Third Indochina War and thus, a solution was not forthcoming just yet since ASEAN would need to do more to ensure the Khmer Rouge would not return. On the other hand, it would also take new leadership on the Vietnamese and Soviet side to move the peace process forward.

While there was a general ASEAN position, Singapore and Indonesia's differing approaches did serve their own purpose to ASEAN's solution as well, even complementing each other with regard to ASEAN's official position of a comprehensive political solution. As a result, ASEAN's coherent

⁴¹⁸ The National Archives of the UK, Moscow Tel No 387: Soviet Union/Indonesia: Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's visit to Moscow: Joint Communiqué in FCO 15/3972 Ministerial visits from Indonesia to the Soviet Union.

⁴¹⁹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.70.

⁴²⁰ Stephen J Morris, *Why Vietnam Invaded Cambodia, Political Culture and the Causes of the War*, (Stanford University Press, 1999) p.40.

position was not affected by these differences. Singapore's hardline position helped to pressurize Vietnam to negotiate while Indonesia's friendlier approach ensured Vietnam had a line of communication to ASEAN, which could then be used to come up with further proposals to get the peace process back on track in subsequent years and as the next two chapters will show, Indonesia proved important in ASEAN's eventual solution of the conflict.

Conclusion

ASEAN managed to make another significant contribution to the peace process by playing a leading role in the formation of the CGDK. Despite the differences between Singapore and Indonesia's individual position regarding the combatants, ASEAN remained committed to the same general position. The formation of the CGDK and the 1983 ASEAN Appeal for Kampuchean Independence further reinforced ASEAN's cohesiveness by emphasizing a united general position for ASEAN regarding the Third Indochina War. This focused on ending the Vietnamese Occupation, but in what Ang describes as an honourable way for the Vietnamese which took their views into account⁴²¹, though as the following chapter will show, this still took time since changes within Vietnam itself would be needed for better conditions towards peace. The inclusion of the two non-Communist factions, especially Sihanouk's, due to his reputation as a Cambodian patriot, managed to increase support for the internationally recognized Cambodian government from the international community, including from the USA and UK. ASEAN also still took some time to guarantee the non-return of the Khmer Rouge and thus a stalemate would remain since ASEAN still did not take Vietnamese concerns into account. Nevertheless, the CGDK and ASEAN Appeal proved to be important for the eventual 1991 solution since the CGDK and national reconciliation included in the ASEAN Appeal strengthened Sihanouk's position and the UN-supervised elections in which all four parties could take part, contributed to Cambodian self-determination as well.

According to the Annexes of the report of the Seventeenth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Jakarta, the Foreign Ministers concluded that 1984 saw ASEAN's political cohesion being manifested by its united

⁴²¹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.65.

effort in seeking a solution to the Kampuchean problem⁴²² as evidenced by the 1983 ASEAN Appeal for Kampuchean Independence as shown by this chapter. This suggests some improvement in the overall situation during that time from ASEAN's perspective, highlighting how important the war was in bringing the member states together and improving their overall coordination as a group. This shows that the Third Indochina War by this time was close to leaving a legacy which included the strengthening of ASEAN as an effective organization in the international community as proven by events such as the ICK, formation of the CGDK and 1983 ASEAN Appeal, all events driven by ASEAN. Like the ICK before it, the two events focused on in this chapter, the formation of the CGDK and the 1983 ASEAN Appeal, further contributed to ASEAN coherence as the association found themselves increasingly united in their goal to find a solution to the conflict.

Related to this, this chapter has pointed out Sihanouk's statements which suggested that despite the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC increasingly becoming united within the coalition, the Khmer Rouge were proving to be very problematic for ASEAN to deal with. This is especially important when discussing Sihanouk and ASEAN's actions later in the narrative, as emphasized by the following chapter's emphasis on the new peace initiative known as the Proximity Talks Proposal. It is also worth noting here that, Sihanouk's statements proved that ASEAN, FUNCINPEC and KPNLF also had their own misgivings about the Khmer Rouge just like Vietnam did, and this would prove to be part of ASEAN's rationale for its subsequent peace efforts after 1984, though it would still take a long time to come for ASEAN to end support for the Khmer Rouge.

With the formation of the CGDK and the ASEAN Appeal, ASEAN took steps to address Vietnamese and international concerns about the Khmer Rouge. However, the UN-supervised elections and national reconciliation emphasized in the ASEAN Appeal and the inclusion of non-Communist factions was not enough without a formal guarantee to prevent a Khmer Rouge return. This was a problem that remained and thus the war continued. As the next two chapters will show, ASEAN would have to find a way to address the problem of supporting the Khmer Rouge and acknowledge the PRK's existence while

⁴²² Ministry Of Foreign Affairs, Brunei, Annexes of the report of the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting Jakarta 9-10 July 1984.

changes in the Vietnamese and Soviet positions were still needed for the war to come to an end. Nevertheless, in terms of greater cohesion, ASEAN undoubtedly benefited by encouraging the formation of the CGDK which enabled it to play a leading role at this point of the conflict.

Chapter 4

Shift To a More Conciliatory Position: The Effect Of The Vladivostok Speech

The years 1985 to 1987 saw a significant change in the narrative of the Third Indochina War with Mikail Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech of 28 July 1986, which signalled a shift of Soviet Foreign Policy in the Asian and Pacific regions, and the introduction of the Vietnamese economic reforms known as Doi Moi in 1986. The shift by the Soviets and Vietnamese to a more conciliatory position more in line with ASEAN, provided an opportunity for ASEAN to continue with its efforts toward a comprehensive political solution. This shows that ASEAN's efforts alone were not enough to solve the war and shifts in the Soviet and Vietnamese positions were also required to bring the conflict to an end.

ASEAN also saw a need to regain the initiative after Vietnamese offensives on the battlefield placed the CGDK in a weaker position than before. This led to ASEAN member Malaysia proposing an initiative called the Proximity Talks Proposal. As this chapter will show, this initiative was adopted by ASEAN and taken by different member states and repackaged in different forms. Indonesia under Foreign Minister Mochtar then used the Proximity Talks Proposal as a basis for their own proposal for peace talks with Vietnam called the Cocktail Party Proposal which they presented to Vietnam in 1987 in an event known as the Ho Chi Minh City Understanding. The significance of these peace proposals is that they were the first steps towards the JIM meetings or Jakarta Informal Meetings as mentioned in the introduction to the second chapter. Also noted in this chapter is a peace proposal from the CGDK, known as the CGDK's Eight Point Proposal, which itself was significant as it showed that apart from ASEAN, the CGDK themselves could also come up with initiatives to assist with the ending of the conflict. Elements from the Eight Point Proposal, similar to the 1981 ICK as covered in Chapter Two, would be brought forward in ASEAN's further attempts to find a solution, showing that on their side, ASEAN and the CGDK were making progress towards a comprehensive political solution as well after the ICK and formation of the CGDK.

Despite some divisions when the Proximity Talks Proposal was suggested in 1985, the ASEAN states mostly remained committed to their preferred comprehensive political solution. The Proximity

Talks/Cocktail Party Proposal ultimately contributed to ASEAN unity in the long run, as the members eventually came to an agreement and the association ended up continuing to be committed to bringing Vietnam to the negotiating table. ASEAN's standing as an international organization increased as a result, and both ASEAN and the CGDK continued with peace efforts despite Vietnamese military offensives. ASEAN's commitment and coherence in coming up with more initiatives to solve the war would prove vital in moving the peace process forward.

This chapter remains reliant on primary sources. I have been able to acquire access to sources at the ASEAN Secretariat and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brunei through an internship, which would otherwise have been inaccessible to researchers, improving on the understanding of ASEAN's initiative which evolved from the Proximity Talks Proposal to the Cocktail Party Proposal which then, as the following chapter will show evolved into the Jakarta Informal Meetings or JIM. As in the previous chapters, interviews with certain figures involved during the war are also used, since the information they provided is largely unavailable in accessible sources which further contributes to the understanding of ASEAN's response through these initiatives. Where appropriate, newspapers such as Malaysia's *The New Straits Times* and secondary sources such as books by Eva Mysliwicz, Mattias Fibiger and David Elliott are also used to complement the other sources since the lack of Vietnamese primary sources can be compensated for by usage of their books. Like the previous chapters, country-by-country sections will be included since ASEAN did not supersede each member state's foreign policy.

1985: Malaysia's Proximity Talks Proposal

1985 did not begin well for ASEAN, nor for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). Vietnam launched an offensive on 18 September 1984 which ended on 4 April 1985, in which they attacked civilian camps and military bases along the Thai-Cambodian border using artillery and tanks, gaining control of Phnom Malai and leading to more refugees fleeing to Thailand⁴²³. This was an attempt by Vietnam to destroy bases belonging to the Khmer Rouge and KPNLF⁴²⁴. This was described

⁴²³ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.87.

⁴²⁴ Leszek Buszynski, 'Vietnam's ASEAN Diplomacy', *The World Today* Royal, 42.4 (1986) pp.63-66 (p63).

by western diplomats as Vietnam's greatest victory during the conflict⁴²⁵. However, while this was going on, Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi stated that he believed ASEAN's solidarity on the Kampuchean problem was the major factor in containing the situation in Southeast Asia and the maintenance of peace and stability in the region⁴²⁶, highlighting how important ASEAN's role was as the Third Indochina War continued and the fact that Thailand appreciated ASEAN's efforts. As mentioned in the previous chapter, ASEAN attempted a more conciliatory approach to Vietnam with the 1983 ASEAN Appeal, but as Malaysian historian Danny Wong Tze-Ken pointed out until September 1985, Vietnam refused to respond positively to the various ASEAN proposals⁴²⁷. ASEAN remained committed to peace and realized they had to come up with newer solutions to regain the initiative after the Vietnamese offensive.

With this, ASEAN had the opportunity to take the initiative from the superpowers by coming up with their own solutions. Such a peace initiative came in 1985 when ASEAN member, Malaysia came up with the idea for "proximity talks" between the CGDK and the PRK which would take place in different rooms in the same venue via a mediator acceptable to both sides though they suggested the idea without consulting the other members⁴²⁸. Indonesia was against that idea while Singapore would accept it if it had the support of the CGDK and involved Vietnam. This was in keeping with ASEAN's view that the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia was the main reason for the conflict, preventing ASEAN from ending support for the Khmer Rouge due to Vietnam's violation of the UN Charter by doing so. ASEAN now wanted Vietnam to come to the negotiating table, four years after they had refused to attend the 1981 ICK mentioned in Chapter Two, so that more progress could be made. The three major powers, affected by the current stalemate, were now willing to leave it up to regional actors like ASEAN to take the initiative, thus enabling ASEAN to potentially find a solution that would favour them instead of the USA, USSR or China. The idea of proximity talks was also intended to introduce an element of flexibility to what were otherwise rigid positions adopted by the CGDK and PRK, whereby indirect contacts and dialogues could be established and maintained through the good offices of an intermediary

⁴²⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.87.

⁴²⁶ ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report 2 August 2022.

⁴²⁷ Danny Wong Tze-Ken, *Vietnam-Malaysia relations during the Cold War 1945-1990*, (University of Malaya Press, 1995).

⁴²⁸ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.87.

without each side having to extend recognition to the other⁴²⁹. It was also decided that the Vietnamese themselves would be informed of the idea, as ASEAN wished to be transparent with them in the hopes that they would support the Proximity Talks Proposal⁴³⁰.

The Proximity Talks Proposal was suggested as a new approach towards the resolution of the Cambodian problem in the hope that it would provide a breakthrough out of the current impasse after the Vietnamese offensive. It was seen as a good diplomatic offensive for ASEAN, particularly if Vietnam were to reject the proposal. At the same time, should Vietnam accept it instead, a positive outcome for ASEAN was that the proposal would become an important vehicle in the search for a political settlement to the conflict as ASEAN was now aiming for talks, again after the 1981 Conference.

ASEAN and the CGDK realized how important it was for them to come up with new strategies such as the Proximity Talks Proposal to retake the initiative from the Vietnamese and the Soviets after the Vietnamese offensive. The reaction from ASEAN to the Proximity Talks Proposal was positive in that it was accepted by the other ASEAN Foreign Ministers when they attended the commemoration of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Asia-Africa Meeting in Indonesia from 24 to 25 April 1985⁴³¹. It was agreed that the proposal be studied by the ASEAN Senior Officials with a view to submitting it for final consideration by the foreign ministers at their Annual Ministerial Meeting in July 1985⁴³². At the ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan on 12 and 13 May 1985, it was agreed that the Proximity Talks Proposal was to be presented as a serious proposal by ASEAN thereby providing them with another initiative in the search for a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict⁴³³. This is further proof of increasing ASEAN solidarity even after the Vietnamese offensive which seemingly placed the association in a weaker position than before. ASEAN still maintained its commitment to solving the conflict regardless of Vietnam's success on the battlefield.

⁴²⁹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.87.

⁴³⁰ ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report, 2 August 2022.

⁴³¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Position and background brief for the eighteenth ASEAN ministerial meeting Kuala Lumpur, 8-9 July 1985 (political matters).

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid.

With this new proposal, ASEAN was now aiming for Vietnam to be receptive to indirect talks, due to the presence of a mediator instead of both sides meeting each other directly. A further consultation and exchange of views on the Proximity Talks Proposal was held in Bangkok on 28 and 29 May 1985 amongst ASEAN Senior Officials⁴³⁴. There was a general consensus among them that the proposal could be pursued as a valuable and tactical diplomatic move vis-à-vis Vietnam with some elements of the PRK, particularly in the context of the forthcoming meeting of the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers in Angola and the Fortieth session of the UN General Assembly⁴³⁵. Consultations were subsequently held with representatives of the CGDK to secure their support. Based on these consultations, ASEAN proposed that the Proximity Talks Proposal be pursued as a major diplomatic initiative and that efforts be made to secure the CGDK's acceptance of it⁴³⁶. What is interesting here is ASEAN also displayed an openness to including elements of the PRK for the first time, meeting one of Vietnam's concerns in some way, without recognizing the PRK.

Singaporean Foreign Minister Dhanabalan praised Malaysia's Proximity Talks Proposal and Indonesia's role as interlocutor since it highlighted ASEAN's preparedness to explore all avenues to secure a Vietnamese withdrawal and restore Cambodia's independence⁴³⁷. Although Sihanouk announced that his party FUNCINPEC favoured the Malaysian suggestion for proximity talks and any other initiatives of ASEAN to solve the Cambodian problem, the CGDK as a whole ultimately rejected the idea at that moment in time because they felt it was disadvantageous for them to negotiate while Vietnam was still occupying Cambodia⁴³⁸. This was also because other members of the coalition were against any dialogue and compromise with the PRK while the occupation was ongoing⁴³⁹. Meanwhile the three major world powers, the USA, the USSR and China did not declare any formal position on the proximity talks leaving the decision to their allies involved in the war, perhaps hoping that the tide of the conflict could swing in any of their favour. China, through their Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian informed

⁴³⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Position and background brief for the eighteenth ASEAN ministerial meeting Kuala Lumpur, 8-9 July 1985 (political matters).

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report, 2 August 2022.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

⁴³⁹ Ibid.

Indonesia that they were not against the Proximity Talks Proposal⁴⁴⁰. Their rivals, the USSR, neither accepted nor rejected the idea and offered to convey the proposal to Vietnam while the USA indicated to ASEAN to be cautious with the proposal⁴⁴¹. It is also important to note that ultimately ASEAN's cohesion was not affected despite Indonesia's initial disapproval of the idea since they eventually accepted it anyway after gaining a full understanding of the proposal.

The rationale for convening the proximity talks was also related to Sihanouk's desire for national reconciliation between the Cambodian factions⁴⁴². As mentioned in Chapter Three during the 1983 ASEAN Appeal, ASEAN shared Sihanouk's view that national reconciliation was important for bringing about a political settlement and considered it a positive step for restoring and maintaining Cambodia's independence and national unity, also essential for the realization of long-term peace and security in the country⁴⁴³. This would also address Vietnam's concern regarding the Khmer Rouge as national reconciliation would place Sihanouk instead of Pol Pot at the head of the Cambodian government and incorporate the PRK as well, if they chose to accept the idea. Thus, it would contribute to the security of its neighbours in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam⁴⁴⁴. This shows that Sihanouk tried to address Vietnamese concerns, just as ASEAN did.

Also consistent with this, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers during their meeting in New York in October 1984 encouraged Sihanouk to establish contacts and dialogues with the PRK and Vietnam in his capacity as leader of the CGDK⁴⁴⁵. This continued ASEAN's attempts at reaching out to Vietnam. Now the hope was that a pathway to communication with Sihanouk would encourage Vietnam to adopt a friendlier position towards the CGDK. In doing so, the Foreign Ministers were motivated by the need to present the conflict as a war which had to be settled by the Cambodians with a Vietnamese withdrawal and not as a conflict between ASEAN and Vietnam, although ASEAN would continue to play the role

⁴⁴⁰ ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report, 2 August 2022.

⁴⁴¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Position and background brief for the eighteenth ASEAN ministerial meeting Kuala Lumpur, 8-9 July 1985 (political matters).

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

of a facilitator during the conflict⁴⁴⁶. This position was consistent with ASEAN's professed neutrality while encouraging their ally Sihanouk to establish his own contacts with PRK leader Heng Samrin, despite their own position of not recognizing the PRK without the UN-supervised elections that ASEAN wanted. While certain ASEAN members such as Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia were sending varying types and amounts of aid to specific component parties of the CGDK because some members were against supporting the Khmer Rouge, they also wanted the CGDK to be Vietnam's main opponents on the battlefield, especially since their own armed forces, were largely not involved except for the Thai military's responses to Vietnamese incursions into their territory. Singapore and Malaysia choose to support the non-Communist factions to achieve their primary goal of ending the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia, while making Sihanouk and Son Sann's factions stronger to address Vietnamese concerns by reducing the chances of a Khmer Rouge return. Fellow ASEAN member, Thailand still sent aid to the Khmer Rouge, and this could be justified due to a desire to make the CGDK as strong as possible with the Khmer Rouge's military strength being a vital element of this, because of the need to put military pressure on Vietnam. Here the ASEAN states ideas complimented but also contradicted each other in different ways, complicating matters of ending the conflict since Vietnam would not accept the Khmer Rouge, yet ASEAN as a whole was not willing to end support for them just yet, especially because of Vietnam's successful military offensive at the beginning of 1985.

Other ideas related to ASEAN's search for peace in Indochina showed that they were not committing to one power over the others. For example, Indonesia also proposed the linking of solving the Third Indochina War with the normalization of relations between Vietnam and the USA⁴⁴⁷. Given Indonesia's prominent role in founding the Non-Aligned Movement and holding the Bandung Conference combined with Suharto's goal for Indonesia to be a leading country in ASEAN, it was not surprising that this was an Indonesian idea. It also highlighted ASEAN's own independence from being influenced by the superpowers, as they intended for Vietnam to establish links with the USA despite being a Soviet ally. This idea received positive responses by Vietnam, China the USSR and the USA. A key difference in

⁴⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Position and background brief for the eighteenth ASEAN ministerial meeting Kuala Lumpur, 8-9 July 1985 (political matters).

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

viewpoints between the warring sides was that Vietnam preferred the normalization of relations to come before ending the war while ASEAN, the USA and China all wanted the solution of the Third Indochina War to occur first instead. What is significant here is that all the major parties involved in the conflict agreed on this linkage increasing the likelihood of ending the war since there was some common ground between them all. This would be beneficial to ASEAN's goal, though the differences of opinion mentioned above meant it was not realistic yet in 1985 and not immediately implemented as a result.

The proximity talks are an important reminder of how ASEAN ultimately aimed for a comprehensive political solution through negotiations including UN supervised elections after splitting the CGDK and the creation of a UN peacekeeping force. Now four years after the ICK, ASEAN came up with a newer, more indirect proposal for talks between both sides, in the hope that Vietnam and the CGDK, particularly the Khmer Rouge would be more open to accepting the idea. This would provide an opportunity to move past the rigid positions of each side. Before proceeding, the bilateral positions of Singapore and Indonesia will be considered due to the contrast between Singapore's hardline and Indonesia's friendlier position towards Vietnam as highlighted before in the previous chapter.

The Balance Of Power: Continued Communication With China

Singapore saw it as vital to maintain links with China due to China's key role in the conflict. Singapore's and China's positions on the Cambodian conflict remained close in 1985, with Premier Deng Xiaoping's decision to continue supporting Southeast Asian Communist Parties having no effect on the matter⁴⁴⁸. China's Foreign Minister Zhao Ziyang felt that Vietnam would continue to dominate Cambodia and persist with trying to drive a wedge between China and ASEAN as well as ASEAN's CGDK allies⁴⁴⁹. The Singaporeans interpreted these remarks as Zhao's way of emphasizing that China would continue to exert pressure on Vietnam which at this point was still required from Singapore's perspective. This meant that China would maintain its friendly position towards ASEAN but was not adopting a conciliatory position towards Vietnam unlike what ASEAN did in the previous chapter.

⁴⁴⁸ The National Archives of the UK, Lee Kuan Yew's visit to China 13-26 September 1985 in FCO 21 2987 Relations between China and Singapore.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

In response, Lee Kuan Yew emphasized the need for a Vietnamese withdrawal and a political solution⁴⁵⁰. He also reiterated that Thailand's security as ASEAN's frontline state remained important for ASEAN at that moment⁴⁵¹. While ASEAN continued to focus on maintaining its own cohesion due to the war's threat to Thai security, the CGDK was clearly not united at that stage, meaning ASEAN's desired solution would still take time to become a reality. Singapore continued supporting the CGDK and with this, Lee Kuan Yew emphasized the need for its greater unity, discouraging the Khmer Rouge from launching attacks on the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC⁴⁵².

The topic of Cambodian elections was also brought up by Singapore and China. The Singaporeans stated that they would accept the Khmer Rouge if they won the UN-supervised elections, while on their part, despite being associated with the Khmer Rouge, the Chinese stated that they were also providing support to Sihanouk's FUNCINPEC and Son Sann's KPNLF⁴⁵³. Furthermore, China like ASEAN, committed to opposing the use of undemocratic means by any faction to take power in Cambodia⁴⁵⁴. Meanwhile, sources at the British Archives stated that Son Sann's KPNLF indicated they would continue to support Sihanouk after a Vietnamese withdrawal which could be interpreted as them being open to a merger or alliance between KPNLF and FUNCINPEC after the war⁴⁵⁵. This proves that there was agreement between Sihanouk and Son Sann regarding uniting their parties as Sihanouk expressed the previous year, just as ASEAN wanted and improving chances of the conflict being solved.

Also, during his meetings with Deng and Zhao, Lee urged them to discontinue support for groups such as the Malayan Communist Party (MCP)⁴⁵⁶. Deng replied forcefully that China gave no support for the MCP but refused to formally renounce moral support for them as new Politburo member Ho Qili, who was also present at the meetings with Deng, claimed that if China did so, the USSR would be able to

⁴⁵⁰ TNA, Lee Kuan Yew's visit to China 13-26 September 1985 in FCO 21 2987 Relations between China and Singapore.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

step in instead⁴⁵⁷. As mentioned before in the previous chapter, the Soviets were keeping such options open, though eventually, thanks to China's refusal to renounce support for the MCP, the opportunity to offer Soviet support for the MCP never presented itself as a result. Ironically, this ensured that Soviet influence would never spread into Malaysia and thus to neighbouring Singapore and Brunei where the Soviets could have attempted to gain influence given these countries' close proximity to Malaysia. This indirectly addressed one of ASEAN's major fears behind their reaction to the Third Indochina War as China prevented Soviet expansion into the rest of Southeast Asia, outside of Indochina through their policies, though ASEAN remained committed to placing Sihanouk at the forefront in Cambodia for the sake of Indochinese peace, since ASEAN did not trust the Khmer Rouge to maintain peace, only valuing them for their military prowess.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian said that Singaporean leaders agreed with China that international pressure on Vietnam had to be maintained until the Vietnamese were prepared to negotiate a political settlement⁴⁵⁸. He also reaffirmed China's willingness to help the non-Communist groups within the CGDK⁴⁵⁹. After reiterating China's view that no one faction of the CGDK could survive without the other two parties, Wu said both China and ASEAN needed to promote unity among the CGDK⁴⁶⁰. Wu also stated that after a Vietnamese withdrawal, a transitional period was required, during which no Cambodian faction would be permitted to achieve power by undemocratic means, similar to what Deng and Zhao had promised to the Singaporeans, after which China would accept UN-supervised elections⁴⁶¹. In terms of its relations with Singapore, China appears to be willing to think on the same wavelength with a key member of ASEAN, though the means to ensure the transitional period after the withdrawal were not very clear at this point⁴⁶². With this, it is fair to say that despite not recognizing China's Communist government in 1985, Singapore acknowledged China's importance in solving the war and both countries continued to work very closely towards this, which for the moment was more

⁴⁵⁷ TNA, Lee Kuan Yew's visit to China 13-26 September 1985 in FCO 21 2987 Relations between China and Singapore.

⁴⁵⁸ The National Archives of the UK, Briefing of Chinese Foreign Minister's visit to Singapore 15 February 1985 in FCO 15 4247 Political Relations between Singapore and China.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

important to them than diplomatic recognition. ASEAN did need outside help to solve the conflict and China's involvement was at the very least useful in that regard.

Meanwhile, Indonesian ties with Vietnam continued. Several high-level visits occurred between them in 1985 despite the tense situation between ASEAN and Vietnam. For example, in March, Mochtar paid a visit to Hanoi, which was reciprocated in April by Vietnamese Defence Minister Dung and later, Thach in August to Indonesia⁴⁶³. This enabled Vietnam to continue to have a clear line of communication to ASEAN. Indonesia believed that improved relations with Vietnam would increase the prospects for a settlement of the Cambodian conflict⁴⁶⁴. ASEAN solidarity was not affected by this since the association saw the need to have an interlocutor with Vietnam.

From Vietnam's perspective, improving relations with Indonesia served to lessen the diplomatic and economic isolation that Vietnam faced since the war began⁴⁶⁵. As Ong Keng Yong stated, both Vietnam and Indonesia shared a common historic experience⁴⁶⁶ in their respective attempts to gain independence by military means, which was a reason why it was easy for them to have closer relations with each other, in contrast to Vietnam's attempts to do so with other ASEAN members and Indonesia still endeavoured to maintain positive relations with Vietnam in 1985, which enabled Vietnam to have relations with an ASEAN member which was also a country outside the Soviet bloc. ASEAN needed this as well, to present future peace initiatives to Vietnam, which became particularly important in 1987, as will be shown later.

President Suharto had a firm commitment to ASEAN meaning that in 1985, it was likely that his dual track policy regarding the Cambodian problem would continue, with Foreign Minister Mochtar generally supporting ASEAN's policy on the matter while others in Suharto's administration such as Benny Murdani, who did not consider Vietnam a threat to ASEAN, focused on improving bilateral relations between Vietnam and Indonesia and exploring ways outside the ASEAN context to end the

⁴⁶³ TNA, Briefing of Chinese Foreign Minister's visit to Singapore 15 February 1985 in FCO 15 4247 Political Relations between Singapore and China.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

Cambodian impasse⁴⁶⁷. This shows that Suharto attempted to end the Third Indochina War by any means necessary even using methods which were not necessarily in line with ASEAN's plans for a comprehensive political solution, potentially endangering ASEAN's unified position. As will be shown, this was never the case since Suharto prioritised ASEAN over Benny's position, thus ASEAN cohesion was maintained.

Like other ASEAN states, Indonesia felt obliged to defer to Thailand on issues regarding the Third Indochina War but sent no military assistance to the resistance⁴⁶⁸. Thus, Indonesian support of ASEAN's policy had therefore, not been as forthright as that of some other ASEAN members⁴⁶⁹. This could also be attributed to its role as interlocutor with Suharto and Mochtar wanting to retain Vietnam's trust so that Indonesia could continue to communicate with Vietnam on ASEAN's behalf. The fact that Benny Murdani was wrong to believe Vietnam had withdrawn from Cambodia also raised doubts about Indonesia's dual track policy to solve the conflict, and explains why ASEAN's position, as promoted by Mochtar, became more prominent as his role in 1987 would later show.

On 12 April 1985, Mochtar gave European Community Ambassadors a briefing of his recent trip to Hanoi to explain his thinking about the need for a new strategic configuration, emphasizing that a strong and stable but non-aggressive Vietnam was vital to Southeast Asia since Indonesia was not against Vietnam as such but only against its behaviour and actions⁴⁷⁰. He also added that ASEAN collectively did not have the weight of either the USSR or China and a peaceful and constructive American presence was required in order to put what he described as the "China/Soviet see-saw" more into balance⁴⁷¹ meaning a balance of power from an American presence would stop the Sino-Soviet rivalry from getting out of hand in Southeast Asia, as ASEAN wanted throughout the war⁴⁷². As mentioned before in Chapter

⁴⁶⁷The National Archives of the UK, Indonesia-Vietnam relations information paper, external intelligence bureau Prime Minister's Department, Wellington 12 September 1985 in FCO 15 4277 Political Relations between Indonesia and Vietnam and Cambodia.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Phillipe Regnier, *Singapore, City State in Southeast Asia*, (Hurst, 1987) p.219.

Two, ASEAN's definition of ZOPFAN was now influenced by the need for a balance of power between the major powers, instead of excluding them from the region completely.

Also with regard to this interpretation of ZOPFAN, Mochtar added that the two conditions for the normalization of relations between the USA and Vietnam were clearing up the problem of American soldiers missing in action and resolving the Kampuchean problem⁴⁷³. If these conditions were fulfilled and the USA could develop normal relations with Vietnam, there would be improved chances of a lasting peace in Indochina⁴⁷⁴. Thus, Mochtar wanted Vietnam to become a stronger buffer between China and ASEAN while also wanting a US presence in Southeast Asia to balance China and the USSR.

Singapore and Indonesia balanced ASEAN's position, with Singapore being friendly with China and Indonesia being friendly with Vietnam with each trying to persuade China and Vietnam to adopt more flexible positions. Indonesia's position here is especially important to note given what they would do later to the Proximity Talks Proposal in 1987, repackaging this idea which allowed them to play a leading role in ASEAN's efforts for peace, as this chapter will show later.

1986: The CGDK's Eight-Point Peace Proposal

It was in 1986, however, that Vietnam and the USSR offered an indication of a more conciliatory approach. Before proceeding with further analysis, it is also important to note that Vietnamese incursions into Thailand, as mentioned in Chapter Two, continued to be a frequent occurrence throughout the Third Indochina War as a consequence of ASEAN continuing to support the Khmer Rouge to end the Vietnamese Occupation. During the Nineteenth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers deplored Vietnam's continued pursuit of a military solution to the Kampuchean problem⁴⁷⁵. They noted that despite the absence of military targets along the Thai-Kampuchean border, Vietnamese forces continued military operations against what the Foreign Ministers referred to as civilian camps in the border areas, in violation of Thailand's sovereignty and

⁴⁷³ Phillipe Regnier, *Singapore, City State in Southeast Asia*, (Hurst, 1987) p.219.

⁴⁷⁴ The National Archives of the UK, Record of Meeting Between Mr. Daunt and Mr. J Kelly US Department of Defence 23 September 1985 in FCO 15 4277 Political Relations between Indonesia and Vietnam and Cambodia.

⁴⁷⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Joint communique of the 19th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, 1986.

territorial integrity⁴⁷⁶, though Vietnam had been continuing the targeting of Khmer Rouge forces in border camps, just as they had done in 1980, so Vietnam's actions were not completely unjustified. Vietnam continued to face attacks from the Khmer Rouge, so it was understandable from Vietnam's perspective, why their incursions continued throughout the war. For ASEAN on the other hand, this meant new peace initiatives were needed to improve the situation.

For example, a Vietnamese incursion on 2 May 1986, resulted in deaths among those who the ASEAN Foreign Ministers described as innocent Kampuchean civilians and Thai villagers living along the border⁴⁷⁷. ASEAN considered this to be the worst Vietnamese incursion into Thai territory since the war began⁴⁷⁸. They strongly condemned these actions and reiterated their call for Vietnam to stop launching them, while urging the international community to make a similar appeal⁴⁷⁹. The significance of this was that even after what had been described as a triumph the year before, Vietnamese incursions into Thailand were still continuing after six years. This greatly concerned ASEAN and proved that the Khmer Rouge would have to be brought into check if ASEAN were to achieve progress towards a comprehensive political solution. It was proving difficult for ASEAN, not least because the other two Cambodian factions were not particularly strong enough yet and Vietnam's successful offensive the year before, made dropping support for the Khmer Rouge an unrealistic option for ASEAN who wanted Vietnam to withdraw from Cambodia⁴⁸⁰. This May 1986 incursion worsened matters and meant any hope of ASEAN dropping support for the Khmer Rouge was highly unlikely though they persisted in trying to convince Vietnam to negotiate as will be shown further in this chapter.

Nevertheless, the year 1986 would be filled with several positive events related to solving the conflict, one of which was the introduction of an Eight-Point Peace Proposal by the CGDK⁴⁸¹. This was the first time that the CGDK actively attempted on their own initiative to find a solution to the conflict, instead of relying on their allies such as ASEAN or China. Included in this proposal were negotiations between

⁴⁷⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, Joint communique of the 19th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, 1986.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report 2 August 2022.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.62.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid, p.94.

Vietnam and the CGDK on the two phased withdrawal of Vietnamese forces within an agreed time frame, a UN supervised ceasefire, UN supervision of a Vietnamese troop withdrawal, the formation of a quadripartite government, free elections under UN supervision between the four Cambodian parties including the PRK, a guarantee of Cambodian neutrality for two years by the UN, reconstruction assistance for Cambodia from all countries and lastly a non-aggression and peaceful co-existence treaty with Vietnam⁴⁸². It was important that the Eight-Point Peace Proposal included several of ASEAN's original preferences from the ICK. This shows how the CGDK were not only calling for further UN involvement but also willing for the PRK to be included, contributing to national reconciliation and addressing a Vietnamese concern by including the PRK.

ASEAN endorsed the CGDK's Eight-Point Proposal during a meeting in Bali on 30 April 1986 because it reaffirmed ASEAN's belief that the Cambodian conflict had to be solved by the Cambodian people themselves⁴⁸³. The proposal was considered as viable since it originated from the CGDK's leaders with the merit that it could serve as a constructive framework for future negotiations between them and Vietnam⁴⁸⁴. In terms of a response, the Chinese communist party chief, Hu Yaobang indicated a positive response to the proposal when he felt the idea was historically significant and generous, taking into full consideration, the interests of the Vietnamese⁴⁸⁵. He believed that the proposal would win support from the international community because of it taking the concerns of all warring parties into account⁴⁸⁶. This proposal also had the potential to convince China to adopt a conciliatory position since China was positive about it, which ASEAN desired as well since a friendlier position from China would also go some way to addressing Vietnamese concerns which ASEAN also wanted.

Unfortunately, Vietnam rejected the Eight-Point Proposal, viewing the proposal as unjust and counter to the Indochinese proposal for a solution, involving direct talks between the internationally recognized CGDK and the Vietnamese backed PRK⁴⁸⁷. This was because Vietnam unsurprisingly only recognized

⁴⁸² ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report 2 August 2022.

⁴⁸³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Post ministerial conferences 6+6 conferences.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ *New Sunday Times*, 7 September 1986.

the PRK as the legitimate government of Cambodia instead of the CGDK⁴⁸⁸. It is important to note that Vietnam and the PRK had consistently demanded for the elimination of the Khmer Rouge from the CGDK, largely due to past conflicts between Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge⁴⁸⁹. Because of this, the Eight-Point Proposal was seen as an attempt to legalize the Khmer Rouge, a condition which Vietnam would not accept since past Khmer Rouge aggression against Vietnam was itself a reason for the war breaking out in the first place⁴⁹⁰. Sihanouk condemned Vietnam's rejection, accusing them of dishonesty and being a threat to world stability⁴⁹¹. He felt that the CGDK had given Vietnam maximum guarantees with the Eight-Point Proposal and thus the CGDK could no longer grant any more concessions since Sihanouk considered the proposal to be fair to both sides⁴⁹². Once again, the Vietnamese were making it clear that the Khmer Rouge had to be removed from the CGDK, but ASEAN, while distrusting the Khmer Rouge would not allow this to happen until the UN-supervised elections that ASEAN aimed for had taken place.

Not even the promise of PRK involvement in a quadripartite government was enough to convince Vietnam to support the proposal. The Eight Point Proposal was not enough to resolve the Cambodian problem. ASEAN would instead continue with proposals for talks, as will be shown later. The failures of ASEAN's efforts so far indicated more efforts were required and a particularly significant idea would eventually come later in 1987, courtesy of Indonesia reviving and making modifications to Malaysia's Proximity Talks Proposal, continuing ASEAN's role in solving the conflict.

At the very least, Vietnam too reaffirmed that the internal affairs of Cambodia must be settled by the Cambodian people themselves, a view which they shared with ASEAN⁴⁹³. Vietnam, like ASEAN also maintained that the fate of the Khmer Rouge would be decided by the Cambodian people⁴⁹⁴. The PRK, who had succeeded in returning Cambodia to a state of normality⁴⁹⁵, after the genocidal policies of the

⁴⁸⁸ *New Sunday Times*, 7 September 1986.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

⁴⁹³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Post ministerial conferences 6+6 conferences.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁵ Eva Mysliwiec, *Punishing the Poor: The International Isolation of Kampuchea*, (Oxfam, 1988) p.22.

Khmer Rouge, also rejected the CGDK proposal because it failed to address what they considered internal as well as international aspects of a political settlement of the conflict⁴⁹⁶, likely referring to the Khmer Rouge's presence, as being not only a threat to Vietnam but also to the PRK. Tommy Koh has stated that ASEAN's main concerns were Vietnam's violation of the UN Charter, and not really defending the Khmer Rouge⁴⁹⁷, though the formation of the CGDK has suggested that ASEAN's rationale for supporting them was to make use of their military to liberate Cambodia, especially since the UN supervised elections in ASEAN's comprehensive political solution were intended to give other parties a chance to assume power after the war, including the PRK who would compete against the other three parties after the CGDK would split up prior to the elections.

It was not just Vietnam and the PRK who distrusted the Khmer Rouge. Despite ASEAN's constant UN lobbying, some of their allies were not prepared to extend anything beyond diplomatic recognition to the CGDK due to the presence of the Khmer Rouge. For example, Australia and Canada, two of ASEAN six key economic allies known as the Dialogue Partners, refused to support the Proximity Talks Proposal, even though the others, the USA, EU, Japan and New Zealand all did⁴⁹⁸. This was most probably due to both countries reluctance to support the Khmer Rouge before 1982 and indicates the CGDK did not change matters in this regard. The war would continue for the time being since ASEAN refused to drop support for the Khmer Rouge before UN supervised elections. Nevertheless, events in the USSR and Vietnam, as examined below, gave new impetus to the peace process.

Conciliatory Approaches From Vietnam And The USSR

With regards to the USSR's stand, on 28 July 1986, Gorbachev gave a speech in Vladivostok half of which was devoted to the economic development of the Soviet Far East while the rest focussed on Soviet foreign policy in the Asian and Pacific regions. Through this speech, Gorbachev implied changes in Soviet foreign policy which included its perspective of the Third Indochina War. This would become a turning point for ASEAN's solution to the war since without Soviet support, Vietnam would not be

⁴⁹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Post ministerial conferences 6+6 conferences.

⁴⁹⁷ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 30 November 2022.

⁴⁹⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Post ministerial conferences 6+6 conferences.

able to maintain the occupation and ASEAN's comprehensive political solution could thus be achieved, though ASEAN would need to move ahead with more concrete plans, using the Proximity Talks Proposal as a basis. Gorbachev wanted to normalize relations with the USA and China in order to "reform the USSR via the policies of economic restructuring"⁴⁹⁹. This was why he agreed to end Soviet support for the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, which was one of Deng Xiaoping's demands for the normalization of Sino-Soviet relations⁵⁰⁰. This proved beneficial to ASEAN's goal as well since the end of Soviet support for the occupation would encourage Vietnam to put a stop to it.

Gorbachev's decision to improve relations with China also encouraged Vietnam to follow suit because of their dependence on the Soviets. As Christopher Goscha, a Vietnamese history specialist from the University of Quebec pointed out, the Vietnamese eventually did "as Soviet assistance declined sharply and only highlighted their international vulnerability and internal economic crisis".⁵⁰¹ This marked the changing of the Soviet position on Cambodia and paved the way for ASEAN to share a common goal with both the USSR and Vietnam regarding a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, no doubt increasing the chances of achieving the solution ASEAN had aimed for in the years prior to 1986.

As suggested by the Vladivostok speech, the USSR was now willing to accept the existence of a Cambodian problem, marking a significant change after seven years and providing a chance for the conflict to be resolved⁵⁰². Meanwhile, China now supported a negotiated settlement of the Cambodian problem⁵⁰³, instead of their previous policy of continuing the war to "bleed Vietnam white"⁵⁰⁴. This finally indicated a more conciliatory position from China as well. With the two Communist powers adopting a less hardline position, the chances for the resolution of the conflict increased. This shows that ASEAN could not solve the war on their own as they needed Vietnam and the USSR to adopt a friendlier position towards them as well, given how Vietnam had rejected all of ASEAN's proposals

⁴⁹⁹ Cristopher Goscha, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam*, (Penguin Books, 2016) p.435.

⁵⁰⁰ Odd Arne Westad and Sophie Quinn-Judge, *The Third Indochina War, Conflict between China, Vietnam and Cambodia, 1972-79*, (Routledge, 2006), p.222.

⁵⁰¹ Cristopher Goscha, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam*, (Penguin Books, 2016) p.435.

⁵⁰² Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.98.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid*, p.99.

⁵⁰⁴ The National Archives of the UK, Aide Memoire, Discussions between Acting Minister Collantes and HRH Prince Norodom Sihanouk, President of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, 7 March 1984 in FCO 15/3891 Prince Sihanouk's visit to ASEAN countries.

from years before despite the attempts of some ASEAN member states to present a friendlier position to Vietnam.

Also important for this goal was that like Gorbachev, Vietnam's own political leaders realized too that they had to improve the well-being of their own citizens if the Communist Party of Vietnam wished to remain in power, as they approached ten years after the fall of Saigon⁵⁰⁵. Under the leadership of Nguyen Van Linh in 1986, a series of reforms known as Doi Moi or renovation was introduced⁵⁰⁶. Like China and the USSR, Vietnam "abandoned Stalinist central planning in favour of allowing a market-oriented economy based on supply and demand to operate"⁵⁰⁷. Despite Vietnam's dislike of him due to their view that he was the person responsible for the outbreak of the Third Indochina War, Deng Xiaoping's policies were recognized by the Vietnamese as a model for reviving agricultural production and maintaining power⁵⁰⁸. Doi Moi also encouraged the development of the non-state sector as well⁵⁰⁹. With Vietnam now following a similar path to China by abandoning their adherence to the Communist ideology from an economic perspective, this allowed them to be more open minded in reconsidering some of their policy decisions, including the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia due to large scale changes in the Communist Bloc occurring at that point in time. This would benefit ASEAN as well, since it indicated large scale changes in Vietnam's perspective of world affairs, into a less ideologically driven policy.

As result of Gorbachev's Vladivostok Speech and Doi Moi, ASEAN might have understandably expected a timely end to the war. However, as the next few paragraphs will show, the impact of these two significant events was not necessarily immediate. The new Soviet and Vietnamese approach, motivated primarily by their respective domestic and economic objectives, did not mean the conflict would be immediately resolved, as evidenced by an August 1986 Vietnamese attack on a Thai border

⁵⁰⁵ Cristopher Goscha, *The Penguin History of Modern Vietnam*, (Penguin Books, 2016) p.437.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ D. W. Elliott, *Changing Worlds: Vietnam's Transition from Cold War to Globalization*. (Oxford University Press, 2012) p.48.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

post⁵¹⁰, leading to further tensions between Vietnam and Thailand⁵¹¹. However, as 1986 continued, Vietnam and the USSR decided to coordinate activities in the Asia Pacific Region in keeping with Gorbachev's new foreign policy initiative⁵¹². This meant that ASEAN as will be shown below, continued coordinating their own policies as well, recognizing an opportunity for peace. It also shows that with regard to the solution of the war, a Soviet and Vietnamese role was needed to achieve ASEAN's preferred comprehensive solution, though it should be noted as mentioned before in Chapter Two, in the aftermath of the ICK, ASEAN itself did acknowledge Vietnam and the Soviets had to be brought in eventually.

On 1 September, it was reported that Vietnam aimed for normal ties with China and ASEAN, even though at this point solidarity and global cooperation with the USSR constituted the fundamental principle of Vietnamese foreign policy as shown on 3 September when Vietnam reiterated their loyalty to the USSR even as Gorbachev made overtures to China⁵¹³. The following day, speaking at a NAM summit, Vietnam stated that they would leave Cambodia by 1990 if Pol Pot was removed by that time⁵¹⁴. Vietnam claimed that ASEAN was hindering a peaceful solution to the Cambodian problem, as Vietnam still insisted on the elimination of the Khmer Rouge⁵¹⁵. However, around the same time, Thai Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda, in an apparent show of understanding, urged the Vietnamese to build up their country⁵¹⁶. The fact that Prem used more diplomatic language showed that ASEAN continued to make efforts to demonstrate neutrality and friendliness towards Vietnam. Despite Prem's efforts however, ASEAN refused to end support for the Khmer Rouge if Vietnam continued to occupy Cambodia. Vietnam refused to do so because of their concerns regarding Pol Pot. All this suggests that ASEAN did not see any substance to the Vladivostok Speech at that time, two months after it had been given by Gorbachev and continued with their support for the CGDK, remaining committed to their aim of a Vietnamese withdrawal. At the very least, ASEAN could take comfort from the fact that Vietnam's

⁵¹⁰ *New Straits Times*, 21 August 1986.

⁵¹¹ *New Straits Times*, 23 August 1986.

⁵¹² National Archives of Malaysia, File 2000/0002993W Vietnam Vol 24.

⁵¹³ *New Straits Times*, 3 September 1986.

⁵¹⁴ National Archives of Malaysia, File 2000/0002993W Vietnam Vol 24.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁶ *New Straits Times*, 11 September 1986.

end goal was to have positive relations with the ASEAN states as well, showing the feeling was mutual on both sides, though each took different steps to reach this.

ASEAN-Vietnam Relations In Late 1986: Continued Clashes Between Vietnam And Thailand

In October 1986 Vietnam once again rejected the Eight Point-Peace Plan, because it opposed the return of the Khmer Rouge⁵¹⁷. Despite this, Vietnam did inform the UN that they were willing to talk to China anytime regardless of location⁵¹⁸. Vietnamese Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Vo Dong Giang had alluded to China as a power trying to block a settlement in Cambodia while also stating that Vietnam had made several overtures to China, none of which brought any response so far⁵¹⁹. It can thus be seen that Vietnam did make an effort to solve the war at their end, though it faced problems of its own in getting a response, due to Vietnam's weak position near their border with China. Vietnam and Laos then rejected a UN debate on Cambodia⁵²⁰. This was the first time a statement by the two countries jointly announced a boycott of UN discussion and a rejection of the outcome of the debate in advance of the debate's occurrence⁵²¹. Strangely enough, this seems to indicate that Vietnam and Laos were being defiant even three months after Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, a case of division by Vietnam and one of its major allies in the form of the USSR, though at least for the remainder of 1986, as this thesis will show, the Soviet Union and Vietnam's alliance was maintained. This serves as a further reminder that ASEAN had to take steps to deal with the Khmer Rouge, but it would not be until 1988 as will be shown in the next chapter, that they finally decided it would be appropriate to do so.

Thailand proceeded in its bid to improve relations with Vietnam, agreeing to high level talks with them moving forward with attempts to be more conciliatory since this position seemed to be having some effect⁵²². Thai Army Commander in Chief General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh said Vietnam was Thailand's good friend and it was Vietnam's ally, the USSR which was the root of the security problem in Southeast

⁵¹⁷ *New Straits Times*, 11 September 1986.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

⁵²² *New Straits Times*, 25 October 1986.

Asia⁵²³. He did however, place emphasis on the USSR's support for the deprivation of Cambodian and Laotian independence by Vietnam as reasoning for ASEAN's cautious position, while claiming that Thailand was a neutral party which was not involved in the war. After five years of the conflict, it was highly unlikely Vietnam would believe that Thailand was sincerely being neutral, given ASEAN's continued support for the CGDK. ASEAN's concerns regarding Communism were still prompting it to harbour suspicions of Vietnam and the USSR, even though the USSR's involvement in the rest of the region outside Vietnam and Laos was negligible.

December 1986: Further Changes In The Soviet-Vietnamese Bloc

Another significant event of 1986 was the Sixth Vietnamese Communist Party Congress. Former Vietnamese leader Le Duan's death in July 1986 enabled this congress to take place and for Nguyen Van Linh to become party leader⁵²⁴. A political report submitted to this congress also reaffirmed Vietnam's intention to progressively remove its troops from Cambodia but did not commit to 1990 which the Vietnamese had previously stated as the target year for a total withdrawal of an estimated 140,000 troops in Cambodia⁵²⁵. Though, the sources mentioned that a Mr Giang, presumably referring to Minister Vo Dong Giang, said the date would be respected⁵²⁶. Giang also ruled out direct negotiations between Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge, repeating that the Cambodian people must find the solution themselves, a belief that ASEAN had themselves though ASEAN was not quite ready to abandon the Khmer Rouge just yet before a Vietnamese withdrawal⁵²⁷.

On 20 December 1986 it was reported that a shakeup in the Vietnamese government raised ASEAN's hopes for peace, though individual members including Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia were sceptical of immediate changes⁵²⁸. It should also be noted that two days later, reports were made that with more changes in its leadership, Vietnam's policies on Cambodia may change⁵²⁹ and Vietnam

⁵²³ *New Straits Times*, 25 October 1986.

⁵²⁴ D. W. Elliott, *Changing Worlds: Vietnam's Transition from Cold War to Globalization*. (Oxford University Press, 2012) p.29.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid*.

⁵²⁶ National Archives of Malaysia, File 2000/0002993W Vietnam Vol 24.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid*.

⁵²⁸ *The Star*, 20 December 1986.

⁵²⁹ *The Star*, 22 December 1986.

indicated its readiness to restore ties with China⁵³⁰, though Minister Vo Dong Giang stopped short of offering a pullout of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, and still did not want to involve the Khmer Rouge in talks⁵³¹. This was presumably because the Vietnamese were still unconvinced that the Khmer Rouge would end hostilities if the Third Indochina War came to an end. With this, this thesis will now examine bilateral positions between the four states being focused on and the warring parties for 1986 and 1987. With Brunei now independent, their position will be taken note of as well, as their position was similar to Malaysia, giving a sense of how the majority of ASEAN states reacted to the conflict. It can be said that while Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia maintained suspicions of Vietnam and the Soviets due to fears regarding the balance of power, Indonesia, on the other hand, now sensed an opportunity to end the war by being more flexible and was encouraging ASEAN to be more accommodating.

Indonesia

As mentioned earlier, under Mochtar's tenure as Foreign Minister, Indonesia would place emphasis on the ASEAN policy, centred on its frontline state Thailand. From Indonesia's perspective, according to Mochtar, after talks with Thach, it did not look as though there would be further development on the Cambodian issue until after the Vietnamese Party Congress at the end of 1986⁵³². Despite events such as Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech promising a more conciliatory position, Mochtar did not detect any such signs from the Vietnamese in 1986 and because of this in his view, the improvements that ASEAN wanted would not occur for the time being meaning that war had yet to be solved in 1986.

In his conversations with American Secretary of State George Shultz, Mochtar stated that he felt that the USSR appeared to be becoming more reasonable⁵³³. He also noted that there was inter-factional rivalry and fighting within the CGDK which to him was helpful to none of the parties involved in the war⁵³⁴. When Shultz asked Mochtar about differences in the positions, Mochtar replied that Thailand

⁵³⁰ *The Star*, 30 December 1986.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*

⁵³² The National Archives of the UK, Teleletter titled Visit by the Indonesian Foreign Minister 27 February 1986 in FCO 4813 Political relations between Vietnam and Indonesia.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

was different to Indonesia. Their stand was more similar to China who saw no reason to seek an early settlement of the problem⁵³⁵. Indonesia considered the view of China and Thailand to be unrealistic and believed all sides had to make concessions to achieve a solution⁵³⁶. Mochtar also said that the Vietnamese for their part appeared to be becoming more flexible while some ASEAN members did little to match this⁵³⁷. Regarding Thailand, this was likely due to China's influence as it would be recalled that China and ASEAN did tend to differ regarding issues about the Third Indochina War several times in the past, as described in the previous chapters. Mattias Fibiger has pointed out that throughout the Cold War, the Indonesian military indicated a preference to align with Vietnam as a buffer against China⁵³⁸ and as Indonesia continued to play its role as interlocutor, this helps to explain why by 1986, it continued to play a moderating influence between Vietnam and the more hardline ASEAN members such as Thailand and Singapore. Their role as a moderator proved vital in maintaining ASEAN's preferred solution after the events of 1986⁵³⁹.

While briefing EC Ambassadors, Mochtar confirmed that little progress had been made on the question of Cambodia with few positive steps towards establishing positive relations between the USSR and ASEAN as Gorbachev had hoped for in Vladivostok⁵⁴⁰. During talks with Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, Mochtar insisted on an early solution to the Cambodian conflict, which he said was essential for improvement of relations between ASEAN and the Soviets. Shevardnadze told Mochtar that the USSR could not put pressure on Vietnam in this regard since Vietnam was an independent country meaning Soviet pressure would negatively impact relations between the USSR and Vietnam⁵⁴¹. Shevardnadze then asked Mochtar if Indonesia could encourage Thailand to deny sanctuary to the Cambodian resistance. Mochtar refused to pressure Thailand to do this reaffirming that Indonesia's

⁵³⁵ The National Archives of the UK, Teleletter titled Visit by the Indonesian Foreign Minister 27 February 1986 in FCO 4813 Political relations between Vietnam and Indonesia.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Mattias Fibiger, *Suharto's Cold War*, (Oxford University Press, 2023) p.274.

⁵³⁹ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

⁵⁴⁰ The National Archives of the UK, Telno 86 Visit of Soviet Foreign Minister to Indonesia in FCO 15 4985 Relations between Indonesia and the Soviet Union: visit by Eduard Shevardnadze, Soviet Foreign Minister, to Indonesia, March 1987.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

policy was fully supportive of the ASEAN position⁵⁴². This suggests that it was difficult for either side to compromise, encouraging Indonesia to find a new diplomatic initiative, in the form of reviving Malaysia's Proximity Talks Proposal.

Shevardnadze's visit ended with no new proposals on Cambodia, saying only parties directly involved could find a solution to the conflict⁵⁴³. The joint press statement issued at the conclusion of Shevardnadze's visit stated, however, that countries outside the region could make a useful contribution to a solution. Overall, the fact that Shevardnadze's visit failed to result in any new proposals caused Indonesia to think the Vladivostok Speech contained little of benefit to Southeast Asia⁵⁴⁴. Mochtar saw few signs of flexibility from the USSR and therefore, had no immediate plans to visit Hanoi in his capacity as ASEAN's interlocutor⁵⁴⁵. Nevertheless, as this chapter will show, he did proceed to present the Proximity Talks Proposal in the new form of the Cocktail Party Proposal to Vietnam later in the year. It was through these diplomatic initiatives that Indonesia would become very prominent in the peace process, as the next chapter will show.

Singapore

Singapore continued to consider Sihanouk who visited the country from 2 to 5 August 1986, to be important in solving the Cambodian problem⁵⁴⁶. It is worth noting that Sihanouk was more upbeat compared to his previous visit in 1984⁵⁴⁷. During meetings with Lee Kuan Yew, Rajaratnam and Dhanabalan, Sihanouk shared his assessment that the situation on the ground was encouraging, since the anti-Communist forces led by both himself and Son Sann were proving more effective and the Khmer Rouge were showing a greater willingness to cooperate with the other factions in the CGDK than before⁵⁴⁸. Another important development could be detected in a statement by China's General

⁵⁴² The National Archives of the UK, Telno 86 Visit of Soviet Foreign Minister to Indonesia in FCO 15 4985 Relations between Indonesia and the Soviet Union: visit by Eduard Shevardnadze, Soviet Foreign Minister, to Indonesia, March 1987.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ The National Archives of the UK, Teleletter Cambodia: Visit by Sihanouk to Singapore in FCO 15 4560 Political relations between Singapore and Cambodia.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid.

Secretary Hu Yaobang envisaging a reduction in the Khmer Rouge forces and an alignment of four parties of equal size when the Vietnamese withdrew, indicating a new flexibility on the part of China⁵⁴⁹. Because of this, Sihanouk now felt that a four way deal was possible for a future political solution⁵⁵⁰.

ASEAN members felt compelled to advise the CGDK at times, even though by 1986, they wanted the CGDK to solve the war themselves. The CGDK's nature as a loose coalition prompted ASEAN to constantly be involved in the resolution of the Cambodian problem. The Singaporeans reiterated to Sihanouk that the CGDK's Eight-Point Proposal contained useful elements but had some omissions which concerned them such as the disarming of the combatants and providing for international supervision which was important for ASEAN who wanted UN supervised elections to take place after the war⁵⁵¹. What was important for Singapore now regarding the ASEAN solution was the need for the UN supervision of a withdrawal and for elections, even more so than any Sino-Soviet rivalry.

To conclude regarding Singapore's bilateral approach to the war, Micheal Leifer later wrote that while Singapore ultimately agreed to ASEAN's goal of the neutralization of Southeast Asia, they differed from their fellow members in that instead of excluding major powers from the region, Singapore believed in allowing as many competing powers as possible to achieve a balance of power to prevent any of them from becoming too dominant⁵⁵². They feared the USSR was becoming this due to the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia giving them a strong foothold in the region, which explains Singapore's determination to ensure that ASEAN engaged with China and the USA despite its professed neutrality. This differing stance was accepted by the rest of ASEAN as Singapore continued to play its part within the association.

Malaysia

While Mahathir ordered a review of Malaysia's relations with China in 1985 to focus increasingly on trade and investment, Malaysia's relations with the USSR on the other hand, were described as cool

⁵⁴⁹ TNA, Teleletter Cambodia: Visit by Sihanouk to Singapore in FCO 15 4560 Political relations between Singapore and Cambodia.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Joint Communique of the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, 1984.

⁵⁵² Micheal Leifer, *Singapore's Foreign Policy, Coping with Vulnerability*, (Routledge, 2000) p.59.

since the increased Soviet physical presence in Southeast Asia because of the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia caused unease⁵⁵³. Offers of Soviet aid to Malaysia over the years had been rebuffed and Malaysia continued to oppose the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan⁵⁵⁴. Internally, communism was now at a low ebb in Malaysia, with the MCP now divided into three factions, it was highly unlikely that they would be of any distraction to the Malaysian Government in ASEAN's goal to end the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia with a comprehensive political solution⁵⁵⁵. This meant that it was unlikely that Malaysia would negatively impact ASEAN cohesion as the end of the 1980s became closer.

Lastly with regard to a balance of power, by the time period of 1985 to 1987, Malaysian leaders quietly welcomed the American strategic presence in Southeast Asia as a balance to the increased Soviet presence and would be seriously concerned if there were moves in the Philippines to expel the American bases⁵⁵⁶. The Malaysians were similar to the Singaporeans in this sense, feeling that the balance of power in Southeast Asia was now in favour of the USSR⁵⁵⁷ and this needed to be balanced out, though given the problems in the USSR which prompted Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, this point was debatable as well, since Gorbachev's new policy indicated a desire to solve the Cambodian conflict and not to continue it. Subsequent events would prove this view as the war was eventually solved in 1991 so Gorbachev's change in position would have some effect.

Brunei

As mentioned in the thesis introduction, Brunei finally gained independence in 1984 and thus, the Third Indochina War became one of its first key concerns as an ASEAN member. Brunei had minimal contact with Communist countries and there were no communist embassies in Brunei in 1986⁵⁵⁸. China and Vietnam showed very little interest in Brunei. However, according to the then Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lim Jock Seng, Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach visited

⁵⁵³ The National Archives of the UK, Information paper in FCO 15 4581 Internal political situation in Malaysia.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ The National Archives of the UK, Research Department paper titled Malaysia Internal Security Act, 18 December 1987 in FCO 15 4954 Internal Political Situation in Malaysia.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ The National Archives of the UK, Information paper for Singapore Soviet relations in FCO 15 4558 Political Relations between Singapore and the Soviet Union.

⁵⁵⁸ The National Archives of the UK, Information paper on British policy towards Brunei in DEFE 13 2360 Brunei: General.

Brunei in 1986⁵⁵⁹, expressing interest in establishing relations between the two countries which would not occur until 29 February 1992, one year after the official end of the Third Indochina War. Interestingly enough, at an ASEAN meeting in June 1987, Brunei's Foreign Minister, Prince Mohammed Bolkiah took note of the USSR showing interest in the Pacific region and sending its Foreign Minister to visit Indonesia and Thailand, and Thailand reciprocating this visit and India sending its Minister of State to all the members of ASEAN hinting at changes in the international situation on the part of the USSR and its allies⁵⁶⁰. Because of this, according to Lim Jock Seng, Brunei did not receive much criticism from its fellow ASEAN members for Co Thach's visit⁵⁶¹. Though this can be attributed to the changing international situation by then. Brunei and Malaysia were doing what little they could to encourage other parties to solve the conflict but were content to let Indonesia and Thailand take the lead for ASEAN. Nevertheless, ASEAN cohesion on the Cambodian conflict remained strong in 1987.

This does highlight key differences between the four countries being focused on, with Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia maintaining suspicions of the Vietnamese and Soviets due to concerns about the balance of power, and in Brunei's case, due to a general apprehension on Communism. Indonesia on the other hand, sensed an opportunity for progress in the peace process, due to their position as ASEAN interlocutor, and introduced a new proposal for talks known as the Cocktail Party Proposal based on the Malaysian Proximity Talks Proposal which will be elaborated upon in the next section below. As the following chapter will show however, Indonesia took advantage of this by taking the lead in the peace process which would find itself consistent until the final peace agreements in Paris in 1991, even at the cost of cracks in ASEAN unity which they themselves worked to address, as will be evidenced in the next chapter.

⁵⁵⁹ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

⁵⁶⁰ ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report, 2 August 2022.

⁵⁶¹ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

1987: Ho Chi Minh City Understanding And Sihanouk's First Meeting With Hun Sen

1987 saw the Proximity Talks Proposal evolve into a new proposal with a new name, the Cocktail Party Proposal, initially proposed by Sihanouk on 2 October 1985⁵⁶². On 29 July 1987, this suggestion was brought forward to the Vietnamese by Mochtar in Ho Chi Minh City in his capacity as ASEAN's interlocutor to Vietnam⁵⁶³. The event would later become known as the Ho Chi Minh City Understanding⁵⁶⁴. Like Malaysia in 1985 however, Indonesia had not discussed the initiative with its fellow ASEAN members before Mochtar travelled to Vietnam⁵⁶⁵. Singapore was concerned that the Cocktail Party Proposal, now presented as an initiative of Mochtar instead of Sihanouk, would be dominated by Vietnam and Indonesia and could therefore, deviate from the international focus which ASEAN had maintained since 1979⁵⁶⁶. They were also concerned that the Cocktail Party Proposal would inadvertently legitimize the PRK⁵⁶⁷. Nevertheless, at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok in August 1987, the Foreign Ministers were able to reach an agreement to support it⁵⁶⁸. The meeting would initially be amongst the four Cambodian factions, followed immediately by Vietnam's participation⁵⁶⁹. Elements of the CGDK's Eight-Point Proposal would form the basis of discussion at this proposed meeting⁵⁷⁰. However, the version endorsed by ASEAN was not the same as the Ho Chi Minh City Understanding which was more informal and without preconditions and political labels⁵⁷¹. When Sihanouk was informed of the ASEAN proposal, he was sceptical that the Cocktail Party Proposal would materialize⁵⁷², likely due to this misunderstanding. Nevertheless, ASEAN cohesion would be maintained since all of its members eventually agreed to support this idea.

⁵⁶² Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013), p.91.

⁵⁶³ Ibid, p.101.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

On 1 October, Sihanouk informed ASEAN's UN Representatives that he decided to meet Hun Sen to obtain information on Vietnam's true intentions⁵⁷³. Sihanouk told the Indonesians that after this meeting, the next step would be to meet with the Vietnamese in Jakarta, provided the Indonesians could arrange a meeting at an appropriately high level⁵⁷⁴. The meeting between Sihanouk and Hun Sen was accepted by most of the parties involved in the Third Indochina War and ASEAN had little option but to support it as well⁵⁷⁵. Singapore's position was that ASEAN needed to continue sustaining political and economic pressure against the Vietnamese occupation⁵⁷⁶. Singapore could accept any solution which ensured a total Vietnamese withdrawal and guaranteed Thai security, since these were their main concerns when the war broke out⁵⁷⁷. ASEAN's flexibility would prove vital here, as that was emphasized by them along with ASEAN solidarity as the Third Indochina War continued.

On 15 October, the PRK offered Sihanouk a government position as part of a new peace proposal aimed at projecting an image of flexibility in the lead up to the annual UN debate on the war, hoping he would defect from the CGDK to their side⁵⁷⁸. The PRK's peace proposal also included elections with foreign observers to set up a coalition government leading to a peaceful, independent, democratic, neutral and non-aligned Cambodia⁵⁷⁹. The inclusion of the word neutral in the PRK peace proposal was considered interesting by American analysts⁵⁸⁰. These elections would follow a Vietnamese withdrawal occurring at the same time as the end of foreign aid for the CGDK⁵⁸¹. The PRK also promised to allow CGDK members to have a role in a future Cambodian government except for Pol Pot and some of his closest associates including Ieng Sary and Ieng Thirith⁵⁸². Among other things, the PRK peace proposal also recommended an international conference to guarantee a settlement⁵⁸³. Interestingly, the PRK's proposal had several similarities to ASEAN's comprehensive political solution, and thus, it can be

⁵⁷³ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.102.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid, p.103.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid, p.20.

⁵⁷⁸ Murray Hibbert, 'Peace or Propaganda', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 October 1987.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

concluded that from the PRK themselves, there was also an openness to a more conciliatory position, similar to their allies, Vietnam and the USSR now had, though the PRK, unlike ASEAN insisted that top members of the Khmer Rouge had to be removed from the peace process. This unfortunately meant that agreement between both sides was highly unlikely since ASEAN was not ready to drop support for the Khmer Rouge if Vietnam still had military superiority over them, as that would enable Vietnam to continue the occupation.

It is also worth highlighting that Vietnam in October 1987, accepted the Cocktail Party Proposal⁵⁸⁴. The *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that this was the first time that Vietnam and the PRK responded positively to an ASEAN proposal to resolve the conflict⁵⁸⁵. On the other hand, the publication also reported that ASEAN accepted the idea of an initial informal meeting of Cambodian factions, to happen before an international conference involving all other parties⁵⁸⁶. ASEAN was sceptical of the PRK peace plan due to its timing, which was on the eve of the UN General Assembly debate on Cambodia, but they acknowledged the PRK's acceptance of the proposal as a step forward⁵⁸⁷ since Vietnam was showing signs of becoming more open to talks with the CGDK as ASEAN constantly wanted. This is important as it provides an indication of ASEAN's success during the peace process after the military setbacks of previous years hardened Vietnam's position. Vietnam's acceptance of Cocktail Party Proposal opened the door to improve on one of the key factors regarding the failure of the 1981 ICK, which was their absence from that meeting.

As mentioned above, there was also an endorsement by ASEAN of the meeting between Sihanouk and Hun Sen, highlighting an acknowledgment of the need for flexibility from both sides by October 1987⁵⁸⁸. Sihanouk also helped to convince the US Secretary of State George Shultz who was initially unenthusiastic about Indonesia's Cocktail Party Proposal⁵⁸⁹. Meanwhile China also modified its stance, as their Foreign Minister Wu Xueiqian told both ASEAN and the USA that the mainstay of power in a

⁵⁸⁴ Murray Hibbert, 'Peace or Propaganda', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 October 1987.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

future Cambodian government after the war should not be the Khmer Rouge or the PRK⁵⁹⁰, a positive development for ASEAN, since this was another indication that China was adopting a more conciliatory position like ASEAN was. Sihanouk convincing Shultz was also important here to ensure that the ASEAN-led initiative for the Cocktail Party Proposal could proceed to maintain the peace process.

By the later part of 1987, Indonesia was increasingly active in engaging other countries to participate in the peace process, highlighting how ASEAN valued the help of those from outside the region in their goal to solve the Cambodian problem. This was shown on 5 November when, in a move coinciding with Sihanouk's plan to meet with Hun Sen, Mochtar travelled to France to meet with his French counterpart Jean Bernard Raimond to avoid misunderstandings between the two peace initiatives, the Cocktail Party Proposal and Sihanouk's meeting with Hun Sen, which Mochtar worried could affect the CGDK⁵⁹¹. Also, in November, Japan assured Mochtar of their support while pledging to support an international reconstruction fund for Indochina⁵⁹². This is relevant since as mentioned throughout this thesis, ASEAN acknowledged its limitations and wanted outside help to solve the conflict since the very beginning.

Meanwhile in response to the PRK's peace plan mentioned earlier, Sihanouk rejected the PRK's offer of a position in their government⁵⁹³. Later, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that on 23 November, a joint Vietnamese-Indonesian working group reached several agreements on ways of holding the proposed peace talks between Cambodian factions⁵⁹⁴. This shows that despite Sihanouk's rejection, initiatives to encourage settlement of the Cambodian conflict would continue to proceed, largely thanks to Indonesia's efforts in moving the process forward more consistently than in the years before. Through Indonesia's actions, it can be interpreted that by 1987, ASEAN had become more determined than ever to encourage progress, also highlighting their own development as an association by then.

⁵⁹⁰ Murray Hibbert, 'Peace or Propaganda', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 October 1987.

⁵⁹¹ Micheal Vatikotis, 'In Brief Section', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 November 1987.

⁵⁹² Micheal Vatikotis, 'In Brief Section', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 November 1987.

⁵⁹³ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

Sihanouk and Hun Sen eventually met from 2 to 4 December 1987⁵⁹⁵. According to Ang Cheng Guan, in Singapore's assessment of the four-point agreement which was reached at the end of that meeting, this meeting signified a new framework which represented a major breakthrough for Vietnam⁵⁹⁶. Sihanouk and Hun Sen signed a communique affirming their common will to end the Cambodian conflict through an accord by all parties which would be guaranteed by an international conference⁵⁹⁷. Although this communique included an international conference, just as ASEAN wanted since 1981. Ang concluded that Sihanouk discarded the ASEAN framework in favour of one that incorporated all the main elements of the Vietnamese proposals⁵⁹⁸. Sihanouk and Hun Sen had emerged as the co-equal centres of any future agreements⁵⁹⁹. Sihanouk was no longer constrained by the CGDK or ASEAN and the PRK had established its legitimacy while the CGDK had been sidelined, leaving the KPNLF and the Khmer Rouge with the stark choice of joining Sihanouk or waging a struggle of their own⁶⁰⁰. While Sihanouk and Hun Sen still wanted to move towards an international conference, the rest of the contents of their communique were not conducive to ASEAN's preferred solution. This would undoubtedly be the start of some issues which would challenge ASEAN's position, forcing the association to adapt to changing circumstances as will be shown in the next chapter.

The Cambodian problem was now portrayed as a civil war and the role of the external powers was now confined to endorsing and guaranteeing any solutions that Sihanouk and Hun Sen would come up with⁶⁰¹. As a result, Singapore was worried that this could lead to the CGDK potentially being thrown into disarray and ASEAN becoming split after uniting behind the issue of the Third Indochina War for the past eight years⁶⁰². This would then in turn create confusion in the international community and dissipate the pressures on Vietnam⁶⁰³, as ASEAN had kept the issue alive at the UN throughout the war⁶⁰⁴. Nevertheless, as will be noted in the next chapter, Indonesia's determination to hold peace talks

⁵⁹⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013), p.103.

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 17 December 1987.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.104.

⁶⁰² Ibid

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

between the Cambodian factions in the form of the Jakarta Informal Meetings would ensure that ASEAN would still play a major role in the search for peace in Cambodia.

Conclusion

The coming of Mikail Gorbachev brought about a change in the situation, favourable to ASEAN. His Vladivostok Speech of 28 July 1986 marked the beginning of a new phase of Soviet history which marked a shift to a more conciliatory position by the USSR towards ASEAN about the Cambodian issue. In addition to this, the economic problems that Vietnam faced at the same time resulted in the introduction of the Doi Moi policies under the leadership of Nguyen Van Linh in 1986. This increased the chances of a change of mindset for the Vietnamese leadership. In contrast to the previous six years of the conflict, in which Vietnam and the USSR had been defiant towards the international community, now they both showed an indication of a willingness to resolve the Cambodian problem as well. This meant that ASEAN, now with six members, sensed an opportunity to make further progress in the peace process as well.

This was evidenced by the Proximity Talks Proposal, and its evolution into the Cocktail Party Proposal in 1987, as suggested by two of its members, Malaysia and Indonesia. The fact that Indonesia took an idea which they initially disagreed with, and converted it to their own, demonstrates ASEAN's prominence as an active group on the international stage, compared to the talking shop it was dismissed as before. By 1987, ASEAN had evolved as an organisation, becoming an active party in regional and Cold War politics, carry its own weight in the international community. This shows that similar to events covered in the previous chapter, including the ICK, the Cocktail Party Proposal further contributed to ASEAN coherence, especially since the ASEAN member states had discussions on the Malaysian and Indonesian proposals and managed to repackage the idea as an ASEAN proposal to introduce a new initiative to solve the war.

This would become more obvious in the years ahead, to be discussed in the following chapter. For 1987, the Ho Chi Minh Understanding and the meeting between Sihanouk and Hun Sen were both important in the narrative as they paved the way for ASEAN's most important contribution to the Third Indochina

War, the Jakarta Informal Meetings. This was what the Malaysian Proximity Talks Proposal and Indonesian Cocktail Party Proposal eventually evolved into, further establishing ASEAN as a force with the ability to directly influence Southeast Asian Politics. While ASEAN solidarity appeared to be under threat by Sihanouk and Hun Sen's meeting at the end of 1987, the association managed to pull together and as the next chapter will show, came together to hold the Jakarta Informal Meetings, once again overcoming threats to its cohesion and adding to the framework which had already been established by the 1981 ICK.

A major takeaway for ASEAN now was the fact that Vietnam accepted the Indonesian Cocktail Party Proposal. This was a major improvement on the earlier 1981 ICK since ASEAN had now accomplished its goal of bringing Vietnam to the negotiating table. But while this was a major achievement for the association, this chapter has also highlighted that changes in the Soviet position and Vietnamese position under Mikail Gorbachev and Nguyen Van Linh respectively were necessary for the solution of the Third Indochina War to be reached and ASEAN could not claim sole credit for resolving the conflict. Moreover, by the time the war ended, ASEAN, in particular, Indonesia showed an indication to make modifications from the established position which the association had held since 1979 so it can be argued that the Third Indochina War had bought ASEAN together as a meaningful actor in international affairs even if an obstinate one. As the next chapter will show, major challenges would emerge even further with differences in the Indonesian and Thai positions in the final years of the conflict and ASEAN would be forced to adapt while maintaining the key elements of a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN supervised elections in its preferred solution which would be reached at the end of the war.

Chapter 5

The JIM Meetings

Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Malaysia's Proximity Talks Proposal which transformed into Indonesia's Cocktail Party Proposal had increased hopes for peace talks finally occurring since Vietnam had accepted it in 1987. This eventually bore fruit under the leadership of the new Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas in the form of three Jakarta Informal Meetings (JIM). The first was held from the 25 to 28 July 1988 while the second was from the 19 to 21 February 1989 as well as an extra meeting on 10 September 1990. The JIM meetings involved the three component parties of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea, the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the ASEAN members as well as Vietnam and Laos. The JIM meetings were cited by this project's interviewees as ASEAN's most important contribution to the solution of the Third Indochina War. Some ASEAN members such as Singapore began to worry that their efforts to find a solution to the conflict which they had been working on since the 1981 Conference, would be thrown into disarray. The JIM meetings enabled ASEAN to continue playing a role in the search for peace. However, the first two meetings were seen as a failure by media outlets like the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, due to the divided positions of Indonesia and Singapore as well as between Sihanouk and the other CGDK leaders which necessitated further meetings in Paris later on, though it should be noted that Alatas had intended for the meetings to be preparation for an international conference to begin with so it can still be argued that this meetings were a success since this was their end goal in the first place despite the problems between Singapore and Indonesia which occurred at those meetings.

There were still some stumbling blocks for ASEAN to reach its targeted comprehensive political solution, because the period from 1988 to 1990 also showed signs of divergence emerging amongst its members, namely Thailand and Indonesia. Both countries wanted to play a major role in the peace process to advance their own interests; Thailand under the new government of Chatichai Choonhavan was aiming for economic benefits from Indochina while Indonesia aimed to play a larger role in

international affairs. This caused concern among other members such as Singapore, who feared a breakup in the ASEAN position which they had worked hard to maintain in the years before. This proved to be the most challenging period for ASEAN in terms of maintaining its united position, especially with how divisive proceedings at the JIM meetings could be and how Sihanouk and Hun Sen's meetings went against ASEAN's initial step of refusing to meet the PRK directly without Vietnamese involvement in the meetings, as this would be the equivalent of accepting a Vietnamese fait accompli, which ASEAN, as mentioned in previous chapters wanted to avoid. This also necessitated the involvement of the UN Security Council which was something ASEAN aimed for since 1979. Nevertheless, the importance of ASEAN's role could still be proven by the elements of their solution which were eventually reached in 1991 under the UN Security Council's leadership once the conflict was solved.

Despite all this, as Tommy Koh has written, the JIM meetings can also be considered as a success since the delegates at the meetings were eventually able to reach points of agreement between Vietnam and the Cambodian factions. Thus, it can be argued that the meetings were able to contribute positively to the solution of the Third Indochina War and thus, ASEAN became a more coherent organization as a result. This is especially considering that the differences in position between Thailand and Indonesia did not detract from ASEAN's preferred solution which would eventually be reached at the Paris Peace Agreements in 1991 ultimately proving that ASEAN was still ultimately successful in solving the war, though their coherence was increasingly affected and outside parties like France and Australia, as shown in this chapter helped them to achieve the solution which they had been aiming for nearly a decade. This chapter like the others, is structured chronologically based on the key events, which by this point, are the JIM Meetings and other international conferences. On the one hand, ASEAN's role as the driving force of the JIM Meetings mean they continued to play a significant role in the peace process. However, from 1990 onwards, with Vietnam having withdrawn, ASEAN then lost the main initiative to the UN Security Council, though key elements of their comprehensive political solution were maintained by the UNSC, so it can be said that the eventual solution in 1991 was largely a product of ASEAN, though they could not have achieved it by themselves.

Hun Sen And Sihanouk's Second Meeting

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sihanouk and Hun Sen met in December 1987 and had a second meeting in January 1988 in France⁶⁰⁵. Despite the previous meeting reaching a four-point agreement between the two of them as stated before, their second meeting failed to achieve a breakthrough because Sihanouk could not agree to the condition of dismantling the Khmer Rouge military infrastructure⁶⁰⁶. Like ASEAN, Sihanouk still felt the presence of the Khmer Rouge was important to ensure a Vietnamese withdrawal. He wanted a new political structure in Cambodia, based on national reconciliation but Hun Sen could not accept the dismantling of the PRK and insisted that general elections be held within their framework⁶⁰⁷. Hun Sen also rejected any negotiation for a solution under UN auspices because he felt the UN had humiliated Vietnam by seating the CGDK instead of the PRK⁶⁰⁸. However, this would not be acceptable to ASEAN who intended for there to be elections under UN supervision and a peacekeeping force in the aftermath of the war. Thus, the second meeting between Hun Sen and Sihanouk did not contribute much to peace efforts and left the door open for ASEAN plans for talks between the warring parties as mentioned before in the previous chapter, meaning ASEAN's significance in the peace process would remain.

Despite this, it was reported that Sihanouk was unambiguous about his desire to join forces with Hun Sen regardless of the position of the Khmer Rouge under Khieu Samphan or Son Sann's Khmer People's National Liberation Front⁶⁰⁹. Sihanouk was not satisfied with the outcome of his meeting with Hun Sen and after that, on 13 January 1988, he resigned as President of the CGDK and claimed Hun Sen was controlled by Vietnam and the USSR⁶¹⁰. He also said that if the Khmer Rouge criticized his talks, he would sever relations with them⁶¹¹. According to Ang Cheng Guan, he later revealed that this resignation was a ploy, putting pressure on the other parties to cooperate with him⁶¹². On 16 February, Sihanouk

⁶⁰⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.104.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Micheal Field, 'Sihanouk Act II', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 February 1988.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Ibid.

⁶¹² Ibid.

agreed to resume the presidency after receiving a letter of apology from Son Sann⁶¹³. All this suggested that there were tensions within the CGDK which would have been concerning to ASEAN since Ang pointed out that Son Sann was critical about Sihanouk's talks with Hun Sen⁶¹⁴. As mentioned before, ASEAN preferred that Sihanouk not meet with Hun Sen but were more worried about him leaving the CGDK due to the importance ASEAN placed on Sihanouk as CGDK leader throughout the war. Regardless of the failure of his second meeting with Hun Sen, and the continued convergence of views with ASEAN with regard to the comprehensive political solution, Sihanouk unlike ASEAN was ready to join forces with Hun Sen, acknowledging the Khmer Rouge as a problem here though he distrusted both the Khmer Rouge and PRK. This prompted ASEAN to get negotiations going as quickly as possible as shown below.

JIM 1

By March 1988, Ali Alatas had taken over as Indonesian Foreign Minister from Mochtar Kusumatmadjaa⁶¹⁵. On 1 May 1988, he informed his ASEAN counterparts that he would be working towards the convening of a meeting in Jakarta (JIM 1) on 25 July 1988 derived from the Cocktail Party Proposal mentioned in the previous chapter⁶¹⁶. Ang wrote that the only difference between Alatas and Mochtar was that Alatas envisaged this as an informal rather than formal meeting, being set up as a preparatory meeting for an international conference as ASEAN had aimed for since 1981⁶¹⁷. An additional complication occurred on 10 July when Sihanouk once again resigned from the CGDK due to concerns regarding the Khmer Rouge⁶¹⁸. At an ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting from 21 to 22 July, ASEAN indicated that they shared Sihanouk's concerns⁶¹⁹. This was evidence that the situation was changing since there was now increased criticism of the Khmer Rouge by both Sihanouk and the

⁶¹³ Micheal Field, 'Sihanouk Act II', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 February 1988.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid.

⁶¹⁵ *The Straits Times*, 25 March 1988.

⁶¹⁶ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.107.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

international community and thus, ASEAN could no longer support them without any serious consequences of a backlash. Nevertheless, JIM 1 went ahead despite Sihanouk's resignation.

As mentioned before in this thesis, ASEAN's core aim was for a comprehensive political solution involving a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN-supervised elections between the four parties after splitting up the CGDK before they took place, to be reached via a conference or meeting. JIM was an attempt to move towards this solution now that the international situation had changed in the aftermath of Gorbachev's changes in the USSR and the introduction of Doi Moi due to economic problems in Vietnam, providing ASEAN with more room to manoeuvre. In briefings before JIM 1 began, Alatas made it clear that the aim was to provide an opportunity to talk frankly to one another⁶²⁰. He argued that to proceed immediately to a formal conference would produce nothing but statements, though observers at the meeting's first day noted that very little of substance in terms of a viable political solution was discussed so JIM 1 did not get off to a good start⁶²¹. After the first day, Hun Sen issued a statement outlining a seven-point peace proposal which dwelt on eliminating the Khmer Rouge and offered Sihanouk a role as Head of a proposed national reconciliation council⁶²². Sihanouk, who eventually attended the meeting⁶²³ as a guest of President Suharto⁶²⁴ despite initially saying he would not do so⁶²⁵, dismissed the proposal as a ploy despite it mentioning dismantling the Khmer Rouge⁶²⁶. Regarding his own solution, as a compromise, Sihanouk appeared to drop both his and ASEAN's idea that a political solution would be enforced by an international peacekeeping force and relaxed his demand that the PRK be dismantled before elections⁶²⁷. Reports suggested that he was meeting Hun Sen some of the way in this regard since both Hun Sen and Khieu Samphan wanted the idea of an international peacekeeping force to be removed, presumably to avoid the UN standing in the way of

⁶²⁰ Rodney Tasker and Micheal Vatikiotis, 'The Prince Offstage', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 August 1988.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Micheal Haas, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia 1989', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23.2 (1991), pp.42-53, (p44) doi: 10.1080/14672715.1991.10413150.

⁶²⁴ Rodney Tasker and Micheal Vatikiotis, 'The Prince Offstage', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 August 1988.

⁶²⁵ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p108.

⁶²⁶ Rodney Tasker and Micheal Vatikiotis, 'The Prince Offstage', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 August 1988.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

their attempts to gain power in Cambodia. Since Sihanouk attended the meeting anyway, thanks to Suharto, he was kept updated about the developments and remained important in the peace process. He surprisingly implied dropping the demand for UN peacekeepers which would not be encouraging to ASEAN who insisted on the UN as key to their preferred solution and it is important to note that when the war eventually ended in 1991, this was ultimately not dropped and the UN remained part of the solution, to the relief of ASEAN.

At a press conference after the meeting, Alatas acknowledged that JIM 1 dwelt too much on the need to prevent the Khmer Rouge from returning to power. It should be noted that the likes of Tommy Koh have emphasized that ASEAN acknowledged that the Khmer Rouge were a “cruel and blood-thirsty regime”, and that ASEAN was only supporting them for the sake of the UN Charter and to end Vietnam’s occupation⁶²⁸. There was also a fear that Vietnam could exploit its position as a prime mover of JIM 1 to ensure the PRK could obtain Cambodia’s UN seat due to increased emphasis on the Khmer Rouge’s atrocities during the meeting⁶²⁹. While ASEAN was still focused on a Vietnamese withdrawal, they did not want the PRK to gain legitimacy prior to the UN supervised elections, as this would be the equivalent of accepting a Vietnamese *fait accompli* from ASEAN’s perspective⁶³⁰. ASEAN’s comprehensive political solution emphasized UN supervised elections which in their view would be redundant if the PRK achieved recognition without them. As will be shown, ASEAN eventually stuck to this as UN involvement was too important for them as a means to address numerous concerns such as Vietnamese tensions with the Khmer Rouge since UN involvement was also vital to prevent a breakdown of law and order which the Khmer Rouge could potentially take advantage of. ASEAN insistence of a UN peacekeeping force could also be considered as evidence of their distrust of the Khmer Rouge and their attempt to address this but after a Vietnamese withdrawal and not before.

Once JIM 1 ended, JIM co-chairmen Alatas and the outgoing Singapore Foreign Minister Dhanabalan had differing views and it was considered only a limited success⁶³¹. Alatas felt that common

⁶²⁸ Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 30 November 2022.

⁶²⁹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.108.

⁶³⁰ Ong Keng Yong, Interview with the author, 3 December 2022.

⁶³¹ Micheal Vatikiotis, ‘Smiles and Soft Words’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 August 1988.

understandings had been reached but Dhanabalan felt there was nothing of substance, blaming Vietnam though he acknowledged that JIM 1 managed to establish a forum for the parties to meet and if they were sincere, to make progress⁶³². Singapore was frustrated with Indonesia's softer stance towards Vietnam, which differed greatly from their own, and Dhanabalan was annoyed at "having to accept the fiction that Vietnam was an interested rather than an involved party⁶³³". This implied that Vietnam was not directly involved in the war, despite their occupation of Cambodia being the main issue from ASEAN's perspective. It became apparent that despite ASEAN continuing to emphasize a united position throughout the war, there were still moments of division between its members, due to differing bilateral interests. This is not surprising, given Indonesia and Vietnam's affinity with one another, as stated by Ong Keng Yong though the association still worked as one cohesive group in the UN⁶³⁴. As mentioned before in Chapter Two, Suharto ultimately made the decision to prioritise ASEAN over pursuing direct negotiations with Vietnam because Suharto considered ASEAN an important pillar in his foreign policy and so opted for a solution more akin to the general ASEAN position⁶³⁵. Because of this, the notion of a united ASEAN position was still consistently present every year from 1979 to 1991 in the UN, thanks to ASEAN managing to compromise when UN General Assembly meetings came about⁶³⁶.

In any case, although it appeared to confirm that all parties agreed to a neutral, non-aligned and independent Cambodia⁶³⁷, the only tangible achievement of JIM 1 was the creation of a working group to follow up and build towards holding another meeting⁶³⁸. In addition to this, a third meeting between Sihanouk and Hun Sen was also announced⁶³⁹. In August 1988, Sihanouk, once again resigning from the CGDK added that the Khmer Rouge could be prevented from returning to power by uniting the other three factions⁶⁴⁰. However, Thailand and Singapore felt that drawing attention to Khmer Rouge

⁶³² Micheal Vatikiotis, 'Smiles and Soft Words', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 August 1988.

⁶³³ Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Leo Suryadinata, *Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Suharto*, (ISEAS Publishing, 2022) p.128.

⁶³⁶ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

⁶³⁷ *The Straits Times*, 23 September 1988.

⁶³⁸ Micheal Vatikiotis, 'Smiles and Soft Words', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 August 1988.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

atrocities at a time when Vietnam was showing greater flexibility could delay a political settlement⁶⁴¹. This was because increasing criticism of a group within the CGDK i.e. the Khmer Rouge, could relieve the pressure on Vietnam by shifting that pressure to the Khmer Rouge, and thus the CGDK instead, which ASEAN wanted to avoid until Vietnam withdrew, after which the CGDK would disband and the UN supervised elections could be held between the four Cambodian parties. ASEAN focused on maintaining their unity despite Sihanouk's constant resignations threatening their position.

JIM 1 ended up being polarizing for the CGDK since it saw a narrowing of the distance between the PRK and Sihanouk and the isolation of the Khmer Rouge. Sihanouk's moves to compromise with Vietnam threatened to move away from ASEAN's preferred solution.⁶⁴² This also went against ASEAN's strategy of keeping the CGDK in the UN seat. It was reported that Thailand was furious when Alatas appeared to link a Vietnamese withdrawal to the non-return of the Khmer Rouge⁶⁴³. Presumably this was because it would be difficult for ASEAN to deal with both problems simultaneously while keeping the CGDK together. ASEAN did not want to risk breaking up the coalition before a Vietnamese withdrawal, after which this could be done prior to the UN-supervised elections that they wanted. Nevertheless, at a meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers on 5 October, it was concluded that JIM 1 had provided the impetus for further dialogue among the warring parties⁶⁴⁴. This gave ASEAN the initiative to build on any positive aspects for a solution reached during JIM 1 showing that ASEAN was acting coherently as an association and independently of the superpowers.

Following JIM 1, various parties were stepping up efforts to find peace. Other diplomatic activities from the remainder of 1988 included Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila planning to visit Hanoi in February to quicken the Cambodian peace process and improve economic ties between Thailand and Vietnam⁶⁴⁵ and UN Special Representative Rafeuuddin Ahmed going to China to discuss ways to solve the Cambodian problem⁶⁴⁶. The Khmer Rouge also indicated that they would attend further talks,

⁶⁴¹Rodney Tasker, 'Prince on the loose', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 August 1988.

⁶⁴² Ibid.

⁶⁴³ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, anonymized source, meeting report 5 October 1988.

⁶⁴⁵ Paisai Sricharatchanya, 'In Brief Section', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 December 1988.

⁶⁴⁶ Unknown Author, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 December 1988.

showing that at least for the moment, the Khmer Rouge would cooperate with ASEAN and the rest of the CGDK⁶⁴⁷. On 22 August, Alatas said that the working group set up by JIM 1 aimed to meet in Jakarta on 17 October for a meeting that would be a continuation of efforts to seek a solution to the Cambodian issue with the group scheduled to complete its tasks by the end of the year⁶⁴⁸. This ensured that ASEAN's solution remained on track since the working group originated from JIM 1.

Later the *Far Eastern Economic Review* correspondent, Ted Morello wrote that JIM 1 necessitated ASEAN's usual UN resolution to be given an overhaul for the first time in years, with ASEAN now acknowledging formally the need to condemn the Khmer Rouge's past atrocities and to push for their non-return⁶⁴⁹, though they always had reservations about supporting the Khmer Rouge⁶⁵⁰. It was not until after JIM 1 that the decision was made to formally make this a part of the annual ASEAN backed UN resolution, with Vietnam and ASEAN having now directly met with each other for the first time since the Third Indochina War at JIM 1. The UN resolution was then slightly altered to also emphasize the non-return of the Khmer Rouge's genocidal policies in addition to the usual demand for a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN supervised elections⁶⁵¹. As emphasised by Tommy Koh, ASEAN did not support the Khmer Rouge, but maintained support for the CGDK despite the Khmer Rouge being part of it since ensuring a Vietnamese withdrawal was ASEAN's main priority⁶⁵². ASEAN's coherence was still not affected despite this overhaul since the association continued to act as a single bloc in the UN just as they had done every year up to that point⁶⁵³. The UN General Assembly voted in favour of the resolution much to the vindication of Indonesia⁶⁵⁴. ASEAN's united position was thus maintained despite the difficulties which resulted from JIM 1. The CGDK was also largely helped in maintaining

⁶⁴⁷ Unknown Author, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 December 1988.

⁶⁴⁸ Unknown correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 1 September 1988.

⁶⁴⁹ Ted Morello, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 September 1988.

⁶⁵⁰ Tommy Koh, *The Tommy Koh Reader, Favorite Essays and Lectures* (World Scientific Publishing, 2013) p.72.

⁶⁵¹ ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report 2 August 2022.

⁶⁵² Tommy Koh, Email to the author, 20 December 2022.

⁶⁵³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Joint Communique of the 22nd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, 3-4 July 1989.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid.

their position at the UN by ASEAN lobbying missions to various countries which ensured the nations being visited continued to support them keeping the seat over the PRK⁶⁵⁵.

JIM 2 And Further Diplomatic Activity

In early 1989, Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach and his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen agreed to hold talks in the first half of that year to work out a timetable for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, with a basis for these talks being a recent Chinese statement that they would gradually reduce supplies to the Khmer Rouge as Vietnam withdrew⁶⁵⁶. On the other hand, Vietnam amended a preamble to its Constitution, deleting all references condemning France, Japan, the USA and China for past actions in Vietnam with the revised constitution no longer mentioning Vietnam's past conflict with China⁶⁵⁷. With the international situation continuing to move towards a conciliatory position on both sides and China and Vietnam apparently now working towards withdrawal, the situation was more promising for ASEAN who then aimed for a second JIM, hoping to achieve more progress.

In July 1988 Thailand's new Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan came to power⁶⁵⁸. This was significant in the approach of the ASEAN states to the Third Indochina War as Chatichai signalled a major shift with his aim to change the battlefields of Indochina into marketplaces⁶⁵⁹. This indicated that Thai policy under Chatichai would be far different from how it had been at the start of the Third Indochina War. In September 1988, Thailand and Vietnam agreed to hold talks on the Cambodian conflict before the working group meeting, the first time that both countries agreed to meet each other bilaterally regarding the issue⁶⁶⁰. Like Sihanouk and Hun Sen's meeting before, this had the potential to derail ASEAN's solution but as will be shown later, JIM 2 still went ahead.

⁶⁵⁵ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

⁶⁵⁶ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 January 1989.

⁶⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ Artemy Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko, *The End of the Cold War and the Third World*, (Routledge, 2011) p.163.

⁶⁵⁹ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 October 1988.

⁶⁶⁰ Murray Hiebert, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 September 1988.

Nevertheless, Chatichai also took the step of assuring Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, that this did not mean Thailand would depart from ASEAN's policy to isolate Vietnam economically⁶⁶¹. As ASEAN's frontline state, any change in Thailand's position on the war was supposed to encourage its fellow ASEAN members to do the same. As will be shown however, Thailand ultimately did not depart from the ASEAN position as Chatichai promised Mahathir which was beneficial for ASEAN to maintain its established coherent position especially before a Vietnamese withdrawal.

Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi visited Vietnam from 9 to 12 January 1989, hoping to quicken the peace process and normalize relations between Thailand and Vietnam⁶⁶². At this point, it was reported that Thailand no longer doubted Vietnam's desire to withdraw from Cambodia due to an understanding reached between the Soviet and Chinese Foreign Ministers that all remaining Vietnamese troops should be pulled out by the end of 1989, a development that Siddhi described as "light at the end of the tunnel"⁶⁶³. Siddhi, like Sihanouk, tried to contribute to the peace process with compromises, hoping the war would be solved quicker as a result. Thailand believed it had to act in concert with other key parties to the conflict since Thailand had diplomatic relations with all involved states and felt they were in a strong position to influence a settlement to safeguard Thai interests⁶⁶⁴. Siddhi and Thach reportedly agreed on a new compromise formula for an international peacekeeping force in Cambodia, as aimed by ASEAN, here referred to as the Phrase Control and Supervisory Mechanism, which was acceptable to China⁶⁶⁵. With this being said, it did not look as though Thailand under Chatichai was moving far away from ASEAN at first, given the fact that Siddhi had been Thai Foreign Minister since the beginning of the war, despite Chatichai being more open to meeting with Vietnam and the PRK.

On 25 January, another important event of ASEAN's response to the Third Indochina War took place when Hun Sen visited Thailand as Chatichai's guest. This was controversial, given the fact that Thailand, as ASEAN's frontline state, officially recognized the CGDK over the PRK⁶⁶⁶. Siddhi, despite

⁶⁶¹ Paisai Sricharatchanya, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 September 1988.

⁶⁶² Paisal Sricharatchanya, 'Making Up', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12 January 1989.

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁵ Robert Delfs, 'A Deal Takes Shape', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 January 1989.

⁶⁶⁶ Paisal Srichartchanya, 'Unofficially Speaking', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 February 1989.

reports of rivalry between him and Chatichai, said that Hun Sen's visit would contribute to a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian conflict⁶⁶⁷. Senior Thai officials added that the meeting could help soften Hun Sen's stance towards a compromise with the CGDK⁶⁶⁸. The coming of Chatichai promoted a change in Thailand's position regarding the war. Korea University Public Policy scholar Balazs Szalontai wrote that Thai entrepreneurs were encouraging Chatichai's government to relax economic pressure on Vietnam⁶⁶⁹. Like Sihanouk and Siddhi, Chatichai tried to compromise with Vietnam and the PRK, and with this, it can be concluded that JIM 1 encouraged some ASEAN politicians to adopt flexible attitudes towards Vietnam and the PRK just as Sihanouk did. However, Sihanouk himself was not pleased about Chatichai's policy⁶⁷⁰. This was perhaps because Sihanouk, might have seen strategic disadvantages for the CGDK before a Vietnamese withdrawal, since his second meeting with Hun Sen failed to lead to anything substantial. There is a contradiction between Chatichai and Sihanouk here, both were open to Hun Sen after JIM 1 but were not quite in agreement with each other, meaning that ASEAN's coherence and comprehensive political solution was safely maintained at least until JIM 2.

Regarding ASEAN, it was important to note that on 19 January, Chatichai visited Indonesia to reassure Suharto that Thailand was not trying to upstage the second Jakarta Informal Meeting⁶⁷¹, a sign of a rivalry between the two countries due to their different peace initiatives. The issue now was that Hun Sen's Thailand visit had lowered expectations for JIM 2⁶⁷². The meeting between Chatichai and Hun Sen was also reported to be a factor behind Sihanouk's boycott of the meeting, though his party, FUNCINPEC would still attend, led by his son, Ranariddh⁶⁷³. Interestingly, Hun Sen would defend Chatichai when Chatichai was accused of upstaging JIM 2 saying Chatichai had in fact helped by persuading the CGDK to attend, reaffirming their close relationship⁶⁷⁴. It ultimately did not stop ASEAN from proceeding with JIM 2 and suggests Hun Sen also wanted the meeting to happen. It can

⁶⁶⁷ Paisal Srichartchanya, 'Unofficially Speaking', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 February 1989.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Artemy Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko, *The End of the Cold War and the Third World*, (Routledge 2011) p.163.

⁶⁷⁰ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 March 1989.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Paisal Srichartchanya, 'Turning Turtle,' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 9 February 1989.

⁶⁷³ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁴ *The Straits Times*, 23 February 1989.

also be concluded that Hun Sen's visit of Thailand did not impact ASEAN's general position especially when the disagreement between Sihanouk and Chatichai is considered as it shows Sihanouk, himself key to ASEAN's position not giving approval to Chatichai's actions despite his friendlier attitude towards Hun Sen since the second meeting between Sihanouk and Hun Sen back in 1988. The fact that Hun Sen himself wanted JIM 2 to take place even suggests PRK support for the JIM process to a degree, thus even they showed support for ASEAN initiatives at times, despite the association's refusal to recognize them.

The purpose of JIM 2 was to provide a framework for informal discussions among all involved parties to search for a comprehensive solution to the war⁶⁷⁵. FEER Correspondent Nayan Chanda reported that there were two points of contention between both sides. As mentioned before, the question of dismantling the PRK and its replacement with a government of national reconciliation was one because the PRK refused to agree⁶⁷⁶. The other was the question of an international peacekeeping force, as part of ASEAN's solution, which was left to differing interpretations because of Vietnam and the PRK's resentment towards the UN following years of international isolation⁶⁷⁷. The PRK believed that the UN would continue to take sides⁶⁷⁸. Unlike ASEAN, Vietnam and the PRK wanted the peacekeeping force to be a supervisory mechanism to act on behalf of the government that won the election⁶⁷⁹. They proposed that Poland, India and Canada, who were involved in the original supervisory commission at the end of the First Indochina War in 1954 should monitor the withdrawal and ensure a simultaneous cut-off of foreign military supplies to resistance groups⁶⁸⁰. Vietnam wanted a personal representative of the UN Secretary-General to monitor and supervise the withdrawal as a compromise⁶⁸¹. ASEAN was still unwilling to accept a Vietnamese fait accompli and Sihanouk preferred that the withdrawal be supervised by the UN instead of countries of Vietnam's choosing despite his earlier indication towards compromise. This was likely because he did not trust Vietnam's plan despite his friendly gestures

⁶⁷⁵ *The Straits Times*, 18 February 1989.

⁶⁷⁶ Nayan Chanda, 'The Sticking Points', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 February 1989.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷⁸ Micheal Haas, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia 1989', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23.2 (1991), pp.42-53, (p44) doi: 10.1080/14672715.1991.10413150.

⁶⁷⁹ Nayan Chanda, 'The Sticking Points', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 16 February 1989.

⁶⁸⁰ Rodney Tasker and Nayan Chanda, 'To Stay or Not to Stay', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 April 1989.

⁶⁸¹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.122.

towards Hun Sen. Interestingly enough, Sihanouk despite his earlier meetings with Hun Sen and desire to join forces with him, did not completely break away from ASEAN's preferred solution as he himself still insisted on elements of the ASEAN solution to be included, especially UN involvement, hinting he trusted neither the Khmer Rouge or even the PRK fully.

At JIM 2 in February 1989, Thach made no concessions towards an interim quadripartite regime or international supervision and hardened Vietnam's position on a timetable for a troop withdrawal, saying Vietnamese forces could be withdrawn under international supervision by September if the minimal condition of agreement on cessation of military supplies to all factions was met or Vietnam would instead pull out by the end of 1990 on its own terms⁶⁸². As Chairman, Alatas was aiming for a compromise to ensure that JIM 2 improved on JIM 1 and keep ASEAN's peace efforts going. Alatas's strategy during this meeting was to introduce a working paper that floated a compromise on the internal aspects of an overall settlement⁶⁸³. It suggested that both the CGDK and PRK continue to function while elections, as ASEAN wanted, were held⁶⁸⁴. The suggestion of the compromise implies Indonesia aimed to encourage ASEAN to adjust its position to maintain the peace process.

Alatas presented several options for an international control mechanism to supervise a Vietnamese withdrawal, a ceasefire and elections, all of which was blown aside by rancorous accusations among all Cambodian factions⁶⁸⁵. Indonesian officials stressed it was difficult to hold the meeting together⁶⁸⁶. The relaxation of international pressure caused Vietnam to become more confident that it could influence the peace process, especially with China deciding on a Sino-Soviet summit before a Vietnamese withdrawal and Chatichai's policies, which were more conducive to Hun Sen and Vietnam⁶⁸⁷. All these developments had a negative effect on negotiations despite the international situation moving towards a seemingly more conciliatory position on all sides. As will be shown in the conclusion, UN involvement was eventually achieved but the peace process would shift from ASEAN to the UN itself

⁶⁸² Hamish McDonald, and Micheal Vatikiotis, 'Peace on Hold', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 March 1989.

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

to ensure the aim of the ASEAN comprehensive political solution was eventually met. UN involvement as ASEAN wanted, was necessary for UN peacekeepers to be deployed to maintain law and order and for UN supervised elections to restore Cambodian self-determination and reduce chances of the Khmer Rouge coming to power to take place.

The Chairman's consensus statement at the end of JIM 2 kept open negotiations on an overall settlement instead of moving towards a partial settlement⁶⁸⁸. Singapore's new Foreign Minister, Wong Kan Seng was not pleased by this development, as it threatened to dismantle ASEAN's position since Thailand and Indonesia were now making moves contradictory to ASEAN which they held since 1979. Wong urged his colleagues to remain committed to a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN supervised elections saying that a withdrawal without durable internal arrangements would cause the conflict to worsen due to intensified resistance against the PRK⁶⁸⁹. In this sense, he was implying the outbreak of civil war in Cambodia after the Third Indochina War. However, in his 2018 book, Heng Samrin claimed that the PRK had the support of the Cambodian people⁶⁹⁰. Eva Mysliwiec points out that most Cambodians found it incomprehensible why the UN supported the CGDK due to Khmer Rouge involvement since life under the PRK regained a sense of normality compared to the Khmer Rouge because of efforts by the PRK to restore Cambodia's economy and people's livelihoods⁶⁹¹. ASEAN's concerns regarding Vietnamese control and the PRK being a puppet government did have some truth to them, though the extent of control varied⁶⁹². While it is true that a significant number of Cambodians did initially welcome the PRK after the pain and suffering caused by the Khmer Rouge, uncertainty over Vietnamese intentions also meant that some Cambodians also fled the Vietnamese Occupation to join the CGDK across the border, so it is fair to say that Cambodians were split between the CGDK and PRK⁶⁹³. Eventually, ASEAN would not lose sight of the goal of UN supervised elections between all four Cambodian factions including the PRK and a UN peacekeeping force though they did drop support for

⁶⁸⁸ Hamish McDonald, and Micheal Vatikiotis, 'Peace on Hold', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 March 1989.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ Heng Samrin, *The People's Struggle Cambodia Reborn*, (Editions Didier Millet, 2018) p.113.

⁶⁹¹ Eva Mysliwiec, *Punishing the Poor: The International Isolation of Kampuchea*, (Oxfam, 1988) p.15.

⁶⁹² Thomas Clayton, 'Cambodians and the occupation: responses to and perceptions of the Vietnamese Occupation, 1979-89' *South East Asia Research*, 7.3 (1999) pp.341-363, (p350).

⁶⁹³ Norman G. Owen, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia* (NUS Press), p.486.

the Khmer Rouge and allow the PRK in earlier than they originally intended as will be shown later in this chapter.

Wong stated that the most difficult issue coming out of JIM 2 was that of inter-Khmer talks on political agreements among the factions⁶⁹⁴. The CGDK's nature as a loose coalition was now becoming a disadvantage to ASEAN, as JIM 2 highlighted how disunited the CGDK was due to each party having its own ideology outside of their common goal to liberate Cambodia from the Vietnamese. In addition, it also suggested that in 1989, the PRK was not highly regarded by ASEAN who considered them as having been forcibly installed by Vietnam and not representing self-determination for the Cambodians despite Hun Sen's meeting with Chatichai. Wong assumed fighting between the PRK and the Khmer Rouge would continue without elections although Heng Samrin and Eva Mysliwiec have presented evidence suggesting the contrary. Ultimately fighting did break out after the Vietnamese withdrawal so Wong was not completely wrong, though the PRK leaders turned out to be more cooperative towards Sihanouk after the Vietnamese withdrawal as evidenced later in 1991 once the war ended.

After JIM 2, Alatas wanted ASEAN wanted to continue talks towards a solution, despite their diminishing role. Wong praised Alatas for holding JIM 2, indicating a friendlier approach between Singapore and Indonesia compared to JIM 1. Nayan reported that in the immediate aftermath of JIM 2, ASEAN was overshadowed in the search for a solution to the Third Indochina War by Sino-Soviet rapprochement since the two Communist powers would be able to influence a solution more akin to their interests instead of ASEAN's⁶⁹⁵. Nevertheless, the JIM participants continued to encourage talks between the Cambodian factions, this time under French auspices⁶⁹⁶. France was now joining in the search for a solution and ASEAN, having acknowledged the need for the involvement of outside powers since the beginning, were open to this, while seeking to maintain its preferred solution. The need for outside power involvement became vital in the aftermath of JIM 2 due to the apparent weakness of the coalition model as the peace process moved forward.

⁶⁹⁴ *The Straits Times*, 24 February 1989.

⁶⁹⁵ Rodney Tasker and Nayan Chanda, 'To Stay or Not to Stay', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 April 1989.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Sihanouk called for an international conference in Paris to follow the JIM meetings as Alatas had envisaged⁶⁹⁷. In addition, Hun Sen agreed to travel to Jakarta for talks with Sihanouk as Suharto's guest⁶⁹⁸. Another follow up to JIM 2 was an announcement made by Vietnam, Laos and the PRK on 5 April, of a Vietnamese withdrawal by the end of September⁶⁹⁹. ASEAN showed guarded optimism that Vietnam might be sincere about this though China and Sihanouk reacted negatively⁷⁰⁰. Another effect of Sino-Soviet reproachment was that it forced the USA to increase involvement to prevent both a Vietnamese fait accompli and the return of the Khmer Rouge by force⁷⁰¹, while focusing on support for Sihanouk⁷⁰². Given the fact that the USA and ASEAN preferred a non-Communist Cambodia under Sihanouk as their ideal solution, this was a positive development for ASEAN, as Sihanouk could at least be assured of American support especially considering the need for outside help as mentioned above.

Overall, the JIM process contributed to ASEAN's continued involvement in the peace process as they continued to carry its elements forwards just as they had done for the 1981 ICK. The basis for this was that the JIM meetings identified key areas of agreements and laid the basic framework for the political settlement⁷⁰³. ASEAN's Foreign Ministers concluded that it contributed to the process of a peaceful settlement of the Cambodian problem and called on Vietnam and the Cambodian factions to exercise flexibility and to compromise to find a durable and comprehensive settlement of the problem⁷⁰⁴. Alatas had been searching for a compromise at JIM 2 and after that meeting, the association as a whole was encouraging Vietnam and the Cambodian factions to do the same.

Determined to continue the peace process, Alatas at the Twenty-second ASEAN Ministerial Meeting described JIM 1 as an important breakthrough where basic common understandings were reached on the general approach to the Cambodian conflict, while JIM 2 established the overall framework and broad parameters for a comprehensive solution⁷⁰⁵. It can therefore be concluded that the answer to the

⁶⁹⁷ Rodney Tasker and Nayan Chanda, 'To Stay or Not to Stay', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 April 1989.

⁶⁹⁸ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 April 1989.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Nayan Chanda, 'The Cambodian Waltz', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 11 May 1989.

⁷⁰² Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 April 1989.

⁷⁰³ ASEAN Secretariat, Anonymized source, Meeting Report, 3 August 2022.

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

question of whether the JIM meetings were successful or not, is largely a matter of perspective. Having aimed for an international conference from the beginning, ASEAN would have regarded the meetings as significant due to the points of agreement reached which proved to be constructive going forward and the process was moving to an international conference in Paris after that, as intended by ASEAN who continued with efforts to solve the Cambodian crisis. ASEAN proceeded with further developments where key elements reached at the JIM Meetings continued to be emphasized until the Third Indochina War officially ended in 1991. When Alatas's initial aim for JIM to be a preparatory meeting to an eventual international conference is considered, the fact that JIM succeeded in identifying key areas of agreements and laying basic framework for a political settlement means that it can be considered a success, since it was intended as a preparatory meeting and not for final negotiations to end the conflict, as that would be left to the international conference in Paris, which made sense given that ASEAN aimed for an international conference and UN involvement from the very beginning in 1979.

Chatichai's visits managed to make an impact on the PRK's position, resulting in a level of trust between their governments as shown when after he returned from Jakarta on 6 May, when he suggested a ceasefire between the warring parties, believing that it would remove any pretext Vietnam would use to delay their withdrawal⁷⁰⁶. This was rejected by Khieu Samphan who continued to ask ASEAN for the dismantling of the PRK⁷⁰⁷. ASEAN wanted a Vietnamese withdrawal, but the Khmer Rouge did not agree to the ceasefire. As mentioned before in Chapter Three, ASEAN wanted PRK participation in UN supervised elections, addressing one of Vietnam's concerns, so the PRK were ultimately not disbanded and went on to participate in the elections after the war⁷⁰⁸.

Unlike the Khmer Rouge, Hun Sen supported Chatichai's idea and indicated that he would accept a special role for Thailand as a supervisor or observer to see for itself if Vietnam's withdrawal was genuine⁷⁰⁹. Hun Sen wanted to show Thailand that it had his government's trust⁷¹⁰. On this matter, Siddhi said he would not object to Thailand playing a role if invited to do so but Thai Army Commander

⁷⁰⁶ Murray Hiebert and Paisal Srichartchanya, 'Peace on Hold', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 May 1989.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ Lee Jones, *ASEAN Sovereignty and Intervention in Southeast Asia*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) p.135.

⁷⁰⁹ Paisal Srichartchanya, 'Withdrawal Pains', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 May 1989.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

General Chaovalit Yongchaiyudh rejected the idea, saying Thailand could help with the Cambodian peace process in other ways which he did not elaborate⁷¹¹. This turned out to be beneficial for ASEAN as Chaovalit's action prevented Thailand from departing from ASEAN's preferred solution before an international conference as desired by Alatas and the rest of ASEAN.

An international peace conference was then scheduled for August in Paris, to choose participants for an international control mechanism that would verify the Vietnamese pullout and the cessation of foreign military aid to the CGDK⁷¹². Sihanouk asked the ASEAN member states to attend the Paris Conference⁷¹³. It should be noted that the aspects to be discussed in Paris were part of their preferred political solution. Increased involvement by the superpowers helped ASEAN's goal to solve the conflict. This also reflected ASEAN's desire for outside help to solve the war which they had since 1981, due to ASEAN's limitations. For example, US President George HW Bush planned to launch a diplomatic offensive regarding Cambodia, designed to be a multilateral effort involving, if possible, China, the USSR, France, Thailand, and Vietnam⁷¹⁴. The American plan to ensure self-determination in Cambodia and prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge would be discussed with Qian Qichen and Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev with consultations with Thai and Vietnamese officials also planned⁷¹⁵. Here, what is noteworthy is how the USA was increasingly active in the peace process, another effect of Gorbachev's changes in the USSR as well. What is important to note there with regard to ASEAN's solution is that the Americans aimed to prevent the return to the Khmer Rouge. This would address Vietnam's concerns since the Americans, as a superpower, had more capability to guarantee a non-return of the Khmer Rouge than ASEAN did. This was just as ASEAN acknowledged, help from outside powers, including the Americans would be needed to solve the war.

Meanwhile, Alatas met with his French counterpart Roland Dumas where they agreed that their countries would be co-chairs of the Paris Conference⁷¹⁶. Thailand persuaded France that unlike JIM, the

⁷¹¹ Paisal Srichartchanya, 'Withdrawal Pains', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 May 1989.

⁷¹² Ibid.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 June 1989.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid.

Paris Conference would make decisions based on unanimity rather than consensus, a view that China⁷¹⁷ and the Khmer Rouge⁷¹⁸ agreed with. Sihanouk, on Khieu Samphan's behalf, argued that during the JIM meetings, the only consensus reached was between Indonesia, Laos, Vietnam and the PRK⁷¹⁹. This suggests that from his perspective, the consensus-based approach was unsuccessful. The involvement of Thailand and Indonesia shows that even as peace efforts moved away from the regional framework of JIM, ASEAN was still playing a significant role in the peace process, through two of its members especially since ASEAN member Indonesia would be a co-chair in Paris.

ASEAN still felt the need to put military pressure on Vietnam to withdraw despite the progress resulting from the JIM process. The strategy of the ASEAN states was to keep all options open no matter how contradictory each tactic was to another to demonstrate their flexibility in solving the Cambodian conflict. For example, on 25 May 1989, it was reported that Khmer Rouge units operating near the Cambodian-Thai border received an increase in Chinese arms supplies, an action which required Thai military acquiescence and went against recent progress in solving the Cambodian conflict⁷²⁰. This was because of suspicion in Thai military quarters that some Vietnamese soldiers could be left behind, disguised as PRK soldiers after September⁷²¹. Thailand though appearing to be supportive in ASEAN's endeavour to end the conflict, could act contrarily to ASEAN's general position. Luckily, this would not be a major issue in meetings that would follow, and ASEAN maintained its cohesion.

In addition to this, on 29 June 1989, it was reported that ASEAN was hoping to step up a clandestine training programme in Malaysia for new recruits of the KPNLF and FUNCINPEC, planning to add 1000 trained fighters to both factions⁷²². The plan was to increase the total strength of the two factions to as much as 50000 by the end of the year but Western observers considered this to be unrealistic⁷²³. In this exercise ASEAN, like the USA was placing emphasis on the non-Communist factions, hoping to

⁷¹⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013), p.124.

⁷¹⁸ Micheal Haas, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia 1989', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23.2 (1991), pp.42-53, (p44) doi: 10.1080/14672715.1991.10413150.

⁷¹⁹ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013), p.124.

⁷²⁰ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 May 1989.

⁷²¹ Paisal Srichartchanya, 'Withdrawal Pains', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 May 1989.

⁷²² Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 29 June 1989.

⁷²³ Ibid.

allow Sihanouk and/or Son Sann to gain the initiative over the Khmer Rouge or Vietnam, which would address Vietnam's concerns over the Khmer Rouge.

First Paris Meeting

Other parties such as the KPNLF, FUNCINPEC and other countries shared ASEAN's goal of preventing a Khmer Rouge return by force. Talks between the Cambodian factions over power-sharing at the end of the Vietnamese occupation broke down after only one day in Paris on 24 July⁷²⁴. The Cambodian leaders had hoped some accommodation could be reached before the conference on 30 July⁷²⁵. The major sticking point was reported to be in reaching an agreement on the future role of the Khmer Rouge⁷²⁶. Sihanouk predicted that the Khmer Rouge would sabotage the conference⁷²⁷. Even though talks had moved to Paris, emphasis on preventing the return of the Khmer Rouge was still important, just as it was during the JIM meetings. ASEAN was acknowledging this by now, though they mistrusted the Khmer Rouge from the beginning, bringing in outside parties other than the ASEAN member states, making it easier for ASEAN to lean towards dropping support for the Khmer Rouge due to the increasing involvement of outside parties now involved in the peace process.

The International Conference on Cambodia was convened in Paris from 30 July to 30 August 1989. In addition to the four Cambodian factions, eighteen governments and the UN sent representatives⁷²⁸. The first ministerial session ended with a unanimous agreement on a guideline document drafted by France which would enable the conference to set a practical framework and agenda⁷²⁹. The joint announcement that the Cambodian leaders would refrain from using the veto implicit in the conference's unanimity rule, was read as a good sign for the conference's prospects for success⁷³⁰. Three working committees were then formed. What is significant was that Malaysia was allowed to chair one of the committees with Laos working on the promised guarantee of the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and

⁷²⁴ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 August 1989.

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ Ibid.

⁷²⁷ Micheal Haas, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia 1989', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23.2 (1991), pp.42-53, (p43) doi: 10.1080/14672715.1991.10413150.

⁷²⁸ Ibid.

⁷²⁹ Micheal Field, 'Starting to Tango', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 August 1989.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

neutrality of Cambodia through the cessation and non-recurrence of foreign interference and external arms supplies, and the prevention of the recurrence of genocidal policies or the return and introduction of foreign forces⁷³¹. These were all components of ASEAN's comprehensive solution, again ensuring ASEAN continued to play a significant role in the peace process, dealing with aspects which addressed concerns of all sides involved in the war.

The conference fell apart after three weeks on the issue of power-sharing among the Khmer factions⁷³². In the Ad Hoc Committee, France was pushing for endorsement of a document that would leave the PRK in control, with the cosmetic addition of Sihanouk as Head of a state council⁷³³. None of the CGDK leaders were willing to accept this⁷³⁴. Both sides rejected each other's proposals outright and stood their ground on immovable positions⁷³⁵. Even a change from consensus to unanimity was not bringing immediate results as shown by the stalemate in Paris.

Paris complicated matters after JIM despite unanimity aiming to make decision-making easier than consensus. The major obstacle was the extent to which the Khmer Rouge would participate in a government following a Vietnamese withdrawal⁷³⁶. An additional point of contention was China's refusal to stop supporting them⁷³⁷. It was likely that China's worsening relations with the USA, who were staunchly behind Sihanouk and facing an increasingly anti-Khmer Rouge public, caused this⁷³⁸. Haas also points out that speeches from Wong Kan Seng, Khieu Samphan, Sihanouk and Son Sann broke the spirit of compromise by being overly critical of Vietnam⁷³⁹. The deadlock boiled down to a choice between a three-month interim bipartite council or a one-year interim quadripartite government⁷⁴⁰. It is important to remember here that back at the 1981 ICK, China had worked to ensure

⁷³¹ Micheal Field, 'Starting to Tango', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 10 August 1989.

⁷³² Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 31 August 1989.

⁷³³ Ibid.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Micheal Field, Rodney Tasker, and Murray Hiebert, 'No end in sight', *Far Eastern Economic Review* 7 September 1989.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Rodney Tasker, 'Fighting for Turf', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 26 October 1989.

⁷³⁹ Micheal Haas, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia 1989', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23.2 (1991), pp.42-53, (p45) doi: 10.1080/14672715.1991.10413150.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

the Khmer Rouge's continued involvement in Cambodia including participation in post-war UN supervised elections and this shows that even in 1989, China was not ready to drop this demand just yet. This negatively impacted the chances of solving the war, meaning ASEAN and the involved parties would have to continue with the peace process since China still refused to compromise about this.

By this point, ASEAN and the other parties often had to deal with different compromise solutions to achieve progress, while some involved participants did not want to compromise at all. After carrying out interviews, Haas believed that the Khmer Rouge deliberately wrecked the Paris Conference and suggested widespread Khmer Rouge infiltration into the other CGDK component parties⁷⁴¹. Alatas attempted to arrange compromises with all factions, finding agreement with Vietnam and the PRK, but not the Khmer Rouge or FUNCINPEC⁷⁴². Also in September 1989, US Secretary of State James Baker told ASEAN's Foreign Ministers in New York that there was an urgent need to look for a different approach⁷⁴³. This reflected how from America's perspective, the meetings failed to achieve a solution and a change of strategy was needed. Haas however, pointed out that the USA, along with China and the Khmer Rouge, showed no indication of wanting to compromise in Paris, unlike Vietnam and the PRK⁷⁴⁴. Vietnam eventually withdrew its troops from Cambodia on 26 September 1989⁷⁴⁵. After the failure in Paris, the only diplomatic initiative regarding the Cambodian conflict was Chatichai holding separate meetings with Ranariddh, Son Sann and Hun Sen⁷⁴⁶. His proposal for a ceasefire failed because the CGDK felt it would benefit the PRK⁷⁴⁷. But his advisers managed to gain Sihanouk's acceptance for further talks among the Cambodian factions, provided they were along the lines of the Paris Conference or JIM⁷⁴⁸, allowing diplomatic efforts to keep going. ASEAN's aim of a Vietnamese withdrawal had finally been achieved, but with the failure of the first Paris Conference, the priority

⁷⁴¹ Micheal Haas, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia 1989', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23.2 (1991), pp.42-53, (p49) doi: 10.1080/14672715.1991.10413150.

⁷⁴² Ibid, p.50.

⁷⁴³ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.146.

⁷⁴⁴ Micheal Haas, 'The Paris Conference on Cambodia 1989', *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 23.2 (1991), pp.42-53, (p52) doi: 10.1080/14672715.1991.10413150.

⁷⁴⁵ Michael Haas, *Genocide By Proxy: Cambodian Pawn on a Superpower Chessboard*: (Praeger, 1991) p.212.

⁷⁴⁶ Murray Hibbert, 'Going it alone', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 5 October 1989.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibid.

became a reconvening of this to ensure the achievement of the comprehensive political solution involving UN supervised elections and UN peacekeepers.

Despite the initiative passing to parties other than ASEAN, its members did their best to continue the peace process. ASEAN managed to maintain its strategy of keeping the CGDK in the UN since its resolution still gained a lot of support in 1989 despite the expectation that Vietnam's withdrawal would reduce support for ASEAN's position at the UN⁷⁴⁹. ASEAN solidarity at the UN still remained even after the complications resulting from both JIM 2 and Paris.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, ASEAN ministers such as Rajaratnam did consider the Khmer Rouge problematic before but by 1989, with Vietnam seemingly having already withdrawn, more attention was now being paid on Khmer Rouge atrocities and ASEAN had to adapt while committing to its preferred solution. On 23 November, the European Community passed a resolution urging its members to give de facto recognition to the PRK⁷⁵⁰. The significance of this was that one of ASEAN's dialogue partners, in this case, the EC, was changing its policy by encouraging recognition of the PRK. This could be interpreted as a sign of the changing international sentiments now that the Vietnamese had withdrawn.

Apart from ASEAN, their ally, Australia also attempted to contribute to the peace process by this point. Sihanouk expressed support for an Australian proposal from Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, that Cambodia be placed under UN interim administration until elections⁷⁵¹, a proposal similar to his own which called for Cambodia to be placed under a UN trusteeship.⁷⁵² However, diplomats were sceptical about its success because of opposition from both the PRK and CGDK and the powers backing them⁷⁵³, referring to China and the USSR because Vietnam and the PRK were still critical of UN involvement. In Singapore's opinion, the Australian proposal would not be viable unless Hun Sen supported it⁷⁵⁴, given the fact that all factions had yet to agree regarding UN involvement. The Australian plan was a viable idea for a new strategy in ASEAN's goal to solve the Cambodian conflict especially since it

⁷⁴⁹ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 2 November 1989.

⁷⁵⁰ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.145.

⁷⁵¹ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 7 December 1989.

⁷⁵² Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.144.

⁷⁵³ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review* 7 December 1989.

⁷⁵⁴ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.144.

included the UN involvement that ASEAN wanted though there were still differences regarding a peacekeeping force. ASEAN however, understood that with Vietnam having already withdrawn, this issue was largely for the superpowers to solve since as permanent members on the UN Security Council, they would have the final say in UN related matters. With the changing situation involving greater scrutiny of the Khmer Rouge, the time was now right for outside powers other than ASEAN to play a bigger role in the peace process as evidenced by Australian involvement here and as mentioned before in Chapter Two, ASEAN was well-aware of its own limitations throughout the peace process, acknowledging this would have to occur eventually.

Initiative Passes From ASEAN To UN Security Council

ASEAN was now prepared to use the Australian plan as a basis for newer proposals to ensure direct UN involvement in Cambodia as aimed for in their preferred comprehensive political solution. As 1990 began, ASEAN governments, led by Thailand asked Indonesia to convene a Senior Officials' Meeting in Jakarta to discuss the Cambodian conflict⁷⁵⁵. ASEAN diplomats felt that ASEAN would have to come up with a new strategy to reinvigorate its role in the peace process⁷⁵⁶. According to Ang, when the UN Security Council's permanent five members took over the issue, ASEAN lost control of the agenda⁷⁵⁷. Given the fact that Australia's proposal called for a UN trusteeship though, the core elements of ASEAN's solution were not forgotten since ASEAN always aimed for UN supervised elections and a UN peacekeeping force in its solution. Alatas began regional visits to gauge whether the involved parties were ready to reconvene for informal talks in Jakarta as he wanted to know if there were improved chances for success⁷⁵⁸.

The Khmer Rouge rejected the Australian plan and insisted that the PRK had to share power with the CGDK in an interim government prior to elections⁷⁵⁹. Hence, even after the JIM meetings and a Vietnamese withdrawal, the Khmer Rouge, like the PRK, were still unwilling to allow UN involvement.

⁷⁵⁵ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 January 1990.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁷ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.147.

⁷⁵⁸ Hamish McDonald and Micheal Vatikiotis, 'A Distant Light', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 March 1990.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

This was why Alatas faced pressure from ASEAN and Vietnam to keep the peace process moving forward after the failures at Paris⁷⁶⁰. It is worth noting that ASEAN's previous insistence on keeping the Khmer Rouge in the CGDK, now showed signs on backfiring but by this point, ASEAN now resigned themselves to allowing the UNSC to play the main role in the peace process especially since Vietnam had already withdrawn and UN involvement became the core issue regarding the war.

The Permanent Five of the UNSC approved Australia's proposal to give the UN an enhanced role in resolving the Cambodian problem⁷⁶¹. The plan aimed to achieve a ceasefire, the cessation of outside military assistance, and the comprehensive political settlement ASEAN had wanted since 1979⁷⁶². Vietnam and the PRK were more willing to agree than China, who refused to stop supporting the Khmer Rouge⁷⁶³. At this point, Hun Sen agreed with ASEAN that the UN could monitor elections, though he still refused to hand over administration of Cambodia to them⁷⁶⁴. Despite this, Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Tran Quang Co told journalists in Chiang Mai on 12 January that the PRK accepted a UN role in an interim administration⁷⁶⁵. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Rogachev said China and the USSR agreed on a UN role as well, though he declined to comment on China accepting an interim UN administration to oversee elections⁷⁶⁶. The delegates agreed that free and fair elections should be conducted under direct UN administration, taking place in a neutral environment in which no single party would be advantaged, an agreement clearly aimed at concerns over the Khmer Rouge⁷⁶⁷. More importantly for this narrative, the Permanent Five included elements of ASEAN's solution carried over from the 1981 ICK and the JIM meetings, namely the need for UN involvement including supervising elections, ensuring ASEAN's importance to the solution.

The Permanent Five also committed themselves to honouring the results of free and fair elections and insisted that all Cambodians should have the opportunity to take part, just as ASEAN always aimed

⁷⁶⁰ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 18 January 1990.

⁷⁶¹ Micheal Field, and Murray Hiebert, 'Regime of Last Resort', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 January 1990.

⁷⁶² Ibid.

⁷⁶³ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁷ Ibid.

for⁷⁶⁸. A role for the UN in a Cambodian settlement appeared to be established with the acceptance of a special representative of UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to run UN activities until the inauguration of a democratically elected government⁷⁶⁹. ASEAN's aim of UN involvement in elections was thus achieved. More importantly, Hun Sen also indicated a change in his own position, since he was facing increasing pressure from the Cambodian people to end the war. It was reported that he was ready to make concessions to the Australian plan, including resigning if the CGDK vacated the UN seat⁷⁷⁰. Pressure from the Cambodian population played a role in the peace process, together with the PRK's shift, and all parties were now open to the prospect of UN administration in Cambodia as ASEAN desired.

Outside parties also began to show willingness to meet the PRK directly. France approved for the PRK to set up an information office in Paris⁷⁷¹, while the USA indicated that it was ready to resume normalisation talks with Vietnam if the Vietnamese were cooperative in agreeing to a UN based solution to the Cambodian problem⁷⁷². The Americans decided that in the event of such cooperation, a US embassy could be set up in Hanoi even before a Cambodian peace agreement was signed⁷⁷³. ASEAN would likely not approve of this as they refused to take any such steps until the comprehensive political solution was completely reached including the UN supervised elections. Nevertheless, this was another positive development for ASEAN's comprehensive political solution since all sides were taking a friendlier approach to each other than in the years before.

Indonesia sent invitations for a third meeting in Jakarta⁷⁷⁴. When this transpired, the Khmer Rouge decided not to immediately dismiss a UN supervised settlement⁷⁷⁵. The meeting lent substance to the view that global and regional politics were pressing the factions towards settlement⁷⁷⁶. The Australian

⁷⁶⁸ Micheal Field, and Murray Hiebert, 'Regime of Last Resort', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 25 January 1990.

⁷⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁷¹ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 February 1990.

⁷⁷² Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 February 1990.

⁷⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁴ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 February 1990.

⁷⁷⁵ Hamish McDonald and Micheal Vatikiotis, 'A Distant Light', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 March 1990.

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid.

initiative convinced Alatas to hold this meeting⁷⁷⁷. It was encouraging to him that the Cambodian factions showed greater flexibility this time round with Hun Sen giving a categorical yes to the Australian plan, though he was still vague about the extent of UN involvement in an interim administration⁷⁷⁸. ASEAN could at least take comfort that he did not reject UN involvement outright. The meeting ended with a call for the Cambodian factions to delegate national sovereignty to a UN transnational body⁷⁷⁹. The significance of this meeting was that it confirmed that the UN were now increasingly being relied upon for a solution, and ASEAN was now emphasizing this, as it was what they aimed for.

On 7 June 1990, Hun Sen was interviewed by the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, when he stated that both he and Sihanouk shared similar views regarding the creation of a Supreme National Council and mentioned that in principle, the PRK had accepted the UN Interim Authority⁷⁸⁰. He also added however, that he did not believe that the UN could maintain law and order and that he believed only the PRK could prevent the return of the Khmer Rouge⁷⁸¹. While this interview could be considered as evidence that Hun Sen did think on a similar wavelength to ASEAN in terms of UN and Sihanouk's involvement, there was still be disagreement between him and ASEAN since he still placed the PRK, which ASEAN would not recognize without a victory in UN-supervised elections, at the forefront of a solution to the conflict. Nevertheless, ASEAN could still take comfort from Hun Sen's approval of UN involvement here as that would increase the chances of achieving the solution they wanted.

The Americans caused concern for ASEAN when US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Robert Kimmitt informed ASEAN ambassadors in Washington on 17 July that American policy would be changing as bipartisan support in America on the Cambodia issue was breaking down⁷⁸². On 2 August, Nayan reported that US Secretary of State James Baker announced that the USA would no longer support the seating of the CGDK at the UN if it included the Khmer Rouge but would continue to support the non-Communist resistance⁷⁸³. Baker even stated that the PRK was no longer a puppet

⁷⁷⁷ Hamish McDonald and Micheal Vatikiotis, 'A Distant Light', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 March 1990.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁹ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 March 1990.

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.150.

⁷⁸³ Nayan Chanda, 'For Reasons of State', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 August 1990.

government due to the Vietnamese withdrawal, not considering the presence of Vietnamese advisers in Cambodia to be a continuation of the occupation⁷⁸⁴. These developments forced ASEAN to reinforce the Cambodian UN seat as shown below with PRK presence in a Supreme National Council that would replace the CGDK through a final JIM meeting.

10 September 1990 JIM Meeting: The Supreme National Council

ASEAN then focused on efforts to create a Supreme National Council (SNC) composed of important Cambodians to occupy the UN seat while the Americans agreed not to lobby to eject the CGDK from the seat to allow time for the formation of the SNC⁷⁸⁵. Alatas described this situation as remaining united on fundamentals while differing on tactical aspects⁷⁸⁶. Baker's decision forced ASEAN to make changes to its strategy with the Supreme National Council becoming ASEAN's new focus regarding solving the Third Indochina War which remained consistent with their established position since the SNC would replace the CGDK in the UN.

France, as Co-Chairman of the Paris meetings recommended for Indonesia to host another JIM aimed at discussing the composition of the SNC in time for September's UN General Assembly⁷⁸⁷. An SNC acceptable to all Cambodian factions could then replace the CGDK at the UN⁷⁸⁸. During a visit to Bangkok from 13 to 14 August, Chinese Premier Li Peng was reported by Thai government sources to have shown a new degree of flexibility in China's Cambodia policy⁷⁸⁹. Both Li and Chatichai expressed support for the UN Security Council who called for a SNC, comprising members from all four Cambodian factions to be formed as early as possible⁷⁹⁰. On 28 August, the Permanent Five agreed on the framework for a comprehensive settlement to end the Cambodian conflict⁷⁹¹. Now with China, the Khmer Rouge's supporter on board, progress towards an SNC was more likely, increasing chances of a third JIM meeting improving on the previous two, as ASEAN aimed for.

⁷⁸⁴ Nayan Chanda, 'For Reasons of State', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 2 August 1990.

⁷⁸⁵ Micheal Vatikilotis, 'Feeling the Heat', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 9 August 1990.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁷ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 August 1990.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁹¹ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 September 1990.

The agreement on the framework proposed UN supervision of an interim government, military arrangements for the transnational period, free elections and guarantees for Cambodia's neutrality, all elements that ASEAN had aimed for since the 1981 ICK⁷⁹². The UNSC called on the four Cambodian factions to adopt their plans and form the SNC⁷⁹³. The PRK wanted fifty per cent of the seats while the Khmer Rouge demanded equal representation for each faction⁷⁹⁴. The UNSC's idea of compromise was to choose SNC members as individuals instead of faction representatives⁷⁹⁵. After the JIM meetings, the UNSC was actively playing a major role in contributing to the peace process, facilitating ASEAN to succeed in reaching their goals even though the UNSC took the initiative from them. Given ASEAN's desire for UN involvement, though, this should not necessarily be considered as a failure since ASEAN acknowledged the need for outside help to eventually occur even in the years before, admitting that they could not solve the issue by themselves as far back as 1981 when they had discouraged the idea of regional conferences, knowing that assistance from outside the region was necessary to achieve their comprehensive political solution especially since the Third Indochina War had been part of the Sino-Soviet split in the first place as mentioned in Chapter Two⁷⁹⁶.

China's Assistant Foreign Minister Xu Dunxin considered the UN plan reasonable and urged the Cambodian factions to quickly establish the SNC, hoping this could be done in Jakarta⁷⁹⁷. The plan also envisaged the UN gaining control of five key Ministries in Cambodia to ensure free and fair elections⁷⁹⁸. In addition, the UN would verify a ceasefire and supervise disarmament of the factions⁷⁹⁹. FUNCINPEC and KPNLF welcomed the UN plan. Meanwhile the Khmer Rouge found the plan relatively easy to support, since it meant representation on the SNC, thus enhancing their dwindling legitimacy⁸⁰⁰. On 1 September, Heng Samrin confirmed in a speech that the PRK was willing to discuss the UN plan but had difficulty accepting some of its elements⁸⁰¹. He said the PRK accepted the UN plan as a basic

⁷⁹² Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 September 1990.

⁷⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁶ Ang Cheng Guan, *Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian Conflict 1978-1991*, (NUS Press, 2013) p.37.

⁷⁹⁷ Susumu Awanohara, 'Killing Time', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 September 1990.

⁷⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*

document for talks with the CGDK but insisted their position was to maintain its status quo, both politically and militarily⁸⁰². For ASEAN, at the very least, the PRK's two main leaders were now willing to consider elements of the UN's peace plan, suggesting that they would be open to a degree of UN involvement by 1990, removing one of the last remaining obstacles to acceptance of ASEAN's preferred solution.

At that third JIM meeting, referred to as "Baby JIM" by Brunei's Lim Jock Seng and his future Permanent Secretary Pengiran Osman Patra⁸⁰³, a joint statement was released which stipulated that the Cambodian parties accept a framework document formulated by the Permanent Five in its entirety as a basis for settling the conflict⁸⁰⁴. This document entailed organizing a ceasefire and elections as well as an interim administration, all under UN supervision⁸⁰⁵. Secondly, the factions agreed to set up a twelve member SNC to embody Cambodian sovereignty during the transitional period before elections⁸⁰⁶. Members would be defined as representative individuals with authority among the Cambodian people and reflecting all shades of opinion among them⁸⁰⁷. It would be comprised of six PRK members and two each from the Khmer Rouge, KPNLF and FUNCINPEC⁸⁰⁸. This allowed the CGDK and PRK to have an equal number of members in the SNC. Sihanouk also added his own proposal that members could elect a thirteenth member at their first meeting if they wished to do so.⁸⁰⁹ With this, despite its short length, "Baby JIM" was more successful than its predecessors. Unlike the first two JIM meetings, overseas news reports were more favourable to this third JIM meeting as well. ASEAN accounts of the success of the JIM process had some truth to them when the third meeting is considered.

Thus, JIM's significance was that it enabled the involved parties to reach agreement on the key elements of a solution which were still in place even at an international conference led by the UN, which ASEAN had always intended for. The international situation had largely changed at this point with Hun Sen

⁸⁰² Susumu Awanohara, 'Killing Time', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 13 September 1990.

⁸⁰³ Lim Jock Seng, Interview with the Author, 25 November 2022.

⁸⁰⁴ Micheal Vatikiotis, 'Grudging Unity', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 September 1990.

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

meeting both Sihanouk and Chatichai directly along with a Vietnamese withdrawal and thus the PRK could now play an active role in the peace process and ASEAN adapted accordingly, while still maintaining its adherence to a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN supervised elections as the key elements of its preferred solution with the Vietnamese withdrawal now having already been achieved.

In any case, the joint agreement stipulated that the SNC would make decisions by consensus, just as ASEAN did⁸¹⁰. Thanks to the UNSC, the superpowers were now directly influencing a solution to the Third Indochina War, which nevertheless, maintained an adherence to ASEAN's preferred solution, since the SNC was a product of the JIM meetings. Alatas used American non-recognition of the Khmer Rouge as a threat to goad the factions to attend the meeting indicating increased American involvement in the peace process now⁸¹¹. While ASEAN had acted independently when it came to solving the Third Indochina War, there was no denying the fact that the war itself was still a "Cold War" event and the USA, USSR and China would still have to be actively engaged, especially since all of them were part of the Permanent Five. Agreement was only obtained from the factions by keeping them apart as shown at the final press conference when Khieu Samphan took the opportunity to criticize Hun Sen who, luckily for ASEAN decided against a rebuke⁸¹².

Talks in Bangkok among the Cambodian factions on the composition of the SNC stalled because the CGDK wanted Sihanouk to be the SNC Chairman and thirteenth member, but the PRK insisted that he take one of twelve seats, or they should have an extra delegate, which would give them a total of seven⁸¹³. There was also disagreement to a proposal from Hun Sen that he be made SNC vice-chairman and lead the Cambodian delegation at the UN General Assembly⁸¹⁴. The Jakarta Agreement also represented at least a partial back-down from Vietnam's previous insistence that the SNC be composed of equal numbers of representatives from the PRK and the CGDK⁸¹⁵. Indonesia and France then stepped

⁸¹⁰ Micheal Vatikiotis, 'Grudging Unity', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 20 September 1990.

⁸¹¹ Ibid.

⁸¹² Ibid.

⁸¹³ Unknown Correspondent, 'In Brief Section' *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 27 September 1990.

⁸¹⁴ Ibid.

⁸¹⁵ Robert Delfs, Murray Hiebert, Rodney Tasker and Susumu Awanohara, Carrots and Sticks, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 October 1990.

up their efforts in trying to bring about consensus between the Cambodian parties⁸¹⁶. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe had eliminated many reasons for China and Vietnam's estrangement⁸¹⁷. The 1990 Chengdu Summit led to the normalization of relations between China and Vietnam⁸¹⁸. Changes in the Communist bloc also had to be considered for the solution of the Third Indochina War, as this helped ASEAN by forcing Vietnam into a more conciliatory position, as highlighted in the previous chapter. This meant a solution to the war was now closer in sight for ASEAN and the warring parties.

From 9 to 11 November, an important development occurred in Jakarta where there was agreement on a framework for a draft political settlement⁸¹⁹. This consisted of the final act of the Paris Conference, a main agreement covering the transitional period before elections, two separate agreements going beyond the transitional period establishing Cambodia's neutrality and elaborating on arrangements for reconstruction and rehabilitation and five detailed annexes focusing on issues such as the organization of elections, repatriation of refugees, ceasefire and other related military arrangements⁸²⁰. Sihanouk called on leaders of the Cambodian factions to match the effort in Paris⁸²¹. On 22 November, the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson announced that since the Permanent Five's plan was accepted in September 1990, China stopped providing military assistance to the Khmer Rouge, thus finally removing an obstacle for the comprehensive political solution since this might persuade the Khmer Rouge to be more reasonable.

In December 1990, Indonesia and France convened a meeting with the members of the SNC in Paris where a draft agreement for a comprehensive political settlement was presented⁸²². Some points in the draft agreement were not accepted by the PRK. One point of disagreement revolved around the issue of

⁸¹⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Brief of the ASEAN SOM for the 24th AMM/PMC Kuala Lumpur 15-17 July 1991.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ David Shambaugh, (1991) 'China in 1990, The Year of Damage Control', *Asian Survey*, 31.1 (1991) pp.36-49 (p46) doi: 10.2307/2645183.

⁸¹⁹ Micheal Vatitkotis, 'Measure of Success', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 22 November 1990.

⁸²⁰ Ibid

⁸²¹ Micheal Field and Micheal Vatitkotis, 'Jaw and Peace', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 6 December 1990.

⁸²² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Brief of the ASEAN SOM for the 24th AMM/PMC Kuala Lumpur 15-17 July 1991.

genocide⁸²³. The PRK wanted this to be included to ensure the non-return of the Khmer Rouge's brutal practices⁸²⁴. They also had disagreements with the disarmament issue, arguing that if they disarmed their troops, the Khmer Rouge would take advantage of that situation and take control of Cambodia by force⁸²⁵. In addition to this, the issue of sovereignty was also raised by the PRK arguing that the UN had no right to take the sovereignty of a country during the transition period⁸²⁶. Even with the SNC having already been formed by the end of 1990, ASEAN's goal of a comprehensive political solution had yet to be formalized due to these disagreements. However, with the Sino-Soviet split becoming a thing of the past, the major powers adopted more flexible positions eventually leading to ASEAN's preferred solution being achieved in 1991.

Conclusion: the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements

By 1990, ASEAN took a back seat since the UN was playing the main role to solve the conflict after the Vietnamese had withdrawn. However, the war did not end that year since a final agreement was not reached. The UN's involvement in the peace process was what ASEAN had aimed for since the outbreak of the war back in 1979 and a UN peacekeeping force was the final step needed for the comprehensive political solution to be reached to maintain law and order in Cambodia and to supervise the elections. Nevertheless, it can be seen here that ASEAN's comprehensive political solution involving a Vietnamese withdrawal, UN-supervised elections and a UN peacekeeping force was still on track, even though the UNSC's involvement proves that ASEAN could not achieve this without their help.

By 1991, due to the Vietnamese withdrawal, the attitudes of the external powers to the Third Indochina War were changing as Japan and Australia were now supportive of Hun Sen. With the Sino-Soviet split being less of an issue, China was willing to accept a loose arrangement between Sihanouk and Hun Sen, hinting they wanted to end support for the Khmer Rouge and accept Hun Sen as well at this point since Vietnam was no longer seen as a threat to China. In June 1991, Sihanouk became the chair of the SNC

⁸²³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam Brief of the ASEAN SOM for the 24th AMM/PMC Kuala Lumpur 15-17 July 1991.

⁸²⁴ Ibid.

⁸²⁵ Ibid.

⁸²⁶ Ibid.

with Hun Sen as vice chair, despite the Khmer Rouge's opposition. Most crucially, China, the Khmer Rouge's most important ally, supported Sihanouk's decision, indicating they were now switching their support to Sihanouk. Also helpful to the peace process was the fact that, in September, China and Vietnam announced that they would normalize relations. A second SNC meeting was held in August 1991, resolving all crucial issues and paving the way for France to reconvene the Paris Conference. The SNC was formally established in Phenom Penh on 14 November 1991 and the UN sent the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia in 1991 as well, confirming their direct involvement in Cambodia. This proves that Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia was ASEAN's foremost concern since once they had withdrawn, ASEAN had no problems passing the initiative over to the UN Security Council to achieve their preferred solution to the conflict.

The JIM meetings proved to be ASEAN's most significant contribution to the peace process to end the Third Indochina War. While it is easy to view them as failures, due to the fact that the process was dragged out longer than it should have once Vietnam became more comfortable with Indonesia and Thailand's friendlier approach towards them, on the other hand, ASEAN's habit of carrying elements forward as a framework for a solution, just as they had done in the 1981 ICK, ensured that their efforts were never in vain as they continued to be discussed in subsequent meetings to solve the conflict. ASEAN's success could be measured by the fact that its original core demands of a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN supervised elections remained all throughout the process, unchanged from Jakarta to Paris even though they eventually had to pass the initiative to outside powers. The ASEAN states had acknowledged a need to do so since 1979 anyway, as previously evidenced by ASEAN's rationale in calling for the 1981 ICK. Despite the divisions at the JIM meetings that have been noted by Ang Cheng Guan and reports from the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, ASEAN coherence, while certainly affected, remained in place until the final Peace Agreements were signed in Paris, as the association continued to be present and involved with a general position as evidence with the elements of the solution they wanted still intact until the war came to an official end by then. Like the ICK, the JIM meetings were significant in retrospect since ASEAN was the driving force of these meetings. The JIM meetings have been viewed as a key highlight of ASEAN's political history by ASEAN leaders such as Brunei's

Foreign Minister Prince Mohammed Bolkiah, where the association came into its own as a force in Southeast Asian affairs, actively playing a role in the search for peace in the region.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study has shown that ASEAN was greatly concerned by the Third Indochina War due to a combination of factors. This was mostly related to concerns about their internal security and violations of the UN Charter principles of sovereignty and self-determination especially because Cambodia, unlike East Timor was a UN member state at the time the Vietnamese invasion occurred and had been before ASEAN's formation. On the one hand, the ASEAN states were slightly influenced by ASEAN's own version of the Domino Theory, initially proposed by the Americans. This version of the theory specifically centred around a fear of Soviet Communism instead of the Communist ideology in general because at that time the Sino-Soviet split had affected the Cold War. Due to this, Vietnam, a Soviet ally, regarded China as its main enemy, as evidenced by the subsequent theatre of the war which would break out between the two countries. This "Domino Theory" caused them to view the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia as a precursor for Vietnamese or Soviet attacks on Thailand and other ASEAN members. While this was largely preposterous, it needed to be understood in the general context of the situation in the region at that time where Communist insurgencies were still active in the ASEAN states. ASEAN's security concerns therefore were invoked in terms of the Communist threat to their governments which caused them to fear and link the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia with their own local Communist insurgencies, further complicated by the Vietnamese violation of Cambodia self-determination via its forced installation of the PRK, despite the fact that a section of the Cambodian population was glad to be rid of the Khmer Rouge. ASEAN was more concerned about the precedent set by Vietnam's move, though they acknowledged concerns over the Khmer Rouge's atrocities. Therefore, ASEAN felt the need to respond by supporting the Khmer Rouge and later, forming and supporting the CGDK to keep the Vietnamese and by extension, the Soviets, in check while also laying the foundations for a post-war Cambodian government, assisted by UN supervised elections between the four Cambodian parties.

Another reason was that ASEAN also wanted to establish its preferred state of affairs in Southeast Asia, based on respect for UN Charter principles of sovereignty and self-determination which had been

broken by Vietnam by its occupation of Cambodia, which unlike East Timor was a UN member at the time. As mentioned before, the precedent set by the Vietnamese armed overthrow of Pol Pot was also concerning to ASEAN as this meant a situation involving the violation of both sovereignty and self-determination for a fellow Southeast Asian country in the form of Cambodia. Unlike the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, a situation where Cambodian self-determination and sovereignty were being violated at the same time on Cambodia, a UN member since 1953, compared to East Timor, a Portuguese colony, was greatly unacceptable to ASEAN. It is also important to note here the Third Indochina War involved the violation of both principles unlike Pol Pot's attacks which violated Vietnamese sovereignty but not self-determination which was also important to ASEAN who reiterated the importance of self-determination as well in their Ministerial Meetings every year from 1979 to 1988.

This thesis has also highlighted how ASEAN's response to the Third Indochina War resulted in it become a more coherent international organization in world affairs. This is because they spearheaded or were the driving force behind the various initiatives such as the International Conference on Kampuchea, the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea and the Jakarta Informal Meetings and constantly stuck to their general UN resolution until the war's end. This made them more politically active than they were prior to 1979, though it must be said that cracks in ASEAN unity did appear after JIM 1, though ASEAN still committed to its preferred solution which was achieved at the 1991 Paris Peace Agreements. With this in mind, it is also important to note that ASEAN's Ministerial Meetings and their constant lobbying at the UN for the entire duration of the war still managed to provide evidence of the association maintaining a united general position regarding the conflict until 1991, though admittedly this was looser than normal in the final three years once Vietnam withdrew and differences over the continued role of the Khmer Rouge in a post war Cambodian government became more apparent.

Although the war resulted in greater coherence for ASEAN, the research has also pointed out some of the difficulties which occurred in ASEAN's attempts to solve the war. One major reason was ASEAN's insistence on including the Khmer Rouge which reflected a refusal to take Vietnamese security concerns into account was arguably responsible for prolonging the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia. A

significant portion of the Cambodian population did not want the Khmer Rouge to return as well. There were also differences between some ASEAN member states in terms of their bilateral relations with the key combatants which were also apparent and this too, had the impact of prolonging the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia since the differing opinions regarding the Soviets, Chinese and Vietnamese as threats to each individual state meant that finding solutions to the problems ASEAN faced were very time consuming. It was also true that ASEAN's stated emphasis on diplomacy to end the conflict was undermined by certain members' support of the Khmer Rouge in the Cambodian coalition. With this, another observation of ASEAN's attempt to solve the war was that greater ASEAN coherence was not sufficient to end the war by itself, and greater involvement by the United Nations and changes in the Soviet and Vietnamese governments also played a part in ending the conflict, though ASEAN did acknowledge the need for outside help from the beginning, so UN involvement was not necessarily unexpected from ASEAN's perspective.

Initially after the outbreak of the war in 1979, ASEAN called for the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia and the restoration of Cambodian independence and self-determination during ASEAN Ministerial Meetings throughout the war. After denying the Vietnamese-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) Cambodia's UN seat, ASEAN's initial goal was to hold an international conference aimed at finding a solution to the conflict involving a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN-supervised elections. This eventually happened in New York in 1981. However, Vietnam and the USSR's refusal to attend meant the conference was not sufficient to bring about an end the war. Nevertheless, ASEAN decided to continue with the conference anyway and the International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) managed to lead to a framework for a solution which was internalized by ASEAN for the rest of the war including the elements of a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN supervised elections to restore Cambodian self-determination. ASEAN's efforts to convene the ICK also provided a foundation for the greater coherence it would achieve throughout the conflict.

ASEAN also realised that they needed to make changes to the Cambodian government due to the genocidal policies of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge which had been in power before the war broke out. The fact that the Khmer Rouge provoked the war in the first place, only made Vietnam even more reluctant

to withdraw. ASEAN then pushed to encourage the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), with the inclusion of non-Communist leaders, Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann and their respective parties, FUNCINPEC and KPNLF alongside the Khmer Rouge. The CGDK was formed on 22 June 1982 in Kuala Lumpur, occupying Cambodia's UN seat for most of the war. The CGDK gave Sihanouk a way back into Cambodian politics after he had been in exile shortly after the Khmer Rouge takeover back in 1975. ASEAN's efforts to form this coalition further contributed to their coherence as well, just as the ICK did. Sihanouk's presence was also important as part of ASEAN's goal to address Vietnamese concerns which was necessary to end the war by replacing Pol Pot with him as the internationally recognized Cambodian head of state.

The CGDK was able to take advantage of Sihanouk's popularity as a factor to prevent their Vietnamese backed rivals, the PRK under Heng Samrin from gaining international legitimacy at the UN and other international fora. ASEAN's constant lobbying at the UN for the CGDK to keep the seat, combined with ASEAN visits to the countries being lobbied also greatly helped in this regard as well. Sihanouk's return as his country's UN recognized leader gave other countries a legal means to provide aid for the Cambodian resistance fighting against the Vietnamese Occupation. Some ASEAN members such as Singapore and Malaysia provided various types and amounts of aid to the non-Communist factions in the CGDK. This can be considered as ASEAN acknowledging their "preference" for the Khmer Rouge to be replaced after the war, especially since ASEAN wanted UN supervised elections to be held between all parties including the PRK after Vietnam withdrew. This was an early step towards ASEAN sharing a common belief with Vietnam that the Khmer Rouge were unacceptable to rule Cambodia, though this was not obvious to Vietnam just yet as they had yet to meet directly with ASEAN and there were no guarantees to prevent the Khmer Rouge returning to power. Meanwhile, their constant lobbying at the UN during meetings and the "lobbying missions" to the countries being convinced beforehand once again showed they had evolved from a "talking shop" to a more active grouping in global politics.

Needing to move forward with the peace process, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja released the ASEAN Appeal for Kampuchean Independence on 21 September 1983 in Jakarta, taking the lead in ASEAN's attempts to find a solution. The ASEAN Appeal attempted to offer a reasonable basis for a

comprehensive political settlement in Cambodia. This added the exercise of self-determination and national reconciliation in Cambodia along with a Vietnamese withdrawal. Along with ASEAN's earlier demand for UN supervised elections, the ASEAN Appeal was an early indication of ASEAN's attempt to understand Vietnamese concerns since national reconciliation would also incorporate the Vietnamese backed PRK government in addition to the three groups in the CGDK. However, Vietnam was unconvinced and refused to accept the Appeal. Nevertheless, the Appeal also contributed to ASEAN's increasing coherence as an international organization compared to how they were before 1979 since all its member states were committed to this while communicating to Vietnam. ASEAN was aware of the need to present a position that was not hostile to Vietnam, wanting both Vietnam and Cambodia to be part of a peaceful Southeast Asia free from conflict, taking steps to address Vietnamese concerns about the Khmer Rouge. ASEAN's efforts alone would be insufficient to end the war and achieve the comprehensive political solution that they were aiming for. The other side consisting of Vietnam and the Soviet Union would also have to actively contribute for the war to be solved.

The coming of Mikail Gorbachev as Soviet leader in March 1985 was the catalyst for a more conciliatory approach by the USSR towards ASEAN. His Vladivostok Speech of July 1986 and introduction of Perestroika reforms throughout his tenure meant that Soviet foreign policy underwent significant change. Unlike his predecessors, Gorbachev was willing to accept the existence of a "Cambodian problem". The coming of Gorbachev was helpful to ASEAN as it also resulted in a more conciliatory position from Vietnamese. This was evidenced in August 1985 when Vietnam announced for the first time that it would begin withdrawing from Cambodia in 1986, with the withdrawal to be completed by 1990. This proves that ASEAN's efforts alone could not solve the conflict, and a Soviet/Vietnamese role was essential as well.

Of equal importance was the introduction of the Doi Moi reforms in 1986, the same year as the Vladivostok Speech. Under the leadership of Nguyen Van Linh in Vietnam, a series of reforms known as Doi Moi or renovation was introduced. Like China and the USSR, Vietnam "abandoned Stalinist central planning in favour of allowing a market-oriented economy based on supply and demand to operate". Doi Moi also encouraged the development of the non-state sector as well. Vietnam was now

following a similar path to China by abandoning their adherence to the Communist ideology from an economic perspective. This allowed them to be more open minded in reconsidering some of their policy decisions including the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia. Doi Moi, similar to the changes taking place in the USSR under Gorbachev, meant that there was now an opportunity for ASEAN and Vietnam to work together and chances of the conflict being solved increased even further as a result.

Mikhail Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech and Nguyen Van Linh's Doi Moi reforms contributed to a more conducive atmosphere for ASEAN's preferred comprehensive political solution. ASEAN remained committed to solving the issue at the negotiating table rather than on the battlefield as their coherence as an organization continued to develop. As they further evolved as an association during the war, the opportunity to succeed in their aim to solve the conflict increased as well.

On ASEAN's side, 1985 saw the introduction of the Proximity Talks Proposal by Malaysia between the CGDK and the PRK which would take place in different rooms but in the same venue via a mediator acceptable to both sides. This idea was well received by the other ASEAN members as well as Sihanouk and his FUNCINPEC party. On 2 October 1985, the Proximity Talks Proposal evolved into the Cocktail Party Proposal when Sihanouk presented it as his own suggestion. The idea of proximity talks was also intended to introduce an element of flexibility to what were otherwise rigid positions adopted by the CGDK and PRK, whereby indirect contacts and dialogues could conceivably be established and maintained through the good offices of an intermediary without either side having to extend recognition to the other, especially since recognition of the PRK would be considered equal to accepting a Vietnamese *fait accompli* by ASEAN which was something they wanted to avoid. In a similar way to the 1981 ICK, ASEAN's decision to adopt this Malaysian proposal further highlights how the Third Indochina War proved to be its making as an established organization in the international arena.

Around the same time, Sihanouk expressed support for the idea of national reconciliation as introduced in the 1983 ASEAN Appeal to bring all Cambodian factions, including the Vietnamese-backed PRK together in a Cambodian government that would be in control after the war. This was to ensure peace and stability and prevent warfare from reoccurring. Ironically, an incomplete form of national

reconciliation would come about after the war which would serve both ASEAN and Vietnam's interests eventually since it did not include the Khmer Rouge.

Returning to the narrative, Vietnam still needed to be brought to the negotiating table in 1986. The CGDK then introduced an Eight-Point Peace Proposal which was endorsed by ASEAN during a meeting in Bali on 30 April 1986. The Eight-Point Proposal, like the 1981 ICK framework served as a constructive basis for future negotiations to end the war. Vietnam rejected this as well, but the adherence to some elements of the Eight-Point Proposal to the peace process by all parties including Vietnam themselves to an extent remained for the rest of the conflict. The Eight-Point Proposal could also be considered another example of ASEAN's success as several of its elements such as a ceasefire and withdrawal under UN supervision along with UN supervised elections were part of the Eight-Point Proposal as well and would eventually become part of the final peace agreements in 1991.

This study has emphasized that ASEAN as an association generally tried to solve the war through negotiations and meetings to achieve a Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia and none of the ASEAN member states launched military attacks on Vietnam or the PRK, not wanting any direct ASEAN military involvement. However, as also shown, incursions by Vietnam into Thai territory in response to Khmer Rouge attacks across the border did mean that the military forces of ASEAN's frontline state, Thailand did occasionally get involved in some fighting and suffered casualties. Despite this, Thai military involvement was kept to a minimum. Thailand did not try to mobilize its military forces to further escalate the situation in response to any incursions which ASEAN referred to as Vietnamese aggression in their Joint Communiques. Other ASEAN states such as Singapore and Malaysia offered to train CGDK members both in terms of military training and logistics but never sent their own militaries to assist the CGDK. This was because their armed forces were preoccupied fighting insurgencies such as the Second Malayan Emergency in West Malaysia. As mentioned before however, these local insurgencies contributed to ASEAN's concerns about the Vietnamese Occupation of Cambodia which not only violated key aspects of the UN Charter, but increased ASEAN's apprehensions about Communism.

On 29 July 1987, an event which would later become known as the Ho Chi Minh City Understanding occurred when Mochtar presented the Cocktail Party Proposal to the Vietnamese. At the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok in August 1987, ASEAN reached an agreement to support the Cocktail Party Proposal, now being presented as an Indonesian plan, with some ideas different from both Sihanouk's plan and the Malaysian Proximity Talks Proposal. The meeting would initially be amongst the four Cambodian factions, followed immediately by the participation of Vietnam. Elements of the CGDK's Eight-Point Proposal formed the basis of discussion at the proposed meeting, showing how ASEAN's preferred solution was being maintained as the war continued. In October 1987, Vietnam eventually accepted the Cocktail Party Proposal for talks between the Cambodian factions. This was significant because Vietnam had now agreed to come to a meeting organized by ASEAN regarding solving the conflict, providing an opportunity to improve on the 1981 ICK with all involved parties this time round.

These events showed that as a result of the Vladivostok Speech and the introduction of Doi Moi, Vietnam and the USSR's position towards the war was changing. ASEAN took advantage of this; firstly, with Rithauden suggesting the Proximity Talks Proposal and then Sihanouk and Mochtar turning it into the Cocktail Party Proposal. Once this occurred, ASEAN prepared for a future meeting along those lines. What was significant here was that ASEAN's desire to follow up on the 1981 ICK which did not include Vietnam was being realized, though several changes outside of ASEAN's control had to take place, especially a reduction of Soviet support for the Vietnamese before Vietnam finally agreed to come to the negotiating table.

Once Ali Alatas took over as Indonesian Foreign Minister in March 1988, the Cocktail Party Proposal, transformed into what would become known as the first Jakarta Informal Meeting (JIM). Alatas envisioned the JIM meetings to be preparatory for an international conference, which made sense since ASEAN constantly wanted to reconvene the ICK. JIM 1 was only seen as a limited success due to disagreement between the four Cambodian factions and to an extent, ASEAN members Indonesia and Singapore at the meeting. From this perspective, JIM 1 seemed to be more of a hindrance rather than a contribution to the Cambodian peace process. On the other hand, JIM 1 enabled Vietnam and the four

Cambodian factions to meet each other directly at the same meeting for the first time. Thus, it was an improvement over the 1981 ICK, since Vietnam had finally been convinced to come to the negotiating table. JIM 1 was thus significant to ASEAN's attempts to solve the conflict because it provided the impetus for further dialogue.

Before a second meeting (JIM 2) ASEAN also made some adjustments to its usual UN resolution, now facing a situation whereby continued support for the CGDK from most of the international community would not be guaranteed due to increasing scrutiny of the Khmer Rouge's genocidal policies. The UN resolution was slightly altered to also emphasize the non-return of the Khmer Rouge's genocidal policies and ASEAN was able to adapt accordingly to ensure success for its goal to solve the war.

In January 1989, Hun Sen visited Thailand as a guest of new Thai Prime Minister Chatichai. This was important to the narrative since Thailand under Chatichai's regime, was more business oriented than previous Thai governments during the war such as that of Prem and becoming more open to communication with the PRK. Despite ASEAN's frontline state showing signs of change in its Cambodian policy with Hun Sen's visit of Thailand, ASEAN's adherence to a comprehensive political solution to the Third Indochina War remained in place with the key elements of a Vietnamese withdrawal and UN supervised elections remaining as part of ASEAN's key aims, and the change in Thailand's position did not affect this.

At JIM 2, Alatas's Chairman's consensus statement kept open negotiations on an overall settlement instead of moving towards a partial settlement. This was a small improvement compared to JIM 1. JIM 2's main contribution to the peace process was that it established the agreed overall framework and broad parameters for a comprehensive solution as well as its major component elements which were later carried forward to the final meetings in Paris in 1989 and 1991. Because of this, the JIM process did succeed when Alatas's initial aims for them to be a preparatory meeting for an eventual international conference was considered since ASEAN took credit for the framework that it reached and maintained throughout the rest of the meetings to end the conflict. ASEAN's coherence was also ultimately not affected as the association itself continued to support further initiatives as the process moved from Jakarta to Paris.

Sihanouk then called for an international conference in Paris to follow the JIM meetings. This was in line with ASEAN's goal since an international conference was what Alatas had intended to happen after the JIM meetings when he initially came up with the idea. An international peace conference was then scheduled for August in Paris to choose participants for an international control mechanism to verify the Vietnamese pullout and the cessation of foreign military aid to the CGDK. Alatas met with his French counterpart Roland Dumas and the two agreed that their countries would be Co-Chairs of the Paris Conference. Indonesia's presence as Co-Chair of the Paris Meeting ensured that ASEAN would still have a leading role in the search for a solution to the Cambodian problem through Indonesia. Indonesia was now playing the leading role in the peace process showing how individual ASEAN states adapted accordingly to the changing circumstances. When the International Conference on Cambodia was convened in Paris from 30 July to 30 August 1989, Malaysia was given a role in overseeing one of the working committees which enabled two ASEAN member states a significant role in the peace process after the Jakarta Informal Meetings.

The Paris Conference of 1989 fell apart after three weeks over the issue of power-sharing among the Cambodian factions. Alatas attempted to arrange compromises with all factions, finding agreement with Vietnam and the PRK, but not from the Khmer Rouge or FUNCINPEC. After the failure in Paris, Thai Prime Minister Chatichai held separate meetings with Sihanouk's son Norodom Ranariddh, Son Sann and Hun Sen. His proposal for a ceasefire failed but his advisers managed to gain Sihanouk's acceptance for further talks among the Cambodian factions, provided they were along the lines of the Paris Conference or JIM meetings. Despite having seemingly lost faith in ASEAN's consensus-based decision making before, once the Paris Conference also failed, Sihanouk was willing to return to a similar ASEAN-led initiative to resume the peace process, leaving the door open for ASEAN to play an important role again and this would be evident with the final JIM meeting in 1990.

On 26 September 1989, Vietnam withdrew and this meant that one of ASEAN's main goals had been reached. This resulted in much greater attention being paid on Khmer Rouge atrocities than ever before. The failure of the initial Paris Conference meant that it would still take some time to solve the conflict.

The choice for decisions in Paris to be carried out based on unanimity rather than ASEAN's usual consensus failed to improve upon its chances for success.

In 1990, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) took over the main initiative in solving the Cambodian problem after the Vietnamese withdrawal and ASEAN lost control over the agenda. The Permanent Five members of the UNSC unanimously approved an Australian proposal to give the UN an enhanced role in resolving the Cambodian problem. The plan aimed to achieve a ceasefire, the cessation of outside military assistance, and a comprehensive political settlement consisting of all the elements which ASEAN had repeatedly called for since 1979 including around UN supervised elections and a UN peacekeeping force to maintain law and order after fighting had ended. Once again elements which ASEAN carried over from the 1981 ICK were still given emphasis at subsequent meetings, including by other parties such as the UNSC. Similar initiatives by outside parties such as Australia were also welcomed since obtaining outside help was another ASEAN aim since the war broke out in 1979. As the 1980s came to an end, Vietnam unsurprisingly became more willing to compromise than China or the Khmer Rouge, unsurprisingly as they already had withdrawn once the Soviets could no longer support the occupation. It is worth noting that the UNSC was willing to keep elements of ASEAN's comprehensive political solution as they continued with the goal that ASEAN had been aiming for, and this further proves ASEAN's importance to the peace process.

Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Tran Quang Co informed journalists in Chiang Mai on 12 January that the PRK accepted the UN's role in an interim administration. This was important for ASEAN as they wanted UN involvement since the 1981 ICK. The delegates agreed that free and fair elections should be conducted under direct UN administration in a neutral environment in which no single party would be advantaged. A role for the UN in a Cambodian settlement appeared to be firmly established with the acceptance of a special representative of UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar to run UN activities until the inauguration of a democratically elected government after the UN supervised elections. ASEAN's desire for UN involvement in a solution to the Third Indochina War appeared to have finally been reached and this can be considered further evidence of their success.

ASEAN then focused on efforts to create a Supreme National Council (SNC) composed of prominent Cambodians to replace the CGDK at the UN. To do this, ASEAN held another Jakarta Informal Meeting in 1990 which took place over a shorter length of time than its two predecessors. During a visit to Bangkok from 13 to 14 August, Chinese Premier Li Peng and Chatichai expressed support for the UNSC position on Cambodia, which called for a Supreme National Council to be formed as early as possible. This shows that the UNSC's views aligned with that of ASEAN, increasing chances of another JIM meeting's success.

On 28 August, the five Permanent Members of the UNSC agreed on the framework for a comprehensive settlement to end the Cambodian conflict. The agreement proposed elements of ASEAN's comprehensive political solution including UN supervision of an interim government, free elections, and guarantees for the neutrality of a future Cambodia. This meant that ASEAN's goal for a comprehensive political solution could now be facilitated by the UN. The ASEAN member states had emphasized the UN as a key part of their attempts to solve the conflict and this now proved to be the right move as the UN itself could now enable that solution to be reached. In addition, the UN would verify a ceasefire and supervise disarmament of the factions, fulfilling another of ASEAN's goals in a comprehensive political solution. All four Cambodian factions supported the UN plan at this point. This meant that with the PRK now having joined ASEAN, the CGDK, Vietnam and China in welcoming UN involvement, all involved parties of the Third Indochina War now appeared to be on the same wavelength and a solution was closer in sight.

At the third JIM meeting or "Baby JIM" as referred to by some of the interviewees, a joint statement was released which stipulated that the Cambodian parties accept a framework document formulated by the Permanent Five of the UNSC in its entirety, as a basis for settling the conflict. This document entailed organizing a ceasefire and elections as well as an interim administration, all under UN supervision. The factions also agreed to set up a twelve-member Supreme National Council (SNC) to embody Cambodian sovereignty during the transitional period before elections are held. SNC members would be defined as representative individuals with authority among the Cambodian people and reflecting all shades of opinion among them. It would be comprised of six members of the PRK

and two each from the Khmer Rouge, KPRLF and FUNCINPEC, ensuring that every Cambodian faction would have representation in the council. Despite its short length, the 1990 “Baby JIM meeting” proved to be more successful than its predecessors, since unlike the two previous JIM meetings, ASEAN leaders and foreign press all agreed that it was a total success in achieving its main aim of forming an SNC, without too many problems. The JIM process finally proved to be able to make a practical contribution to the search for a solution to the Third Indochina War. The joint agreement stipulated that the SNC would make decisions by consensus instead of unanimity, thus closely aligning it with ASEAN’s usual procedure. This was further evidence of ASEAN’s significance in the peace process. Like the ICK before it, ASEAN’s decision to host this extra JIM meeting became further proof of how the Cambodian peace process contributed to their coherence, since they remained committed to the goal of solving the conflict, despite the UNSC taking up more of a leading role by 1990.

Indonesia and France then stepped up their efforts in trying to bring about consensus between the Cambodian parties. Consensus as usually emphasized by ASEAN was now firmly back on the agenda with the creation of the SNC. This further proves ASEAN’s success as the SNC, like the CGDK before it was ASEAN backed, maintaining ASEAN’s preferred Cambodian government, now including the PRK in occupying the UN seat. Here it shows that the ASEAN states for the most part, adapted accordingly while holding on to some key aspects of their solution which had yet to be reached. Thanks to Indonesia and Thailand opening a chain of communication to them, the PRK joined the internationally recognized Cambodian government which became the SNC. Though it should be noted that since the UNSC now played the main role, they were more the driving force with regard to the SNC, unlike the CGDK. Nevertheless, ASEAN willingly accepted the SNC, since they did not consider the SNC to be equal to a Vietnamese fait accompli despite the PRK’s presence since Vietnam had already withdrawn.

Later in June 1991, with the SNC now in place, Sihanouk dealt with the question of the Chair and Vice Chair of the SNC in Jakarta. What is significant for ASEAN is that Indonesia under Ali Alatas hosted this meeting, which ASEAN has considered key in maintaining its leading role until the end. A second SNC meeting from 26 to 29 August 1991 resolved all remaining matters such as military arrangements

and relations between the SNC and the UN. It was agreed that there would be no reference to genocide in the final statement, though with China and ASEAN no longer backing the Khmer Rouge, this was seen as less of a problem by 1991. This eventually led to the Paris Peace Agreements which officially ended the Third Indochina War being signed on 23 October 1991.

The Paris Agreements were followed by the establishment of the SNC as the internationally recognized Cambodian government on 14 November 1991 in place of the CGDK, reaching ASEAN's comprehensive political solution. The PRK was now incorporated into Cambodia's UN seat, alongside the CGDK, now with ASEAN's full support. The UN sent an advance peace keeping force called United Nations Advanced Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) in 1991, which eventually became United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), a year later consisting of 15547 troops, 893 military observers and 3500 civilian police. There was also provision for up to 1149 international civilian staff, 465 United Nations Volunteers and 4830 local staff, supplemented by international contractual staff and electoral personnel during the electoral period. The ASEAN members including Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia all contributed personnel to UNTAC, along with forty other countries under the leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi from Japan and Force Commander John Sanderson from Australia. The UN supervised elections that ASEAN had been emphasizing throughout the peace process were eventually held on 24 May 1993, though the Khmer Rouge ultimately did not take part in them. During the electoral period, more than 50,000 Cambodians served as electoral staff and some 900 international polling station officers were seconded from foreign governments. This shows that UN involvement, key to ASEAN's solution was eventually reached.

ASEAN did not show as much concern by then since the Khmer Rouge lost international support once the UNSC had been bought in to directly oversee the Cambodian peace process and China, on the other hand, eventually opted to support Sihanouk instead of Pol Pot. Its member states did attend the final agreements in 1991, maintaining their coherent position towards the conflict until its end. Thus, Cambodia became a constitutional monarchy once again on 24 September 1993, at which point UNTAC ended its mission and left the country. Sihanouk once again became King for a second reign, with his son Norodom Ranariddh as First Prime Minister and Hun Sen as Second Prime Minister after the

elections resulted in a hung parliament with Sihanouk and Ranariddh's party FUNCINPEC becoming the largest party in the country. The Khmer Rouge did not return to power, as Vietnam wanted so it can be said that both ASEAN and Vietnam, with help from the UN were eventually able to have a solution which was fair to both sides.

As shown by the literature review chapter, previous authors which studied the Third Indochina War as a topic often focused on several aspects but many books, particularly the earlier ones in the literature, were focused largely on the conflict's position within the larger context of the Cold War. A second phase of literature about the war emerged when details of the Khmer Rouge's genocide became more apparent when more writers visited Cambodia, managing to observe the situation in the country for themselves. As a result, the genocide became the overwhelmingly most popular topic in literature related to the Third Indochina War for most of the late 1980s. After the war, newer books covered a more varied range of topics related to the conflict, written mostly by historians.

The books and articles mentioned in the literature review however, have never placed ASEAN as their main topic with regards to the Third Indochina War. This indicates that for the most part, various authors have not been fully concerned about ASEAN's impact on the diplomacy of the war or its effects on the other countries in Southeast Asia other than the combatants, most of which were ASEAN members at the time. At certain points however, the likes of Westad and Ang did make references to other Southeast Asian countries such as ASEAN members Singapore and Thailand, but did not emphasize the conflict's effects on ASEAN as an entire association in their work. Even though ASEAN has been established since 1967, its relevance to the wider Cold War has not been given much attention by these authors, despite more than twenty years of ASEAN's existence overlapping with the entirety of the Third Indochina War. In fact, the Cold War and the Third Indochina War itself has been very important in understanding the rationale for ASEAN's existence as many of its policies including ZOPFAN, SEANWFZ and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, were all emphasized during the Third Indochina War to reinforce ASEAN's position and still exist as important elements in the functioning of ASEAN as an association today.

As highlighted before in the first chapter, the most similar work to this study has been Shee Poon Kim's 1980 book, "The ASEAN States' Relations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam". However, Kim's work was produced only two years after the outbreak of the war and thus was more speculative in nature. This thesis has presented evidence-based information that Kim was unable to provide at the time and only speculated on, continuing to the year 1981 onwards. Kim's book focuses mainly on the original five ASEAN members, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand, discussing mostly the association's relations with Vietnam up until the Third Indochina War while taking note of the increased unity within ASEAN as a result. Kim concludes the book by suggesting that cooperation between Vietnam and ASEAN would be possible in the future. While he was not entirely wrong in this regard, it was not until 1995, by which time the Cold War was over and three years after the Third Indochina War officially ended that Vietnam would join ASEAN as its seventh member, the first of the Indochinese countries to do so, with the Vietnamese Communist Party still ruling the country until the present day.

The study thus provides a conclusion to Kim's work while also adding the viewpoint of Brunei, which was not yet independent at the time that Kim's book was released in 1980. Kim did not mention Brunei in his book, understandably focusing on the ASEAN members of the time. Since Brunei was not yet an ASEAN member in 1980, Kim would not have paid attention to Brunei in his study, especially since he was a specialist in Political Science, working on contemporary events and his book, as evidenced by its title was focused on ASEAN's relations with Vietnam, thus it would not have made sense to include Brunei at the time. Brunei's role, while relatively minor, certainly contributed to ASEAN coherence, given the fact that the Sultanate firmly supported Alatas's efforts at convening the JIM meetings and supported both Singapore and Indonesia, helping to balance these two in a similar way that Malaysia did. Moreover, Brunei's decision to adopt a friendly position with Vietnam was also significant to note for studies on the Third Indochina War. This was because Brunei was noted as going along with both the more hardline Singapore, and Indonesia, which largely was on the opposite side of the spectrum, due to Brunei's support for Ali Alatas. Thus, what can be added is that Brunei surprisingly pursued positive relations with Vietnam compared to its fellow ASEAN states with varying degrees of

interaction with the Vietnamese, making it slightly harder to place Brunei in either category of ASEAN states who considered Vietnam or China the bigger threat to the region.

Another work which is similar to this thesis is Vu Minh Hoang's PhD thesis *The Third Indochina War and the Making of Present-Day Southeast Asia*. This thesis differs in the sense that while Hoang covers a similar topic, he mostly uses official Vietnamese sources, allowing his thesis to be focused on Vietnam's perspective of the events of the Third Indochina War and how they responded to them. It is worth noting that while, Hoang's thesis, being Vietnam-centred, defines the JIM meetings as a complete success, in contrast to the findings of this work, which has argued that it while can ultimately be viewed as a success, given its contributions to the final comprehensive political solution, it was also viewed as a failure by others due to the fact that it did not end the war and the divisions that occurred between the Cambodian parties as a result, which threatened to derail ASEAN's solution until the more successful final "Baby JIM" meeting in 1990. Given his choice of sources however, it is unsurprising that Hoang's thesis only refers to JIM as a success since it is likely that Vietnam would have undoubtedly seen it as such, since they were one of the parties that benefited the most from those meetings, because ASEAN dropped support for the Khmer Rouge earlier than expected as a result, strengthening Vietnam's position at the negotiating table.

This study furthermore complements two of Ang Cheng Guan's books by including information from Brunei's position which was not available to him. This enables a more holistic picture of the conflict's effects on ASEAN to be represented and understood. Brunei, having joined ASEAN right after their independence in 1984, did manage to play a role in the conflict, as stated by some of the interviewees, who were prominent in the Bruneian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Like Kim, Ang also did not mention Brunei in his 2018 book *"Southeast Asia and the Cold War"*, despite the book covering the Cold War in every part of the region. He did not include Brunei when writing about the Third Indochina War or even any sections covering events that happened before or after the war, including the Konfrontasi of the 1960s despite Brunei's involvement in that conflict.

The study also aims to present a greater understanding of the war's impact on ASEAN as an association, which was also emphasized by the interviewees. While it is largely similar to Ang Cheng Guan's 2013

book, “*Singapore, ASEAN and the Cambodian conflict 1979-1991*”, which included brief mentions of Brunei, the addition of information regarding Brunei’s position on the war and emphasis on the Third Indochina War’s effects on ASEAN’s functioning as a coherent association fills in the gaps in the literature by including details from Bruneian Foreign Ministry sources which have not been used by previous authors.

This thesis has pointed out that Brunei largely followed ASEAN’s lead because as Brunei Second Minister for Foreign Affairs Lim Jock Seng mentioned, ASEAN became the main pillar of Brunei’s foreign policy after independence, a sentiment shared by his Permanent Secretary Pengiran Osman. As the interviewees have pointed out, it was only after Brunei joined ASEAN that the Cambodian problem would be of interest to Brunei since ASEAN placed the Third Indochina War at the top of its agenda at that time. Brunei would then support and join in as part of its own efforts to promote ASEAN integration. Thus, Brunei aimed to adhere to ASEAN’s comprehensive political solution throughout the conflict. This study has also shown that Lim Jock Seng and Prince Mohammed Bolkiah also agreed with Ang Cheng Guan that Brunei supported Ali Alatas during the JIM meetings and gave him a lot of credit for ASEAN’s comprehensive political solution. This differed to foreign media such as the *Far Eastern Economic Review* who instead in their reports implied that the JIM meetings were a failure with Ali Alatas struggling to hold those meetings together, because of differences between the component parties in the CGDK becoming more evident than before. Brunei’s perspective of ASEAN could be different from its fellow member states, such as Singapore, who despite having close ties with Brunei and being smaller in size than Brunei, did not necessarily place the same emphasis on ASEAN that Brunei did, though they still consider ASEAN important for their own foreign policy.

The study has also been able to provide a glimpse into Bruneian foreign policy priorities which were evident even in its early years of independence, which the previous sources did not include having excluded Brunei in their research. This information is very relevant in understanding the country’s present day foreign policy since Brunei’s focus on ASEAN has remained consistent until today. The inclusion of information from the four interviewees in this study: Lim Jock Seng, Tommy Koh, Ong

Keng Yong and Pengiran Osman have also revealed details regarding Brunei's position during the Third Indochina War and the wider Cold War which were not available to previous authors.

The inclusion of Brunei-based sources is particularly significant to understanding of the Third Indochina War as it supports the idea of ASEAN gaining coherence through its search for a compromise between the differing viewpoints of its member states. For example, thanks to an interview with Lim Jock Seng, Chapter Four made mention of a visit from Nguyen Co Thach to Brunei in the 1980s, years before the two countries established relations with each other, giving a clue to Brunei's individual position which was similar to that of Malaysia, taking a middle ground. Brunei and Malaysia's commitment to a middle ground between a more US-friendly posture of Singapore and a greater commitment to non-alignment and engagement of Vietnam via Indonesia, provides a look at how ASEAN actually took advantage of the differing positions taken by its member states bilaterally to ultimately find a solution that turned out to be favourable to both sides even as conditions changed as the war continued.

This study has also shown that some ASEAN members such as Malaysia and Indonesia, who considered China to be a bigger threat to their security than Vietnam, already had positive relations with Vietnam and were communicating with them as the war continued over the years. This was a reason why Indonesia eventually became ASEAN's interlocutor to Vietnam during the conflict. Overall, this study shows that that Kim was ultimately correct, but it would take a significantly long time before his idea would become a reality with Vietnamese membership of ASEAN, though this study has shown that such an idea had already been suggested as early as 1980.

Shee Poon Kim, Ang Cheng Guan and other previous authors did cover the entirety of the region in their works but did not place much emphasis on the effectiveness of ASEAN as an association when writing about the Third Indochina War, instead focusing on how the conflict's nature proved decisive in turning the tide of the Cold War in favour of the United States over the Soviet Union due to divisions in the Communist bloc. Most authors have also more frequently focused on how the Third Indochina War has been the most visible instance of the Sino-Soviet split, which itself contradicts the idea of the Cold War being strictly a conflict between Communist and non-Communist ideas, especially since the Chinese Communist government became an ally of the non-Communist United States for the remainder

of the Cold War. Thus, this study complements their work and provides more information for historians and researchers focused on either ASEAN or the Cold War which was not available before.

China also found itself allied with ASEAN due to a common goal for the entirety of the Third Indochina War, though there were moments of tension between China and ASEAN until China ended its support for the Khmer Rouge by late 1991 which then allowed ASEAN's comprehensive political solution to be reached. This presents a gap in previous analyses of Cold War history and the history of ASEAN itself as an association, both of which this study seeks to contribute to. Because of this, this study has addressed this field of history by focusing on the Third Indochina War's effects on ASEAN as a regional grouping.

This thesis has also shown how ASEAN, once the war broke out, carefully came together to become the main driving force to create the comprehensive political solution that would lead to the final 1991 Paris Peace Agreements. Apart from Ang Cheng Guan and Shee Poon Kim, this study also complements Micheal Haas's 1991 book "*Genocide by Proxy*" particularly with regards to his conclusion, as emphasized in the first chapter. Haas had suggested room for a future Asian solution to Asian problems, and as proven by this study, ASEAN played an important role in solving the war, since elements of their comprehensive political solution were reached in meetings which they were the driving force for such as the 1981 ICK, and the JIM meetings.

While not enough to succeed on their own, these meetings were nevertheless significant in establishing the solution that would eventually be reached in 1991. Although ASEAN did ultimately take some of Vietnam's concerns into consideration as the years progressed, key elements of their preferred solution remained the same and were included in 1991. This might not have necessarily been the solution that Haas initially envisioned in his work, but ASEAN did eventually play an important role in the peace process, as Haas had hoped for. This helps prove that Haas was correct to some extent though it should not be forgotten that ASEAN ultimately did have some outside help such as from the UNSC.

In conclusion, both internal security matters and UN Charter related factors prompted ASEAN to oppose the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, though they eventually had to recognize Vietnamese

concerns in a comprehensive political solution. This involved a Vietnamese withdrawal, a UN peacekeeping force and UN supervised elections for a new Cambodian government after the war, aiming to replace the Khmer Rouge, all of which were eventually reached by 1991, though ultimately ASEAN needed the help of outside parties such as the UN Security Council to eventually reach this solution. The Third Indochina War became a pivotal moment in ASEAN's history as it was through the processes in which they responded to the conflict. By organizing conferences such as the ICK and the JIM meetings, this coherence was being expressed through ASEAN becoming an active force in influencing Southeast Asian affairs since they largely formulated the solution via both their multilateral activities such as ministerial meetings and UN activity as well as their bilateral contacts with the combatants. ASEAN took advantage of this by combining ideas from each member state despite their differing bilateral relations with the warring nations to search for compromises which they used to formulate their initiatives. ASEAN's coherence was also proven by its adherence to some aspects of their solution such as their stance on UN involvement despite changes in their general position after 1986. They managed to succeed in solving the conflict but not by themselves, though their role was still very important, and overall, achieved a new level of coherence which they never had before the war.

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Lee Kuan Yew's interview with Amir Daud, and Zulkiefly Lubis, Journalists of TEMPO on 27 June 1980,

Primary sources from National Archives of Malaysia (all information from Malaysian newspapers cited in this thesis were obtained here as well)

File 1965/0000175W, Vietnam Volume 11, National Archives of Malaysia

File 1965/0000795W ASEAN-INDOCHINA STATES RELATIONS VOL 2, National Archives of Malaysia

File 1965/0000796W ASEAN-INDOCHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 3 National Archives of Malaysia

File 1965/0000797W ASEAN INDO CHINA STATES-RELATIONS Vol 4 National Archives of Malaysia

File 2000/0002993W Vietnam Vol 24, National Archives of Malaysia

Primary sources from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam

Annexes of the report of the 17th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting Jakarta 9-10 July 1984, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei

Brief of the ASEAN SOM for the 24th AMM/PMC Kuala Lumpur 15-17 July 1991, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei Darussalam

Joint Communiqués of the ASEAN Ministerial Meetings 1979-1991

Position and background brief for the eighteenth ASEAN ministerial meeting Kuala Lumpur, 8-9 July 1985 (political matters), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brunei

Post ministerial conferences 6+6 conferences, correspondence from Brunei's Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Newspapers and Periodicals

Brunei

Borneo Bulletin

Singapore

The Straits Times

Malaysia

Malay Mail

The New Straits Times

The Star

Hong Kong

Asiaweek

Far Eastern Economic Review

Interviews

Face to face

Lim Jock Seng (25 November 2022)

Ong Keng Yong (3 December 2022), follow up conducted online 10 February 2023

Online Interviews

Tommy Koh (30 November 2022), follow up 20 December 2022

Pengiran Dato Paduka Haji Osman bin Pengiran Haji Petra (10 April 2023)

Appendices

1. Ethical Review Form



Please read each question carefully, taking note of instructions and completing all parts. If a question is not applicable please indicate so. The superscripted numbers (eg⁸) refer to sections of the guidance notes, available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/UoLEthicsApplication>. Where a question asks for information which you have previously provided in answer to another question, please just refer to your earlier answer rather than repeating information.

Information about research ethics training courses: <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/EthicsTraining>.

To help us process your application enter the following reference numbers, if known and if applicable:

Ethics reference number:	
Student number and/ or grant reference:	201485451

PART A: Summary

A.1 Which Faculty Research Ethics Committee would you like to consider this application?²

- Arts, Humanities and Cultures (AHC)
- Biological Sciences (BIOSCI)
- Business, Environment and Social Sciences (AREA)
- FS&N, Engineering and Physical Sciences (EPS)
- Medicine and Health (Please specify a subcommittee):
 - School of Dentistry (DREC)
 - School of Healthcare (SHREC)
 - School of Medicine (SoMREC)
 - School of Psychology (SoPREC)

A.2 Title of the research³

The Third Indochina War: Revisiting Cold War Politics in Southeast Asia

A.3 Principal investigator's contact details⁴

Name (<i>Title, first name, surname</i>)	Muhd Ilyas Abdul Manaf
Position	PhD Student

Department/ School/ Institute	University of Leeds
Faculty	Arts
Work address (<i>including postcode</i>)	Full time student/not applicable
Telephone number	+ 44 7478 104092 (UK) +673 7125544 (Brunei)
University of Leeds email address	hymiam@leeds.ac.uk

A.4 Purpose of the research:⁵ (Tick as appropriate)

Research

Educational qualification: *Please specify:* _____ *PhD thesis* _____

Educational Research & Evaluation⁶

Medical Audit or Health Service Evaluation⁷

Other

A.5 Select from the list below to describe your research: (You may select more than one)

Research on or with human participants

Research which has potential adverse [environmental impact](#).⁸ *If yes, please give details:*

Research working with data of human participants

New data collected by qualitative methods

New data collected by quantitative methods

New data collected from observing individuals or populations

Routinely collected data or secondary data

Research working with aggregated or population data

Research using already published data or data in the public domain

Research working with human tissue samples (*Please inform the relevant [Persons Designate](#) if the research will involve human tissue*)⁹

A.6 Will the research involve NHS staff recruited as potential research participants (by virtue of their professional role) or NHS premises/ facilities?

Yes No

If yes, ethical approval must be sought from the University of Leeds. Note that [approval](#) from the NHS Health Research Authority may also be needed, please contact FMHUniEthics@leeds.ac.uk for advice.

A.7 Will the research involve any of the following:¹⁰ (You may select more than one)

*If your project is classified as [research](#) rather than service evaluation or audit and involves any of the following an application must be made to the [NHS Health Research Authority](#) via IRAS www.myresearchproject.org.uk as NHS ethics approval will be required. **There is no need to complete any more of this form.** Further information is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/NHSEthicalreview> and at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/HRAapproval>.*

You may also contact governance-ethics@leeds.ac.uk for advice.

Patients and users of the NHS (including NHS patients treated in the private sector)¹¹

Individuals identified as potential participants because of their status as relatives or carers of patients and users of the NHS

Research involving adults in Scotland, Wales or England who lack the capacity to consent for themselves¹²

A prison or a young offender institution in England and Wales (and is health related)¹⁴

Clinical trial of a medicinal product or medical device¹⁵

Access to data, organs or other bodily material of past and present NHS patients⁹

Use of human tissue (including non-NHS sources) where the collection is not covered by a Human Tissue Authority licence⁹

Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients

The recently deceased under NHS care

None of the above

You must inform the Research Ethics Administrator of your NHS REC reference and approval date once approval has been obtained.

The HRA decision tool to help determine the type of approval required is available at <http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics>. If the University of Leeds is not the Lead Institution, or approval has been granted elsewhere (e.g. NHS) then you should contact the local Research Ethics Committee for guidance. The UoL Ethics Committee needs to be assured that any relevant local ethical issues have been addressed.

A.8 Will the participants be from any of the following groups? (Tick as appropriate)

Children under 16¹⁶ *Specify age group:* _____

Adults with learning disabilities¹²

Adults with other forms of mental incapacity or mental illness

Adults in emergency situations

Prisoners or young offenders¹⁴

Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator, eg members of staff, students¹⁷

Other vulnerable groups

No participants from any of the above groups

Please justify the inclusion of the above groups, explaining why the research cannot be conducted on non-vulnerable groups.

It is the researcher's responsibility to check whether a DBS check (or equivalent) is required and to obtain one if it is needed. See also <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/healthandsafetyadvice> and <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/agencies-public-bodies/dbs>.

A.9 Give a short summary of the research¹⁸

This section must be completed in language comprehensible to the lay person. Do not simply reproduce or refer to the protocol, although the protocol can also be submitted to provide any technical information that you think the ethics committee may require. This section should cover the main parts of the proposal.

My research is about finding out more information regarding the international relations between the three countries involved in the Third Indochina War, China, Vietnam and Cambodia and the Malay/Indonesian speaking members of ASEAN, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. This research will attempt to analyse the effects the war had on the three combatants and their relations with those four countries as the war was ongoing from 1978 to 1991 and how this also affected the

solidarity of the group, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), as Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia, and later Brunei (after independence on the 1st of January 1984, the country joined ASEAN on the 7th of January 1984). My research will take place in Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia and will involve oral history interviews.

A.10 What are the main ethical issues with the research and how will these be addressed?¹⁹

Indicate any issues on which you would welcome advice from the ethics committee.

Confidentiality = participants may wish for their identities to be kept a secret, depending on their individual being interviewed and their personal preferences, this is a common issue in historical research, as some information can be considered politically sensitive, though this largely depends on area of the topic being studied and if the person being interviewed was directly involved.

I plan to interview embassy staff in Brunei and experts in the field of Cold War studies where appropriate. If they wish not to be identified by name, their names will be kept anonymous in the research, the person being interviewed will also be able to tell me in advance if they wish for their identities to be kept secret before the interview, and at any point, if they inform me that some information which they may state during the interview is not to be used in the research, I will not use the information which they specify.

Data protection = this is more to do with where the information gathered during the research and where it will be kept throughout the duration of the study at the University of Leeds

All data will be stored and obtained fairly, lawfully and with the full consent of participants. The data will be used solely for the purpose of academic research. All information will be stored on my University OneDrive as required and only shared with my two supervisors, whenever necessary. All data, once transferred to the University server/cloud system as soon as an internet connection allows it, will be immediately deleted from the personal devices.

Use of sensitive information = sometimes, even when consent is given by participants and interviews which are not anonymized, there may be some parts of the information given which the participants wish not to be shared with anyone, even future researchers and scholars, though this refers to specific pieces of information given by the respondents and not the whole interview itself.

The interviewees will have the right to refuse to give information or will be able to stop the interview if they wish to do so at any point in time, the request will be respected and participants can refuse to answer some of the questions asked during the interview if they are not comfortable to do so, in which case, the interview will just proceed except in cases where the interviewee wishes for it to be stopped

Conduct of research = How will the research be carried out?, what methods will be used

I will actively ensure that I will conduct my research honestly, ethically and with integrity at all stages of the process. I will approach the participants via email or phone and provide them with all necessary information to ensure their full understanding upon deciding to participate. All interviews for this

PhD research will only be carried out with those who consent to participate and no incentives will be provided. All interviews will be carried out during times convenient for the participant if they agree to take part, and the interviewee will select the time and the place for me to meet them for the interview

Consent = how will the consent of the interviewees, participants be obtained?

Each individual participant will be given an Information Sheet and Informed Consent Form which will inform them of their rights to confidentiality, to not answer particular questions in the interview and the right to withdrawal from the study.

PART B: About the research team

B.1 To be completed by students only²⁰

Qualification working towards (eg Masters, PhD)	PhD History
Supervisor's name (Title, first name, surname)	Dr Sean Fear
Department/ School/ Institute	School of History
Faculty	Arts
Work address (including postcode)	School of History, Micheal Sadler Building, Leeds LS2 9JT

Supervisor's telephone number	0113 343 9472
Supervisor's email address	S.Fear@leeds.ac.uk
Module name and number (if applicable)	N/A

B.2 Other members of the research team (eg co-investigators, co-supervisors) ²¹

Name (<i>Title, first name, surname</i>)	Dr Adam Cathcart
Position	Lecturer
Department/ School/ Institute	School of History
Faculty	Arts
Work address (<i>including postcode</i>)	School of History, Micheal Sadler Building, Leeds LS2 9JT
Telephone number	0113 343 3585
Email address	A.Cathcart@leeds.ac.uk

Name (Title, first name, surname)	
Position	
Department/ School/ Institute	

Faculty	
Work address (including postcode)	
Telephone number	
Email address	

Part C: The research

C.1 What are the aims of the study?²² (Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person.)

The study will examine bilateral relations between the three countries involved in the Third Indochina War, China, Vietnam and Cambodia with each of the four Malay/Indonesia speaking countries of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia during the time period of the war (1978-1991) to further understand the impact of the conflict on ASEAN's development as an organization.

C.2 Describe the design of the research. Qualitative methods as well as quantitative methods should be included. (Must be in language comprehensible to a lay person.)

It is important that the study can provide information about the aims that it intends to address. If a study cannot answer the questions/ add to the knowledge base that it intends to, due to the way that it is designed, then wasting participants' time could be an ethical issue.

Archival research

The majority of the research will be archive based using documents from the archives of Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia including newspapers and government documents. These sources will allow understanding of the conflict from the perspective of the media and the citizens of all four countries during that time, as well as the position of the political leaders of Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Vietnam and Cambodia as well as ASEAN as an organization regarding the Third Indochina War.

Interviews

Interviews will be carried out with ministry staff who had been involved during the conflict and experts such as lecturers living in Brunei and Singapore who specialize in the topic of the Cold War or other relevant areas, ie, Chinese or Vietnamese history in general. Selection will be through contacts in my previous two universities, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and the National University of Singapore. If possible, interviews with people directly involved in the events will also be carried out if they can be tracked down and if they agree to be interviewed for this purpose.

C.3 What will participants be asked to do in the study?²³ (*e.g. number of visits, time, travel required, interviews*)

Interviews will take place at a place and time mutually agreed upon by the interviewer and interviewee (given the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a possibility that this may involve meeting only through either Zoom or Microsoft Teams or Skype where applicable). Interviews with the same person more than once is also a possibility. At the moment, there are no plans for the interviews to be given a specific structure, as this depends on who will be available to interview once research in the field happens.

C.4 Does the research involve an international collaborator or research conducted overseas?²⁴

Yes No

If yes, describe any ethical review procedures that you will need to comply with in that country:

No additional ethical review is required

Describe the measures you have taken to comply with these:

The research will fulfil the duty of confidentiality and anonymity if requested towards informants and participants

The research will protect participants from harm, by not disclosing sensitive information, in this case, referring to any information that they interviewee may share while answering an interview question but, that they may inform me during the interview in certain cases in which information the participants give is not to be used in the thesis. At the start of each interview, I will also ask if there are certain parts of their information which they do not wish to disclose, such as their names, before the interview begins. The term sensitive information differs here compared to C10 in this form. For clarification, in this case sensitive information refers to information from a diplomatic and international relations perspective, since the interview participants will be diplomats and people involved in the foreign affairs ministries of the four countries being focused on.

The term sensitive information in C10 of this form on the other hand, is instead defined as information relating to involvement in actual events on the ground such as the Khmer Rouge atrocities, which

will not be a part of this study, as soldiers and civilians directly involved and impacted by the battles of the war are not the people who I intend to interview for this research.

The research will respect the narrator's equal authority and honour their right to respond to questions in their own style and language

Prior to the interview, the purpose of the research will be disclosed to the interviewee, so that they are aware of its purposes

Include copies of any ethical approval letters/ certificates with your application.

C.5 Proposed study dates and duration

Research start date (DD/MM/YY): ____01/10/2021____ Research end date (DD/MM/YY): __30/09/2025____

Fieldwork start date (DD/MM/YY): ____01/08/2022____ Fieldwork end date (DD/MM/YY): ____30/05/2024____

C.6. Where will the research be undertaken? (i.e. in the street, on UoL premises, in schools)²⁵

Brunei

-National Archives of Brunei Darussalam

- Universiti Brunei Darussalam

-Borneo Research Centre (PenBorneo)

-Brunei History Centre

Singapore

-National Archives of Singapore (NAS)

-Singapore National Library Board (to access old Straits Times Newspapers, available in all libraries except Chinatown and Orchard)

-National University of Singapore

Malaysia

-National Archives of Malaysia

-NSTP Resource Centre, New Straits Times Office

United Kingdom

-Public Record Office, Kew, London

-British Library

Indonesia

-ASEAN secretariat

Interviews will be held in Brunei at a time, place and date mutually agreed upon by the interviewer and interviewee (for those in Singapore, Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Skype will be used if possible)

RECRUITMENT & CONSENT PROCESSES

C.7 How will potential participants in the study be identified, approached and recruited?²⁶

How will you ensure an appropriately convened sample group in order to meet the aims of the research? Give details for subgroups separately, if appropriate. How will any potential pitfalls, for example dual roles or potential for coercion, be addressed?

Identified – potential participants will be identified through research in archival documents, newspapers as well as through contacts in places such as Universiti Brunei Darussalam, National University of Singapore and the Brunei History Centre.

These participants will then be approached via e-mail, post or telephone

As above, I will reach out to participants and in the process of this communication go through the process of informing them about my research and recruiting them into my research study

C.8 Will you be excluding any groups of people, and if so what is the rationale for that?²⁷

Excluding certain groups of people, intentionally or unintentionally may be unethical in some circumstances. It may be wholly appropriate to exclude groups of people in other cases

I will not be excluding any groups of people. The research will select people on the basis of their knowledge on the subject of my PhD

C.9 How many participants will be recruited and how was the number decided upon?²⁸

It is important to ensure that enough participants are recruited to be able to answer the aims of the research.

The number is largely dependent on how many participants will be available once research in the field happens.

If you have a formal power calculation please replicate it here.

Since this is primarily an archive based research, I will likely interview very few people, not likely to be more than 10 participants, the number will most probably be between 5 and 10 participants, since a lot of individuals involved are likely deceased.

Remember to include all advertising material (posters, emails etc) as part of your application

C10 Will the research involve any element of deception?²⁹

If yes, please describe why this is necessary and whether participants will be informed at the end of the study.

No

C.11 Will informed consent be obtained from the research participants?³⁰

Yes No

If yes, give details of how it will be done. Give details of any particular steps to provide information (in addition to a written information sheet) e.g. videos, interactive material. If you are not going to be obtaining informed consent you will need to justify this.

An information sheet and an informed consent form will be used for this purpose. The right to confidentiality and right to withdraw will be respected for each interviewee.

If participants are to be recruited from any of potentially vulnerable groups, give details of extra steps taken to assure their protection. Describe any arrangements to be made for obtaining consent from a legal representative.

Will research participants be provided with a copy of the Privacy Notice for Research? If not, explain why not. Guidance is available at <https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/information-for-researchers>.

Yes No

Copies of any written consent form, written information and all other explanatory material should accompany this application. The information sheet should make explicit that participants can withdraw from the research at any time, if the research design permits. Remember to use meaningful file names and version control to make it easier to [keep track of your documents](#).

Sample information sheets and consent forms are available from the University ethical review webpage at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/InvolvingResearchParticipants>.

C.12 Describe whether participants will be able to withdraw from the study, and up to what point (eg if data is to be anonymised). If withdrawal is not possible, explain why not.

Any limits to withdrawal, eg once the results have been written up or published, should be made clear to participants in advance, preferably by specifying a date after which withdrawal would not be possible. Make sure that the information provided to participants (eg information sheets, consent forms) is consistent with the answer to C12.

Participants will be given the right to withdrawal until the data is published (the thesis submission deadline is 30 September 2025). Participants can contact me via email, SMS, WhatsApp or phone call to express their desire to be withdrawn from the study. Data will only be withheld or reduced if specifically requested by the participant.

C.13 How long will the participant have to decide whether to take part in the research?³¹

It may be appropriate to recruit participants on the spot for low risk research; however consideration is usually necessary for riskier projects.

There will be initial contact through e-mail or telephone call with the participant at first, if they agree to the interview, then a time, date and place will be set

C.14 What arrangements have been made for participants who might have difficulties understanding verbal explanations or written information, or who have particular communication needs that should be taken into account to facilitate their involvement in the research?³² *Different populations will have different information needs, different communication abilities and different levels of understanding of the research topic. Reasonable efforts should be made to include potential participants who could otherwise be prevented from participating due to disabilities or language barriers.*

N/A, all interviews will be English speakers and able to understand and consent.

C.15 Will individual or group interviews/ questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, or is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the study (e.g. during interviews or group discussions)?³³ *The [information sheet](#) should explain under what circumstances action may be taken.*

Yes No *If yes, give details of procedures in place to deal with these issues.*

The interview participants will be from Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia and not from the 3 warring countries. This means that since all participants will be those from countries indirectly involved in the conflict, most of them are not involved in events which are considered sensitive issues such as the Khmer Rouge atrocities so it is unlikely that criminal information will be included in the thesis, as I do not plan to interview those who fought on the frontline or were involved in the atrocities.

C.16 Will individual research participants receive any payments, fees, reimbursement of expenses or any other incentives or benefits for taking part in this research?³⁴

Yes No

If Yes, please describe the amount, number and size of incentives and on what basis this was decided.

RISKS OF THE STUDY

C.17 What are the potential benefits and/ or risks for research participants in both the short and medium-term?³⁵

Benefits – gives the interviewee the opportunity to describe the significance of events they were involved in, ie, Paris Peace Agreements in 1991

Risks – if a protestor were to be tracked down and interviewed, remembering traumatic events might occur, if this causes distress to the individual being interviewed, they will be permitted to stop the interview at their own request if they desire to do so

if a protestor were to be tracked down and interviewed, remembering traumatic events might occur, if this causes distress to the individual being interviewed, they will be permitted to stop the interview at their own request if they desire to do so. As my interviews will take place in my home country of Brunei, I will inform the participants of the relevant services that they can turn to if needed in this situation such as medical help etc. (An additional note will be that since the people I interview are diplomats who are not involved in the frontlines, it is unlikely that problems such as PTSD would be an issue, as the interview will not involve soldiers, civilians i.e. prisoners of war, as most participants who I plan to interview are those not directly involved in any fighting and are mostly only involved on the diplomatic aspect of the conflict).

C.18 Does the research involve any risks to the researchers themselves, or people not directly involved in the research? *Eg lone working*³⁶

Yes No

If yes, please describe: _____

Is a risk assessment necessary for this research?

If you are unsure whether a risk assessment is required visit <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/HealthAndSafetyAdvice> or contact your Faculty Health and Safety Manager for advice.

Yes No If yes, please include a copy of your risk assessment form with your application.

RESEARCH DATA

C.19 Explain what measures will be put in place to protect personal data. E.g. anonymisation procedures, secure storage and coding of data. Any potential for re-identification should be made clear to participants in advance.³⁷ *Please note that research data which appears in reports or other publications is not confidential, even if it is fully anonymised. For a fuller explanation see <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConfidentialityAnonymisation>. Further guidance is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement>.*

Data and Information will also be stored in the University of Leeds cloud system as mentioned in my data management plan. As mentioned before, if required participants will be anonymized for their own safety, for example, if participants inform me in advance they do not wish to be identified in the thesis, the thesis will use terms such as “an individual who was involved” or “participant interviewed for this thesis” instead of referring to the participants’ first or last names. Data will be then transferred to my University OneDrive as required. All data, once transferred to the University server/cloud system as soon as an internet connection allows it, will be immediately deleted from the personal devices.

C.20 How will you make your research data available to others in line with: the University's, funding bodies' and publishers' policies on making the results of publically funded research publically available. Explain the extent to which anonymity will be maintained. (max 200 words)

Refer to <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConfidentialityAnonymisation> and <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement> for guidance.

Research data will be saved onto my University of Leeds OneDrive after being deleted from my personal devices. A copy of my thesis, either as a hard copy or soft copy will be made available at the University of Leeds for future reference by future students and researchers.

C.21 Will the research involve any of the following activities at any stage (including identification of potential research participants)? (Tick as appropriate)

Examination of personal records by those who would not normally have access

Access to research data on individuals by people from outside the research team

Electronic surveys, please specify survey tool: _____

[\(further guidance\)](#)

Other electronic transfer of data

Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, e-mails or telephone numbers

Use of audio/ visual recording devices (NB this should usually be mentioned in the information for participants)

FLASH memory or other portable storage devices

Storage of personal data on, or including, any of the following:

[University approved](#) cloud computing services

Other cloud computing services

Manual files

Private company computers

Laptop computers

Home or other personal computers (not recommended; data should be stored on a University of Leeds server such as your M: or N: drive where it is secure and backed up regularly: <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement>.)

Unclassified and Confidential University data must be kept on the University servers or in approved cloud services such as Office 365 (SharePoint or OneDrive). The N: Drive or Office 365 should be used for the storage of data that needs to be shared. If Highly Confidential information is kept in these shared storage areas it must be encrypted. Highly Confidential data that is not to be shared should be kept on the M: Drive. The use of non-University approved cloud services for the storage of any University data, including that which is unclassified, is forbidden without formal approval from IT. Further guidance is available via <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement>.

C.22 How do you intend to share the research data? (Indicate with an 'X) Refer to <http://library.leeds.ac.uk/research-data-deposit> for guidance.

Exporting data outside the European Union

Sharing data with other organisations

Publication of direct quotations from respondents

Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals to be identified

Submitting to a journal to support a publication

Depositing in a self-archiving system or an institutional repository

Dissemination via a project or institutional website

Informal peer-to-peer exchange

Depositing in a specialist data centre or archive

Other, please state: _____.

No plans to report or disseminate the data

C.23 How do you intend to report and disseminate the results of the study? (Indicate with an 'X) Refer to <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDissemination> and <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/Publication> for guidance.

Conference presentation

Peer reviewed journals

Publication as an eThesis in the Institutional repository

Publication on website

Other publication or report, please state: _____ PhD thesis _____

Submission to regulatory authorities

Other, please state: _____.

No plans to report or disseminate the results

C.24 For how long will data from the study be stored? Please explain why this length of time

has been chosen.³⁸ Refer to the [RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy](#) and http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/info/71/good_research_practice/106/research_data_guidance/5.

Students: It would be reasonable to retain data for at least 2 years after publication or three years after the end of data collection, whichever is longer.

___ 2 ___ years, _____ months

As recommended by the recommendation given above, depending on how long it takes for me to collect the data

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

C.25 Will any of the researchers or their institutions receive any other benefits or incentives for taking part in this research over and above normal salary or the costs of undertaking the research?³⁹

Yes No

If yes, indicate how much and on what basis this has been decided

C.26 Is there scope for any other conflict of interest?⁴⁰ *For example, could the research findings affect the any ongoing relationship between any of the individuals or organisations involved and the researcher(s)? Will the research funder have control of publication of research findings? Refer to <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ConflictsOfInterest>.*

Yes No

If so, please describe this potential conflict of interest, and outline what measures will be taken to address any ethical issues that might arise from the research.

C.27 Does the research involve external funding? (Tick as appropriate)

Yes No ***If yes, what is the source of this funding?*** _____

NB: If this research will be financially supported by the US Department of Health and Human Services or any of its divisions, agencies or programmes please ensure the additional funder

requirements are complied with. Further guidance is available at <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/FWacompliance> and you may also contact your [FRIQ](#) for advice.

PART D: Declarations

Declaration by Principal Investigators

1. The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
2. I undertake to abide by the University's ethical and health & safety guidelines, and the ethical principles underlying good practice guidelines appropriate to my discipline.
3. If the research is approved I undertake to adhere to the study protocol, the terms of this application and any conditions set out by the Research Ethics Committee (REC).
4. I undertake to seek an ethical opinion from the REC before implementing substantial amendments to the protocol.
5. I undertake to submit progress reports if required.
6. I am aware of my responsibility to be up to date and comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of patient or other personal data, including the need to register when necessary with the University's Data Protection Controller (further information available via <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/ResearchDataManagement>).
7. I understand that research records/ data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in future.
8. I understand that personal data about me as a researcher in this application will be held by the relevant RECs and that this will be managed according to the principles established in the Data Protection Act.

9. I understand that the REC may choose to audit this project at any point after approval.

Sharing information for training purposes: *Optional – please tick as appropriate:*

I would be content for members of other Research Ethics Committees to have access to the information in the application in confidence for training purposes. All personal identifiers and references to researchers, funders and research units would be removed.

Principal Investigator:

Signature of Principal Investigator:

(This needs to be an actual signature rather than just typed. Electronic signatures are acceptable)

Print name: Muhd Ilyas Abdul Manaf Date: (dd/mm/yyyy): 10/05/2022

Supervisor of student research:

I have read, edited and agree with the form above.

Supervisor's signature: 

(This needs to be an actual signature rather than just typed. Electronic signatures are acceptable)

Print name: Sean Fear

Date: (dd/mm/yyyy): 10/05/2022

Please submit your form by email to the [FREC or School REC's mailbox](#).

Remember to include any supporting material such as your participant information sheet, consent form, interview questions and recruitment material with your application.

To help speed up the review of your application:

- Answer the questions in plain English, avoid using overly technical terms and acronyms not in common use.
- Answer all the questions on the form, including those with several parts (refer to the [guidance](#) if you're not sure how to answer a question or how much detail is required).
- Include any relevant supplementary materials such as
 - Recruitment material (posters, emails etc)
 - [Sample participant information sheet](#)
 - [Sample consent form](#). Include different versions for different groups of participants eg for children and adults, clearly indicating which is which.
 - Signed [risk assessment](#) (If you are unsure whether a risk assessment is required visit <http://ris.leeds.ac.uk/HealthAndSafetyAdvice> or contact your Faculty Health and Safety Manager for advice).

Remember to include use [version control](#) and meaningful file names for the documents.

- If you are not going to be using participant information sheets or consent forms explain why not and how informed consent will be otherwise obtained.
- If you are a student it is essential that you discuss your application with your supervisor.
- Submit a [signed copy](#) of the application, preferably electronically. Students' applications need to be signed by their supervisors as well.

2. Emails with ethics approval

From: Ilyas Abdul Manaf <hymiam@leeds.ac.uk>
Sent: Saturday, October 26, 2024 10:46 AM
To: muhd.manaf@outlook.com
Subject: Fw: FAHC 21-117 - Conditional Study Approval Confirmation

From: AHC Research Ethics <AHCResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 12:10 AM
To: Muhd Abdul Manaf <hymiam@leeds.ac.uk>
Subject: FAHC 21-117 - Conditional Study Approval Confirmation

Dear Ilyas

FAHC 21-117 - The Third Indochina War: Revisiting Cold War Politics in Southeast Asia

The above research ethics application has been reviewed by the Faculty of Arts, Humanities & Communications Research Ethics Committee (AHC REC) and I can confirm a conditional favourable ethical opinion based on the documentation received at date of this letter and *subject to the following condition/s which must be fulfilled prior to the study being implemented:*

- 1. Please confirm that you will store all data, including audio files of interviews etc., on the University server or University approved cloud system (such as Office 365/OneDrive). And that, in the event of any data needing to be temporarily stored in personal devices (for absence of internet connection, for example), and this data will be transferred to the University server/cloud system as soon as an internet connection allows it, and will be immediately deleted from the personal devices. (To amend)***

The study documentation must be amended where required to meet the above conditions and submitted for file and possible future audit. *Once you have addressed the conditions and submitted for file/future audit, you may implement the study and further confirmation of approval is not provided. Please note, failure to comply with the above conditions will be considered a breach of ethics approval and may result in disciplinary action.*

Please retain this email as evidence of conditional approval. Once you have met the conditions and submitted for file/audit, the study may be implemented with immediate effect.

Please notify the committee if you intend to make any amendments to the original research as submitted and approved to date. This includes recruitment methodology; all changes must receive ethical approval prior to implementation. Please contact the Research Ethics & Governance Administrator for further information (AHCReserachEthics@leeds.ac.uk)

Ethics approval does not infer you have the right of access to any member of staff or student or documents and the premises of the University of Leeds. Nor does it imply any right of access to the premises of any other organisation, including clinical areas. The committee takes no responsibility for you gaining access to staff, students and/or premises prior to, during or following your research activities.

Please note: You are expected to keep a record of all your approved documentation, as well as documents such as sample consent forms, risk assessments and other documents relating to the study. This should be kept in your study file, which should be readily available for audit purposes. You will be given a two week notice period if your project is to be audited.

It is our policy to remind everyone that it is your responsibility to comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection and any other legal and/or professional guidelines there may be.

I hope the study goes well.

Very best wishes,

Taylor Haworth, Research Ethics Administrator, Secretariat

On behalf of Professor Matthew Treherne (AHC REC Interim Chair)

From: Muhd Abdul Manaf <hymiam@leeds.ac.uk>
Sent: 02 August 2023 10:16
To: AHC Research Ethics <AHCResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk>
Subject: FAHC 21-117 Fifth Version of Ethical Review Form

Good Morning,

Here is the fifth version of the Ethical Review Form that you requested stating that I will delete all data from my personal devices as soon as an internet connection allows it.

Regards, Ilyas

From: Ilyas Abdul Manaf <hymiam@leeds.ac.uk>
Sent: Saturday, October 26, 2024 10:47 AM
To: muhd.manaf@outlook.com
Subject: Fw: FAHC 21-117 Fifth Version of Ethical Review Form

From: AHC Research Ethics <AHCResearchEthics@leeds.ac.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, August 2, 2023 5:24 PM
To: Muhd Abdul Manaf <hymiam@leeds.ac.uk>
Subject: RE: FAHC 21-117 Fifth Version of Ethical Review Form

Dear Ilyas,

Many thanks for sending this through. I have filed it with the rest of your study.

Good luck with the project.

All the best,

Taylor