CHAPTER III

AUSTRALIA AND THE ASEAN:
POLITICAL INTERACTION
While considering the significance for Australia's relations with the ASEAN, besides the economic changes, there is a need to recognise regional issues also. The political co-operation on international issues is important for stability in the region.

Geographical location of Australia and economic importance of the ASEAN required a productive relationship between the two. Australia has considered Southeast Asia important in formulation of its foreign policy because of a number of reasons. Most pressing reason has been the strategic importance of area to Australia.¹ During the Cold War period Australia looked at Southeast Asian countries either as non-aligned, or pro-communist, or anti-communist. As the Cold War came to an end, political and economic issues got a precedence over the strategic issues in the region. Australia had hoped for a stable, prosperous, non-communist neighbourhood. Australia looked to profitable trade relations among the two. Since 1960s Southeast Asia started having an important position in the Australian Foreign policy. Australia was willing to accept heavier leadership responsibility in the region.²

Any comparison of Australia's international relations in 1960s with that of the 1970s and afterwards, underline the fact that the ASEAN countries

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occupied a prominent place in Australia’s world view, Australia recognised that its future lied in the development of the Southeast-Asian region. Support for the ASEAN in political matters became a central feature in Australian foreign policy. Since 1967, Australia and the ASEAN countries, have been affected by the same major events.  

The ASEAN’s formation in 1967 was welcomed and encouraged by Australia. It was advocated by the then Australian Minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck. In August 1967, his statement on international affairs suggested that the ASEAN should be welcomed and given every encouragement. Since 1967, Australia and the ASEAN consult and co-operate closely and routinely on a wide range of multilateral issues.

In 1967-68 suggestions were made in Australia that it should seek the membership of the ASEAN or that the ASEAN and Asia Pacific Council (ASPAC) should be merged into a greater regional bloc. It was in Australia’s interest to proclaim its identity as part of the region, or staking claim to a voice in its councils. This idea, however, was not supported by Indonesia. For

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3 Report, for the Australian Information Service, Department of Administrative Services, Canberra, 1981, p.4.


this reason Prime Minister of Australia, John Gorton's idea of an Australian-Indonesian non-aggression pact in June 1968 came to nought.

During 1967 Australia wanted the British forces to remain in the region for stability and security of the Southeast-Asian region. Retention of the Australian and British troops was also supported by the governments of Malaysia and Singapore.\(^7\) Australia's perception was that the threats to the stability of Southeast Asia could effect Australia's security directly. As a result Australia's regional defence agreement included two ASEAN nations, Singapore and Malaysia. The members of this Five Power Defence Arrangement are Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. It came into existence in 1971. The British announcement on 18 July 1967 of the total withdrawal of its forces from Malaysia and Singapore by mid-1970s would have created a void. Lord Carrington, the British Defence Secretary, in Canberra, said, "We believe, that we must stay in South-East Asia not in any dominant way but as an equal partner with other countries who are concerned in the defence of this area."\(^8\)

When the ASEAN Foreign Ministers met in Kuala Lumpur on 27 November 1971, the concept of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality,

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ZOPFAN was agreed upon. It was proposed by Malaysia.\textsuperscript{9} This was to remove the necessity of a pact like FPDA for security. The Australian Government did not regard this proposal as immediately practicable.\textsuperscript{10}

Until 1972 the ASEAN did not appear as an important region in the Australian Foreign Policy. With the election of the Labor Government in December 1972 the ASEAN stood at a visible platform. Australia moved to establish formal links with the ASEAN in 1973. Preliminary meetings were held between the representatives of the two. Australia was the first non member country to establish relationship with the Association in 1974. The Australian political leaders have frequently commented on the significance of the ASEAN to Australia. As in the 1970, the Prime Minister of Australia on a visit to the Philippines said, "Australia is very conscious of the importance of ASEAN as a force for moderation of region....

Let me emphasize, ... that Australia's interest and involvement in South-East Asia is strong and growing, and that it is a central and enduring policy objective of the Australian Government to strengthen contacts and relationships with ASEAN in all fields of common interest. The acronym ASEAN has a


second meaning for us. It stands not only for the Association of South-East Asian Nations, but also for Australia's South-East Asian Neighbours."¹¹

Regular ministerial exchanges and series of officials talks on bilateral basis with individual countries and also with the ASEAN as a group have been established.

Ambassador Moh. Yusuf Hitam, Director-General of the Malaysian ASEAN National Secretariat said on 18 January 1984 during the opening of the eighth ASEAN-Australia Forum, "Indeed, if I may say so, the general well being and the future of our peoples are deeply inter-related. We, therefore, cannot ignore the imperatives of common approaches on the vital aspects of our interests."¹²

Increasing personal contacts were established as a result of the regular visits by the Australian Prime Ministers to the ASEAN countries. Sensitive issues could be resolved in a friendly atmosphere. Indonesian President Suharto's announcement during his visit to Australia in 1972 of an institution of annual consultations between Jakarta and Canberra was an important start.¹³

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1970s onward Australia broadened the range of its international contacts. The concern about the well being of neighbouring countries became a central feature of the Australian foreign policy. The Prime Minister of Australia E.G. Whitlam, in his address at the State Dinner in Kuala Lumpur on 29 January 1974 stated, "What has changed our attitude to South-East Asia is not the degree of our interest or our involvement, but the nature of that interest and that involvement. We seek to turn away from the destructive confrontations of the past to constructive co-operation in the future."\textsuperscript{14}

ASEAN-Australia Economic Co-operation Program (AAECP) was established in 1974. It was the first step to form a direct link between Australia and the ASEAN. The Annual ASEAN-Australia Forum is meeting of the senior officials for consultations. The ASEAN-Australia Consultative Meetings (AACM), was established in 1978. Between the Forum meetings it brings the Australian officials from 12 Departments into regular Consultation with the Heads of the ASEAN diplomatic missions in Canberra.\textsuperscript{15}

In mid-1970s, major issues of the Australian and the ASEAN concerns were the problem of East Timor and fall of non-communist regimes in Indo-China. The Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser of the Liberal Party

\textsuperscript{14} "Australia and South-East Asia", \textit{Principal Speeches of the Prime Minister During his Visit to South East Asia, 28 January to 13 February 1974}, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 1974, p.12.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{AFAR}, vol.52, no.4, April 1981, p.183.
visited Kuala Lumpur to attend the funeral of the Malaysian Prime Minister, Tun Razak. There, on 18 January 1976, he said, "...I think it is possible for ways to be found for Australia to identify and develop the common interests we have with the ASEAN countries, and then work together with them to help achieve (them)." 16

By the mid-1970s members of the ASEAN countries faced disturbances. It culminated in the holding of first Conference of the ASEAN Heads of Government in Bali in February 1976. This Summit declared a Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and a Declaration of Accord.

The preparatory meeting of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers at Pattaya decided not to invite Australia in the Bali Summit as observer along with Japan. 17 Refusal to invite Australia was because of several reasons. The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik was deadly against it. 18 In an interview with Indonesian magazine he said that Fraser has only tried to show, that his administration is better received in the ASEAN than his predecessor, E.G. Whitlam. 19 The Indonesian attitude was conditioned by the Australian reaction to the conflict in East Timor.

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17 The Sydney Morning Herald, 12 February 1976.
18 ibid, 7 February 1976.
19 The Tempo, 7 February 1976.
The ASEAN members emphasised on decisions taken by general consensus rather than by majority votes. The question of whether Australia would be invited to Bali Summit or not was such an issue. Indonesia is accepted by the other ASEAN members as single most influential member of the Association. Without the Indonesian support Australia could not have moved forward in its relations with the Association. Perhaps the reason of the ASEAN’s disinterestedness was political and strategic. A Formal meeting with the Australian representative would have been an indirect support to anti-Soviet and anti-Vietnamese attitude of Australia.  

3.1 Australia and Indonesia

Australia’s relations with Indonesia have always been given high priority. Relations with rest of the ASEAN countries depend upon Australia’s relations with Indonesia. Australian Prime Minister, E.G. Whitlam in his speech at the Australian Institute of Political Science Weekend Conference in January 1973 said, "The importance of Indonesia to Australia is indisputable. We need, however, to see the development of our relationship with Indonesia within the wider Southeast Asian regional context.... We see our relations with Indonesia

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as complementary to and not in any way competitive with our relationships with other ASEAN countries."\(^{21}\)

Relationship between these two could not reach any substantial level though Australia had supported Indonesian independence. Criticisms were at non-governmental level. Indonesia was criticised for its expansionism. East Timor issue and Irian Jaya-Papua New Guinea problem strained the relationship.

Australian media too brought out several critics of the Indonesian policies in West Irian and attempts of the Indonesian Government to silence the local media. News of the Indonesian treatment of the Irianese undermined Indonesian image in Australia. In 1980 Australian media gave full coverage in *Sydney Morning Herald* to the financial dealings of President Suharto and his family. Another coverage was on Singapore court hearings, President's involvement in corruption and attempted censure of the President by a petition to the Indonesian parliament by around fifty leaders.\(^{22}\)

The Indonesian officers called it inaccurate and biased reporting. Its repercussions were that the Indonesian government refused to renew the visa for the Australian correspondents, Warwick Bentler and Peter Rodgers in

\(^{21}\) *AFAR*, vol.44, no.1, January 1973, p.33.


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Jakarta. This move, however, was disliked by the Australian politicians.\textsuperscript{23} Free entry of the Australian tourists to Indonesia was also stopped.\textsuperscript{24}

The Indonesian government refused to recognise the Australian media, ABC and asked to transfer it to the Department of Foreign Affairs.\textsuperscript{25} Tension was soon relieved but there was an uneasiness in both the countries about their relationship. There was an ongoing battle between the Indonesian authorities and the Australian media. An author in some Indonesian book on Australia wrote in 1954, "Their press loves to twist everything it prints on Indonesia. Don't expect the Australian press to publish anything good about Indonesia."\textsuperscript{26}

Tensions between Indonesia and Australia released with the appointment of new Foreign Ministers in Jakarta and Canberra, Ali Alatas and Gareth Evans.

3.2 East-Timor Affair

In 1970s Portuguese Timor became a hot issue between Australia and Indonesia. The Australian and Indonesian interests in Timor concerned on
Indonesian take over of East Timor in 1975. The Indonesians moved militarily with haste to take the place of departed Portuguese colonialists. Five Australian journalists were killed in this process.\textsuperscript{27} Australia was concerned not only to the deaths and sufferings but also the way in which East Timor was incorporated. The Indonesians, initiated a large scale unease and opposition in Australia.\textsuperscript{28}

The Indonesians also insisted that independent East Timor will be a political and security risk to Indonesia. Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik also stated that Indonesia had no territorial ambitions over Timor.\textsuperscript{29} But, at the same time they also insisted that independent East Timor will be a political and security risk to Indonesia. A meeting in jakarta was held between Suharto and Whitlam, there was no interest among the Australian officials about East Timor. whitlam was of the view that Australia must avoid any involvement in colonial problems of the ASEAN. He considered Australian involvement in this affair inconsistent. It would have tarnished, "the international image. Whitlam wished to mould for Australia and himself.\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant, "South-East Asia", \textit{Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of 1990s}, Melbourne, 1991, p.187.
\item \textsuperscript{28} The Canberra Times, 16 October 1978.
\item \textsuperscript{29} AFR, n.16, 16 July 1974.
\end{itemize}
Australian policy was announced publicly. It was not the statement of E.G. Whitlam but a briefing by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. "Whitlam is understood to have indicated that Australia felt an independent Timor would be an unviable state and a potential threat to the stability of the area. But he is also thought to have made clear, that the people of the colony should have the ultimate decision on their future."  

This statement gave an impression to the Indonesians that Australia supported the Indonesian assimilation of the colony and colony's independence would not be in favour of the region.  

There was difference over action on Timor among the different departments in the Government of Australia. Department of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister of Australia wanted to settle the dispute by leaving it on the people of East Timor. While Department of Defence, supported a solution favourable to the Indonesians. Australia was not a party in East Timor affair and also wanted to have good relations with Indonesia. As J.A.C. Mackie observes, "Because of her proximity and strategic importance to Australia, Indonesia inevitably demands particular attention in Australia's thinking about foreign policy and our relations with the


neighbouring countries of Southeast Asia and East Asia.\textsuperscript{33} Prime Minister Whitlam in his speech in Townsville on 2 May 1976 has opined, that despite Indonesia's invasion of Timor, the relationship between Australia and Indonesia should be preserved.\textsuperscript{34}

By the end of 1974 Australia was in a state of dilemma whether it should support a union of the Portuguese Timor with Indonesia or not. In 1975 newspapers of Australia gave coverage to this issue. The news were based on official leaks, that Australian Government is aware of a possible military takeover by Indonesia.\textsuperscript{35} The Australian Foreign Minister, Don Willesee met the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik in New Delhi on 28 February 1975. They were there to attend a Conference of the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific. There, Willesee was reported to have told his counterpart about Australia's opposition to use of force in East Timor.\textsuperscript{36}

In late August 1975 there was an unsuccessful coup by the conservative Timorese forces. As a result Fretilin maintained its position in the Portuguese Timor. The Portuguese wanted to establish a three nation force of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{33} J.A.C. Mackie, "Australia's Relations with Indonesia: Principles and Policies I", \textit{Australian Outlook}, vol.28, no.1, April 1974, p.5.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Viviani, n.32, p.203.
\item \textsuperscript{35} CPD, n.4, 25 February 1975, p.641.
\item \textsuperscript{36} SMH, n.17, 1 March 1975.
\end{itemize}
Portuguese, Indonesians and Australians in Timor. The Australian Prime Minister Whitlam, was ready to participate in a peacekeeping effort that too on the request by the United Nations, but not to send its troops to Timor. The government of Australia did not support Timor but the Australian media gave this issue complete recognition. Whitlam, while replying a question in Parliament about the Australian move said, "there was no prospect of an ASEAN role". ASEAN was supporting Indonesia on this move. Whitlam stuck to his position about East Timor till the fall of his government on 11 November 1975.

On 7 December 1975, Indonesia launched an attack on the capital of East Timor, Dili. Fretilin forces were driven out and pro-Indonesian Government was installed. In Australia, the Liberal Country Party coalition took over the charge from Labor Government with caretaker status. So they could only give a statement condemning the Indonesian move in East Timor.

Liberal-country Party Government came to power winning the elections on 13 December 1975. The new Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser adopted a

37 ibid, 27 August 1975.
38 CT, n.28, 3 September, 1975.
40 Viviani, n.32, p.218.
41 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock, The Australian, 8 December 1975.
tougher attitude towards the Indonesian invasion than the previous government.\textsuperscript{42} On 12 December 1975, the UN General Assembly confirmed a resolution of its Fourth Committee, calling for immediate withdrawal of the Indonesian troops.\textsuperscript{43} Australia voted for it and the ASEAN countries were against. Australian support to the UN resolution was highly criticised in Indonesia. Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock unsuccessfully tried to improve the relations with Indonesia which was in Australian interest.\textsuperscript{44}

Formal incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia was in August 1976. In December 1977 Liberal Country Party again won with a large majority.

The Australian Government was anxious to improve its relationship with Indonesia. In January 1978, Australia recognised Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.\textsuperscript{45} The then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock announced that Australia would recognise East Timor as a part of Indonesia when the Indonesian government will start negotiations with the Australian government about seabed boundary.\textsuperscript{46} Negotiations started in 1979.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{42} Hilman Adil, "The Problems of East Timor in the Context of Indonesian-Australian Relations", \textit{World Review}, vol. 17, no. 4, October 1978, p. 42.
\bibitem{43} SMH, n. 17, 13 December 1975.
\bibitem{44} Peter Hastings in ibid, 27 January 1976.
\bibitem{45} \textit{Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade}, vol. 61, no. 4, April 1990, p. 210.
\bibitem{46} H.C. McMichael, "Australia-Indonesia Relations", \textit{Australian Outlook}, vol. 40, no. 3, December 1986, p. 140.
\end{thebibliography}
statement to Parliament on 22 August 1985, the Prime Minister Bob Hawke also reaffirmed the Indonesian sovereignty over the province.47

3.3 Human Rights

Though the Australian government recognised East Timor as a part of Indonesia, but it did not overlook the circumstances of the incorporation and methods to achieve it. Australia also criticised the Portuguese authorities because they walked away from East Timor without any concern to their economic and political condition. The Australian government made efforts on pressurising the Indonesians to improve the situation of East Timorese. Australia has supported the basic human rights of the people in East Timor.

Indonesia and Australia had differed for many years on human rights issue. These rights were allegedly first violated during the events of 1970s when military was engaged to drive out the Fretilin Guerillas. According to Jim Dunn of the Australian Parliament's Legislative Research Service, on the basis of a report by a leader of pro-Indonesian forces stated that around 60,000 Timorese were killed.48 Jim Dunn with a Member of Labor Party, Gordon Bryant in 1977 visited Portugal and interviewed Timorese refugees there. They submitted a report to Andrew Peacock and some private agencies too. This

48 CT, n.28, 4 March 1976.
report asserted that one sixth of the population i.e., around 10,000 persons were killed in East Timor.\(^{49}\)

In Timor capital Dili on 12 November 1991 the Indonesian soldiers fired on a crowd of 3,000 East Timorese demonstrators. It was assessed that around 100 people were killed.\(^{50}\) Some say only 50 people died. So, the casualties were not confirmed.\(^{51}\) According to the Indonesian officials the demonstrators stabbed an army major to death. With this the situation worsened.

The Australian reporters could not write much about it as they remembered the expulsion of two other correspondents from Indonesia in 1980.

The Australian Prime Minister, Bob Hawke on 13 November 1991 in Parliament stated, "....We are, of course, as a government, very deeply disturbed by the reports of this tragedy in Dili yesterday.... We have recognised Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor, but we have constantly expressed our concern about human rights abuse there."\(^{52}\) Australia insisted on a full inquiry of the incident. The strength of protest in Australia indicated that the Australians have not forgiven Indonesia for its invasion in 1975.

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\(^{50}\) *The Star*, 22 December 1991, p.35.


John Wheeldon, the Minister for Social Security and a Minister for Repatriation and Compensation in the Whitlam Government criticised E.G. Whitlam for his policy of 1974. Whitlam did not want to damage the relationship between Indonesia and Australia. Indonesia thought that Australia understood their position in Timor. He told the Advertiser, "I don't have any doubt whatsoever that in the last month of the Whitlam government in 1978, Australia was actively involved in urging the Indonesians to take over East Timor." 53

Though the timor affair was a small factor in Australia-Indonesia relationship still it remained a source of unease during the period. Reports from East Timor say that the Australian aid was not distributed properly among the Timorese and that they were starving. Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Gareth Evans met the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas on 19 December 1991 and discussed about army shooting in Dili. Gareth Evans told, "it was in Indonesia's own interest to conclude its inquiry into Dili shooting…. Otherwise international Confidence in Indonesia will be undermined." 54 He also asked to form a National Investigative Commission to probe the shooting. The Indonesian Prime Minister Suharto did not meet the Foreign Minister during his visit. Moreover, they did not seem to like the

Australian interference in their affair. As Ali Alatas said, "You (the international Community) have been telling us how to handle the situation. Don't rub things the wrong way, don't exaggerate, don't insinuate...."55 With this he also wanted to review the no visa policy of East Timor, implemented in 1989. They disliked the presence of foreign journalists in East Timor on 12 November 1991 without declaring themselves journalists.

Professor Parimal Kumar Das, in his article "The East Timor Question", had rightly summed up the Timor Affair. In liberation of East Timor from Portuguese, Australia unnecessarily intervened. He said, "Timor is to Indonesia what Goa was to India."56 So integration of East Timor into Indonesia is a just and domestic business.

3.4 The Timor Gap

There is a seabed boundary between Australia and Indonesia. Australia tried to reach an agreement with Portugal about this boundary off East Timor, but failed. Thus, the seabed boundaries surrounding the Portuguese colony remained unsettled. This area in the Timor Sea without a maritime boundary is called "Timor Gap."57

55 ibid, 22 December 1991, p.35.
In 1975, Australia again got worried with the Indonesian sovereignty. But in 1979 when Australia recognised the Indonesian sovereignty, negotiations began over maritime boundary of Timor Gap of hundred miles. Australia stressed that the Timor Trench, a depression of about fifty miles off the south coast of East Timor is natural dividing line. Indonesia preferred median line concept which shifts the boundary further down than Australia wants. This was to give Indonesia control of large areas of the Bonaparte Gulf Basin, which has reserves of oil and gas.

According to the agreement of October 1972 between Indonesia and Australia a boundary line was agreed approximately two hundred miles from Australia and one hundred and sixty miles from the Timor coast in South.

Then the concept of a zone of cooperation was introduced in 1985. According to this, shared exploration and exploitation of petroleum resources in the Timor Gap was admitted by Indonesia and Australia. In October 1988, during Gareth Evans’ visit to Jakarta as Finance Minister, this issue was discussed with the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Ali Alatas. This culminated with the signing of the treaty on 11 December 1989 in a mid-air ceremony over

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58 Janet Lim, n.49, p.48.
59 AFR, n.16, 10 October 1979.
60 SMH, n.17, 10 October 1972.
the zone of cooperation. The treaty entered into force on 9 February 1991.

According to the treaty instead of drawing a line through disputed area a box of 40,000 square kilometres was drawn around and agreement was mutual exploration of resources. Zone was divided into three subzones A, B and C. Area B is under Australia’s sole jurisdiction, area C is under sole jurisdiction of Indonesia while area A under joint control.

This treaty was a good start in Indonesia-Australia relationship in a new decade. It is an example of non-military solution to a political problem where boundary of valuable petroleum resources was associated.

Timor Gap Treaty was challenged by Portugal in 1991 itself in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Proceedings were started against Australia. The Portuguese argument was that still Portugal is recognised by the UN as the administering power for East Timor66 and in that case treaty

63 Evans and Grant, n.27, p.188.
64 Treaty Between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on the Zone of Cooperation in an Area Between the Indonesian Province of East Timor and Northern Australia, 11 December 1989, Part II, Article 3 and Article 4, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 1989, p.18.
65 AFAT, n.45, p.703. (Statement by Gareth Evan in Canberra on 4 December 1989 to the Conference on "Indonesia’s New Order: Past, Present and Future").
between Australia and Indonesia was unlawful which went against the rights of Timorese.67

Australia argued that Portugal had no legal responsibility over East Timor as they walked off in 1970 leaving it muddled. Indonesia was not a party as it does not accept the jurisdiction of ICJ. In the meantime Australia joined Indonesia in granting 55 oil companies permits to explore Timor Gap. Analysis estimate, that the output will be doubled by 1995.68

3.5 Vietnam War

Vietnam war has been a hot issue for the foreign policies of different Governments in Australia. Before Vietnam war, Australia did not have any Indo-China policy. Australia regarded it important for its security. Australia considered South-Vietnam the first domino and Australia the last. They knew that if South Vietnam came under Communism it will be a threat to Australia. The Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt recognised the importance of South Vietnam to Australia, "In the long run the threat to South Vietnam is a direct threat to Australia. That is the view of this Government."69

67 Insight, n.62, p.5.
Menzies Government in 1965 sent troops to Vietnam. Australia thought that the United States should take a stand against expansion of the Chinese communism in Vietnam. The Prime Minister, Menzies put it in the Parliament, "the takeover of South Vietnam would be a direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South and South East Asia. It must be seen as a part of a thrust by communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans." Massive American intervention began in 1965. Nations joined in were Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines and Thailand. Australia's contribution was about a quarter of the US involvement i.e., 47,000 Australian personnel and 496 of them were killed.

Australia's involvement was controversial domestically. It was asserted that the United States was in Vietnam to assist its people in self determination, while, Australians were there as they wanted the involvement of the US in Southeast Asia. From 1965 to 1967, Australia proceeded to expand the size of its forces in Vietnam in four steps. Prime Minister Harold Holt publicly announced Australian commitment to the allied war in Vietnam. "... is the most urgent of our current external problems and

70 ibid, vol.45, 29 April 1965, p.1061.
it is basic to all our aspirations for security in Asia.... We do not believe that our great Pacific Partner in the United States should stand alone for freedom."\textsuperscript{75}

With the accidental death of Harold Holt in December 1967, the strategy which led Australia into Vietnam failed. In 1967 Gough Whitlam assumed the leadership of the Labor Party. The Australian Labor Party mentioned in its 27th Commonwealth Conference at Adelaide in 1967, that "the Labor Party is opposed to the continuance of the war in Vietnam and to the Australian participation in it."\textsuperscript{76}

Acting Prime Minister, John Mc Ewen backed the United States policy in Vietnam. But he did not have leadership ability of the late Harold Holt. The American President, Lyndon Johnson cautioned the Labor Party about its opposition to the war in Vietnam. He hoped to see a strong pro-American, pro-War Prime Minister elected and an increase in the number of Australian troops and airmen in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{77}

John Grey Gorton was elected as new Prime Minister on 9 January 1968. Immediately after his election, he stated, "We must show the Communists that

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Current Notes}, n.8, vol.38, no.10, October 1967, pp.411-12.


aggression does not pay. We lived through an era some years back when we let it exist, and look what happened."  

Without any consultation with Australia on 31 March 1968 the President of the US announced cease air and naval attacks on North Vietnam. This left Australia in a difficult situation as their confidence was betrayed. They informed the Australian government only a few hours before.

In January 1969, Richard M. Nixon became new President of the US. He wished Australia to play an active regional role. Prime Minister John Gorton went to the US in May 1969 to assess President Nixon's views towards Vietnam. He was satisfied with the meeting and his Deputy Prime Minister, Mc Even said that the Australian support in Vietnam war has cemented their relations with the U.S.

In December 1969, Gorton announced the withdrawal of forces. Then in 1971, he resigned and became the minister for defence. William McMahon became the new Prime Minister of Australia. While serving as Minister for Foreign Affairs, in 1970, in a ministerial statement he had said, "...we still regard Communist China and other Communist regimes as a central obstacle.


79 Cuddy, n.77, p.347.

to peace."81 Earlier Prime Minister Gorton had already declared that the Australian forces would be phased out with the continued reduction of the American forces, if that occurred.82

First partial withdrawal of forces took place on 22 April 1970 and another of 1000 men was announced by new Prime Minister on 30 March 1971. Last unit of the Task Force arrived in Australia in December 1971.83

The Labor Government came to power in December 1972 and Gough Whitlam became the new Prime Minister. He ordered an end of the Australian participation in Vietnam war and called the troops back.84 Australia was satisfied with the situation in Vietnam as with the demolition of North Vietnam's plans, South Vietnam could flourish.

Just before Christmas in 1972, President Nixon ordered bombing in Hanoi to force the North Vietnamese to negotiate. Cairns, the Australian Minister for Overseas Trade and Secondary Industry, criticising the Nixon administration said, "Now they have served those purposes, the war goes on

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82 115 Congressional Record, 13 October 1969, pp.29647-29648.
84 Cuddy, n.77, p.350.
and bombing and killing are intensified."^85 Paris Peace agreement of January 1973 was to provide a political solution to a problem without war.^86

The US troops withdrew but hostilities between North Vietnam and South Vietnam remained. The Australian Government adopted a calm approach. The Prime Minister, E.G. Whitlam argued in the Parliament on 8 April 1975, "who rules in Saigon is not, and never has been, an ingredient in Australia's Security. Our strength, our security, rests on factors and relationships ultimately unchanged by these events."^87

With the fall of anti-communist governments in Cambodia and South Vietnam in 1975 the Australian government was alarmed. Now they remembered the domino theory for the security of South East Asia and then Australia. In Vietnam the PRG was recognised as the government of South Vietnam after it controlled Saigon.^88 The new government committed Australia for reconstruction in Indo-China.^89 North Vietnam and South Vietnam got unified in July 1976.^90

^85 SMH, n.17, 22 December 1972.
^86 CPD, n.4, 8 April 1975, p.1260.
^87 ibid.
^88 SMH, n.17, 7 May 1975 (Statement by Foreign Minister Willesee on 6 May 1975).
^89 The Age, 9 May 1975.
^90 Evans and Grant, n.27, p.203.
After 1975, the ASEAN-Vietnam relations seemed to be tense. The Philippines and Thailand had participated in the Vietnam war. They were scared of the victorious revolutionary, united Vietnam. After 1976 the relations improved, as the ASEAN countries themselves initiated the move. The ASEAN foreign ministers started considering Vietnam's problems and policies in a friendly manner.

On 26 April 1976, general elections were held and a National Assembly of the reunified Vietnam was elected. The ASEAN Summit in 1976 welcomed the end of war in Vietnam. In 1977, the ASEAN also welcomed the Vietnamese entry to the UN.

3.6 Australia in Cambodia: (After the Vietnam War)

The Cambodian problem began with the removal of Prince Sihanouk from power in 1970. He was the head of state, government and guarantor of his country's independence.

Sihanouk viewed that Cambodia's survival depends upon good relations with the neighbour i.e. Vietnam. With the two bombing attacks on the Cambodian villages in 1966, the relations between Cambodia and the US turned


sour. 93 Australia's interest in Indo-China deepened with the Vietnam war. On 30 March 1970 Prince Sihanouk was overthrown and Lon Nol was installed in power. 94 The North Vietnamese attacked the new government led by General Lon Nol. As the civil war worsened in Cambodia the LCP government of Australia announced its support to Vietnam. The US President Nixon's plea was that bombing of Cambodia was to drive out the North Vietnamese from their Cambodian bases.

The Labor Party came to power under E.G. Whitlam in December 1972, in Australia. Whitlam's government gave a new shape to the Australian foreign policy with the end of Australia's military involvement in Indo-China. They recognised Lon Nol government but Whitlam did not accept the allegations of the US role in the ouster of Sihanouk. 95 They withdrew international aid fund for Cambodia. However, the Cambodian Communist movement, known as 'Khmer Rouge' was growing rapidly. It was assisted by North Vietnam and a coalition of various political forces in Cambodia was operating under the leadership of Prince Sihanouk. The Australian Prime Minister met Prince Sihanouk in November 1973 against the wishes of his


94 ibid, p.56.

advisers. But Australia's stance on the recognition of Lon Nol remained the same. 96 The opposition, LCP criticised this act of Whitlam. "The Prime Minister must realise, that such action on his part cannot contribute to the stability and security of the Khmer Republic." 97

On 17 April 1975, Lon Nol regime fell to the guerilla based Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (GRUNK), Foreign Minister, Willesee announced that Australia would recognise the new government. The Australians considered it a part of its policy to end the fighting in Indo-China and involvement of great powers as well. T.B. Miller described it as a "wish to make a fresh start in relations with the governments which could rule in Vietnam and Cambodia in the future." 98

In late 1975, the Conservative-Liberal Party Coalition government assumed office in Australia. They also continued with the same policies of the Labor government towards Indo-China. The Australian press reported about the barbaric acts of the Pol Pot regime and the fact that GRUNK was a fallacy. 99 Australian Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock also said "no

96 ibid, p.50.
97 CPD, n.4, 7 November 1973, p.2891.
99 Mririlees, n.93, p.64.
diplomatic representation in Phnom Penh and little first hand information is available on the events within Cambodia itself.\textsuperscript{100}

Indo-China took a back seat in Australia's relations with the ASEAN countries during Fraser government. It is accepted that Khmer Rouge killed one-third of the Cambodian population in the three and a half years between April 1975 and December 1978.\textsuperscript{101}

The anti-Vietnamese attitude of the Khmer Rouge led to the Vietnamese intervention in the Cambodian affairs with the support of Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{102} This intervention was to save the Cambodian people from genocidal regime of Pol Pot. Phnom Penh was captured on 7 January 1979, and the People's Republic of Kampuchea proclaimed on 11 January 1979 under Heng Samrin. Australia considered Vietnam's move against Kampuchea as a "public gesture against Peking, abetted by the USSR."\textsuperscript{103} With this the Fraser government cancelled Australia's aid programme to Vietnam and their bilateral relations were put on ice.

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\textsuperscript{100} CPD, n.4, 26 April 1976, p.1735.
\textsuperscript{102} Statement by the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tony Street to the Parliament on 9 April 1981. AFAR, vol.52, no.4, April 1981, p.183.
\end{flushright}
Australia joined the ASEAN by co-sponsoring the ASEAN resolutions in the UN General Assembly to teach a lesson to Vietnam. 104 Till 1983, the Australians followed the same attitude.

On 18 February 1979, Heng Samrin, President, People’s Republic of Kampuchea and Pham Van Dong, Premier of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation in Phnom Penh. 105 Australia did not recognise this treaty as still it continued to recognise Democratic Kampuchea. In Article 5 of this Treaty the two promised "to maintain a policy of friendly relations and of good neighbourliness with Thailand and other countries of Southeast Asia." 106 But they also condemned the Khmer Rouge. Member of the Australian Parliament, Wreidt commented in May 1980, "... it is shameful for the Australian people that its government is associated with the Pol Pot regime which was capable of such crimes against the Kampuchean people." 107 The Australian government withdrew its recognition from Khmer Rouge Regime on 14 February 1981 following Britain. 108 In mid 1982 at its 35th national conference the Labor


106 ibid, p.78.

107 AFR, n.16, 9 May 1980.

Party appreciated this move of the Australian government. They also declared, that no recognition would be given to any coalition involving the Pol Pot forces. Although the ASEAN nations were unhappy but it could not damage Australia's relationship with the ASEAN.

Thailand seemed to be worried about the presence of the Vietnamese troops. They felt the danger to its territorial integrity from the possibility of an accidental cross-border spillover of fighting between the Vietnamese and Kampuchean troops.

After withdrawing its recognition of the Democratic Kampuchea on 14 February 1981, the Australian Foreign Minister, Tony Street, said in the Five ASEAN Foreign Ministers meet in Manila on 20 June 1981, "We now recognise no regime in Kampuchea... Australia welcomes the efforts to establish a united front among the Kampuchean nationalist elements. We favour the emergence in Kampuchea of a nationalist government which is truly representative of the Khmer people."

The Hawke government came to power in March 1983. This was another round of Labor Government after their role in the Vietnam war. New government revised its policies towards Indo-China.


After 1979 in Cambodia, PRK was also struggling to establish itself with the Vietnamese support. They faced opposition from two non-communist movements - the republican Khmer People's National Liberation Front (KPNLF) and the pro Sihanouk National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC). Khmer Rouge was also revived with the Chinese aid, and Thai assistance. An informal coalition of China, the ASEAN and the US opposed the PRK and gave political and military assistance to the guerrilla forces. The three forces KPNLF, FUNCINPEC and Khmer Rouge were encouraged by the ASEAN to combine in June 1982 as a Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK).\textsuperscript{112} At the heart, it was a conflict between China and Vietnam and the Soviet Union for influence in Indo-China.\textsuperscript{113}

Labor's decision to restore aid to Vietnam was against the ASEAN and US wishes. Other Australian initiative was the establishment of NGO office in Phnom Penh and establishment of a radio-telephone link with Ho Chi Minh city.\textsuperscript{114} The ASEAN countries thought that Australia was being used by Vietnam.


Hawke government wanted the emergence of a nationalist, neutral and self-sufficient Cambodia to which all the displaced Cambodians can return. They wanted to see it happen without bloodshed, through non-violent political means. Australia also welcomed formation of a coalition of Prince Sihanouk and Son Sann. 115 The Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Gareth Evans in a lecture at the Footscray Institute of Technology in 1989 said, "Other assumptions behind the Indo-China policy of the Hawke government were that a military solution to the Cambodia problem was neither possible nor desirable...." 116

Peaceful solution of the Cambodian problem was the Indo-China policy of the Hawke government. As first manifestation of the new approach, Australia decided in 1983 to withdraw from co-sponsorship in support of the annual ASEAN Cambodia resolution in the UN General Assembly. 117

ASEAN’s resolution was the call for a withdrawal of foreign troops from Cambodia and for self determination of the Cambodian people. Still Australia voted for the resolution. Responses in the ASEAN countries, specially Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia were alarming. China and some other European countries also showed their inclination towards Australia. The Thai

116 Evans, n.104, p.42.
117 SMH, n.17, 4 October 1983.
Foreign Minister, Siddhi Savetsila got irritated and said, "It looks as though Australia is looking for new friends instead of trying to cultivate its old friends in the Asean." On 4 October 1983, while the Australian Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden was delivering his speech to the UN General Assembly, the Malaysian Foreign Minister, Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie left the assembly hall showing his anger. Australia was taken aback by the reaction of his counterparts. The ASEAN-Australia relations despite the controversy over Australia's refusal to co-sponsor ASEAN resolution on Kampuchea returned to normal.

Bill Hayden started visiting the countries of South-East Asia to have talks over the issue. He visited Vietnam and Laos in 1983 and 1985 and the Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Nguyen Co Thach came to Australia in 1984. It was decided that military solution is neither possible nor desirable. Failure to resolve the problem was becoming a threat to regional stability. Bill Hayden in a statement to the Parliament said, "The longer the current situation continues in Cambodia the greater will be Vietnam's


119 ibid.


dependence on the Soviet Union and the more obtrusive Soviet military power will be in the region. "122

In spite of all those efforts of Hayden, ASEAN attitude was stable, as they feared Australia’s action in the UN assembly and also its decision not to recognise CGDK’s entitlement to the UN seat. 123 Till now Australia was not sure of the Vietnamese action if they supported the ASEAN countries for the withdrawal of troops. They thought, that the Vietnamese forces were capable enough to respond to the guerrilla activities. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden in his speech to the Australian Joint Service Staff College on 10 April 1984 stated, "I do not believe, that Vietnam is going to withdraw unilaterally from Kampuchea any more than I believe from the assessments. I’ve received of its military capabilities that it is able to take strain both militarily and economically of maintaining forces in Kampuchea perhaps indefinitely.…." 124

The demand of the ASEAN countries was that the Vietnamese forces be withdrawn to create necessary conditions for a free act of self determination by the people of Kampuchea and to decide their government.

122 ibid, vol.55, no.11, November 1984, p.1168.
124 AFAR, vol.55, no.4, April 1984, p.309.
Vietnam faced internal economic problems and Gorbachev in his speech in Vladivostok in July 1986 mentioned curtailment in costly foreign involvements as a part of new Soviet policy.\textsuperscript{125} Change in Soviet attitude towards China brought ease in strained relations of other countries too.

Indonesia too played an active diplomatic role. They held two Jakarta Informal Meetings in July 1988 and February 1989 though inconclusive.\textsuperscript{126} Only major move was that Vietnam announced that it was prepared to withdraw all its troops by the end of 1989 from Kampuchea.\textsuperscript{127}

The Paris Peace Conference on Kampuchea was convened in Paris in July-August 1989. This brought together all the six ASEAN countries, representative of the UN Secretary General, all four Cambodian factions, the permanent five members of the UN Security Council, Vietnam, Laos, Australia, Canada and India. The Conference suspended without achieving any concrete solution to the problem.\textsuperscript{128} There was no internationally recognised procedure to monitor Vietnam's promise of complete withdrawal by September 1989.

\textsuperscript{125} Frost, n.112, p.8.
\textsuperscript{126} Evans and Grant, n.27, p.209.
\textsuperscript{127} "Joint Declaration", Vietnam News, Embassy of the SRV, Canberra, 5 April 1989.
\textsuperscript{128} Asia Yearbook 1990, Hong Kong, pp.102-3.
Australia, therefore, suggested an enhanced role for the UN in the transitional process. Gareth Evans was sure that UN involvement will give a neutral political environment in Kampuchea. Kampuchea was in a very bad condition. Its infrastructure was completely destroyed and it was a different experience for the UN operation. A number of officers worked over it and a series of 155 pages was prepared incorporating the plans and scenario for the UN role. This was then published as "Cambodia: an Australian Peace Proposal" and also called a "Red Book" from the colour of its binding.

Finance Minister Ali Alatas placed high value to Australia's role in Cambodian diplomacy which supported Indonesia's own diplomatic efforts as well. The Australian Ambassador to Indonesia in National Press Club, Canberra on 12 April said, "The political cooperation on international issues has improved; can be seen most clearly in the closely coordinated moves to bring the Cambodian problem nearer to settlement. Australian and Indonesian Foreign Ministers have been in constant contact sharing, their own findings over Cambodia...."  

Australia was able to persuade the matter in a congenial atmosphere with the ASEAN members towards the settlement. This was the dream of Bob

129 CPD, n.4, The Senate, 6 December 1990, pp.5165-75.
131 AFAT, vol.61, no.4, April 1990, p.120.
Hawk and Bill Hayden since 1983. Bill Hayden at the opening of the Post Ministerial Conference (six plus six) at Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel in Bangkok, on 7 July 1988 said to the ASEAN Ministers, "Australia endorses very much the principles that you outlined in your introductory comments Mr. Chairman, total withdrawal of Vietnamesene forces, national reconciliation of the various factions of Khmer people and independent sovereign and neutral country." 132

The peace proposal of Australia was adopted by the UN Security Council's members. But there was heated discussion about incorporation of Khmer Rouge in the formal settlement of Kampuchea. It was thought that Khmer Rouge will again expand its influence in the country. 133 Garth Evans opposed it. He advocated the inclusion of the KR in the government as he was of the view that with their inclusion only China will agree to end its support. He said in the ASEAN-PMC in Jakarta on 27 July 1990, "We are all committed to achieving a comprehensive settlement which is supported by China and is accepted by all the Cambodian parties, including the Khmer Rouge... we can never and must never forget the horror that the Khmer Rouge inflicted on its own people little more than a decade ago. Yet the simple fact


is, that in the absence of a comprehensive settlement supported by China and accepted by the Khmer Rouge the Cambodian tragedy will continue."\textsuperscript{134}

Paris peace agreement was reconvened and United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was inaugurated in February 1992. Its principle aim was not only peace-keeping and election organisation but fair and free elections in a new domain. The UN faced many difficulties in making these true. The UN operation called military personnels from more than thirty countries. Australia as a principal proponent of the UN also supported. Bob Hawke, the Australian Prime Minister said, "We are prepared to contribute significant forces to help implement a UN sponsored settlement of the Cambodian problem...."\textsuperscript{135}

The Khmer Rouge were reluctant to allow the UN access to their bases and announced in May 1992 that their forces would not be disarmed until State of Cambodia (SOC) is dismantled.\textsuperscript{136} By the end of 1992 the UN stopped attempting the implementation of Paris agreement fully. They only concentrated on the formation of new Cambodian government through peaceful and fair elections.\textsuperscript{137}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{134} AFAT, vol.61, no.7, July 1990, p.431.
\item \textsuperscript{135} ibid, vol.62, no.5, May 1991, p.207.
\item \textsuperscript{136} Klintworth and Babbage, n.101, p.14.
\end{itemize}
3.7 Immigration and Refugee Policy

Australia has followed a policy of non-refoulement i.e. not sending a refugee back to the country from which he fled. Before the Second World War Australia accepted a small number of refugees which increased gradually with their thought of increasing the population.

For many years Australia's image in the ASEAN was of a racist country, who was discriminatory in its immigration policy. Since 1966 efforts have been made by the parties to alter Australia's immigration policies to remove its racist image. The situation changed after World War II. In 1966, the Australian government became a bit liberal towards the skilled technicians and educated people. In the four year period 4,800 persons including dependants were accepted into Australia. Many came from the ASEAN countries, specially from Malaysia and the Philippines.

'White Australia' policy was the result of the Labor Party's economic fears that came to an end with the increase in number of immigrants to Australia. Australia never entered into any formal commitments to permit people to come to Australia as political asylum. But Australia is a signatory to the 1951 "Convention relating to the Refugee status". According to which not to expel a refugee who has entered illegally "to the frontiers of territories

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where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."^{139}

With the changes of government in Indo-China and fighting in East timor, refugees entered in a large number. 'White Australia' policy was not completely out as in "1959 many Australians did not want total exclusion of this policy."^{140} New Immigration policy was applied for the first time in 1973-74.

In 1975 there was public pressure on the government that Australia should accept some of the refugees from Vietnam who would leave Australia back to Vietnam after the Communist victory there. The public appeal failed as the basic humanitarian concern was lost in the political point. Prime Minister Whitlam did not approve the admission of any Vietnamese. The excuse was that Saigon authorities did not permit.^{141} While this problem could have been solved if there was any indication of negotiations.^{142}

Around 130,000 refugees fled to the Philippines, Hongkong, Singapore and the US. The Australian Prime Minister during his visit to Indonesia in

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141  "Statement" of The Australian, 29 April 1975.
September 1974 was interviewed by South-East Asian correspondent, Michael Richardson. The reporter asked him that Australia has cut the immigration intake because of the employment problem in spite of removal of racial discrimination. He called it hypocrisy of the Australian government. The Prime Minister replied that admission of immigrants is pointless if there is no job. Racial discrimination is pointless, and Australia is free to reduce "such recruitment when they need to do so."143

Almost a million people since 1975 went to the ASEAN countries and Australia. In June 1979, about 363,000 refugees were living in ASEAN countries' camps waiting for resettlement anywhere else.144 More than half were in Thailand. Singapore had almost none of the refugees. The ASEAN countries opposed themselves to be the countries of resettlement.

Australia accepted 23,000 refugees for permanent settlement from April 1975 to June 1979. 19,000 were selected from the ASEAN camps.145 By 1981 Australia became a country of resettlement for refugees. Since World

143 AFAR, vol.45, no.9, September 1974, pp.590-1.
145 ibid.
War II 400,000 refugees found shelter in Australia and Australia had one refugee over 390 persons in Australia.\textsuperscript{146}

During all this time 1975-79, Australia delayed its decisions regarding refugees. Ultimately Whitlam decided to call wives and children of Vietnamese and Cambodian students in Australia. It was promised by the opposition to create a new department "to handle the problems quickly."\textsuperscript{147}

In April 1975 when Saigon fell, there were 4,000 applications to bring the Vietnamese to Australia. Only 300 of those were approved and in the last flight of 76 Vietnamese, 34 were nuns.\textsuperscript{148} It was the result of the persuasion by a Bishop.

Liberal Country Party was also as restrictive as the Labor government and only allowed 800 Laotians and Kampucheans to arrive from Thailand. From mid-1977 boat people started arriving unannounced on northern shores of Australia. They entered through the Indonesian islands as Singapore would have not allowed them. In 1977, 800 boat people arrived and in 1978, 600

\textsuperscript{146} Richard Woolcott (Australian Ambassador to the Philippines), "Australia and the Southeast Asian Countries", \textit{The Indonesian Quarterly}, vol.9, no.3, July 1981, p.87.

\textsuperscript{147} Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Policy, Liberal and National Country Parties, Canberra, August 1975.

more boat people arrived in Australia. The UN Deputy High Commissioner said that the flow of boat people would show to more manageable proportions. The matter of the boat refugees was given a high priority as fewer unauthorised refugees will make authorised intake larger. On the status of refugees an official of the UN said, "The convention does not guarantee a right of entry into so many words, but it does oblige states parties not to impose penalties for illegal entry on refugees, provided that they report to the authorities without delay and show good cause for their actions." 

The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, M.J.R. Mac Kellar said, that only the refugee arriving in small boats will be allowed to stay in Australia temporarily. He also made it clear that the big ships and their owners whom he called "queue jumpers", even if they were true refugees will not be allowed to land.

Australia helped to organise the first Geneva Conference in November 1978. It was not very successful. Another Geneva meeting was held on 20-21

149 SMH, n.17, 8 March 1979.
150 ibid, 17 March 1979.
July 1979 to discuss the problem of Indo-Chinese refugees.\textsuperscript{153} This was attended by 66 countries and was different from that of 1978. Michael Mac Kellar announced in his address that Australia will accept 14,000 refugees in 1979-1980. Thus permanently resettled refugees will be 37,000 by June 1980.\textsuperscript{154}

In June 1979, at Bali, the ASEAN foreign ministers expressed their concern over refugee problem and identified "Vietnam, as flow of exodus".\textsuperscript{155} Australia joined the ASEAN in criticism of Vietnam over refugees. Still, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Andrew Peacock at his meeting with the ASEAN Foreign Ministers in Kuala Lumpur on 26 June 1980 stated, "so far as the refugees are concerned, Australia will continue to play a major part in re-setting refugees from Indo-China. We will do no less in future than we have in the past. Moreover, I am happy to announce that we have decided to participate in the UNHCR orderly departure programme.\textsuperscript{156}

Since Australia has had to try to minimize the incidence of refugee boats arriving there illegally, ASEAN's co-operation was necessary. For limiting the onward passage it was essential to have a constructive and credible policy


\textsuperscript{154} ibid, p.424.

\textsuperscript{155} "Australia and ASEAN", n.144, p.350.

\textsuperscript{156} \textit{AFAR}, vol.51, no.6, June 1980, p.223.
involving the responsibility of receiving refugees and providing financial assistance too. This was done through the UNHCR by giving over $11 million in transit camps in the ASEAN countries.\textsuperscript{157}

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tony Street at the Sixth ASEAN-Australia Forum in Canberra, on 14 April 1981 proclaimed Australia as one of the major resettlement countries continued to meet humanitarian obligations. He also mentioned that to date Australia accepted 47,000 Indochinese refugees as permanent residents and $30 million were spent on various related programmes.\textsuperscript{158}

As a result of discouraging illegal departures of the Vietnamese boat people by the authorities, Australia’s refugee intake declined in 1982-84.

In 1983, Australia was going through economic recession under the Labor Party regime. So, the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, Stewart West set an Immigration Programme. Accordingly, they gave preference to family reunion than previous liberal government’s priority to the labour shortage. He announced total intake for 1983-84 approximately 70,000.\textsuperscript{159} He also mentioned to the Parliament that under previous government family migration fell from 1982-83 estimates of 44,000 to only

\textsuperscript{157} Ministry for Foreign Affairs, New Release, M46, Canberra, 26 June 1979.
\textsuperscript{158} AFAR, vol.52, no.4, April 1981, p.189.
\textsuperscript{159} ibid, vol.56, no.3, March 1984, p.234.

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27,000. The Philippines had been measured to be the fourth largest source of migration to Australia. In 1981 more than 14,000 Filipino residents were present in Australia.

Australia had been very cautious about its relations with the ASEAN on the issue of refugees. Australia, in the forms of cash, food, aid and personnel, contributed over $50 million as assistance to the refugees. Stewart West on 7 March 1984 stated in the Parliament, "Nothing could be more damaging to our current good relations with ASEAN and our regional understanding than to unilaterally and suddenly withdraw from the Indo-Chinese refugee problem."

People who were departing Vietnam were not necessarily refugees. In many cases they were illegal immigrants too. Australia wished to set some principles and objectives to receive refugees from Vietnam on mutual grounds with the ASEAN. Thereafter at the meeting between the ASEAN and the dialogue partners in Bangkok on 7-9 July 1988, Foreign Minister of Thailand, Siddhi Savetsila discussed the Australian attitude. He said, "We all agree that humanitarian treatment should be rendered to refugees and that relevant

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160 ibid, p.235.
international principles regarding refugees should be upheld. Australia and the ASEAN shared same views on repatriation of the refugees, who could not satisfy the accepted criteria for their status to be declared as refugees.

Thus, Australia seemed to have supported the ASEAN countries on the issue of the refugees coming from Indo-China. Both had tried to work together on the issue of illegal flow of migrants.

3.8 Civil Aviation

The civil aviation problem was not that important in Australia-ASEAN relations. It concerned only one ASEAN member, Singapore. But, from the beginning, Singapore tried to make it an ASEAN issue.

The problem arose when the Australian government tried to protect the interest of the QANTAS in home market and the Kangaroo route between Australia and Europe. Many European airlines and the Singapore Airlines (SIA) entered the market. The Singapore Airlines was created after the break up of Malaysia-Singapore Airlines into SIA and the Malaysian Airline System (MAS) in 1970. It offered many free services beyond those prescribed by the

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164 21st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and Post Ministerial Conference with the Dialogue Partners, Bangkok, 4-9 July 1988, Jakarta, p.54.
International Air Transport Association. The Singapore government enjoyed high profits from their Airlines, which was over 3 percent of country's GNP in 1978 and was supposed to rise to 6 percent in 1983.

Faced with the declining market share and continuous pressure from the Australians for lower fares, Australian International Civil Aviation Policy (ICAP) was initiated. Australia was concerned about its Kangaroo route as it was its major earner. On 11 October 1978, the Australian Transport Minister, Peter James Nixon announced in the Parliament to implement new, revised fares from 1970 on the said route.

New policy had adverse effect on Singapore's revenue. This policy discouraged the stopovers which was a damage to Singapore's tourist industry. SIA was the only Airlines among all the ASEAN countries which depended heavily on its Australian routes.

None of the ASEAN countries had sympathetic attitude towards Singapore. Malaysia already had bilateral civil aviation disputes with Singapore, and the Thai officials were also unsympathetic to the SIA's problems. Ultimately, Singapore could make the ICAP an ASEAN issue. The

167 The Australian, 7 February 1979.
168 Janet Lim, n.49, p.42.
ASEAN started criticising the Australian rules of civil aviation and also decided to negotiate the matter with Australia on a group basis.\textsuperscript{171} The ASEAN opposed ICAP. Primary ASEAN demand was to allow them to participate in the low fare scheme and other was, that "ICAP should not be confined to Australia alone."\textsuperscript{172}

Jakarta Ministerial meeting in March 1979 brought no solution to the dispute. Australia offered lower stopover rates but not a concession to the ASEAN on the route.\textsuperscript{173} In this meeting Singapore and the other ASEAN countries were hostile to each other on the issue of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).\textsuperscript{174} The then Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser had helped Malaysia in getting it solved. An MAS aircraft was grounded in Sydney for nine days as a result of the reaction of industrial dispute involving MAS. The Malaysian government jailed twenty three members of the Airlines Employees Union (AEU). Malcolm Fraser authorised the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) to fly the aircraft to a RAAF base for refuelling. The Malaysian Prime Minister thanked Fraser for this act.\textsuperscript{175}


\textsuperscript{172} Guy Sacerdoti, "ASEAN's Divided Unity", \textit{FEER}, vol.103, no.10, 9 March 1979, p.51.

\textsuperscript{173} \textit{AFR}, n.16, 21 March 1979.

\textsuperscript{174} \textit{The Business Times}, 19 March 1979.

\textsuperscript{175} \textit{The Straits Times}, 21 March 1979.
In May 1979, a meeting between the Australian and ASEAN officials, was held to discuss the issue. Australia granted the ASEAN airlines limited concession to carry 350 passengers per week in each direction on Kangaroo route for twelve months. Only one stopover per round trip was permitted with the cost of $A150.\textsuperscript{176} The outcome was dissatisfactory for Singapore. The ASEAN airlines were allowed to carry 36,400 cheap fare passengers which was less than the 165,000 per year put forward by the ASEAN.

Again a meeting of the Economic Ministers in Canberra was held on 22-25 October 1979. In this meeting it was realised, that tourism makes great impact on economic growth and Australia should co-operate with the ASEAN to ensure that growth.\textsuperscript{177} A general agreement was also reached on cheap fare advance payment flights between Australia and the ASEAN.\textsuperscript{178} The new fare came into effect on 1 January 1980.\textsuperscript{179} The ASEAN airlines were also guaranteed seating on nonstopover journey on the Australia Europe route. Thus, the tension between the ASEAN and Australia was diffused.

\textbf{3.9 Irian Jaya}

\textsuperscript{176} "Australia-ASEAN Aviation Talks", News Release, Department of Transport News, Canberra, 7 May 1979.

\textsuperscript{177} AFAR, vol.50, no.10, October 1979, p.583.

\textsuperscript{178} AFAR, vol.51, no.11, November 1980, p.414.

\textsuperscript{179} ibid.
West Iran had been important for the Australian security. The Indonesian claim to West Irian was not endorsed by the UN, despite Indonesian efforts. Australia has also supported the Dutch sovereignty over West Irian on cultural and ethnic grounds. Tension between the Netherlands and Indonesia was released after signing an agreement in 1962. Australia always looked for a peaceful settlement.\textsuperscript{180} West Iran was transferred to the UN on 1 October 1962 and was to be handed over to Indonesia after 1 May 1963 but before the end of 1969.\textsuperscript{181} During this period people of the region were supposed to decide their future.

The management of the 7,600 km. border between Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Irian Jaya, an Indonesian province, created tension in the relations between Australia and Indonesia in mid 1980s. A large number of the Irianese refugees fled across the border to PNG. Stability of the border matters to Australia's security.

Leaders of PNG look towards Australia for the solution of their problems. Australia can help in a practical way but PNG is a sovereign state and should try to find solution to its problem itself.\textsuperscript{182} This was stated by

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{180} B.D.Beddie, "Australian Policy Towards Indonesia", \textit{Australian Outlook}, vol.22, August 1968, pp.129-30.
\item \textsuperscript{181} \textit{Current Notes}, n.8, vol.33, 1962, pp.70-72.
\item \textsuperscript{182} \textit{AFAT}, vol.62, nos. 11&12 Supplement, November-December 1991, p.29.
\end{itemize}
the Australian officials at the Royal Institute of Public Administration in Darwin on 12 September 1991.

Thus, Australia did not want to get its relations effected with its neighbour, Indonesia.

Brunei Darussalam was admitted to the ASEAN as sixth member in January 1984. Australia acclaimed the participation of Brunei in various fields. 183

The ASEAN’s relations with Australia had involved a number of political issues. Australia gave its full diplomatic support to the ASEAN on Kampuchean issue. Timor affair brought tension among Indonesia and Australia but it could also be sorted out in a healthy political environment. Australia recognised Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. Recurring problems on the Irian Jaya-PNG border also threatened Australia-ASEAN relationship. The statement of Prime Minister Bob Hawke in 1984, that these were for Indonesia and PNG to resolve, removed this complication too.

Criticisms of Indonesia in the Australian media and Indonesian responses to them resulted in a barrier to communication. It was not removed till 1988. But now the relations are once again normal. Australia’s immigration policy was misunderstood in the beginning. The Australian officials made sustained efforts to remove this misunderstanding. In fact, the other countries of the

ASEAN had to face the problems that arose from the Vietnamese migration. Australia proved to be a good neighbour having share part of that burden.

Australia's dialogues with the member states of the ASEAN on political issues had been periodical and productive. The Australian Prime Minister, E.G. Whitlam in 1974 called ASEAN, "...unquestionably the most important, most relevant, the most natural. Australia does not seek to be a member of the ASEAN, though we have close bilateral and regional relationship with all its members."184

How much are the political arguments going to disturb the economic interaction becomes a conscious effort to be made. Because whatever happens in one part of relationship affects what happens in the other parts of it. Though, Hal Hill, Senior Fellow in Department of Economics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the ANU, Canberra further said, "that political relations have never effected the economic relations between the two."185

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185 In an interview to the Author on 29 November 1996, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.