Chapter III

India’s Look East Policy: Forging Partnership with ASEAN
The impact of events at the global level on India and Southeast Asia are crucial in order to understand the new developments that began between India and ASEAN. It may be useful to recall the state of affairs both in India and Southeast Asia at the time of transition from the Cold to the post-Cold War, particularly during 1990-1991. Compelling reasons unfolded on all major fronts which paved the way to the beginning of a new era in India-ASEAN relationship. During the last decade of last century Southeast Asia offered an opportunity to revive India’s political and economic links as the region had started bracing itself for a radically changed environment. India was looking to play a meaningful role, however minimal, in Southeast Asia as far as strategic issues and economic aspects are concerned.

**Indian Foreign Policy Since 1991**

In order to understand India’s relations with ASEAN in the post-Cold War period, it is necessary to keep in mind the foreign policy changes

effected in India since the early 1990s. For the first time, a sign of renewed activism was noticeable in Indian foreign policy with a sense of purpose and direction. The reorientation of Indian foreign policy was in response to the economic structural changes in the international system and also within the nation. These changes enabled India to initiate a policy framework that was radically different. Although the Indian leadership did not consciously articulate a new foreign policy framework, incremental changes throughout the 1990s accumulated to produce a new approach to the world by the end of the decade. C. Raja Mohan, a foreign policy analyst observed: “In responding to the external environment as well as the demands of the new economic strategy at home, there was continuous tension between new ideas and old mindsets in the making of the new foreign policy”. In order to give greater economic thrust to the foreign policy a separate cell, called the Economic Division, was created with a senior official in the Ministry of External Affairs heading it.

It was against this background one could see a dramatic transformation in India’s approach and policies towards Southeast Asia refurbishing India’s image as a responsible emerging power and convincing ASEAN that the former had greater stakes in promoting peace and stability in the region rather than extending its influence to fill the so

called power vacuum in Southeast Asia. ASEAN too was also responsive to Indian initiatives as this regional organization looking for new partnerships in the post–Cold War uncertainties. ASEAN countries were also attracted by the economic opportunities India offered after its opening. Another significant factor weighed heavily at ASEAN quarters, particularly after the end of American presence in Southeast Asia was China. The South China Sea dispute emerged as a major concern to ASEAN when Beijing started asserting its claims more vociferously. Although New Delhi did not openly took responsibility to counterbalance China, it did not seem to be averse to the idea of sharing Southeast Asian worries to advance its political and strategic interests. India was particularly worried about the growing nexus between China and the strategically located Myanmar.4

India Looks East

India awoke from the deep slumber from the middle of 1980’s and particularly after the end of Cold War and attempted to gain a place in the world true to its potential. The democratic pluralism in India did not allow quick changes in the country and the society as divergent as India was to be handled as per the varied aspirations of its people. This was a major restraining factor affecting nation’s political decisions. But at last India

crossed the hurdles and a clear road map was drawn which changed India’s relations towards East Asia. Premier P.V. Narasimha Rao, with his vast experience in foreign policy matters launched Look East Policy to involve India with the countries in the East. India’s Look East Policy raises other issues such as how does India placed itself globally and what lies towards its east? India being located in the southern Asian region, to its east it is one of opportunity. To the west lie geo strategic challenges and therefore India looks east because a resurgent Asia Pacific gives shape to its Look East Policy. India crafted a plan of action in its approach towards Southeast Asia, East Asia and also Asia-pacific.5

India’s admiration to east did not develop suddenly. Before India’s independence Jawaharlal Nehru wrote, from his prison cell that “The pacific is likely to take the place of the Atlantic as a future newer centre of the world. Though not directly a pacific state, India will invariably exercise an important influence there”.6 This view emerged as a reality by the end of the last century. India was integrating with the Asia-Pacific in a number of ways. The thrust was primarily economic, keeping with the emerging trend of “flag following commerce.” Political and security

6. Cited in Dipankar Benerjee, n.2,p.188.
linkages developed in their own way, given their respective dynamics and the need to develop commercial ties rapidly.  

India's Look East policy consisted of three objectives: first, to renew and strengthen political contacts with Southeast Asia, Japan and Australia; the second, to target Japan and selected Newly Industrialized Countries (NIC), particularly Singapore, for investments; and the third was to forge multilateral security and defense links with Southeast Asia.  

EVIOLUTON OF INDIA - ASEAN PARTNERSHIP

The ASEAN countries, relatively close neighbours of India, geographically and in terms of cultural commonalities and regional interests, have emerged as an attractive destination for New Delhi. India realized that to emerge as a major power, it must develop strategic partnership with ASEAN and to use ASEAN as a bridge with which to connect itself to East Asia. It may not be out of place to mention that India's main objective after achieving independence was to attain self-sufficiency under a planned economic system. But in the first four decades, self-sufficiency remained elusive and the import-substitution policy failed to yield the desired results. Instead, what became obvious was an economy weighed down by inefficiency, stagnation, and poor

performance. When Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao assumed power in June 1991, India was experiencing the most serious economic crisis since independence with "a steep fall in foreign exchange reserves to about US$ 1 billion (equal to two weeks imports). 10 To satisfy the demand for capital and maintain economic growth, India not only needed ASEAN's market, but also needed Singapore and Malaysia's technology and investment to beef up its infrastructure such as airports, roads and power. 11

To ASEAN, the changing huge India with its economic liberalization, industrial base, military strength and technical capability, looked a new destination for its economic activity. In addition ASEAN's perception of India as an emerging regional power capable of countering China's threat, in the South China Sea due to conflicting claims over the spratly islands. ASEAN, therefore, realized the need for a paradigm shift in India-ASEAN linkages. New Delhi's Look-East Policy, coincided with ASEAN's Look West Policy particularly by Thailand and Singapore ultimately led to an overall normalization of relations between India and ASEAN. India whole heartedly reciprocated ASEAN's urge to enhance its relations with the latter. Prime Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao visited Indonesia in 1992, Thailand in 1993, Vietnam and Singapore in 1994 and

Malaysia in 1995. In his all these visits he explained India’s commitment to strengthen its relations with Southeast Asia.

**Sectoral Dialogue Partnership**

In the post-Cold War years India liberalized its economy and decided to work in tune with the globalization process. The tiger economies of the Asia-Pacific Rim were taken into consideration to adopt a two-pronged strategy to have closer contact with Southeast Asia. It made diplomatic moves to have close interaction with a multilateral ASEAN and endeavored to have close bilateral ties with the countries of Southeast Asia. India’s perception was that the volume of trade would increase and investment opportunities would increase by becoming closer to ASEAN.\(^7\)

While acting as a vehicle for intra-regional cooperation ASEAN also used a mechanism which enabled it to foster its interactions in a collective way, with external powers. Initially, however, ASEAN lacked a special institution to engage in such exchanges, but gradually these took a shape what is popularly called the dialogue process.\(^8\) The relationship with the main trading partners had been useful for emphasizing common ASEAN

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13. ASEAN states initiated such dialogues with major external powers and organizations with the EEC in 1972; (Australia in 1974); New Zealand in 1975; Japan, Canada, the USA and UNDP in 1977 and with South Korea in 1991.
position on trade, aid and investment issues. In response to the changes in India and its urge for enhanced relations with ASEAN the fourth Summit Meeting of ASEAN held in Singapore on January 27-28, 1992 accorded India a Sectoral Dialogue Partnership. Singapore’s Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, announced that India’s application to become a Sectoral Dialogue partner was approved by ASEAN. Thus India opened dialogue with ASEAN for promotion of trade, investment, scientific and technological cooperation, etc.

India’s newly acquired status of a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN was an important step towards greater-political and economic interactions and an eventual integration with the ASEAN. Baladas Goshal thus observes:

> While the major role in promoting economic relations in the changed environment rests with business and industry, both in public and private sectors, the Governments of India and the various Southeast Asian countries continued to have an important role to play. Naturally, the government had to provide the appropriate framework of upgraded political relations, based on well-conceived enmeshing of strategic interests, but they also have a direct continuing responsibility in the economic filed.

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It is within that framework the sectoral dialogue assumes importance.\textsuperscript{16}

The following were the broad areas that were covered under the Sectoral Dialogue partnership:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{bilateral trade issues including tariff and non tariff trade measures and scope for mutual preferential treatment}
  \item joint ventures in India and the ASEAN countries
  \item cooperation in tourism, science and technology and human resources development
  \item joint marketing
  \item third country projects and
  \item other aspects of cooperation such as participation in Multilateral Trade Negotiation (MTNs), technology transfer and joint R&D.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{itemize}

In the ASEAN sense of a Sectoral Dialogue partnership was an acknowledgement of the usefulness of the collaboration primarily

\textsuperscript{16} Baladas Goshal, "India and Southeast Asia: Prospects and Problems", in Baladas Goshal (ed), \textit{India and Southeast Asia: Challenges and Opportunities}, (New Delhi, 1996), p.106.

economic with a possibility of moving towards a full dialogue partnership in future.\(^{18}\)

The meeting of ASEAN and Indian Senior Officials on the establishment of Sectoral Dialogue between ASEAN and India was held in New Delhi on March 16-17, 1993. The meeting was attended on the ASEAN side by Dato Ajit Singh, Secretary-General, ASEAN, Director Generals of all member countries. India was represented by Dinesh Singh, External Affairs Minister, J.N. Dixit, Foreign Secretary; A.V. Ganeshan, Commerce Secretary; Suresh Kumar, Industry Secretary; P. Rama Rao, Secretary for Science and Technology and J.M. Lyngdoh, Secretary for Tourism.

The officials meeting was co-chaired by J.N. Dixit, Foreign Secretary, and Dato Ajit Singh, Secretary-General, ASEAN. The meeting noted and affirmed the exchange of letters between the two sides on the establishment of Sectoral Dialogue Relations between ASEAN and India.

The meeting considered the following:

(i) Decided to set up the ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (AIJSCC) an Inter-government consultative body to co-ordinate the ASEAN-India Sectoral Dialogue Relations,

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initially covering the areas of trade, investment and tourism. It also intended to establish sub-committees as appropriate.

(ii) Discussed to set up an ASEAN-New Delhi Committee (ANDC) consisting of the Heads of Diplomatic Missions of ASEAN member countries in New Delhi who shall facilitate ASEAN's Sectoral Dialogue Relations with India.

(iii) To establish a Joint ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC) which suppose consist to of representatives from the respective Private Sectors of ASEAN and India.

The meeting agreed to increase cooperation in the areas of trade, investment and tourism. In trade, India proposed the following four areas of cooperation which could form the basis for discussion in future Sectoral Dialogue meetings:

(i) Hold regular trade talks between India and ASEAN.

(ii) Establish a mechanism for the exchange of trade and commercial data.

(iii) Have a regular interaction between business communities of India and ASEAN.

(iv) Establish a mechanism for interaction on industrial standards and quality control.
The meeting noted that India would be establishing a fund under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) to develop programmes and projects in the fields of tourism, administration and management, trade and investments, computers and informatics and solar energy and environmental protection. This fund was to be placed at the disposal of the ASEAN Secretariat and administered by a Joint Management Committee.

ASEAN in its part had put forward several proposals to establish such information and promotion centre for trade and investment, making a list of investment opportunities for investors from both sides and increased exchange of trade missions, trade fairs and development of joint marketing strategies for exports to third countries. India informed the meeting of changes in investment policies and improvement of investment incentives from the Indian side and proposed joint ventures between ASEAN and India which could explore the specific areas of cooperation.

The meeting was also informed of India's suggestion that each side offer six post doctoral fellowships for up to six months in the areas of science and technology and the holding of joint workshops to identify themes of common interest for joint projects in the areas of advanced areas of biotechnology and information technology. In the field of tourism, the meeting recognized the vast potential that exists for collaboration between ASEAN and India. It was agreed that the cooperation in travel, tourism
would certainly be of benefit to both sides. India expressed its desire to learn more about tourism publicity from ASEAN. The following areas of cooperation were identified:

1. Management of destination tourism.
2. Cooperation in the Hotel Industry.
3. Cooperation between the travel trade on the two sides.
4. Promoting 'India-ASEAN Year'.
5. Establishing an ASEAN-India Tourist Information Centre.\(^{19}\)

The First Meeting of the ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee was held in Bali, Indonesia on January 7-8, 1994. The meeting was attended on the ASEAN side by Dato Ajit Singh, Secretary-General of ASEAN and Director Generals of Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Deputy Director General of Thailand, Mr. Lam Peck Heng, Chairman of the ASEAN-New Delhi Committee and their respective delegation together with the representatives of the ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC). The Indian delegation was led by J.N. Dixit, Foreign Secretary, Secretary and Joint Secretaries of Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Department of Science and Technology respectively.

\(^{19}\) Joint Press Release, Meeting of ASEAN and Indian Senior Officials on the Establishment of Sectoral Dialogue Relations between ASEAN and India, March 16-17, 1993, New Delhi.
The meeting adopted the Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference of the ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (AIJSCC) thus making the formal establishment of the AIJSCC. The role of the AIJSCC is to facilitate the ASEAN-India Sectoral Dialogue Relations in the areas of trade, investment, tourism and science and technology. The meeting also adopted the Rules of Procedure and Terms of Reference of the Joint Management Committee for the ASEAN-India Fund which has to be disbursed funds for programmes and projects approved by the AIJSCC.

Members of the Private sector from both ASEAN and India attended the First AIJSCC meeting and held their own preliminary meeting. At the meeting they proposed the framework for the establishment of an ASEAN-India Business Council. In the Council, ASEAN was to be represented by the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASEAN-CCI) and India had to be represented by the India-ASEAN Economic Cooperation Committee (IAECC). The First AIJSCC meeting agreed that the AIBC representatives would participate fully in future AIJCC meetings.

This meeting discussed the possible areas of cooperation and joint collaborations between the two sides. In the areas of the Sectoral Dialogue of trade, investment, tourism and science and technology the meeting agreed that efforts should be focused on programmes and projects
with a view to substantially expanding trade between ASEAN and India. They covered the areas of trade liberalization, facilitation and promotion. The desirability of India-ASEAN Joint Ventures in a number of designated areas including infrastructure development and investment as well as areas of high technology for ASEAN-India and third country markets were underlined. It was agreed that a group of experts from ASEAN and India to be established to identify the mechanisms, modalities and areas of trade and investment cooperation between ASEAN and India taking into account aspects that were discussed. In addition to the activities to be funded by the ASEAN-India Fund, India offered training modules in designated areas of interest to ASEAN and specific projects within the framework of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. In the area of tourism it was agreed that there would be cooperation in the promotion of tourist destination, between travel trade-tour operators, travel agents, air charter operators and airlines, in the hotel industry and in the related development of human resources.

In the areas of Science and technology, joint workshops have been proposed to bring together ASEAN and Indian Scientists and technologists to identify specific topics and types of activities for collaboration particularly in the areas of advanced materials, biotechnology and information technology. Collaboration would also encompass other areas such as non-conventional energy sources, robotics, fiber optics and laser technology, engineering industry, development machinery and machine
tools, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and related products. India also invited ASEAN scientists and experts to visit research and centres for an exchange of ideas and possible collaboration in R & D. In addition, India offered ASEAN twelve scholarships in science and technology.\textsuperscript{20}

The second meeting of the ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (AIJSCC) was held in New Delhi and Goa on February 13-17, 1995. It was jointly inaugurated by the R.L. Bhatia, Minister of External Affairs and Dato' Ajit Singh, Secretary-General of ASEAN. The ASEAN delegations were led by Dato' Ajit Singh and included Director-Generals of ASEAN-Brunei Darussalam, ASEAN-Indonesia, ASEAN-Malaysia, ASEAN-Singapore and ASEAN-Thailand, the Acting Directors-General of ASEAN-Philippines and members of the ASEAN-New Delhi Committee (ANDC), the representatives of the ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC), members of the ASEAN-India Experts Group on Trade and Investment Cooperation (AIEGTC). The Indian delegation was led by K. Srinivasan, Foreign Secretary and included Special Secretary (ER), representatives of Ministries of External Affairs, Commerce, Health, Science and Technology and Tourism. The meeting reviewed the implementation of decisions of the first AIJSCC Meeting and worked out the programme of future cooperation in four agreed areas of trade, investment, science and technology and tourism.

\textsuperscript{20} Joint Press Release, The 1\textsuperscript{st} Meeting of the AIJSCC, Bali, Indonesia, January 7-8, 1994; \textit{www.aseansec.org/15729/htm}.
On trade and investment, the AIJSCC considered the recommendations of the ASEAN-India Expert Group and ASEAN-India Business Council. The meeting recognized that the policy environment was now more favourable to trade and investment expansion both in the immediate as well as the long-term. In order to positively motivate business to exploit opportunities which have been identified in the competitive sourcing of goods and services and in terms of investment opportunities, the meeting agreed to fill the information gaps and undertake promotional work. The plan of action addressed institutional mechanisms for information networking, business match-making and policy consultation. Indian and ASEAN business would be fully involved in this effort. The AIBC made the following specific proposals:

(1) The respective chambers would exchange information on companies and business in India and ASEAN. Based on this a compilation of ASEAN-India private sector data bases providing information investment policies, ongoing and potential projects and information on industry sectors would be established.

(2) The Singapore component of the AIBC would convene the first ASEAN-India Round Table Conference. This would be held in the third quarter of 1995 and would involve participation of captains of industry and Government Policy makers from both sides. The Round Table would be expected to provide a forum for
information exchange, trade and investment promotion and business match making.

(3) Periodic investment fairs would be held where approved project proposals would be presented to create investor interest in the ASEAN and Indian business communities. Greater mutual participation in Indian and ASEAN trade fairs would be promoted.

(4) A programme for cooperation in the small and medium industries to effectively provide linkages between identified national and regional focal points was agreed.

(5) The Indian partners of the AIBC accepted the invitation of the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry to attend its meeting to be held in Manila in March 1995. The AIBC would also hold its Executive Committee meeting at the same time.

The meeting considered the report of the first meeting of ASEAN-India collaboration in science and technology, held in New Delhi on February 6-10, 1995, noted that it had helped in forging closer understanding and exchange of the knowledge base between ASEAN and Indian scientists. Specific areas and modalities of cooperation including exchange of scientists, techno-market surveys, workshops and development of project in the three leading edge technology areas, namely
advanced materials, biotechnology and information technology were identified. The meeting agreed on finding appropriate financial arrangements to support these activities.

The meeting discussed the possibilities of tourism promotion and investment on the basis of an action plan and specific proposals presented by India and ASEAN. The meeting agreed to the implementation of a reciprocal familiarization programme for travel agents and tour operators for promoting Indo-ASEAN tourism, joint marketing in third countries and tourism related investment in India. In addition, the ASEAN Tourism Association (ASEANTA) would assist in organizing a workshop with full involvement of the private sector to work out a programme of cooperation in the above areas. On the policy aspects there was a discussion on civil aviation and visa policies and their implications for tourism promotion. On civil aviation policy, the Indian side made a detailed presentation including a flexible approach. The meeting recognized the importance of favourable visa policies for achieving necessary growth in Indo-ASEAN tourism. A contribution of approximately US $ 190,000 was also announced by India to the ASEAN-India Fund to support activities in the agreed areas of Sectoral Dialogue Partnership. The meeting discussed the establishment of bank branches in ASEAN and India and expressed the hope that the both sides would further encourage this development in the interest of promoting trade and investment expansion.
The meeting recognized the need for increased air traffic between ASEAN and India to promote greater flow of goods and services. The meeting decided that the third meeting of the AIJSCC will be held in Indonesia in 1996.21

Full Dialogue Partnership

After three years of hectic diplomatic parleys and business meetings, India and ASEAN got satisfied with the results they achieved in the process. At this stage ASEAN agreed to promote the relations between India and ASEAN from Sectoral Dialogue Partnership to that of a Full Dialogue Partnership. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers who met in Bandar Seri Begawan in July-August 1995 recommended an enhancement of India’s status in the ASEAN Process.22

For India, getting Full Dialogue Partnership in 1995 was one of its spectacular diplomatic victory which was elusive in the recent past as was explained earlier. Kripa Sridharan explained what was all about Full Dialogue Partnership of India in ASEAN. She said:

Full dialogue status must please India as it would expand the scope of its interaction and make its relationship with ASEAN a multi dimensional one. As is evident, dialogue status by itself will not automatically result in increased trade and investments overnight but its value would

primarily lie in the green signal it provides to the private sectors to undertake bold initiatives. An endorsement at the multilateral level of the kind provided by the formal dialogue partnership is a prerequisite for meaningful commercial proposal originating from the region.23

The Dialogue Partnership with ASEAN had enabled India to significantly deepen its relationship not only with member countries but also its Dialogue Partners. ASEAN's other Full Dialogue Partners in 1995 were Australia, Canada, China, European Union, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA. The Dialogue process was meant to complement and augment India's bilateral relations with its Southeast Asian neighbours.

The mechanism for the ASEAN-India Dialogue have hitherto consisted of:

- The ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences (PMC), in the form of the ASEAN + 10 (meeting of ASEAN with 10 dialogue partners together) and ASEAN + 1 interactions (individual meeting of ASEAN with each dialogue partner);
- ASEAN-India senior official's meeting;
- ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC); and

The ASEAN-India working group.\textsuperscript{24}

As full Dialogue Partner since 1996, India has been participating at the ministerial level in the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC), held in July every year after the main ASEAN ministerial meeting.\textsuperscript{25}

ASEAN-India relations gradually to become more institutionalized and more effective, both sides agreed to establish mechanisms to coordinate and facilitate the works, specifically at the professional and technical level. In this context, ASEAN and India agreed to set up the following working groups:

1. ASEAN-India Working Group on Development cooperation;
2. ASEAN-India Working Group on Science and Technology;
3. ASEAN-India Working Group on Trade and Investment;
4. ASEAN-India Business Council.

These working groups are operational at the technical level, and they have contributed to the improvement of ASEAN-India ties in various sectors. The working groups were expected to identify more specific areas

\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Ibid.}
for joint projects and programmes of activities so that they are more result-oriented.\textsuperscript{26}

With the elevation of India to Full Dialogue Partner status, the ASEAN-India Joint Sectoral Cooperation Committee (AIJSCC) was abolished. But other mechanisms created under the Sectoral Dialogue, namely the ASEAN-New Delhi Committee, the ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC), and the Joint Management Committee of the ASEAN-India Fund, as well as the work programme and other ongoing activities of the AIJSCC, have been subsumed under the New Dialogue Process. Singapore was appointed the country coordinator of ASEAN's Dialogue with India until 1999.\textsuperscript{27}

ASEAN Fifth Summit in Bangkok in December 1995 upgraded India to the level of a Full Dialogue Partner motivated in no small measure by the enormous potential that closer co-operation would field to the two sides.\textsuperscript{28} Describing the ASEAN decision as a farsighted one, India's Foreign Minister summed up his country's expectations in the following terms:

\begin{quote}
Our Full Dialogue Partnership [FDP] is a beginning and a means, not an end in itself. It can only be as meaningful as
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{27} India-ASEAN Relations, n.22.

\textsuperscript{28} Prafulla Ketkar, n.18.
we consciously strive to make it. Constant alignment and reconciliation between intent and activity between impulse and reality and between ignition and follow through will have to be endeavored at all times. The FDP is an expression of political will which different actors, in their respective fields, on either side will have to make use of and give substance to. It is a diplomatic device lending urgency to the tasks of ASEAN-India economic cooperation and politico-strategic concentration.29

Pursuant to the decision on ASEAN-India Full Dialogue Partnership, an ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee [JCC] was established. The JCC is a key institutional mechanism for providing substantive content and implementing programs of cooperation. Although comprehensive, the JCC focused on actualizing ASEAN-India cooperation in trade & investment, science & technology, tourism, infrastructure, human resource development and people-to-people interaction.30

On becoming the Full Dialogue Partner India attended the first Post Ministerial Conference [PMC] in Jakarta in July 1996 which is an annual meeting at the level of foreign ministers, where each Dialogue Partner interacts individually with the other entire ASEAN Dialogue Partner. The then India's External Affairs Minister I.K. Gujral, summing up the importance of ASEAN's decision to admit India as Full Dialogue

Partner lauded it “as a step forward and as a move from derivative to a direct relationship, so that there are no distortions, no misperceptions, no ignorance and no intermediation which would necessitate carefully modulating our ASEAN engagement at the bilateral as well as multilateral levels and deepen an understanding and interaction with individual countries as well as ASEAN institutions and mechanisms”.31 Following the first PMC, an India-AESAN framework of cooperation, termed as vistas of cooperation was designed with the following agenda:

➢ Addition of Human Resources and Infrastructure as two new areas for co-operation to the existing four areas; trade, investment, science & technology and tourism.

➢ Targeting a trade turnover of at least US $ 15 billion by 2001.

➢ Involving ASEAN as a major investor, in particular, in the infrastructure development.

➢ Activation and support to the ASEAN-India Business Council in launching aggressive programmes and other promotional activities “to brand image of India in ASEAN and ASEAN in India.”

➢ India-ASEAN Cooperation in commercializing technologies in three identified areas; advanced materials; bio-technology; and information technology.

31. Ibid.
Setting up two working groups on trade & investment and, science & technology.

Linking up India and ASEAN into circuits and their marketing and ASEAN to invest in tourist infrastructure in India.

Reactivation of cultural agreements and establishment of durable institution like India centers in AESAN countries and ASEAN centers in India and organization of Festivals of India and AESAN during the next four years.

Bridging the hiatus in India-AESAN academic and intellectual contact through institutional level links, exchange of faculty and students, establishment of chairs in Universities etc.

Launching of AESAN-India lecture series, and setting up an Eminent Persons Group [EPG].

Increasing contacts between mutual print and audio-visual media.

The first Meeting of this JCC was held in New Delhi on November 14-16, 1996. The Meeting was attended on the AESAN side by delegations from ASEAN-Brunei Darussalam, ASEAN-Indonesia, ASEAN-Malaysia, ASEAN- Singapore, ASEAN Heads of Missions in New Delhi.

The JCC mechanism recaptured the traditional depth and closeness of ASEAN-India relations in a contemporary context just as the ASEAN
India dimension has assumed special significance in India Asian global foreign policy perspectives. The economic content gained prominence. The JCC was responsibility for sustaining economic cooperation and taking a comprehensive view, including in the realm of culture, academics, education, media and popular contact it could provide additional and coordinated overview of multiple Dialogue processes for the long-term objective of fostering AFTA-India linkage as outlined in the Ministers statement during the Jakarta PMC. Briefly, the JCC could act as an agent of change and substantial transformation in ASEAN-India relations synthesizing the natural ingredients of cooperation in a mutually rewarding manner.

ASEAN and India have established the necessary mechanisms which laid the foundation with more specific content and focus in the dialogue process ASEAN and India further harnessed this synergy in the relationship to strengthen economic linkages. The establishment of working groups on trade and investment and science technology underscored the exchange of human resources through tourism cooperation. In the field of infrastructure, India sought ASEAN’s cooperation in mining, transportation and communications.

In February 1998, ASEAN and India started the political dialogues and consultations at the senior official’s level to maintain growing political

32. Ibid.
consultations at the Senior Officials level to discuss political, economic and security issues at the time the political consultations between ASEAN and India have been very important in the light of the challenges facing in the two regions and also at the international level.33

Establishment of ARF

Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF) is a high level consultative organ of ASEAN representing countries across the continents of Asia, Europe, Australia and America. ARF is expected to promote confidence building and preventive diplomacy in Asia-Pacific, a region beset with multiple security problems such as nuclear proliferation, border disputes between and among nations and maritime disputes causing worry and at times reaching flash point. Against this background, the ARF created an opportunity for a Dialogue among its member countries to promote cooperation, peace and stability in Asia Pacific.

The Singapore Declaration of 1992, proclaimed at the Fourth ASEAN Summit, envisaged intensifying an interaction between the ASEAN member countries and the Dialogue Partners in political and security matters as a means of building cooperative ties with the states in the Asia Pacific region.34 Accordingly, on July 25, 1994, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) came into being and held its first meeting in Bangkok,

chaired by the Foreign Minister of Thailand, Chuan Leekpai.35 The first ARF meeting endorsed ASEAN’s Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, a Code of Conduct to be adhered to by all the members of the ARF in their political and security cooperation.36 In its inception the new forum was built around the core six ASEAN states, seven dialogue partners including Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the USA and the consultative partners, namely, China and Russia, while Laos, Papua New Guinea and Vietnam, the ASEAN observers, also were participants.37

The second ARF meeting was held on August 1, 1995, in Bandar Seri Begawan, chaired by the Foreign Minister of Brunei Darussalam.38 It was an important meeting for more than one reason. This meeting announced ARF’s goals such as that the ARF participants shall continue to work closely to preserve peace, stability and economic development. It also explained the participatory mechanism of ARF and its organization. The participants of ARF comprised ASEAN member states, observers and the Dialogue Partners of ASEAN. Any new application should be submitted to the Chairman of the ARF, who would then consult the ARF participants. Following the ASEAN Foreign Ministerial meetings, the ARF

36. GVC. Naidu, n.1, p. 53.
meetings were scheduled to be held as post Ministerial Conference, by way of continuing the intense ARF activities without break.

The second ARF meeting assumed greater importance as it unveiled a Concept Paper which highlighted the existing position in Asia-Pacific region and the challenges thrown before the ARF. The Concept Paper explained that the Asia-Pacific enjoyed peace and prosperity which should be enhanced as the region experienced some disastrous wars earlier. It avowed that in order to preserve peace and prosperity, the ARF should analyze the key challenges facing the region. The Concept Paper revealed that, to sustain peace and economic growth in the region, the ARF should follow an evolutionary approach of three stages which would help the region to develop further. The three stages being:

1. Promotion of Confidence Building Measures;

2. Development of Preventive Diplomacy Mechanisms and


It also explained by way of conclusion that the ARF participants have to work hard and be highly sensitive to ensure the perpetuation of ARF process. Finally, ARF was projected as an organization which needs

39. Ibid.
innovation and ingenuity to keep the ARF moving forward in the matters of politics and security, in Asia Pacific.\textsuperscript{40}

**India and ARF**

India gained membership in ARF by virtue of it being the Dialogue Partner of ASEAN. India was welcomed to join ARF Ministerial Meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia on July 23, 1996.\textsuperscript{41} India became the seventh dialogue partner and the twentieth member, eligible to participate for the first time in ARF.\textsuperscript{42} India became conscious of its commitment to help achieve the ARF's key goals and to abide by the decisions and statements already made by the ARF. The then Minister of External Affairs, IK Gujral led the Indian delegation to Jakarta. India also participated for the first time at the fourth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the ARF, held in Langkawi (Malaysia) on May 19-20, 1997. Since then, India has been regularly participating in the ARF meetings.

The ARF meetings are generally held in between the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and the PMC. These have focused on activities related to confidence Building Measures, Disaster Relief, Maritime Cooperation and Training for peace keeping operations. India found in ARF, an experiment for the fashioning for a new pluralistic, cooperative security

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    \item 40. *Ibid*, pp. 13-16.
    \item 41. *Ibid*, p. 468.
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order in tune with the diversity of the Asia-Pacific region and in consonance with the shift away from a world characterized by poles built around military alliances. India's participation in the ARF demonstrates in that sense, New Delhi's increasing engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, both in the politico-security and economic spheres, underlining thus the objective of sustaining regional peace and stability. In fact, India's role in ARF has been well appreciated by ASEAN.

To understand the security dialogue between India and Southeast Asia it should be recollected that during the Cold War the ASEAN was worried and got irritated on India's connection with Soviet Union and its support to Vietnam. Once the Cold War came to an end, it became necessary for India to dispel fears about its military expansion in an otherwise traditionally non-hostile ASEAN region. Southeast Asia itself witnessed a sea change in the political atmosphere in the region. The Cambodian issue was no longer contentious and Vietnam was perceived as an ally rather than an enemy by ASEAN. India as a military power in the emerging Asian balance of power could no longer be ignored. Contrary to the previous perception, the Southeast Asian nations began to look upon India as a power that could play a kind of "balancing role".43

On the other hand, it was in India's interest to ensure that Southeast Asia would not be dominated especially by China once it became

obvious that the superpowers were no longer interested to continue in the region. Critical remarks with regard to the ambitions of the Indian Navy by Southeast Asia leaders were changed and urged for greater defence cooperation between India and Southeast Asia. A number of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) that India undertook and greater appreciation of Indian defence strength which created a new era of cooperation and began to transcend beyond the naval.44 Perhaps, the most important was the joint naval exercises India started holding periodically with Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore near the Andamans.45 The Indian Naval chief claimed that the ship visits and communication exercises should dispel the apprehensions about any Indian ulterior motives in Southeast Asia. Equally significant were the defence ties that were being forged between India and many Southeast Asian countries. It was reported that during the visit by Malaysian Defence Minister Najib Tun Abdul Razak in March 1992, a wide range of defence ties was discussed. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad “indicated in an interview that the level of cooperation between Malaysia and India would be upgraded with the Malaysian decision to buy the Russian MiG-29 fighter aircraft.” He explained that India could extend service and training facilities and supply spare parts.46

44. FEER, April 12, 1990, p.21, see also Economist (London), May 12, 1990, p.32.
45. The Straits Times, August 17, 1994.
India and Malaysia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on defence cooperation in February 1993 to embark on 'Joint Venture, Joint Development, Joint Research, Procurements, Logistical and maintenance support in defence related matters', though primarily meant to train Malaysian air force personnel, was fairly broad-ranging to include joint development of certain defence systems of common interest. India expanded facilities at MiG-29 assembly factory to meet the Malaysian demand and at least 100 pilots and ground-supporting staff were trained as part of this MoU, although not much progress could take place with regard to joint development. Malaysia was keen to train its marine commando forces and service its naval boats in India and had regular exchanges between the navies. Similarly, Kuala Lumpur also expressed interest in the procurement Indian HAL-built Dornier 228 Maritime Patrol Craft and HAL-built Chetak helicopters for search and rescue and Cheeta light utility helicopters.48

India's cooperation with Singapore that began in 1993 was probably the deepest. A Singapore proposal for an agreement for the training of its naval officers and other areas of defence cooperation, which had been pending since 1994, was reportedly cleared by the Indian defence minister.


in late 1998. Singapore's main interest seems to train its naval personnel in the Indian naval establishment.

Singapore is the only country that had the rare distinction of gaining access to the training facilities at Cochin's Southern Naval Command, in addition to other training facilities. More significant were the anti-submarine warfare exercises India and Singapore had started to hold since 1996 at India's Eastern Command. Apart from joint naval exercises between the two navies, Singapore got the facility from India's missile testing range at Chandipur to test out its guns. Singapore earlier used to get the training of its air force crew from the American bases in the Philippines. Singapore had already been using Australia for crew training but the Indian option is also being pursued. India has also imported a few patrol boats from Singapore. A number of bilateral defence cooperation activities were also formalized by signing a defence cooperation agreement.

Thailand expressed interest in holding joint naval exercises with the Indian Navy. After acquiring the aircraft carrier, Thailand too has turned to India for training its naval personnel as the Indian Navy is the only Asian navy that has a long experience of operating carriers. Thai pilots have been trained to operate Sea Harriers in India. Though strictly not in

the realm of defence, Thailand has been keen on developing nuclear energy and had in fact broached the idea during the Indian Prime Minister's visit in April 1993 for the supply of a nuclear research reactor.\textsuperscript{52}

India signed a defence cooperation agreement with Vietnam in 1994 in an attempt to upgrade the strategic dialogue and understanding between the two countries. Although Vietnam had downsizing its military quantitatively, its equipment was almost entirely supplied by the former Soviet Union, which urgently needed up gradation or replacement. Vietnam had acquired a squadron of SU-27 Flankers from Russia, but upgradation of large number of MiG-21 fighters had been on the cards. India helped Vietnam in this regard.\textsuperscript{53}

For the first time the navies of India and Indonesia had begun to undertake joint patrolling in the Malacca Straits primarily aimed at curbing piracy. As a part of the defence cooperation agreement, India was involved in training the Laotian army. Even the Philippines has expressed interest to cooperate with India in the field of defence. Both Defence Minister and the Under Secretary of Defence of the Philippines visited the Indian naval ships, two destroyers and a missile corvette, during a port call at Manila. Quoting observers conversant with the Filipino naval needs, a newspaper report commented that "India had already figured in the calculations of the Philippines as a possible source for the procurement

\textsuperscript{52}  \textit{IDSA News Review on Southeast Asia}, Vol.26(4), April 1993, p.80.
\textsuperscript{53}  GVC. Naidu, n.48, p.144.
of naval vessels... there is a possibility of the Philippines now looking at India, among others, for the purchase of patrol boats and missile corvettes".54

A noted Indian naval diplomacy was the annual congregation of Bay of Bengal navies of India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, near the Andamans, which was called as Milan. It was a unique initiative that India had started in early 1995 involving so many navies of the neighbouring countries.55 Apart from naval exercises, this event included coordination of search and rescue operations at sea and establishment of interoperability with other navies. This is followed by seminars at Port Blair on marine environmental protection and pollution control, disaster relief operations and protection of exclusive economic zones.

Within two years of joining ARF, India conducted five nuclear tests at Pokhran, on May 11-13, 1998, describing them as "Peaceful nuclear tests." The initial reaction of ARF members to these nuclear tests was one of a very strong objection.56 At the Fifth ARF meeting held on July 27 in Manila, members expressed grave concern about these nuclear tests by India which were closely followed by Pakistan's tests. However, within a

55. GVC Naidu, n.48, p.146.
short time, matters moved to a better situation as some of the ASEAN members such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand soft peddled the issue and got reconciled to the Indian point of view of the nuclear tests. The ARF Inter-Sectional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures held in Honolulu from November 4 to 6, 1998 and in Bangkok from March 3 to 5, 1999, welcomed the positive developments between India and Pakistan. Some ASEAN countries desired India to be nuclear power as a counterpoise to China’s growing military strength. The unresolved South China Sea islands disputes between China and with some of the Southeast Asian countries was also a valid reason for these countries to begin viewing India as a dependable ally. Since India is a major power in the region with out political and territorial disputes with any of the Southeast Asian country, is natural that these countries look for getting the ASEAN threat perception neutralized.

The ARF held its sixth session at Singapore on July 26, 1999. The high level delegation from India was led by External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh. India sought to project an image of a mature nuclear power which knew how to handle a grave provocation like the Kargil crisis with utmost restraint. 57

It may be noted here that the only political / strategic irritant that could be said to have arisen between India and the ASEAN after the

launching of the Look East Policy was India going nuclear in 1998. Except for Vietnam, all other ASEAN countries disapproved of India's nuclear tests. But, significantly, as an organization, the ASEAN reaction was relatively soft. In fact, soon after the nuclear tests in May 1998, India participated in what was the thirtieth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Manila on July 24-25, 1998. Despite sustained behind-the-scene pressure from Japan, Australia, China and Canada, the closing statement of the then Chairman of the ASEAN standing committee, the Foreign Minister of the Philippines, Domingo Siazon, contained only a mild reference to India's nuclear tests. And when the Foreign Minister of Singapore took over charge as the new Chairman of the standing committee, he in his closing address on July 26, 1998, avoided any mention of the nuclear tests at all.

At the fifth ASEAN Regional Forum meeting held on July 27, 1998, that followed immediately the ministerial meeting, similar attempts to condemn India were also foiled. The original word “Condemned” (of the nuclear tests) was watered down to “deplored”. This was, incidentally, the first time India was present at an international forum after the test. It was apparent that the majority of the ASEAN countries had bought India's consistent assurance to them all these years that Southeast Asia


had no strategic reason to fear India, which had no real territorial dispute with any one of the countries in the region and that the end of bipolarism had completely altered the regional strategic equation. India could be a reliable strategic and economic partner of the ASEAN countries, and furthermore, that India's going nuclear did not mean the abandonment of New Delhi's goal of genuine but complete nuclear disarmament. In fact, these themes were reiterated even later by premier Vajpayee when he toured Southeast Asia frequently. For instance, on May 16, 2001 while addressing the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations in Kuala Lumpur, Vajpayee said: "The Security of India's and that of ASEAN are closely interlinked. We believe that a multi-polar world order would provide the best guarantee of equal security for all states. We respect the status of Southeast Asia as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone ...".60

At the seventh ARF meeting held in Bangkok on July 27, 2000,61 the chairman, Thailand foreign minister Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, in his statement said that the participating ministers in the ARF meeting expressed their concern over the situation in South Asia and hoped for positive developments in the region.62 This attitude was viewed as a major shift from the earlier tough stand of the ARF members against India.

61. [www.aseansec.org/font.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/font.htm).
When the eight ARF meeting was held in Hanoi on July 25, 2001, India participated in the conference without the baggage of nuclear tests. The 9/11 incident in the United States vastly transformed the Indian position in the ARF. The security concerns of India found a natural solution as India became a global partner against terrorism, a country that lonely suffered from terrorist activities in different forms. India was reckoned a strategic partner of no less a power than the United States to direct Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism.

K.C. Pant, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, participated in the ASEAN-Post Minisitral Conference, held in Hanoi July 26-28, 2001. The main issues for discussion at the meeting were the global economic slow down and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), launched by ASEAN to bridge the intra-ASEAN developmental gap and to promote the integration of new members into ASEAN, namely, Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV). India expressed its commitment to the IAI and offered to extend its cooperation in respect of programmes connected with the CLMV. At the 10+1 meeting, ASEAN appreciated India’s commitment to ASEAN and India’s keenness to promote linkages with ASEAN in diverse fields. ASEAN also appreciated India’s focus on

64. Hor Nombongn. n.28, p.143.
the IAI, especially in relation to projects in IT, HRD and S & T for the CLMV countries.

In his statement, K.C. Pant outlined the areas of cooperation in the projects covering biotechnology, teaching of english, computer literacy, advanced materials, technology competitiveness, space imagery for forecasting and control, health and pharmaceuticals, commercialization of indigenously developed technologies, etc. He also proposed a joint meeting of the Trade Ministers of ASEAN countries and India for the promotion of trade and investment linkages. India's offer for cooperation in such a broad range of activities was highly appreciated by ASEAN as projects mentioned were specific and relevant.65

ASEAN Plus One

After securing dialogue partnership India felt that as a logical consequence, it should join the inter-regional groupings with which ASEAN was associated, namely Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation [APEC], Asia Europe Meeting [ASEM] and the ASEAN+3 [ASEAN+ China, Japan and Republic of Korea]. Presenting India's case in forthright manner the Foreign Minister I.K. Gujral observed in ASEAN's Post –

Ministerial Conference on July 24, 1996: "We look to the dialogue partnership as a window to our progressive participation on other ASEAN related for a such as the APEC and Asia Europe Meeting as we are an inalienable part of Asia–Pacific economic and strategic zone".66

India had valid reason as at has the large ethnic Indian minorities in some of the Southeast Asian countries and also being one of the ten fastest growing economies in the world. India emerged as a potential trading partner for Several Southeast Asian countries. According to the Annual Report of the Ministry of External Affairs the total bilateral trade between India ASEAN registered three-fold rise from US$ 2.5 billion in 1993-94 to US$ 7.1 billion in 1995-2000.67

As part of its Look East Policy India had been seeking a Summit level engagement with ASEAN i.e. interaction at the highest level. At the seventh ASEAN Summit, held on November 5-6, 2001, in Brunei Darussalam, the organization took a decision to upgrade its relations with India to Summit level. The decision was in recognition of the sincere and sustained efforts by India to expand and deepen cooperation with ASEAN,

as well as with the individual member countries bilaterally, in diverse fields. India pointed that its experience in having an annual Dialogue with European Union at the Summit level had been very fruitful and the same could be repeated with the ASEAN. India considered it in the mutual interest of both ASEAN and India to have an annual Summit. It also argued that if India and the ASEAN could intensify their interaction and synchronise their actions in world fora, they could together form a formidable force working for global peace and security, equitable economic development, and social justice.

In fact, India was trying for a Summit-level relationship with ASEAN since 1999. It may be noted that in the Manila Informal Summit of ASEAN in November 1999, it was agreed that the leaders of ASEAN, China, Japan and South Korea would meet regularly (every year) and this group was named as ASEAN+3. In its efforts to strengthen its Look East Policy, India also made an attempt to join this grouping. Jaswant Singh, the then External Affairs Minister visited Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand for lobbying towards this effect. The then president K.R. Narayanan was in Singapore, India's most consistent supporter in the ASEAN, on an official visit in November 2000 just at a time when a Summit meeting of ASEAN+3 was being held in that country and India's request was discussed during the Summit. China, however, attempted to
thwart to include India into this group describing the group has already "too crowded".68 Finally, ASEAN + India Summit proposal was supported by a majority of the ASEAN states at the ASEAN Summit held in Singapore in November 2000. Singapore, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia supported India strongly. Whereas Malaysia overtly opposed the proposal.69 In spite of India's efforts to win over Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur continued to hold negative opinion in this regard. During Vajpayee's visit to Malaysia in May 2001, Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said that the ASEAN's engagement with India as a Dialogue Partner need not enjoy further elevation.70 In order to neutralize Malaysia's opposition, India launched a diplomatic offensive and convinced other members of ASEAN. During president Narayanan's visit to Singapore premier Goh assured that he would lobby for India.71 Vajpayee secured the support of Indonesia and Vietnam during his visit to those two countries in January 2001. The open support from the chairman of the seventh ASEAN Summit Sultan of Brunei, Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, was a real boon to India. Addressing the Summit meeting on November 5, 2001 Bolkiah said that at a time when ASEAN was at the crossroads, an ASEAN-India Summit

69. A. Lakshmana Chetty, n.67.
71. A. Lakshmana Chetty, n.67, p.71
would certainly add some sheen to the organization. For want of an alternative, Mahathir couldn’t but accept the proposal of a separate ASEAN-India Summit meeting called ASEAN+1 while ASEAN+3 was allowed to retain its ‘East Asian’ identity.72

India ASEAN relations reached to its prominence when the first ASEAN-India Summit took place in Phnom Penh on 5 November 2002. India as a new partner in the orbit of ASEAN’s economic, political and strategic process was a product of a decade long process of constant Dialogue and multilateral agreements. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee represented India and had the distinction of being the first leader not only from India, but also from the entire South Asia to address an ASEAN Summit. “The first India-ASEAN Summit,” Vajpayee said, “marked a watershed in our efforts at close integration with our eastern neighborhood. It is a logical corollary of our Look-East Policy that we should reinforce our strong bilateral relations with the countries of Southeast Asia with an institutional relationship with its regional association”. In this context some significant portions, from the joint statement of the first ASEAN-India Summit, titled, ASEAN-India

cooperation was released on November, 5, 2002. The joint statement highlighted the major areas of the cooperation in the Agenda, as mentioned below:

- Promoting Regional Peace and Stability; enhancing cooperation in Combating terrorism, including non-traditional security threats; deepening of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs); India’s willingness to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and the implementation of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ).

- Fostering close Economic and Development Cooperation; preparation of a draft framework agreement to enhance ASEAN-India economic cooperation; strengthening cooperation in science and technology; support to Initiative on ASEAN Integration (IAI); support to programme of Action for the Mekong-Ganga-Basin Development Cooperation (AMGBDC) and the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) programmes; preferential tariff treatment to Mekong countries.

- New Directions of ASEAN-India Relations: holding ASEAN-India Summit annually; promoting people to people interaction not only

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73. Prakash Nanda, n.24, pp. 470-471.
through Dialogue at the level of policy makers but also through exchange programmes of youth, media, personnel, academics, business people government officials and artists. 74

With the achievement of Summit status India sought to integrate with ASEAN in the economic, political and security matters. The ASEAN also felt assured of India's support in case of any threat to its security. Economically both India and ASEAN initiated measures for a lasting growth and prosperity of the two regions. Comprehensive economic initiatives taken by both sides are discussed in the next Chapter.


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