

ASEAN & Its Member Nations:

A Four-Week Unit on Modern Southeast Asia, Its Diversity and Its Aspirations for Regional Unity

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Grade Level: Grade 10-12 Honors or AP

Subject: Social Studies, Global Studies, World History

Introduction: The Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) began in the 1960s as a loose association of the five non-communist countries seeking closer economic ties and open to a more meaningful dialog on regional issues like security during the Cold War. By the 1990's it had expanded to ten nations, embracing neighbors once pitted against each other by the global tensions that finally with collapse of Soviet Union and changes in the Peoples Republic of China. Today ASEAN is pledging to form an EU-like community by 2015 with free trade and a common currency. Yet, even excluding past Cold War issues, the ten ASEAN countries have long histories of conflict and competition to overcome before achieving such lofty goals.

In this unit students will come to understand the competing factors that both give rise to and stand in the way of ASEAN's lofty goals. Students will do this by, in small groups, adopting the identity of an ASEAN member nation, researching its history and culture, and then representing that nation to the class, first in presentations profiling each group's country, and secondly in a mock ASEAN summit where each group will represent its country and work with other member nations to achieve both country-specific and regional goals.

At the end of the summit, the class will draft and agree to a joint communiqué outlining the summit's achievements as well as any unresolved issues that need to be carried over to a future (hypothetical) meeting. Finally, students will write up their individual reflections on the summit, discussing what they learned about their country, the region and the prospects for achieving a successful ASEAN Community by 2015.

Essential Questions:

- Besides common geographical boundaries, what historical, economic and cultural interests bind Southeast Asian countries together as a region?
- What are the unique characteristics of each country in the region?
- What historical, cultural, economic and political differences exist between neighboring countries in the regions?
- What goals do these have in forging connections under the umbrella of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)?
- How successful has ASEAN been, or will it be, in achieving regional unity?

Time Required: Approximately 4 weeks, 20 class periods for group work, online research, group presentations and a culminating, simulated ASEAN summit. Several hours of outside research time as homework will also be required.

Purpose of Lesson and Overview: The purpose of this unit is threefold: (a) to familiarize students with the unique histories and cultures of the ten ASEAN member nations, (b) to understand the common historical, economical and cultural links that hold Southeast Asia together as a region, and (c) the aspirations and obstacles involved in forging greater unity among those separate countries under the ASEAN umbrella.

Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson, students should be able to discuss and explain

- The history and current issues concerning the following individual countries: Burma/Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand
- The history and purpose of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
- The ASEAN goal of establishing an EU-like community in the Southeast Asian region by the year 2015
- The feasibility of that goal, reasons for pursuing it, and obstacles to achieving it

Materials:

- Attached Articles on ASEAN, its background & history, its recent summits and ongoing issues facing the organization.
- Attached list of online resources
- For study of the individual countries, subscriptions to ProQuest, ABC Clio, Culture Grams and other academic Web services
- Computer access for online videos, slideshows and further reading
- **DESIRED OUTCOMES:**
- Students should be able to demonstrate their understanding that each of the ten countries under discussion has its own unique culture, history and (in most cases) language, and that despite the superficial similarities that seem apparent to casual observers from Western countries, to the peoples of the respective countries, the differences between them and their cross-border neighbors are striking and significant, that such differences have historically caused division and conflict, and that they remain potent obstacles to regional unity.
- At the same time, however, students must also learn that there are enough common interests affecting the member nations of ASEAN to make the members want to overcome their differences and forge a unified community of nations. Students should be able to demonstrate their understanding of what those common interests are and how they might be able to aid in overcoming regional differences.
- **Prerequisites:** Students should already have a background in Asian geography and knowledge of China, India, Japan & Korea, the other, bigger players on the continent that the ASEAN countries deal with in addition to their dealings with each other.

PROCEDURES:

DAYS ONE & TWO – Teacher presents a lesson on the geography and culture of Southeast Asia and gives a brief history the region from pre-colonial time to present. Presentation should cover, inter alia, the following:

Geography

- Unifying factors of overland trade among the peninsular countries and sea trade among the islands countries and the peninsula
- Common climates, ecosystems and food crops

Culture

- Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam penetrated all parts of the region from earliest times to present
- Linguistic commonalities and differences
- Shared or overlapping literary and artistic traditions

History

- Early influences from India and China
- Pre-colonial kingdoms of Pagan (Burma), Ayudhya (Siam), Anam (Vietnam), Angkor (Cambodia), Srivijaya (Java) and Malacca (Malaya)
- Historic dealings with China (15th Century Ming Dynasty dominance)
- Arrival of European trading powers in the 16th Century (Portugal, Netherlands, France, Spain & Britain)
- Colonization starting in the late 18th Century of every Southeast Asian country except Siam & reasons for Siam's independence
- US interests in SE Asia, starting with the acquisition of the Philippine Islands from Spain after 1898 Spanish-American War
- Japanese conquest of colonial SE Asia during WWII and subsequent occupation during the war's duration
- Resistance of SE Asian nationalists to the return of Western Colonial powers after defeat of Japan in 1945 & wars of independence in French Indochina, British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies in the 1950s
- The American War in Vietnam and its aftermath (Cambodia's civil war; exodus of refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos; repression and rebellion in Burma; insurgencies in northern and southern Thailand; Golden Triangle opium trade)
- The formation ASEAN, and the modernization and growth of SE Asian economies in the 1980s and 90s

Supplement with one or more of the online ASEAN videos whose links are given on the last page of this document. Students may follow up with textbook readings on Southeast Asia.

DAY THREE: Divide the class into ten groups or pairs depending on size. In smaller classes, it may be necessary to assign two countries to one or more groups; keep in mind that smaller countries like Brunei and Laos may be more easily combined.

Assign a country to each group or pair. Instruct students that they will be researching their countries for two purposes: one, to make a fifteen minute presentation profiling their country's history, culture and current form of government and economic status and to draft and publish a 3 to 4 page country profile to share with the rest of the class; second, to know the interests and concerns facing their country and its relations with its neighbors so that they can represent their country at a simulated ASEAN Summit.

Point out the resources listed at the end of this document and inform students that they may use other sources only after they have surveyed the ones provided here, and only with the teacher's approval.

Each group should receive a shared grade for the presentation and published profile.

DAYS FOUR-FIVE: Students will meet in their groups/pairs and begin researching their country. Access to library and/or computer lab facilities will help. Students be made aware that their research should not be limited to the time given then in class and that time outside the class will also be required to complete their research.

DAY SIX: Students prepare their presentations and present the teacher with a draft of the country profile they will distribute when they make their presentations. To avoid any misinformation, the teacher must approve a draft of the profile before it is distributed to the class. As students work on their presentations, the teacher circulates and advises on content and form, reminding students that their presentations will only be 15 minutes in length and that anything they have to leave out of them can be provided to the class in their published profile.

DAYS 7-10: Group/pair presentations to class.

To keep everyone on their toes, presenters must provide at least three content related questions and one open-ended, essay-type based on the information in their presentations and country profiles. The teacher will then use those questions in test or quiz after the presentations are completed.

DAY 11: Quiz on the ten nations of ASEAN, based on information from the presentations with questions compiled from each group by the teacher.

For homework due on DAY 12, students must read the articles numbered 1-3 at the end of this document in the section labeled "ASEAN Background" and ASEAN Summits. Students should take notes on each article and be prepared to discuss them in class. Discussion questions for each article are provided with the article.

DAY 12: Groups will first discuss the articles among themselves and then with the whole class.

For homework due on DAY 13, students will do research online on current issues facing their country as it relates to its immediate neighbors and other ASEAN partners to discuss in class.

Guiding question: What other nations outside the ASEAN membership (such as the United States, China, Japan or India) does your country have to deal with and how can membership in ASEAN affect such dealings?

DAY 14: As a class, discuss the results of last night's research into current events and students' thoughts on the guiding question. Then, meet in groups to prepare for the mock ASEAN Summit.

For homework over the next several days, students will read the remaining articles (#'s 4-7) under the heading "ONGOING AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES" at the end of this document and take notes that will help them discuss the guiding questions provided for the articles.

DAYS 15-16: Groups prepare for mock ASEAN Summit –

- Each group creates a list of pressing issues that face their respective nations and that they will discuss at the Summit. Issues should involve the cooperation of

ASEAN partners and should deal with regional matters as well as local requirements of each group's country.

- Each group elects a chief delegate to speak at the summit.
- Groups will use the online links provided here to further research the issues their country will need raise and pursue at the summit
- Groups should also anticipate issues that their ASEAN partners may raise at the summit and be prepared to deal with them

DAYS 17-19: Mock AESEAN Summit –

- Groups will meet in a simulated summit and discuss the issues they have researched.
- Summit participants will make their own rules for conducting business during the summit, elect a chair and secretaries and decide on an order of business. On the last day, the summit will produce a joint communiqué describing the summit's accomplishments and unresolved issues that had to be tabled for future discussion.
- Groups will receive grades based on their preparation for the summit and for the active participation of the group as a whole in the simulation.

DAY 20 – Debriefing: Groups discuss what they accomplished and did not at the summit, why they were able to reach their goals, or why they did not. Then, as a class, students decide if the summit was a success and whether future summits are worth pursuing. Finally, in more general terms, students discuss what they learned about their about their specific countries, the region and about each of the member nations of ASEAN.

END PRODUCT: Each student will write a 5-page essay, with a bibliography and using MLA citations in which he or she discusses the future of ASEAN and the importance for his or her country of continued membership. Essays will attempt to answer the question: Is the goal of an EU-like ASEAN Community by 2015 realistic, and can the members of ASEAN overcome the obstacles they face along the way? Essays will refer to the simulation experience and to research used in preparing for it.

CONTIUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASEAN Background

TASK: Read articles #1-3 below with the following questions in mind.

Read the overview of ASEAN history below and discuss with your group the reasons why ASEAN's five original members might have wanted to create such a group in the first place. Then discuss reasons for expanding the membership to ten nations by 1999. Consider the history of your own group's country and why it would have wanted to be part of a group like ASEAN.

#1 – An Overview of its History and Plans for the Future

ESTABLISHMENT

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

Brunei Darussalam then joined on 8 January 1984, Viet Nam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999, making up what is today the ten Member States of ASEAN.

AIMS AND PURPOSES

As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN are:

- To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavors in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations;
- To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, cultural, technical, scientific and administrative fields;
- To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional, technical and administrative spheres;
- To collaborate more effectively for the greater utilization of their agriculture and industries, the expansion of their trade, including the study of the problems of international commodity trade, the improvement of their transportation and communications facilities and the raising of the living standards of their peoples;
- To promote Southeast Asian studies; and
- To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

In their relations with one another, the ASEAN Member States have adopted the following fundamental principles, as contained in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) of 1976:

- Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations;
- The right of every State to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;
- Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
- Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful manner;
- Renunciation of the threat or use of force; and
- Effective cooperation among themselves.

ASEAN COMMUNITY

The ASEAN Vision 2020, adopted by the ASEAN Leaders on the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN, agreed on a shared vision of ASEAN as a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies.

At the 9th ASEAN Summit in 2003, the ASEAN Leaders resolved that an ASEAN Community shall be established.

At the 12th ASEAN Summit in January 2007, the Leaders affirmed their strong commitment to accelerate the establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015 and signed the Cebu Declaration on the Acceleration of the Establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015.

The ASEAN Community is comprised of three pillars, namely the ASEAN Political-Security Community, ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. Each pillar has its own Blueprint, and, together with the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) Strategic Framework and IAI Work Plan Phase II (2009-2015), they form the Roadmap for and ASEAN Community 2009-2015.

ASEAN CHARTER

The ASEAN Charter serves as a firm foundation in achieving the ASEAN Community by providing legal status and institutional framework for ASEAN. It also codifies ASEAN norms, rules and values; sets clear targets for ASEAN; and presents accountability and compliance.

The ASEAN Charter entered into force on 15 December 2008. A gathering of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers was held at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta to mark this very historic occasion for ASEAN.

With the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN will henceforth operate under a new legal framework and establish a number of new organs to boost its community-building process.

In effect, the ASEAN Charter has become a legally binding agreement among the 10 ASEAN Member States.

http://asean2011.kemlu.go.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=33&Itemid=106&lang=en

Monday, 11 August 2008

Background on ASEAN Summits

TASK: Read the following articles about (a) the history of ASEAN Summits and (b) the April 2010 ASEAN Summit. In your country groups, discuss the importance of having such frequent summits. Was the 2010 summit was successful? Did it accomplish anything of value for your country or for ASEAN as a group? What work was left to complete at the next summit, and why?

2 – ASEAN Summit History

The ASEAN Summit is an annual meeting held by ASEAN in relation to economic, and cultural development of Southeast Asia countries.

The grouping regularly conducts dialogue meetings with other countries in an organization collectively known as the ASEAN dialogue partners. ASEAN + 3 adds China, Japan, and South Korea after the agreement of ASEAN+3 Heads of Government Summit on Nov. 2001 in Brunei.

The formal summits are held in three days. The usual itinerary is as follows:

- ASEAN leaders hold an internal organization meeting.
- ASEAN leaders hold a conference together with foreign ministers of the ASEAN Regional Forum.
- Leaders of 3 ASEAN Dialogue Partners (also known as ASEAN+3) namely China, Japan and South Korea hold a meeting with the ASEAN leaders.
- A separate meeting is set for leaders of 2 ASEAN Dialogue Partners (also known as ASEAN+CER) namely Australia and New Zealand.

The first ASEAN summit was held in February 1976 in Bali. At this summit, ASEAN expressed its readiness to "develop fruitful relations" and mutually beneficial co-operation with other countries of the region. The ASEAN leaders signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.

The 2nd ASEAN summit in Kuala Lumpur in 1977 was the occasion for the first summit meeting between Japan and ASEAN. Japan expressed its intention to promote co-operation with ASEAN.

The ASEAN heads of government also met the heads of government of Australia and New Zealand. The summit called for expanding cooperation on human resource development; integrating women and youth in human resource development; eliminating poverty, disease and illiteracy; integrating population with rural development policies; providing productive jobs for low-income groups, especially in rural areas; and taking concerted action to curb the abuse and traffic in narcotics and drugs.

Monday, 11 August 2008

http://asean2011.kemlu.go.id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=35%3Athe-asean-summit-history&catid=42%3Asoftnews&Itemid=109&lang=en

#3 – 16th ASEAN Summit Wraps up in Hanoi

April 10, 2010

<http://www1.dtinews.vn/news/news/16th-asean-summit-wraps-up-in-hanoi.html>

The 16th ASEAN Summit, the first one held in 2010, was wrapped up on April 9 in Hanoi with adoption of the ASEAN Statement on Sustained Recovery and Development and the ASEAN Statement on Joint Response to Climate Change. These documents set important orientations for the bloc's cooperation in 2010.

At the plenary session and the retreat session, leaders of ASEAN member states discussed key issues, namely the implementation of the ASEAN Charter and building of the ASEAN Community; joint response to the global issues; and enhancing ASEAN's role and position in the regional and international arena.

ASEAN's leaders reiterated their determination to fruitfully realize the Roadmap for the ASEAN Community and early put the ASEAN Charter into reality.

The leaders focused their discussions on economic recovery and sustained development and issued a Statement on the topic. The Statement pointed out many orientations and solutions for ASEAN cooperation, especially through speeding up economic linkages, combining economic growth and environment protection, social welfare, education and human resource development, and promoting East Asian economic-financial cooperation for sustainable growth.

The ASEAN member states also committed to conducting the ASEAN Connectivity to lay the foundation for closer economic linkages and the Community building.

ASEAN's leaders took this occasion to talk about effective cooperation in response to global challenges, especially climate change.

According to the newly-adopted Statement on Joint Response to Climate Change, ASEAN will merge action plans of regional countries while making positive contribution to the global joint efforts for the birth of an international binding agreement on fighting climate change.

ASEAN's leaders were unanimous in strengthening the bloc's centrality and reinforcing ties with its partners within ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

The Association will consider specific ways for Russia and the US to take part in regional mechanisms. The leaders also agreed to open the ASEAN+8 Defense Ministers' Meeting in order to enhance defense and security cooperation between the bloc and other partners.

Underlining the need to share stances within ASEAN about regional and global issues on international forums, ASEAN's leaders advocated Vietnam, as the ASEAN Chair in 2010, to partake in the G20 Summit this year.

As the Chairman of the 16th ASEAN Summit, Vietnamese PM Nguyen Tan Dung presided over a press conference following the Summit in order to introduce the outcomes of the event.

He revealed that ASEAN leaders discussed numerous issues relating to the Mekong Sub-region's development region, such as infrastructure connectivity, sustainable growth, environment protection, and combating climate change.

In response to a question about the East Sea, the Vietnamese PM highlighted that ASEAN member states and regional countries have common benefits in maintaining peace, stability, security and safety in the East Sea.

Mr. Dung was convinced that on the basis of goodwill for regional common interests, all related parties would strictly abide by the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the East Sea and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982.

ONGOING AND UNRESOLVED ISSUES

The following articles discuss 4 recent issues facing the member nations of ASEAN that have caused disagreement within the organization.

TASK: Read each article and discuss them in your groups. Using the research you've already done about your countries and the nature of ASEAN, try to answer these questions:

- ***What makes these issues so difficult for ASEAN to resolve?***
- ***How can ASEAN get beyond their disagreements?***
- ***Will these issues interfere with ASEAN's goal of an ASEAN Community by 2015?***
- ***Use the online sources provided at the end to find other ongoing issues that affect ASEAN unity, such as the South China Sea territorial dispute with China that affects Vietnam and the Philippines. How successful has ASEAN been at resolving them?***

Issue: *Disagreement over political oppression in Burma / Myanmar*

4 – ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS FACING CREDIBILITY TEST OVER PRESSING BURMA ON POLITICAL REFORM

By Ron Corben, VOA News (Voice of America) 08 Jan 2007

via ProQuest: <http://search.proquest.com/docview/469481027?accountid=3825>

As the leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations prepare for their annual summit in the Philippines this week, they will confront the problem of

Burma. The summit was rescheduled for this week after the host Philippine government canceled the gathering in December because of a typhoon. As Ron Corben reports from Bangkok, analysts expect little real progress in persuading Burma's military government to ease its grip on power.

For the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Burma is an increasingly difficult issue, as international pressure mounts against its government.

But Burma's military, in power for over 40 years, shows no sign of allowing major political reform.

And ASEAN states are divided over Burma, which joined the group in 1997. Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand have pressed Burma to speed up reforms. Others, such as Vietnam and Laos, both one-party states, are more reticent to push for change.

Thailand's interim prime minister, Surayud Chulanont, a retired general, says Burma's military needs to set a clear timeframe on political reform. The Thai interim government, installed after a bloodless coup in September, says it will hold national elections by the end of 2007.

"For Thailand, we have a timeline to draft our new constitution and move on the path to democracy, but for the Burmese we don't see any indications on the timeline yet so we have to be very careful," he said.

Three years ago, Burma's government announced a plan of gradual changes eventually leading to elections. But so far only modest progress has been seen, and the national convention drafting a new constitution has yet to complete its task.

The U.S. and European Union have imposed economic sanctions on Burma and called on it to improve human rights and release political prisoners, especially opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi. In September Burma was listed for debate at the U.N. Security Council.

John Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., calls Burma a threat to international peace and security because of the rising number of Burmese citizens displaced from their homes, as well as drug and human trafficking over Burma's borders.

Sunai Pasuk, a Thai representative for U.S.-based Human Rights Watch, thinks the U.N. debate will add pressure on ASEAN.

He said, "Given the upcoming possible action in the U.N. Security Council, ASEAN's common credibility is now at risk because if Burma cannot improve its behavior in the near future the entire ASEAN community will have to face growing pressure from the international community as well."

Despite international protests, ASEAN allowed Burma to join, and the group's officials argued that membership would encourage reform. Instead, the Burmese government continues to detain most opposition leaders and has toughened controls on international aid organizations.

Debbie Stothardt, spokeswoman for the Alternative ASEAN Network, thinks the group may gain some leverage over Burma. ASEAN is preparing a new charter, which among other things, is expected to call for promoting democracy and protecting human rights.

She said, "For most human rights activists in ASEAN we're counting on the fact that the discussions on the ASEAN charter will be an opportunity to ensure that Burma is very much high up on the agenda."

A Burmese pro-democracy advocate, Naing Aung, from the Asian Network for Free Elections, notes that while ASEAN will not press very hard on Burma, it did not stand in the way of this year's debate at the United Nations.

"It is hard to expect that ASEAN will be more actively involved in solving the Burmese problem. But [ASEAN] are not giving any protection to Burma in terms of the United Nations level," he said. "They no longer protect Burma anymore."

Several experts say that ASEAN leaders are not likely to push publicly on Burma at their annual summit, being held in the Philippines.

What is more, the analysts fear that rising international pressure, especially from the West, will drive Burma closer to China. Burma does considerable trade with China - selling timber and other natural resources that China's booming economy needs.

Experts say that as long as China trades with Burma, the military government may be able to withstand pressure to change for years.

#5—ASEAN Summit Burma Pressure Urged

(news.BBC.com.uk; 8 APRIL 2010)

Leaders of 10 South East Asian nations meeting for a summit in Vietnam have been urged to put Burma's coming elections at the top of their agenda.

The agenda of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit focuses on building regional ties.

But some 100 legislators in the region have appealed to the leaders to put pressure on Burma to ensure fair polls.

Thai PM Abhisit Vejjajiva will no longer attend, after declaring a state of emergency amid protests in Bangkok.

Officials had said Mr. Abhisit would shuttle between Hanoi and Bangkok but correspondents say the situation is so delicate he now appears unwilling to leave the country.

'Extremely important'

The ASEAN summit is expected to focus largely on improving relations between the neighbors and regional trading partners.

Forming a free market group of 600 million people by 2015 is a key theme, although wide differences remain between the delegates.

A petition signed by more than 100 legislators in the region has appealed to the summit to take decisive action against Burma - a fellow member - with the aim of ensuring the elections are free and fair.

Burma's military junta has not yet given a date for the polls - the first in the country in 20 years - but they are expected to take place later this year.

Last month, the country implemented a series of electoral laws that effectively prevent the opposition from taking part in any meaningful way.

Some ASEAN members have criticized Burma's election plans and delegates of several countries have said they intend to raise the subject at the summit in Hanoi.

The Philippines and Indonesia have been outspoken in calling for a genuinely inclusive election in Burma, in which the opposition led by detained leader Aung San Suu Kyi, could take part.

Her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), decided last week not to participate because of restrictions on campaigning, leadership and the continued detention of hundreds of its members.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa said the poll in Burma, also known as Myanmar, was "a potentially extremely important election".

"We've made references to the commitment by Myanmar that this will be an open, free, democratic and credible elections and we would like to see those kind of commitments realized."

Draft summit documents suggest the leaders will also be discussing how fast to cut back on economic stimulus measures, how to speed up construction of regional infrastructure and what action to take on climate change.

Host Hanoi has also spoken before the summit of its desire to secure a regional approach towards China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

But the summit slogan, "From Vision to Action" is intended to refer to economic, not political progress.

"The building of the economic community will be one of the focal points during the summit," said Vietnam's Assistant Foreign Minister Pham Quang Vinh.

ASEAN combines the more developed economies of Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei, with Burma, Laos and Cambodia.

*Story from BBC NEWS:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/8608635.stm>
Published: 8 APRIL 2010*

Issue: Ongoing Border Dispute between Thailand and Cambodia
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#6 –Thailand and Cambodia Border Talks Fail at ASEAN Summit

news.BBC.com.uk

8 May 2011

Talks between the Cambodian and Thai prime ministers have failed to resolve a deadly border dispute.

Hun Sen of Cambodia and his Thai counterpart Abhisit Vejjajiva met on the sidelines of the regional Asean summit, but made no breakthrough.

Tensions over clashes in which 18 people have died have overshadowed the gathering, in Jakarta, Indonesia.

The other issue causing concern at the summit is Burma's request to take over the chairmanship of the group in 2014.

That suggestion has sparked criticism from human rights campaigners.

US-based Human Rights Watch said that if Burma was to take on the role, the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean) would be reduced to "the laughing stock of intergovernmental forums".

A final statement at the meeting said the matter was still under consideration, Reuters news agency reported.

'Point-scoring'

Host nation Indonesia, which has been attempting to broker a peace between Thailand and Cambodia, brought the two leaders together on Sunday morning.

Both Thailand and Cambodia however indicated the discussions had been fruitless.

Mr Hun said the onus was on Thailand to accept the conditions for the deployment of Indonesian observers into the disputed area.

"Once Thailand signs the acceptance of the terms of referenece, then the meeting of the general border committee can start immediately," he said, the Associated Press news agency reported.

At a news conference, Mr Abhisit blamed Cambodia for the violence but called for a peaceful settlement.

"The objective of what we are doing shouldn't be about scoring political points, thinking that there is some kind of technical victory on one issue or another. But the ultimate objective must be to achieve lasting peace. So that both our people can live peacefully side by side, along the Thai-Cambodian border."

The BBC's Karishma Vaswani, in Indonesia, says that though the annual meeting is an opportunity for the 10-nation bloc to present an image of unity to the world, the recent fighting on the Thai-Cambodian border has been a huge embarrassment for the group.

Indonesia's Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa said the next few days could be critical in stabilising the situation.

"We have a terms of reference that has been agreed. We now have to create conditions that are conducive for the early assignment of the observer team and at the same time we need to have the political process ongoing between the two sides," he said.

Seventeen soldiers and a Thai civilian have been killed since February when clashes erupted in a disputed area around the 900-year-old Preah Vihear temple. Tens of thousands of villagers have fled the fighting.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13319952>

#7 – Thai Cambodian conflict an obstacle to the ASEAN Community 2015?

EASTASA FORUM, May 20th, 2011 / Author: Pongphisoot Busbarat, ANU

The 18th ASEAN Summit held in Jakarta had as its theme 'ASEAN Community in a Global Community of Nations.' But against this backdrop of hopes for increased integration, the current Thai-Cambodian dispute highlights fundamental problems among ASEAN member countries.

The conflict has developed within complex political conditions in both countries. Thailand's current domestic situation, however, has been especially aggravating to the relationship as attempts by conservative groups — led by the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), or the Yellow Shirts — to discredit the pro-Thaksin faction has leveraged nationalistic sentiments.

The nationalists attack Thaksin and his allies as 'selling the nation', citing the sale of Thaksin's telecom company, Shin Corp, to Singaporean Temasek in 2005 and the Samak government's support of Cambodia's listing of Preah Vihear Temple as a UNESCO World Heritage in 2008. Despite the World Heritage status having nothing to do with any legally binding border demarcation, the PAD has successfully convinced many Thais that the temple's joint listing will lead to the loss of Thai sovereignty over the disputed 4.6 square kilometre area adjacent to the temple. While Prime Minister Abhisit and his Democrat Party supported PAD's nationalist agenda over this issue when in opposition, PAD's manipulation of nationalist attitudes has gone beyond what Abhisit envisaged, resulting in the government's being pressured into adopting hawkish measures against Cambodia.

The military is another important factor in prolonging the armed conflict, as the dispute keeps the military involved in politics and justifies budget increases (including a recent

THB1.80 billion (US\$59.3 million) for its operations along the Thai-Cambodian border). The Thai military used to play an important role in Thailand's relations with neighbouring countries but lost this prerogative to the Foreign Ministry in the 1990s following democratisation. With the fall of democracy following the 2006 coup, the military has increasingly reinserted its old role and sometimes taken different stances to the government. Evidence of the military's hand can be seen in the government's decision to renege on its support for Indonesian observers in the disputed area.

How the conflict will be resolved remains uncertain. Thailand prefers bilateral talks, seeing disadvantage in raising the issue at the regional and international levels, although past bilateral negotiations have been unsuccessful. ASEAN, under Indonesia's chairmanship, has tried to offer assistance on several occasions since February this year, and Thailand has uncomfortably accepted this role. The recent peace deal brokered by Jakarta during the ASEAN Summit brought about the term of reference for both parties to resolve the conflict, including steps of supporting bilateral negotiations and allowing an observer team to monitor the ceasefire. But both countries are presently still playing around with wording and preconditions; and without good will and concession made by both toward peace, ASEAN, not equipped with any enforcement measures, can do little.

A parallel development is also happening at the ICJ as Cambodia recently submitted a request to the Court to interpret the 1962 border ruling. The conflict may be resolved if both parties accept the new interpretation peacefully. But if the ICJ rules in Cambodia's favour, nationalist sentiment in Thailand will likely intensify, degrading the Thai-Cambodian relationship further. This would also greatly damage Thailand's economic interests, and, from a geostrategic perspective, Thailand would lose its role in mainland Southeast Asia to other regional players, especially increasingly influential China and Vietnam.

The repercussions of this conflict at the regional level may be farther and deeper than anybody would expect. Foremost, not only are bilateral relations deteriorating but ASEAN's unity is threatened. The conflict may drift ASEAN apart, at least in terms of political unity, affecting the progress of regional cooperation. A number of ASEAN leaders have expressed this concern. During the Summit, Philippine President Benigno Aquino said, 'How can we have one ASEAN, one family if we have two major components who cannot solve their problems?' After the Summit, the Malaysian deputy foreign minister also expressed frustration, blaming Thailand for not respecting the agreement previously made in Jakarta, a claim the Thai foreign ministry rejected.

Significantly, this conflict reveals that ASEAN countries may not be ready for the next stage of integration. The sense of community is not ripe enough for any steps beyond inter-state cooperation. Ironically, as a founding member of ASEAN, originally playing an active role in consolidating ASEAN's unity and development, Thailand has become an obstacle to the group's progress. Other founding members also have the potential to react similarly when it comes to sovereignty issues, as the Spratly Islands show.

This conflict could suggest that the integration theory based on the European model of neo-functionalism, which ASEAN has looked up to, may not be suited to this part of the world. More energy and resources need to be directed toward socio-cultural community building. ASEAN's shared identity needs to be fostered with a stronger foundation of mutual respect, understanding and brotherhood among Southeast Asians. With such bonds, nationalism will hardly be able to stir up hatred between neighbours and friends. Without achieving ASEAN's socio-cultural pillar, other regional activities, including security and economic cooperation, cannot be sustained.

The recent Summit's goals — achieving ASEAN Community by 2015, maintaining a safe and stable region, and making ASEAN active in solving global problems — seem distant. The Thai-Cambodian conflict is not only a diplomatic embarrassment but highlights ASEAN's underlying inability to transcend the archaic concept of sovereignty to manage the conflict peacefully. Consequently, a true ASEAN Community according to ASEAN Vision 2020 may have to stay a vision for quite some time.

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