

Has asean been
successful in
promoting security
politics essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

ASEAN has been successful because its members have a very strong commitment to cooperation. Cooperation for the benefit of all and cooperation for the stability and peace of the region. This is a very importance hallmark of ASEAN'

Tun Abdullah bin Hj. Ahmad Badawi

INTRODUCTION

History of the Establishment of Asean

1. ASEAN officially declared its establishment on August 8, 1967[1]. So far ten countries have been a member of ASEAN which are Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia[2]. Establishment of the ASEAN is to create a new organization that will share a common vision in building the nation, reaffirm bilateral and multilateral relations as a way of solving regional tensions. Establishment of the ASEAN is based on the needs and interests with countries to generate regional security and cooperation between the countries involved. Knowing that all the ASEAN countries have a similar background; it will be able to perform its role as a forum to be able to develop economic, social and regional stability.

2. For many years, Southeast Asia or ASEAN countries also had witnessed the competition of major powers in their quest to either establish military bases or influence in the region. Countries like United States, Soviet Union, China, Japan and India were taking over the dominance of faded powers of British, France and the Dutch in this area. Besides the intervention of major powers, the Southeast Asia nation also faced their own regional issues. The

security problems became even worse with the domestic problems faced by most of the countries in the region. Revolutions, subversion, secession struggles, military coup, terrorism and communist threat were some forms domestic problems faced by the nations which became a hindrance factors for these nations to develop smoothly. Though Thailand was the only country that did not experienced any form of colonization, yet it also faced some domestic problems and got entangled in the regional disputes.

3. This essay is to discuss whether ASEAN has substantially contributed to regional peace and stability in South East Asia and does the association represent a long term alternative to balance of power strategies, or a complement to such?

Has ASEAN Substantially Contributed to Regional Peace and Stability in South East Asia?

Regionalism Issues

4. The regionalism issue has becoming one of the hottest topics in the field of International Relations today. It was caused by the expanding global economy and political influence of a few powerful nations. The strategies of how the individual countries choose to form regional organisations, more importantly, the administration of the organisation will show how well the regional organization relates to the rest of the world. The success or failure of this regional relationship will greatly impact the future of the member nations and the degree to which they will ultimately become productive members of the global community. Referring to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) the nations of Southeast Asia (SEA) have chosen to

ally themselves with one another so that the collective security and economic well being of the region may be stabilised and well developed.

Strategic Stability

5. Strategic stability can be define as a condition where policy maker do not face unavoidable pressure to make sudden shift from non violent to violent strategies, in the process precipitating wars that they neither anticipate nor want.

6. Strategic stability influenced by:

- a. Geographical issues such as the contesting over access to resources like water and oil claims.
- b. Culture issues such as conflict in historical background between countries.
- c. Military Strategic Consideration.
- d. Domestic Political Pressure.

Background of Internal Issues within the ASEAN Countries

7. Regional relations among ASEAN countries are in a satisfactory level with the various forms of cooperation among member countries. With the creation of the ASEAN forum in 1967, member countries have been dealing with any problem with good and satisfactory. However there are still some problems involving the member countries that have not successfully resolved. There are among the problems that were refered to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to enable disputes resolved by a neutral body that was assigned to solve the problem in peace. Bilateral problems are said to challenge the

ability and immunities of the family relationship between ASEAN member countries where most issues or conflicts are remnants of ancient history. Apart from that, the internal problem of ASEAN is also expected to be one cause of threat to internal stability and also has a tendency to spread out from their respective national borders. There were many problems among ASEAN members, however for the purpose of this essay; I will highlight a few problems that are considered as big issue such as borders conflict, the issue of organized transnational crime and arms race.

Borders Conflict Issues

8. Malaysia and Thailand. This border conflict has long existed since immemorial time. Since 1824 until 1851, states in the north and the east coast of Malaya like Kelantan, Terengganu, Perlis and Kedah were under the rule of the Siamese. However in 1904, under the Treaty of the Anglo-Siamese, Siamese Government has given the authorities of protection, administration and control over these four states to the British. Together with the treaty is the Treaty Protocol that describes a new border between Siam and the British in Malaya at that time[3]. However, problems still exist that the actual demarcation of the border between Malaysia and Thailand where it is still not have a solution, especially in Kelantan border area involving Golok. It is afraid that this situation may cause problems in future when land development to be implemented in the area, especially near the river.

9. The other major issue that occurred at the border are activities of Separator Islamic guerrilla movement in southern Thailand, especially in the Pattani and Narathiwat. These groups consist of a Patani United Liberation <https://assignbuster.com/has-asean-been-successful-in-promoting-security-politics-essay/>

Organisation (PULO), Pattani Liberation National Front (BNPP) and National Revolution Front (BRN). PULO believed to receive financial assistance from the military and radical Arab regime in Syria and Libya. PULO reportedly established cooperation with the BNPP which is one of the oldest Muslim separatist groups but have a lack of influence. BNPP which is the Islam konservatif group reportedly has close relationship with the Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) which is currently ruled Kelantan at the east coast of Malaysia. BNPP influence has decreased since the death of Naser Tunku Yala in 1977. This is all due to loss of spiritual leadership for 30 years before and the defeat of PAS in Kelantan during the elections in 1978. After that the group has been operating in the area of Ban Panare, Pattani under the new leadership who is Badri Hamdan the university graduates from West Asia and Samsudin Abdul Ghani from Egypt[4]. Thailand Government leaders often do not feel satisfied with the support of the Kelantanese to the Patani people at that time.

10. Military Cooperation. Various efforts have been established in order to overcome and reduce the tension for example by enhancing the military cooperation between both countries. Among the efforts that have been and are being implemented are as follows:

a. Border Patrol. A form of border cooperation has been established since 1979. As a result of the declaration of borders cooperation, joint border patrol between the Malaysia and Thailand army has been held until now. This has reduced tension on the border conflict between the two countries. In addition, this operation also helps in restraining the activities of the rebellion

group from spreading to the Malaysian border. This cooperation has also brought much success to curb smuggling of people,

goods and illegal border crossing activities. As a result, this bilateral cooperation has increased the mutual trust between the two countries.

b. Joint Training. Among the training that have been and are being held continuously are collective military training, individual training and seminars. Military training as “ Exercise THAMAL” between Malaysia/ Thailand organize every year in order to reduce the tension in border conflict. Through the training it is also hope that they will be a deep understanding regarding the bilateral military cooperation between both countries.

c. Meeting The Highest Military Leaders. Visits and conference between the higher levels of leadership from both Ministry of Defense always conducted every year. This approach has contribute to closer relationship, mutual understanding and respect between each other. Any sensitive issues can be solved together wisely to avoid any military action.

In the 24th High Level Committee Malaysia- Thailand both the military leader agreed that criminal and illegal activities in border area have been decreased[5]. On 9 Dec 2009 Prime Minister of Malaysia as request by the Prime Minister of Thailand has made a joint visit to the unstable region in southern Thailand. The purpose of the visit is to win the heart and mind of the people in that area. This effort shows how ASEAN countries are concerned about bilateral cooperation in solving problems between countries in the region as well as to increase the trust between each others[6].

<https://assignbuster.com/has-asean-been-successful-in-promoting-security-politics-essay/>

11. Malaysia and Indonesia. Boundary problem between Malaysia and Indonesia exists only in East Malaysia, covering Sabah and Sarawak. A very long border between Sabah, Sarawak and Indonesia is very difficult to be mark. The thick forests and a lot of mountains make it difficult to be entered by anyone and become a big challenge for the border surveyors from both countries. As a result of the absence of stone boundary that separates between Sabah and Sarawak to Kalimantan has allowed the entry of illegal immigrants from Indonesia to Malaysia without any problems as well as the smuggling activities.

12. All these illegal activities become a very sensitive issue discussed in the Malaysia-Indonesia Boundary Committee and affected the relationship between both countries. Less enforcement by the Indonesian authorities has lead to the increasingly smuggling and illegal logging activities. Stealing of the logging equipments such as bulldozers of the Malaysian workers by the Indonesian has become a normal phenomena for them without thinking about their actions could cause conflict between the two countries. All these illegal activities will continue as long as the boundary problem is not resolved.

13. Thai and Cambodia. Issue between the two countries are at the boundary of Range Dang Reo. Inaccuracies in the marking of the border along Reo Dang River between 1905 and 1917 have caused disputes between Thailand and Cambodia in 1958. This argument is due to the Angkor Wat Temple

Preah Vihear, located at the border between the two countries. The conflict arised because of the different border area from the map that produced by <https://assignbuster.com/has-asean-been-successful-in-promoting-security-politics-essay/>

the France and the one that with the Cambodian. Thailand which has occupied the area since 1945 refused to give any response raised by the French and Cambodia about the border. Thailand has insisted that the map prepared by one parties only and are not published. Finally in 1962, it has been successfully resolved by the ICJ and Cambodia won the case[7].

14. However, the conflicts between the two countries flared again in 2008 involving both military forces which at first caused at least two Cambodian soldiers died and wounded seven Thais soldiers. This issue arised when Cambodia applied to UNESCO for Preah Vihear Temple to be list in UNESCO World Heritage List[8].

Organised Transnational Crime

15. The concept of ' transnational crime' actually took place more than a quarter century ago. Transnational organized crime has become a big issue in the international arena[9]. ' Transnational ' means the movement of the information, money, physical goods, people or things that are visible or not visible across state boundaries when at least one actor involved in the non-governmental movement[10]. According to the UN Secretariat, transnational crime has been defined as " offences whose inception, prevention and / or direct or indirect effects involved more than one country"[11]. When we talk about the concept of `Transnational Crime', it is a criminal activity or activities undertaken by a planned crime organisation which lead to a criminal ofences of two or more countries[12]. Transnational Crime or Organized Crime involves many crimes activities; that occur around the world that ASEAN countries are also cannot escape from being drawn into the same activity. The activities have been occurring from time to time <https://assignbuster.com/has-asean-been-successful-in-promoting-security-politics-essay/>

without any signs of activity undertaken to decrease. It involves criminal activity quite popular such as smuggling of goods, drugs, weapons and human beings. Those who commit criminal activities are growing increasingly clever and brave to carry out criminal activities. Economic recovery among ASEAN countries after the economic crisis from 1996 to 1998 was greatly influenced this activity and has helped expand transnational crime all over Southeast Asia. In 1994, the UN Secretariat has identified 18 categories of transnational crime in the world[13] which of the major transnational criminal activities that hit ASEAN countries are smuggling goods, drugs and people.

16. Drug Smuggling. Drug trafficking business becomes a challenge to the economy growth within ASEAN country. It is not only a major source of 'Centre of Money Lender' but also lead to the cause of war, murder and others criminal offences[14]. This illegal activity is very difficult to be contain totally even though various method such as strict checks at all border entry point implemented in ASEAN country. Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia known as the 'Golden Triangle' is a nest of the largest drug producer in the region. Based on the studies conducted by U. S. government found that Myanmar still remains the largest opium producer in the world[15] with production rate said to increase by 9 percent in the mid-1990s. Not less than 2, 560 tons of opium has been produced by the country[16]. Therefore, it is difficult to eliminate drug trafficking activities as long as the situation continues.

17. Human Trafficking. Human smuggling crimes have become a very popular activity since a long time where it deals with a lot of money.
<https://assignbuster.com/has-asean-been-successful-in-promoting-security-politics-essay/>

According to the study conducted by 'Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights', it was estimated that 4 million people each year have been smuggled across the world[17]. International associations paying less attention to the efforts of monitoring individuals to enter the country illegally compare with the group smuggling activities[18]. Countries that have a strong economic position, such as Malaysia and Singapore become a major destination for human smuggling activities. The smuggling agents willing to faced high risks to do the activities because they can get payment between RM 2, 000. 00 to RM 4, 800. 00 per person[19].

18. Smuggling Goods. ASEAN countries can be seen in two contacts; the countries that have high income rates for example Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore and countries that have low income rates for example Indonesia, Myanmar and Vietnam. The goods in high income rates countries are more expensive than the countries that have low incomes rates. This factor has encouraged smugglers to take high risks in smuggling activities. The smuggling activities of cars from Malaysia to Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia have been successfully reduced not long ago. The smuggling of cigarettes from Indonesia still exists because of the high demand. Clove cigarettes worth million of dollars was confiscated by the customs of Malaysia in 1998 (Table 1)[20].

Ser

Month

Total Cases

Quantity

Price (RM)

Tax (RM)

1.

January

4

909. 11 kg

215, 660. 00

578, 510. 20

2.

February

4

9, 558. 2 kg

569, 680. 00

1, 857, 984. 04

3.

<https://assignbuster.com/has-asean-been-successful-in-promoting-security-politics-essay/>

March

9

2, 749. 115 kg

210, 013. 65

545, 082. 69

4.

April

2

1, 690. 44 kg

17, 756. 00

16, 167. 10

5.

May

2

209. 52 kg

12, 060. 00

14, 489. 73

6.

June

3

3, 865. 95 kg

273, 920. 00

761, 315. 77

7.

July

4

7, 057. 2 kg

463, 320. 00

1, 377, 921. 19

8.

August

8

3, 452. 27 kg

226, 514. 00

766, 095. 15

9.

September

6

9, 884. 83 kg

704, 920. 00

1, 947, 847. 13

10.

October

11

3, 619. 82 kg

225, 598. 00

698, 551. 63

11.

November

11

4, 667. 88 kg

276, 490. 00

1, 008, 555. 98

12.

December

13

5, 816. 61 kg

386, 510. 00

1, 407, 840. 77

Total

77

53, 480. 95

3, 582, 441. 65

10, 980, 361. 38

Table 1: Cigarettes Confiscated by the Customs of Malaysia in 1998

19. Arms Race Issues. Are there any arms race issues within ASEAN countries? According to Colin Gray, there are four basic conditions to be considered as arms race which are:

a. There must be two or more parties, conscious of their antagonism.

b. They must structure their armed forces with attention to the probable effectiveness of the forces in combat with, or as a deterrent to, the other arms race participants.

c. They must compete in term of quantity and quality.

d. There must be rapid increases in quantity and/or improvements in quality[21].

20. The momentum of military build up among the ASEAN countries increased in the 1980s and 1990s, however since the financial crisis in 1997 the force modernisation has slowing down[22]except for Singapore that has less affected in the crisis and continued its military build up. A few reason of why the process of equisition of military equipment within ASEAN country still continueing eventhough in a slow manner is because of to protect economic resources, requirement for EEZ surveillance and protection, inter state tension in the region, internal security caused by the terrorism threat for example after the Sep 11 incident in US and conflict between Thailand Government and the rebellions from the southern part of the state. Based on the study,[23]it is identified that non of the process of military modernisation comply with the conditions stated by Colin Gray. There is no ASEAN country that has a really serious conflict between one another. The border crisis between Thailand and Cambodia which flared in 2008 anyway still can be resolved where both countries still concern the importance of the relationship between ASEAN countries. Force modernisation in Southeast Asia can be considered as arms build-up rather than arms race.

Does the Association Represent a Long Term Alternative to Balance Of Power Strategies, or a Complement to Such?

21. For this question I will highlight the platform that has been established by ASEAN such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and East Asia Summit (EAS) and the external cooperation between ASEAN and major power outside the region.

22. Establishment of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). ASEAN countries agreed with the initiative to establish ARF in the 26th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and Post Ministerial Conference which were held on 23 to 25 July 1993. Then the inaugural meeting held in Bangkok on July 1994. The objectives of ARF are:

a. To foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern.

b. To make significant contributions to effort towards confidence building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia Pacific region[24].

The current important members of ARF are US, China, India, Japan, European Union and Republic of Korea. To build confidence and the capability to cooperate, the ARF also conducts such cooperative multilateral activities such as observation of military exercises, exchanges between defence colleges, joint training and exercises in search-and-rescue and disaster relief, and the maintenance of a registry of conventional arms.

Latest in the 16th ARF that has been conducted in Thailand on 23 July 2009 has come out with a vision statement for ARF by 2020 which focus on to building a region of peace, friendship and prosperity. In year 2009 also, ARF has conducted a lot of conference, dialogue and seminar regarding national

<https://assignbuster.com/has-asean-been-successful-in-promoting-security-politics-essay/>

threat such as terrorism and transnational crime, maritime security and law and regulation on the participation in International Disaster Relief. In promoting mutual assurance, the ARF has proven its value in three stages evolution from confidence building, preventive diplomacy and for the longer term is the approaches to conflict resolution.

23. The Establishment of East Asia Summit (EAS). The first EAS was held in Kuala Lumpur on 14 Dec 2005. The members of the EAS are the ten of ASEAN countries, Australia, People's Republic of China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and New Zealand. EAS was held as part of the overall ASEAN meeting[25]. In the first meeting, the discussion emphasized more towards on developing communication among the members and based on the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the EAS indicated that it will be a forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political and economic issues of common interest and concern and with the aim similar to the ARF which is to promote peace, stability and economic prosperity in EAST Asia[26]. It was also stated in the Kuala Lumpur declaration that EAS will be an open, inclusive, transparent and outward-looking forum to strengthen global norms and universal recognized values with ASEAN as the driving force[27]. Since the establishment in 2005 till 2009 most of the discussion focus on disease prevention such as avian influenza issue and energy security issue which focus more towards the environment and health problems. Latest in 28th Aug 2008 the AEM+6 has been launch and then established the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) which the purpose of establishment was to identified the best way of economic integration,

narrowing development gaps between members and how the energy development can sustain for long term[28].

External Cooperation between ASEAN and Major Power Outside the Region

24. ASEAN and Japan. ASEAN and Japan first established informal relations in 1973. The ties were later formalised with the establishment of the ASEAN-Japan Forum in March 1977. Since then, the ASEAN-Japan Forum has met once every 18-24 months. In early August 1977, the Japanese Prime Minister H. E. Mr. Takeo Fukuda met with the ASEAN Heads of Government at the Second ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur. The Japanese Prime Minister H. E. Mr. Noboru Takeshita met with his ASEAN counterparts in Manila during the Third ASEAN Summit in December 1987. At the meeting, ASEAN and Japan announced “ a new partnership toward peace and prosperity”. Japan has been ASEAN’s top trading partner for many years. In 1993, two-way trade between Japan and ASEAN amounted to nearly US\$87 billion and in 1996, it rose to US\$109. 0 billion, representing nearly 21% of ASEAN’s total external trade. On the other hand, Japan’s trade with ASEAN accounted for about 15% of her total external trade. A unique feature of ASEAN-Japan cooperation is the ASEAN Promotion Centre on Trade, Investment and Tourism in Tokyo.

The Centre was set up in 1981 under the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN Promotion Centre on Trade, Investment and Tourism between ASEAN Member Countries and Japan. It is jointly funded by contributions from Japan and ASEAN Member Countries. In January 2002, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited a number of ASEAN countries and proposed several new initiatives for cooperation. These include the designation of 2003 as the

<https://assignbuster.com/has-asean-been-successful-in-promoting-security-politics-essay/>

Year of ASEAN-Japan Exchange, reinforced cooperation in education and HRD, solidifying the security relations between Japan and ASEAN, the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (CEP), and the “ Initiative for Development in East Asia: IDEA.” Consultations to carry out these initiatives are proceeding. The recent establishment of the Japan-ASEAN General Exchange Fund (JAGEF) has generated a number of cooperation activities in support of greater ASEAN integration.

ASEAN and United States. After the demise of the Cold War, though in a reduced scale, increased US economic interests in the region is an important factor for her in maintaining its military presence in the region. The US presence in the region can become a stabilizing factor only if its military presence can be retained and its economic and political presence is accepted.[29]The US participates in a series of consultative meetings with ASEAN which includes the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC) 9+1 and 9+10, the ASEAN Economic Minister-US Trade Representatives (AEM-USTR), the Senior Economic Officials Meeting-US Trade Representatives (SEOM-USTR), the ASEAN-US Dialogue Meeting, the Joint Planning Committee(JPC) Meeting and the ASEAN-US Business Council. The ASEAN-Washington Committee also assist in conducting and maintaining the dialogue with the US. The ASEAN-US Dialogue has also focused more and more on political and security discussions over the years, particularly with the end of the Cold War. The principle focus of the ASEAN-US security dialogue has been the role of the US in maintaining stability in the region. ASEAN and the US have signed a Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism on 1 August 2002 in Bandar Seri Begawan.

ASEAN and China. Until the 1980s China had largely neglected its claims, preoccupied with more pressing defence demands and lacking in any case the military resources to intervene in the area. As a result, during much of the Cold War, the massive expanse of the South China Sea acted as a sort of 'buffer zone' between ASEAN and China, largely preventing direct contact between their respective forces. At present, all the countries concerned investing heavily in forces to defend their claims, in some cases encouraged by the Law of the Sea, and with growing speculation as to the value of the resources contained in the area, the South China Sea has been transformed into a zone of contention and possible conflict.[30]

Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kwan Yew warned that unless this issue is resolved "in a sensitive way, the present friendly relations between ASEAN and China could revert to the awkward relations of the decade when China supported guerrilla insurgencies in many ASEAN countries".[31] In July 1996, China was accorded full Dialogue Partner status at the 29th AMM in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Chinese Vice Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs H. E. Mr. Qian Qichen attended the meeting as a representative of a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN for the first time. It is hoped that the new generation of leaders in China will allow a more open and pluralistic system to develop and, thus, will enable China to become an integral part of the international community of nations. As a major power in the Asia-Pacific region that possesses nuclear weapons and has adopted a non-aligned posture, China has a unique and important position in regional efforts to promote regional stability. It has become extremely active and more positive in regional multi-lateral institutions, such as the ARF, CSCAP and the ISIS Roundtable on Peace and

Security in the Asia-Pacific for the past years. For ASEAN, this is a welcome development and hopefully the US would see it in the same way although a nuance may remain on the objectives of those regional institutions in