CHAPTER IV

POLICY TOWARDS THE KAMPUCHEAN PROBLEM

In its attempt to find a peaceful political solution to the complex Kampuchean problem, Indonesia faced a serious dilemma in its regional security policy. The dilemma stemmed from its self-perception of being a country of sufficient international credibility, having a large size of territory with enormous natural resources, but without having strong economic and military capabilities:

The dilemma also derived from Indonesia's divergent strategic perception vis-a-vis its ASEAN partners, particularly Thailand and Singapore. Both these countries regarded Vietnam as a source of security threat and regional instability in Southeast Asia. Indonesia on the contrary was of the opinion that Vietnam could play a role as a buffer state in countering Chinese hegemonic ambition in Southeast Asia in the long run. Nevertheless, Indonesia realised that it could not go alone in pursuing its strategic goals. It had no doubt gained economic and political benefits as member of the ASEAN. However, it could not easily accept Thailand's leading role in determining ASEAN's policy towards the Kampuchean problems. This dilemma stood in the way of Indonesia's attempt in finding a peaceful political solution.
ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIETNAM

The fall of Saigon into the hands of Communist North Vietnam in April 1975 caused differences policy outlook among Indonesia's policy makers as to how to respond to the dramatic political developments in Indochina. Among them Adam Malik, Chaidir Anwar Sani or even veteran Ruslan Abdulgani were more sympathetic towards Vietnam. They were inclined to consider Vietnamese as more nationalist than communist who had long struggled against foreign domination. According to them, they had fought against the imperialist China, France, Japan and the United States.¹ They also viewed Vietnam as a potential partner in establishing regional order in Southeast Asia beneficial to Indonesia.

On the contrary, the military leaders viewed Vietnam with a sense of apprehension. There was a likelihood of Vietnam either moving quickly into outright export of revolution or spending more time in its internal consolidation. They suspected that even if Vietnam was to be preoccupied with domestic problems for quite sometime, it would still feel obliged to show its solidarity with communist insurgents in other parts of Southeast Asia. Such

a solidarity meant trouble for Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines. In these three countries the remnants of communist insurgents still remained strong. 2

Another serious concern in Indonesia was that Vietnam might use its military means to compete with Indonesia for a regional leadership in Southeast Asia. The apprehension among Indonesia's military generals was further aggravated by Vietnam's forthright rhetoric in support of Fretilin movement in East Timor. All these were seen by them as a proof that Hanoi was more of a rival rather than partner in the region. 3

At the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Kuala Lumpur on May 13-15, 1975 Foreign Minister Adam Malik expressed ASEAN readiness to have friendly relations with the three nations in Indochina. He also stated that Indonesia was ready to have normal and friendly relations with the communist governments in Indochina provided that the communists would not assist communist insurgents in Southeast Asian countries. 4 He was apparently under

compulsion to articulate the security concerns of the Indonesian military.

Adam Malik seemed to sincerely believe that Indochinese states, especially Vietnam could join ASEAN. He stated this aspect in his speech before the Indonesian Press Club in Jakarta in January 1976. He asserted that there was always a possibility of cooperation between ASEAN states and Indochinese countries in establishing peace and stability in Southeast Asia. This cooperation could be sought through shared commitment of preventing war and also in preventing foreign powers from interfering in the affairs of the region. Malik also emphasised that differences in ideology and social systems should not prevent Indochinese states to join ASEAN.5

Malik's hope that Vietnam could join ASEAN appeared groundless. Vietnam caused apprehensions about its intention in Indonesia not long after it gained control of South Vietnam. An official organ of Vietnamese Communist Party Nhan Dhan proclaimed that:

Victories of the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao peoples have had the effects of setting forth the Southeast Asian people's struggle for independence and freedom as an example and has strongly stimulated this struggle...

The struggle of the Southeast Asian people is enjoying a favourable conditions (sic!) and has a brightest prospect ever seen in their history of the past century. By intensifying this struggle, the people of Southeast Asian countries will certainly foil neo-colonialist schemes and tricks of the US imperialist and reactionaries... 6

The statement generated concern in ASEAN capitals since it could boost morale of communist insurgents in Southeast Asia. Indonesia was concern about the possibility that Vietnamese weapons which had already reached communist rebels in Thailand and Malaysia, could also fall into the hands of People's Army of North Kalimantan. It had been active along the Kalimantan - Sarawak border areas. 7

Indonesia's serious concern seemed to be substantiated. At the time of the Bali Summit in February 1976, Vietnam's position was not only hostile but also threatening because of its open support to communist insurgents in Southeast Asia. In February 1976 a joint statement issued by Vietnamese and Laotian Communist Party leaders, Le Duan and Kaysone Phomvihane declared that they fully supported the just and victorious struggle of the people of Southeast for


peace, independence and democracy. Both Le Duan and Kaysone Phomvihane asserted that they would actively contribute to helping Southeast Asia to become really independent, peaceful and neutral.8

The statement from two Indochinese communist leaders did not dissuade President Suharto from convincing the Indochinese countries that ASEAN was not directed against them. This aspect became obvious at the swearing in ceremony of veteran leader of Indonesian National Party (PNI) Hardi, S.H. as Indonesia's Ambassador to Vietnam. He pointed out that the ASEAN was not a threat to any group or state. He also made it clear that it should not be construed as a sign of weakness of the ASEAN countries. On the contrary, it revealed a determination to collectively develop the region and was responsible for the future of Southeast Asia.9

Vietnam slightly modified positively its stance towards ASEAN states in June 1976 shortly after formal unification of South and North Vietnam upon which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) came into existence. Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh put forward principles on which foreign

policy of Vietnam was based. These principles called for
development among countries in the region for building
prosperity in keeping with each country's specific
conditions. It also called for development of cooperation
for the cause of independence, peace and genuine neutrality
in Southeast Asia. 10

Vietnam's eagerness to come to terms with ASEAN
countries was further underlined when Deputy Foreign
Minister Phan Hien visited Malaysia, Indonesia and the
Philippines in July 1976. Phan Hien hinted that Vietnam no
longer regarded ASEAN as an imperialist invention and once
there was no more foreign bases in ASEAN member states,
Vietnam might consider cooperation with ASEAN. Phan Hien
also pointed that his visit to the ASEAN capitals was aimed
at promoting bilateral relations between Vietnam and ASEAN
countries. 11

Phan Hien's trip to Malaysia, Indonesia and the
Philippines could be considered as a response to joint

10. Leszek Buszynski, Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast
Asia (London, 1986), p.116. See also, Leo Suryadinata,
"Indonesia-Vietnam Relations Under Suharto,"
Contemporary Southeast Asia, Vol.12, No.14, March 1991,
p.333.

11. New Standard (Jakarta Daily), July 10, 1976. See also,
Arnfj Jorgensen Dahl, Regional Organization and Order
communique of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Manila on June 24-26, 1976. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting noted that there were increasing bilateral contacts among states in the region. While hopeful that such contacts would break barrier of suspicions and misunderstanding, it stressed it should be on the basis of mutual sincerity and through reciprocal initiatives."

A new political development occurred in Indochina in 1976. This development eventually coerced Vietnamese leaders to change their attitudes towards ASEAN countries. It reflected a growing rift between China and Vietnam. As a serious fall out, it led to escalation of conflict between Vietnam and Kampuchea which finally culminating into a bloody war.

The growing rift between China and Vietnam became public only after some 170,000 Vietnamese of Chinese extraction fled into Chinese territories. The Overseas Chinese in Vietnam were as much hated by the local Vietnamese as they were elsewhere in Southeast Asia (with the exception of Thailand) because of their economic dominance. After the communist victory in April 1975, the

Chinese were grouped together with intellectuals, devout Buddhists and Catholics as potential groups opposed the spread of socialism.13

The Vietnamese of Chinese extraction were gradually moved into a New Economic Zone areas close to Tay Ninh bordering with Kampuchea. The hardship and discontent forced many of them to flee Vietnam. Peking accused Hanoi of persecuting ethnic Chinese. On the contrary, Vietnam countered the accusation by stating that the exodus had been incited by China in an effort to create problems to the Vietnamese economy.14 Sino-Vietnamese talks in September 1978 failed to produce any positive result. As a result, relations between Hanoi and Peking deteriorated and tensions prevailed along the Sino-Vietnamese border areas.

Relations between Vietnam and Kampuchea had also been fraught with bitter disputes and suspicions. The Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot which came to power in April 1975 had a suspicion that Vietnam had an expansionist ambition on Kampuchean territory. The Kampuchean fear was seemingly justified. Vietnamese soldiers refused to withdraw from the

sanctuary they had occupied since 1960 when Prince Sihanouk was still in power. Soon after its triumph in South Vietnam, Vietnam, according to Chinese source claimed Kampuchea's Way island in the Gulf of Siam. This ultimately led to a military clashes between the two neighbouring countries.15

In March and April 1977, Kampuchea launched a major attack on Ha Tien region. The attack on Ha Tien, a Vietnamese New Economic Zone, was designed to weaken Vietnamese economy and frustrating an alleged Vietnamese plan to integrate Kampuchea into Vietnamese-dominated Indochina federation. Vietnam responded by severing its relations with Kampuchea in December 1977, by the time it had already deployed more than 60,000 troops on Kampuchean - Vietnamese border.16

China perceived the success of Vietnamese military operations in Kampuchea with growing alarm. Since 1977 China had provided the Pol Pot regime in Phnom Penh with 14,000-20,000 technicians and advisers. China had also helped Kampuchea with weaponry and later with jet fighters. It could not tolerate Vietnamese hegemonic ambitions in


Indochina which it considered as its own sphere of influence.

Indonesian and its ASEAN partners looked on the development in Indochina as helpless spectators. Adam Malik who had just been appointed as Vice-President of Indonesia expressed his distress on Kampuchea-Vietnam conflict. To him the conflict between the two Indochinese states was largely an extension of larger conflict between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Adam Malik stated, "Indonesia has little doubt that Vietnam and Kampuchea were only pawns in the conflict". He also warned that the ASEAN countries should not involve themselves in the conflict in Indochina.¹⁷

A similar warning also came from Nasruddin Hars, a member of Commission I (Foreign Policy, Defence and Information) of the Indonesian Parliament (DPR). Nasruddin Hars called upon the ASEAN states to be cautious in dealing with the conflict since both China and Vietnam would try to pull ASEAN into their sides. He also emphasised that ASEAN's principle was very clear, namely to prevent major powers from interfering in the internal affairs of the region. The developments in Indochina according to Nasruddin Hars proved

that major powers were involved in it. ASEAN, according to Hars, had to be more cautious and should not involve in the conflict.18

By the middle of 1978, Indonesia began to notice Vietnam's new positive attitude towards ASEAN. The Indonesian Observer noted that this could not be disassociated from the rivalry between the Soviet Union and China. It further stated:

Vietnam which together with the Soviet Union had denounced ASEAN as a military alliance came out in support of the regional grouping only shortly before the Soviet statement was released here last week. Up until recently China had been the only communist power to express full support for ASEAN and the proposed establishment of a Zone, Peace and Freedom and Neutrality.

The Russian evidently felt that China had gained by its recognition of ASEAN and it could not permit the Chinese to have the monopoly. The Vietnamese change of attitude towards ASEAN might be due to the fact that the Vietnamese had seen for themselves this regional grouping has been set up expressly to improve the standard of living of people and to promote peace and stability.19

The Vietnamese new attitude towards ASEAN was reflected by an official visit of Prime Minister Pham Van Dong to

ASEAN capitals in September 1978. Before the arrival of the Vietnamese Prime Minister in Jakarta, Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja had decided to go to all ASEAN capitals in his capacity as ASEAN's Standing Committee Chairman. The purpose of his visit was to consolidate ASEAN's position in dealing with Vietnam.20

Pham Van Dong's visit to the ASEAN capitals brought an optimism in particular his pledge to respect each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political system and not to use force or threat of force in their bilateral relations. Although he still rejected ASEAN concept of Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality, but Pham Van Dong and ASEAN heads of states stressed this was more to do with differences in terminology than on fundamental attitudes.21

Despite the fact that ASEAN states welcomed Vietnam's new positive attitude towards them, there was still strong suspicion among the ASEAN member states towards Vietnam. They could not ignore the fact that in June 1978 Vietnam had joined communist bloc's economic grouping, Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), at the thirty-second

prime ministers meeting in Bucharest, Romania. In the eyes of the ASEAN leaders, Vietnam's membership in the CMEA had placed it as a member of the Soviet communist bloc and hence it should be dealt with suspicion.22

In Indonesia the suspicion was articulated by a member of the Commission I (Foreign Affairs, Defence and Information) of Indonesian Parliament. He called for a cautious attitude in dealing with Hanoi. The member of Parliament stated that the Vietnamese new attitude could not be detached from China's success in forging closer cooperation with Thailand. He suspected that, Vietnam caught up in a potentially dangerous confrontation with China, Vietnam needed friends anywhere it could find them.23

Political development taking place in Indochina after Pham Van Dong's visit to ASEAN capitals caused alarm among


23. When Pham Van Dong travelled to Bangkok, he brought with him a draft treaty of friendship and cooperation that he would like Thailand to sign. But Thailand refused to endorse the draft. In Thailand and other ASEAN states, there were an understanding that Vietnamese eagerness to forge close relations with ASEAN members was largely caused by its steadily deteriorating relations with China. There was also a suspicion that Vietnam courtship was part of a wider battle for influence in the region between the Soviet Union and Vietnam on the one hand and China and Kampuchea on the other. See, Corrine Phuangkasen, Thailand's Foreign Relations 1964-1980 (Singapore, 1985), p.29.
the ASEAN member states. On November 3, 1978, Vietnam concluded a 25-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. The Treaty reminded the ASEAN leaders with a similar one between the Soviet Union and India in August 1971 which brought about the dismemberment of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{24}

The ASEAN countries followed the developments in Indochina with anxiety. In this connection, Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea on December 25, 1978 came to them as a shock. Some 100,000 Vietnamese troops had launched a massive attack on Kampuchea. Tank-led infantry had plunged across the border areas, fanned out Kampuchean forces and occupied Kampuchea. The invasion forced Pol Pot and his regime to flee to Cardomon Mountain to continue the fight. Phnom Penh fell into the hands of Vietnamese forces on January 7, 1979. It was subsequently followed by the establishment of People's Revolutionary Council. The Council appointed Heng Samrin and Hun Sen as Chairman and Foreign Minister respectively.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{24} Ramesh Thakur and Carlyle A Thayer, n.22, p.264.

\textsuperscript{25} Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore had suspected: "It seems always that once the Soviet Union concludes such a treaty with any country, the joint signatory nation sooner or later launches an aggression against another country Far Eastern Economic Review, June 15, 1979, p.11."
Indonesia's Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja responded to the new development in Kampuchea on January 9, 1979 with serious concern. In his statement as ASEAN's Standing Committee Chairman Mochtar Kusumaatmadja asserted that he "deeply deplore the current escalation and enlargement of conflict between the two states in Indochina". He also expressed "grave concern over the implication of this development and its impact on peace, security and stability in Southeast Asia". 26

The invasion of Kampuchea by Vietnamese forces compelled the ASEAN Foreign Ministers to hold an emergency meeting in Bangkok. The purpose was to assess the situation and discuss as to how to respond to the development in Indochina. ASEAN Foreign Miniser could not ignore the fact that Vietnam had through its armed invasion virtually established a new government in Kampuchea. The Invasion was against a new regional order that ASEAN countries had wanted to establish in Southeast Asia based on Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. 27 More importantly, the invasion was

27. ASEAN Document Series 1967-1986 n.11, p.120.
against the pledge that Vietnamese Prime Minister had given to the ASEAN leaders during his visit to the ASEAN capitals in September 1978.

The ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok on January 12-13, 1979 came out with a resolution. It stated: "The ASEAN Foreign Minister strongly condemned the armed intervention against the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kampuchea". At the same time, it also reaffirmed the right of the Kampuchean people to determine their future by themselves. The resolution demanded the total withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea and urged the Secretary General of the United Nations to consider the situation in Kampuchea.28

The Bangkok statement mentioned above was less direct and deliberately avoided to identify or denounce Vietnam. However, more important than that was the choice of Bangkok as the venue for the meeting. ASEAN Foreign Minister were keen to demonstrate solidarity with a regional partner which had become ASEAN's frontline state. Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja admitted that the Bangkok was chosen deliberately. He stated:

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By choosing Bangkok as the venue for the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting ASEAN wanted to show that all ASEAN states fully supported Thailand which was facing difficult situation after the fall of Phnom Penh. Since Thailand was having a border with Kampuchea where a fierce battle was taking place with the deployment of troops and heavy weaponry, it could seriously threaten Thailand's security.29

Chaidir Anwar Sani, Indonesia's Ambassador to the United Nations took an initiative to put forward a resolution at the Security Council of the United Nations. The resolution demanded the withdrawal of invading forces from Kampuchea. He also said that the ASEAN member countries were willing to cooperate with the United Nations Security Council in the formulation of a draft. However, the resolution was defeated by 13 votes against 2 in favour on January 15, 1979. The Soviet Union had vetoed the resolution on the same day.30

At a time when the ASEAN was preoccupied with their diplomatic efforts to assess the serious repercussion of Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea, another blow struck the

29. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, "Pidato Pengarahan Pada Seminar Masalah Perkembangan Di Indochina" (Briefing Speech At the Seminar On the Developments In Indochina), Jakarta, February 15-17, 1979, p.2.

region when Chinese troops launched a massive attack on Vietnam's northern territory. Led by 300 tanks, 700 warplanes and 170,000 soldiers, Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) embarked on a "punitive mission to teach a lesson", to the Cuba of the east.\(^{31}\) This was the first time that China had gone to war and it created a shock that reverberated throughout the region.

For Indonesia and its ASEAN partners the developments in Indochina did not augur well for the prospect of establishing a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPPAN). Furthermore, the Sino-Vietnamese border war and the growing Soviet presence in Vietnam in the aftermath of the war meant that the trend in the region was towards great power involvement in the Southeast Asian region. ASEAN states were worried that this raised the possibility of Southeast Asia being embroiled once again in the geopolitics of extra-regional rivalry particularly between China and the Soviet Union.\(^{32}\) The involvement of these two big powers would make the resolution of the Kampuchean problem more difficult.


The Chinese invasion of the Vietnamese northern borders caused serious concern among Indonesia's security establishment. The fact that one apparent motive for China's invasion was the alleged persecution of Vietnamese of Chinese descent generated a wider anxiety over any future involvement on behalf of the ethnic Chinese in South east Asia. Indonesia had always viewed China as its potential long term threat because of its size, its proximity, its possession of nuclear weapons and its territorial claim to islands in the South China Sea. China in its past history had regarded Southeast Asia as its sphere of influence.\footnote{Indonesia, Institute of Research and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, \textit{Vietnam, Kampuchea Dan Laos Dalam Dasawarsa 1980an} (Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos In the Decade of 1980s) (Jakarta, 1982), p. 193.}

Indonesia's policy makers were alarm by the Chinese tendency to resort to force to settle its differences with Vietnam. Chinese punitive military mission against Vietnam changed Indonesia's strategic perspective towards Vietnam. It was clear in the mind of Indonesia's security establishment that Vietnam could play a role as some sort of buffer to the Chinese hegemonic ambitions in Southeast Asia. This strategic perspective would become a crucial in
Indonesia's dealing with Vietnam.\textsuperscript{34} Lie Tek Tjeng of Indonesia's National Defence Institute (LEMHANAS) clearly reflected this strategic perspective when he stated that the Chinese "punitive expedition" of Vietnam in 1979 made the leadership in Indonesia, particularly strategists realised Vietnam's importance as possible and viable buffer against the People's Republic of China.\textsuperscript{35}

To assess the situation in Kampuchea, President Suharto called Indonesia's Ambassador in Bangkok, Lieutenant General Hasnan Habib to Jakarta for consultations. According to General Habib, Vietnam seemed determined to stay in Kampuchea until a complete elimination of Pol Pot regime. He asserted that world opinion alone was not enough to stop the war in Kampuchea. Vietnam would refuse to withdraw its troops from Kampuchea and the Soviet Union would support it. He also stated that Vietnam gave every indication that it was not moving into the direction of reaching a political solution to solve the problem and as long as Vietnam did not have any political will to solve the conflict, there would

\textsuperscript{34} Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, "ASEAN As An Alternative Untuk Mengisi Kekosongan Kekuatan Di Asia Tenggara" (ASEAN As An Alternative To Fill The Power Vacuum In Southeast Asia), \textit{Persepsi} (Jakarta, Ministry of Defence and Security), Vol.3, No.2, September 1981, p.5.

be no solution in Kampuchea.  

ASEAN member states decided to take the Kampuchea problem to the United Nations and called for a cease fire and withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. ASEAN states also argued that the international community should not accept Vietnam's military intervention in Kampuchea. Indonesia's Ambassador to the United Nations Abdullah Kamil spoke about this when he asserted: "Foreign intervention be they military or otherwise, are flagrant violations of the principles of peaceful co-existence and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. These lofty principles are enunciated not only in the United Nations Charter but also in other historic documents, such as the Bandung Declaration of 1955..." He also stressed that the acceptance of Vietnam's intervention would mean the affirmation of the law of the jungle. Ultimately, in November 1979, the United Nations General Assembly voted in favour of the ASEAN resolution with 91 pros and 29 against and 29 abstentions.

38. Ibid., n.37, p.1269.
ASEAN states had on various occasion manifested their common approach in finding a solution to the Kampuchean problem. These were clearly reflected in the General Assembly of the United Nations and in their annual foreign ministers meeting. However, beneath commonality of approach as to how to deal with the conflict in Kampuchea, there was an internal disagreement within the ASEAN member countries. At the root of the problem was a difference of opinion between Indonesia and Malaysia on the one hand and Thailand and Singapore on the other. The Philippines had been odd man out with regard to the problem in Kampuchea and it tried to play a mediating role between the two.

A senior Indonesian official frankly expressed Indonesia's attitude towards Vietnam when he stated:

Our concern is that the continued conflict between Vietnam and China is going to make Vietnam more and more dependent on Moscow. I am not so much worried about the Soviet naval presence in Vietnam which I believe is to face Chinese threat. But I would like to see Vietnam develop into a Yugoslavia. I am sure the Vietnamese would become one if they are given alternative source of support. Economically, ASEAN can not of much help. Only the US and Japan can provide alternative.39

Indonesia accepted Vietnamese domination in Indochina

as an unavoidable development given Vietnam's military capability, its history and its size. Understandably, Indonesia's security establishment was not averse to the idea of Vietnam maintaining some form of domination in Indochina. Malaysia although shared Indonesia's strategic outlook regarding Vietnam's domination in Indochina, it could not accept that Vietnam carried out its hegemonic ambition through a military execution. This sympathetic attitude towards Vietnam was compounded by the fact that Vietnam was firmly in control in Kampuchea and despite the grave economic difficulties, Vietnam was not ready to give up its control in Phnom Penh. Such a perspective led the policy makers in both Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur to look for a face-saving formula. This solution would come out later in Kuantan Proposal in March 1987. 40

There was also fear in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur that the perceived Vietnamese threat would force Thailand to rely more and more on China. An increased Chinese cooperation with Thailand was the last thing that Malaysia and Indonesia would like to see. At the same time, Indonesia also realised that it had to support Thailand's position as a frontline

However the fact that Indonesia which had always claimed to be the first among equals had to tow Thailand's line created a sense of frustration among its security establishment. This frustration would sound louder and louder in the coming year.

In his attempt to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Kampuchea, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja had been lobbying for a voluntary repatriation of refugees from Kampuchea who took shelter along the Thai-Kampuchean border areas. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja seemed to assume that if the refugees who were living along the Thai border could be repatriated to Kampuches through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), it could help lessen the burden of Thailand and at the same time improve the general atmosphere in the region. Mochtar believed that this would pave the way for fruitful negotiations with Vietnam. However, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's idea did not go much further. Thailand's Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila turned down the idea. He stated: "We do not believe in such piecemeal solution nor do we think that this would improve

the chances of more substantive negotiation with Vietnam."\(^{42}\) Thailand and Singapore were convinced that the immediate threat came from what they considered as Vietnamese hegemonic ambitions that constituted paramount danger to the security in the region. Vietnamese threat assumed a greater significant because Thailand perceived it to be a Vietnamese intention to dominate Indochina, its ideological commitment to export revolution and its strategic alliance with the Soviet Union. Thailand had long feared the creation of Indochina federation for it would not only remove the barrier between Thailand and Vietnam, but it would also lead to a perpetual Vietnamese domination in Indochina.\(^{43}\) One political scientist correctly pointed out: "if Kampuchea is no longer a buffer between Thailand and Vietnam, then imperceptibly Thailand would turn into a buffer state, respectful, sensitive to the wishes of the big neighbour, Vietnam's controlled Indochina.\(^{44}\)

In March 1980 President Suharto and Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn of Malaysia took an initiative to meet

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44. *Ibid.*, p. 94
Kuantan in the eastern coast of Malaysia. The meeting took place in the aftermath of political turbulence in Thailand after the resignation of Prime Minister Kriangsak Chamanand. The new government under Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond was facing difficulties with the political parties. The situation was further aggravated by the continued flux of refugees crossing the Thai border areas from Kampuchea.

The meeting between the two leaders discussed the security situation in Kampuchea in connection with the existing tension prevailing between Thailand and Vietnam. The two leaders came to the conclusion that the Kampuchean problem could be solved only if Vietnam became less dependent on the Soviet Union. Secondly, there should be an immediate solution to the Kampuchean problem while at the same time recognizing Vietnam's security interests. Additionally, China's threat against Vietnam had forced Vietnam to depend on the Soviet Union. Therefore, peace and stability in Southeast Asia could only be achieved if the states in the region prevented the involvement of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.45

However, contrary to the fear of both President Suharto and Prime minister Hussein Onn, Prime Minister Tinsulanond showed his political skill to bring about political stability in Thailand. He also emphasised Thailand's willingness to abide by ASEAN's consensus and the United Nations resolutions on the Kampuchean problem. In April 1980, during his visit to Jakarta, Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond expressed to President Suharto in "very polite but firm" manner his rejection of the Kuantan Proposal. Thai Prime Minister considered that Vietnam had persistently refused to withdraw its forces, the time seemed hardly apt for making new overture toward Vietnam.46

The Kuantan Proposal was further undermined when on June 23, 1980 more than 2000 Vietnamese troops supported by artillery fires crossed the Thai-Kampuchean border and occupied a number of Thai villages. It seemed that Hanoi wanted to show to the ASEAN's security policy makers that it had the military power to strike at will. However, through Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond's swift and decisive action to deploy Thai air force, Thailand was able to thwart Vietnamese military incursion.47

46. Ibid., p.96.
Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach responded to the Kuantan proposal negatively. In his statement after a brief meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Hussein Onn, Nguyen Co Thach rejected the Kuantan proposal, since according to him implied that Vietnam was under the Soviet control. "It could be a humiliation to say that Vietnam is not free and independent," he asserted. At the same time, he reiterated Hanoi's outstanding position that political reality in Kampuchea is irreversible. According to Nguyen Co Thach, it might take time for the world to accept the situation in Kampuchea, but Vietnam would be ready to wait for much longer.48

Despite the failure of the Kuantan proposal, Indonesia persisted in its attempt to seek reconciliation with Vietnam. Lieutenant General Benny Murdani, then Deputy Chairman of the National Intelligence Coordinating Body (BAKIN) was despatched in a secret mission to Hanoi in May 1980. General Murdani was one among security officials in Jakarta who did not believe that Hanoi launched on adventure in Kampuchea. It was a threat from the Pol Pot regime with the backing of China which was the main principle motive behind the Vietnamese invasion. General Murdani's purpose

to visit Hanoi probably to persuade Hanoi to take a more accomodating attitude towards ASEAN's demand before the impending visit of Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thack to Jakarta. 49 Indonesia needed Vietnam's flexible attitude if it wanted to convince its ASEAN partners to adopt more conciliatory postures towards Vietnam in the coming ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in June 1980.

General Murdani's secret mission to Vietnam failed to persuade Hanoi to adopt a more accomodating attitude towards ASEAN's demands. This could be judged from Foreign Minister Co Thack's statement in Jakarta on June 19, 1980. He stated that Vietnam could not accept Indonesia's position that the solution to the Kampuchean problem should be the basis for regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. He reiterated Vietnam's position that it could not withdraw from Kampuchea as long as Chinese threat remained. 50

Vietnamese refusal to show more accomodating position compelled Indonesia to reconsider its policy towards Vietnam. This was reinforced by a strong opposition from Thailand to General Murdani's secret mission to Vietnam without prior consultation with other ASEAN member


countries. Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja was also concerned about the fact that Indonesia was out of step with its ASEAN partners. Unlike the Ministry of Defence and Security which deal with Indonesia's long term threat, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's primary task was to maintain ASEAN's unity as the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy. President Suharto's address to the nation on August 16, 1980 reflected this new policy. He asserted that Indonesia "give its fullest support to Thailand's right to defend the integrity of its state".51

ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur following the Vietnamese military incursion into Thai border areas on June 23, 1980. Reasonably, ASEAN Foreign Ministers were in no mood to make a compromise with Vietnam. The words they chose in their statement echoed these sentiments. Unlike in the previous year, ASEAN Foreign Ministers used stronger words such as "aggression" and "condemn" and referred to Vietnam by name instead of using the words "foreign troops".52

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52. ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986, n.11, p.73.
The ASEAN Foreign Minister Meeting on June 23, 1980 came out with a statement reflected ASEAN Foreign Minister's disappointment with Vietnam's stance. It stated:

The Foreign Ministers commenced their deliberations with a discussion on the serious development along the Thai Kampuchean border arising from the act of aggression by Vietnam against Thailand...They expressed their particular concern over the continued presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea and the denial of the right of self-determination for the Kampuchean people... The Foreign Ministers stressed the situation in Kampuchea and Afghanistan have a common denominator, the imposition of will on small independent states by foreign powers through the use of force in open violation of international law...They reiterated their strong condemnation of the armed intervention against these two countries.53

Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatnadja articulated Indonesia's hardening attitude towards Vietnam. He stated:

"We fully support zone of peace in Thailand at this testing time. We are ready to implement our support in the form which is apt with the situation and aim at achieving a political solution on the problem that Thailand is facing now".54

53. ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986, n. 11, p. 73.
The Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan encouraged ASEAN member countries to adopt a tougher attitude towards Vietnam. At the United Nations General Assembly in October 1980, ASEAN states got support from the Organization of the Islamic Conference (IOC). Prior to the submission of its own resolution, IOC had drafted a strong resolution demanding the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, reaffirming Afghanistan's right of self-determination, political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. 55

ASEAN resolution demanded a comprehensive political settlement to the Kampuchean problem. It demanded: (1) total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops within specified time and with U.N. verification; (2) U.N. measures during the withdrawal "to prevent Kampuchean armed elements from seizing power"; (3) free elections under U.N. supervision, (4) the convening of a conference to prohibit the introduction of foreign forces from Kampuchea: (5) respect for Kampuchea's sovereignty and territorial integrity, (6) assurance that Kampuchea would pose no threat to any of its neighbours. On October 23, 1980 97 members of the U.S.

General Assembly voted in favour 23 voted against and 22 members abstained. 56

The success of ASEAN member's diplomacy at the U.N. General Assembly enabled them to move ahead with other important task, namely to broaden the political base of the Khmer resistance groups opposing the People's Republic of Kampuchea. There was reason for this. The support to the notorious Democratic Kampuchea had declined with the withdrawal of support from two important countries Australia and Britain. Both Australia and Britain had withdrawn their recognition to Democratic Kampuchea in February 1980. 57 ASEAN members were seriously worried that the declining support for Democratic Kampuchea would damage international support ASEAN members were hoping to gain in the coming International Conference On Kampuchea to be held in New York in July 1980. Therefore, there was an urgent need to put up a more acceptable anti-Heng Samrin resistance group to the international community.

Singapore government took the initiative to put pressure on the three leaders to meet in Singapore in September 1981 in order to form a coalition group. These

57. Sinar Harapan (Jakarta Daily), September 2, 1980.

254
leaders were, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, leader of Armee Nationale Sihanoukiste (ANS), the armed wing of the Movement de Liberation Nationale du Kampuchea (Moulinaka), Khieu Samphan, nominal leader of the Khmer Rouge and Son Sann, leader of the Khmer's People National Liberation Front (KPLNF).  

The Khmer Rouge was reported to have around 30,000-40,000 well-trained and well-supplied and equipped guerilla fighters and by far the largest among all the three resistance groups. Its strength enabled the Khmer Rouge to resist Vietnamese forces attempt to wipe them out from Thailand-Kampuchea border areas. However, it was handicapped by its own notorious reputation for its brutal murder of thousands of Khmers when Khmer Rouge was in power during 1975 and 1978 and condemned by the international community. Formed in 1979, the Khmer's People National Liberation Front had around 16,000 fighters. It might be less powerful than the Khmer Rouge militarily, but it had the sympathy and support from the Kampuchean people. It had also a clean image abroad. Though the Moulinaka was the smallest among all three resistance groups, having only 4,000-5,000 guerillas, it was led by Prince Norodom Sihanouk who carried

58. Suara Karya (Jakarta Daily), September 5, 1981.
enormous sympathy both from within and outside Kampuchea. The international community regarded Prince Sihanouk as the only leader who could unite and regain Kampuchea's independence.59

Indonesia welcomed Singapore's initiative to invite the three resistances leaders. Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja stated that he was confident that other ASEAN member countries would welcome Sihanouk's leadership as the "most encouraging development in Kampuchea's political struggle since Sihanouk credibility is undisputable".60 Indonesia also despatched its most experienced diplomat Chaidir Anwar Sani to Pyong Yang where Prince Sihanouk resided to make sure that he would participate in the meeting in Singapore. He would also play a role as a "go-between" in Singapore in helping to minimize differences between the three resistance leaders. The government of Indonesia chose Anwar Sani for his experience, his fluency in French, the intellectual language of all Khmer leaders and his close friendship with the three leaders.

At the time when the ASEAN countries were exerting pressures on the three resistance leaders to form a coalition group, Vietnam, Laos and Vietnamese backed Heng

60. Kompas (Jakarta Daily), February 15, 1981.
Samrin regime in Phnom Penh put forward a proposal for direct talks between Thailand and the Indochinese countries to sign a non-aggression treaty and to create a demilitarized zone on both sides of the frontier between Kampuchea and Thailand. They also called for a regional conference of Southeast Asian states to discuss the problem of peace and security in the region.61

The ASEAN member countries responded negatively to the proposal of three Indochinese countries. They regarded it as Vietnam's attempt to divert the main issue concerning security problem in Southeast Asia, namely Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea. ASEAN states also considered the proposal for a regional conference as nothing more than a window dressing and as a ploy to gain backdoor recognition for the Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh.62

The negative response by ASEAN member countries to the Indochinese states did not discourage President Suharto to gently persuade Thailand to have a dialogue with Vietnam. The occasion for this was provided during his official visit to Bangkok in March 1981. President Suharto was

62. Sinar Harapan (Jakarta Daily), April 14, 1981.
seemingly encouraged by Burmese foreign minister's proposal that Burma was ready to offer Rangoon as the Venue for the meeting between the conflicting parties. But Thailand rejected the offer. Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond felt that direct negotiations between Thailand and Kampuchea would imply de facto recognition of the Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh, while direct talks with Vietnam, according to Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanond, would mean acceptance of the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea. 63

In their Annual Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Manila in June 1981, ASEAN Foreign Ministers welcomed the convening of Conference On Kampuchea (ICK) to be held in New York on July 31, 1981. They expressed the confidence that the international conference would make a positive contribution to the establishment of a framework for a lasting solution to the Kampuchean conflict. ASEAN Foreign Ministers considered the international conference as of vital to the small nation which might be confronted with the problem of protecting their territory against the imposition by militarily stronger nation. 64 ASEAN Foreign Ministers apparently reminded the Vietnamese that they knew

well that the Vietnamese were facing a formidable task of protecting their country from a militarily stronger China.

The Annual Meeting of ASEAN Foreign Ministers came out with three steps that might help to reach a comprehensive political settlement in Kampuchea. These steps were, (1) The despatch of the U.N. peace keeping force to Kampuchea; (2) The withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea in the shortest possible time under the supervision of the U.N. peace keeping forces; (3) The disarming of all Khmer factions immediately after the completion of the withdrawal of all forces from Kampuchea.65

Speaking before the International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) on July 31, 1981. Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja reiterated ASEAN countries firm belief that the withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea was a precondition to restore peace in Kampuchea. He reminded the participating the countries that the United Nations General Assembly had demanded the withdrawal of foreign troops from Kampuchea in its resolution No. 35/6 1980, Mochtar nonetheless admitted that it might take a longer time and more serious efforts from those who were involved in the conflict. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja believed that this was the

65. ASEAN Documents Series 1967-1986 n.11, p.80.
only solution where all parties involved in the conflict would feel secure. 66

In this connection Mochtar Kusumaatmadja regretted Vietnamese refusal to participate in the ICK and stressed that for Indonesia and its ASEAN partners, it would be serious concern if the Kampuchea problem remained unresolved. He stated "we seriously worried that this would finally make Southeast Asia as an arena of conflict of the exploitative major powers which we reject it and firmly believe that it would be very dangerous for the interest of this region". 67

The International Conference On Kampuchea (ICK) was marked by differences between ASEAN member states and the People's Republic of China. ASEAN states strategy was to adopt a conciliatory approach towards Vietnam with the hope that it would bring Vietnam into a reasonable compromise. On the contrary, China doubted whether Vietnam would make compromise and fought hard for much tougher approach towards Vietnam. 68 ASEAN member countries also suggested that following the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from

Kampuchea, all the Khmer factions should be disarmed. After that, an interim government could be set up to hold free and fair general election. On the contrary, China insisted that only the Heng Samrin regime forces should be disarmed and the Khmer Rouge government should be reinstalled as a legitimate government in Kampuchea.\textsuperscript{69}

The declaration adopted by the International Conference on Kampuchea called for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Kampuchea in the shortest time possible, the holding of genuine, free elections, the restoration and preservation of Kampuchea's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aligned and neutral status for Kampuchea and refraining of foreign powers from all forms of interference, direct or indirect, in the internal affairs of Kampuchea.\textsuperscript{70}

The differences between ASEAN member countries and the People's Republic of China at the International Conference on Kampuchea gave rise to suspicions in Jakarta as to what was the Chinese real interest. Amin Iskandar, member of the Parliament from the United Development Party stated that the differences stemmed from Chinese vested interest to strengthen the Khmer Rouge forces after the withdrawal of


\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Antara News Bulletin} (Jakarta), July 18, 1981.
Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea. He further elaborated by saying:

ASEAN and the People's Republic of China from the very beginning have basic differences. The fundamental difference is that ASEAN does not have its own interest regarding the Kampuchean problem in particular and Indochina in general. In its attempt to find a solution, ASEAN only aims at returning the right of the Kampuchean people peacefully without foreign interferences. The People's Republic of China meanwhile wishes to install the Pol Pot regime in power so as to maintain Chinese influence in Kampuchea. 71

Vietnam called the International Conference on Kampuchea as "joke" and "interference" in the internal affairs of Kampuchea. Vietnam also condemned the ASEAN member countries as had been manipulated by the United States. It also called ASEAN members to "reconsider its attitude towards the Indochinese states". 72

Soon after the convening of the International Conference on Kampuchea, ASEAN countries again turned their attention in forming a coalition of resistance groups against the Vietnamese-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea regime in Phnom Penh. After much protracted negotiations,

71. Merdeka (Jakarta Daily)
the three resistance leaders, Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Khieu Samphan and Son Sann came out with a joint statement on September 4, 1981 in Singapore.

In their joint statement, the three resistance leaders agreed on the following points, *inter alia*: (1) They were willing to form a Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea; (2) They gave full support for the declaration of the International Conference on Kampuchea and other relevant UN General Assembly resolutions on Kampuchea. In addition, the three leaders agreed that all the anti-Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea should avoid any clashes among themselves. "They would refrain from bringing to the public their differences during the whole period of the agreement".73

The diplomatic success that the ASEAN members had gained at the International Conference on Kampuchea in New York forced Vietnam to change its tactic. Vietnam had come to realise that a military solution to the Kampuchean problem was not feasible in the near future. This was despite the fact that it had deployed around, 200,000 strong armed forces in Kampuchea. Vietnamese forces had also failed to wipe out the resistance group along the Thai-Kampuchean border areas. Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen

Co Thach took an initiative to launch a diplomatic offensive to win the recognition of the People's Republic of Kampuchea by the governments in the Middle East and West Europe.74

ASEAN countries took Vietnam's diplomatic offensive seriously. They feared that the possible recognition of the Heng Samrin regime would mean the end of ASEAN's diplomatic efforts. One ASEAN official stated: "If and when the Heng Samrin regime is recognized, it will be in a position to receive international aid. If the process continues, the Khmer Rouge will gradually be transformed into another outlawed insurgency group".75 This idea was surely in the mind of ASEAN countries when they put pressures on three resistance leaders to formalize the formation of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) before the People's Republic of Kampuchea could gain more international recognition.

The ASEAN pressures bore fruit when on June 22, 1982 the three resistance leaders, Prince Sihanouk of Moulinaka, Khieu Samphan of the Khmer Rouge and Son Sann of the Khmer's People National Liberation Front announced the formation of

Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) in Kuala Lumpur. The announcement called for Prince Norodom Sihanouk to be President of the CGDK, Khieu Samphan to be Vice-President in Charge of foreign affairs and Son Sann, Prime Minister. According to the announcement, the purpose of the coalition was to mobilize all efforts in the struggle to liberate Kampuchea from the Vietnamese aggressors and restore Kampuchea as a sovereign and independent country.76

Differences emerged among the ASEAN member countries over the question of military aid to the resistance group. Most of the arms had mostly come from China supplied through Thailand for the Khmer Rouge. Indonesia opposed direct arms link between the ASEAN countries and the OGDK. It insisted that it would only lead to a militarization of ASEAN confrontation with Vietnam. Indonesia also rejected the idea because it knew that it would lead to further isolation of Vietnam. On the contrary, Singapore and Thailand advocated that military assistance and training should be provided to the resistance group. The two differences of opinion failed to be amicably ironed out. Eventually, the

issue of arms assistance to the resistance group was left to each member country to decide whether it should provide military assistance.\footnote{\textit{Diplomacy of Stalemate,"} in Donald E Wheatherbee, \textit{Southeast Asia Divided: The ASEAN-Indochina Crisis} (Boulder, 1985), p.4.}

ASEAN countries strongly supported the CGDK. They projected the CGKD as an alternative on the world diplomatic scene for those countries who were willing to accept as a matter of fact Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea and the establishment of the People's Republic of Kampuchea in 1978. ASEAN member countries were convinced that CGDK could exert diplomatic and military pressures that would eventually force Vietnam to accept a new political arrangement in Kampuchea.\footnote{Michael Leifer, n.7, pp. 123-124.} This new political arrangement was to be based on the United Nations resolution and declarations of the ICK.

The formation of CGDK also enabled ASEAN member states to put up a more acceptable representative of the anti-Heng Samrin regime resistance group at the United Nations General Assembly. This could be seen from the number of votes that the CGDK could mobilise at the General Assembly in the following table:
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On its part however, Indonesia continued to engage in direct high level talks with Vietnam. In November 1982 Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen co Thach visited Jakarta to hold talks with Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja. Like the talks in the previous year, it failed to bring about any tangible progress in removing the stalemate in Kampuchea. Vietnam insisted that it could not withdraw its troops from Kampuchea as long as Chinese threat remained. Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach justified Vietnamese insistence by saying" "Chinese is the root of the problem, if we (Vietnam, Laos and kampuchea) do not stand together, China will again divide the three countries." 80

79. ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Newsletter (Jakarta, September-October 1986), No.17, p.8.
80. Kajat Hartoyo, "Wawancara Dengan Nguyen Co Thach" (Interview with Nguyen Co Thach), Suara Karya (Jakarta Daily), July 31, 1982.
TOWARDS A DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGH

In the early 1983, the ASEAN member countries were preoccupied with the question as to who should represent Kampuchea at the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit Conference in New Delhi on March 1983. Previously the Havana Conference had in September 1972 decided to keep the Kampuchean seat vacant. Initially, India as a host country had intended to invite the People's Republic of Kampuchea's representative to participate at the summit meeting. India had already recognized the People's Republic of Kampuchea in Phnom Penh in July 1980. However, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore resisted the idea and India finally decided to drop its proposal. Indonesia was not very happy with the decision to keep the Kampuchean seat in the Non-Aligned Movement vacant. Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja argued that the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) should adhere to its principle by inviting Democratic Kampuchea to occupy its legitimate place among the members of the Non-Aligned Movement. He asserted that the Havana Summit's decision to remove Democratic Kampuchea from the membership of the

movement was not only unjust to the Democratic Kampuchea but also the Non-Aligned Movement itself.\(^{82}\)

After four days of protracted discussions and hectic lobbying, the Seventh Summit Conference of Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Movement finally decided in favour of keeping the Kampuchean seat vacant. Out of 61 countries participating (there were 70 countries which attended the summit) in the deliberations on the Kampuchean question, 34 members were in favour of keeping the Kampuchean seat vacant.\(^{83}\)

The political declaraton of the Seventh NAM Summit meeting stated:

"There was a need of de-escalating tension in and around Kampuchea through a comprehensive political solution. This should provide for withdrawal of all foreign forces. This would ensure full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all the states in the region, including Kampuchea. All states were urged to undertake a dialogue which would lead to a resolution of differences among themselves. This would eventually bring about peace and stability in the region".\(^{84}\)

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82. *Sinar Harapan* (Jakarta Daily), May 4, 1983.
At the NAM Conference in New Delhi, Foreign Minister of Malaysia Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie proposed to the Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach that talks could be held between ASEAN countries and Vietnam and Laos. Kampuchean representative would not be invited for the talks. Nguyen Co Thach agreed with the proposal pending his consultation with his politburo colleagues in Hanoi. Tan Sri Ghazali Shafie also agreed to hold talks with his ASEAN counterparts.\textsuperscript{85} The Malaysian proposal came to be known later as \textit{five plus two} proposal.

The five plus two proposal failed to make any headway. The Philippines and Thailand denounced the idea. The Philippines Foreign Minister belittled the idea as "part of the old story". Foreign Minister Carlos Romulo also cautioned his ASEAN partners against Vietnamese attempt to divert their attention from the principal fact of the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea.\textsuperscript{86} Thailand rejected the proposal because it was concerned with Chinese sensitivity. In this connection the Chinese Ambassador in Bangkok Sheng Ping had expressed China's unhappiness with the proposal. He

\textsuperscript{85} Indonesia, Institute Research and Development, n.33, p.100.

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review}, April 14, 1983, p.17.
even informed Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila that China had expected to be consulted before ASEAN took any step on the Kampuchean problem. Chinese attitude towards the *five plus two* was reflected in *Beijing Review* which alleged that Vietnam was trying to make a false impression to settle the Kampuchean problem by negotiations and made peace with Southeast Asian countries.

To sort out their differences regarding the *five plus two* proposal, ASEAN Foreign Ministers held one-day meeting in Bangkok on March 23, 1983. They came out with a statement reaffirming that settlement of the Kampuchean problem should be worked out within the framework of the International Conference on Kampuchea (ICK) and on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. They also stressed that a comprehensive settlement should be sought based on total withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. The statement indicated strongly that ASEAN Foreign Ministers had agreed to give up the *five plus two* proposal which had created a division within ASEAN. They decided to return to


their consensus based on the U.N. resolutions and the ICK declaration. 89

In response to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok, Foreign Ministers of Indochinese states held extraordinary meeting in Phnom Penh on April 12, 1983. In the communique, the three foreign ministers accused the ASEAN states of creating obstacles to a dialogue between the two groups of Southeast Asian countries and demanded that a dialogue should be held between ASEAN and Indochinese countries. They also claimed that it should be an open discussion that was acceptable to both sides. 90

On September 21, 1983 ASEAN Foreign Ministers launched "An Appeal for the Kampuchean Independence" in all five ASEAN capitals. The appeal was partly a reassertion of ASEAN's positions on the Kampuchean problem, namely total withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea, the right of the Kampuchean people to self-determination through internationally supervised elections and non-interference of external forces in the internal affairs of Kampuchea. At the


same time, the Appeal was at least partly a response to the declared intentions of Vietnam to carry out the partial withdrawal of its troops. ASEAN's Appeal demanded that Vietnam's partial withdrawal of its troops should take place on a territorial basis. The Appeal also insisted that the Vietnamese troops withdrawal should begin with withdrawal from the western-most territory of Kampuchea along the Thai-Kampuchean border.91

A response from the Indochinese states came in their joint statement in January 1984. The joint statement put forward five proposals, namely (1) A comprehensive agreement with the ASEAN countries which could be a basis for solution of differences between the two groups; (2) A negotiation with Thailand to create a zone of peace on both sides of Thai-Kampuchean border under the international supervision; (3) negotiations with China with the purpose of withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, ending of Chinese threat and ceasing the use of Thai-Kampuchean border by the Khmer Rouge and; (4) negotiations with all countries in the region concerning the withdrawal of all foreign bases from Southeast Asia.92

91. ASEAN Documents Series n.11, p.461.

The joint statement from the Indochinese countries was not a direct response to the ASEAN's Appeal for The Kampuchean Independence. Responding to the joint statement of the Indochinese states, The Indonesian Foreign Minister stated that he did not see anything new in the proposal. He, however, could not hide his disappointment with the attitude of Vietnam regarding the Kampuchean problem. He asserted:

It is clear that these options ignored and deviated from the actual problem which deal with the real situation in Kampuchea itself which resulted from Vietnamese invasion of that country. On the contrary, these options aim at gaining, direct or indirect, ASEAN and world wide recognition as a faith accompli on what Vietnam has created. Recent statements from Vietnam and Laos as well as the Heng Samrin regime blatantly demand recognition on what have been achieved by the Vietnamese military adventures.93

On the February 13, 1984, Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI) General Murdani made an official five-day visit to Vietnam. General Murdani's visit to Vietnam made him not only the first military leader from ASEAN countries, but he was also the first senior ASEAN official to visit Vietnam since 1980. The last visit by

93. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, "Prospek Perdamaian Di Asia Tenggara: Suatu Pandangan Indonesia (Prospect of Peace In Southeast Asia: An Indonesian Perspective" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jakarta), December 1985, p.25.
ASEAN senior official was Malaysian Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen in January 1980. In spite of the fact that Vietnamese officials had made regular visits to the ASEAN capitals, ASEAN officials were less enthusiastic to go to Vietnam so long as Vietnam continued to maintain its occupation forces in Kampuchea.

In Vietnam, General Murdani held talks with Vietnamese Defence Minister General Van Tien Dung. On this occasion, General Van Tien Dung reminded his guest that apart from their common experiences of anti-colonial struggle, both countries had to "struggle vigorously to defend their newly won independence against the plot of imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism." There was a realization here that both countries strategically needed each other. While Indonesia looked at Vietnam as a sort of buffer state between the ASEAN states and China. Vietnam on its part realised that apart from anti-communist stance Indonesian armed forces was a potential ally against China.

During his visit to the Vietnamese border areas in Lang Son, General Murdani made a controversial remark before the


Vietnamese People's Army when he stated": "Our visit have enabled us to see better the strength and fighting capacity of the Vietnamese army. It is my firm belief that there will never be conflict between our two countries. Some countries said that Vietnam is danger to Southeast Asia, but the Indonesian army and the people of Indonesia do not believe it."96

Many Indonesian officials would agree in private with what General Murdani had stated at Lang Son. However, the new aspect of General Murdani's statement was that it was the first ever public statement and the statement was also articulated while he was visiting Vietnamese border with China. The statement was in contradiction with the ASEAN's official policy which had always regarded Vietnam as a source of instability and insecurity in Southeast Asia. It was also in conflict with Thailand stance vis-a-vis Vietnam.

General Murdani's statement in Vietnam could be regarded as representing the general attitude of Indonesian military elites. They did not think that Vietnam could pose a serious threat to the security of Southeast Asia. The statement also represented their understanding of Vietnam's perception of threat from China. General Murdani seemed to

consider that it was not in Indonesia's long term interest to continue isolating Vietnam. Therefore he made clear that Indonesia's always considered that security threat to South-east Asian region came not from Vietnam, but from China.

General Murdani's trip to Vietnam could also be considered as Indonesia's attempt to break the stalemate. It hoped that it could induce Vietnam to adopt more accommodating stance towards the solution of the Kampuchean conflict. The trip also represented that Indonesia had adopted a dual strategy. The first part of it related to matters concerned with the Kampuchean issue. Indonesia did it through ASEAN and for this strategy the man for the job was Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja. The second part of it was strictly concerning Indonesia's bilateral relations with Vietnam and it was concerned with Indonesia's long term strategic interest, the man for the job was General Murdani. 97 One could not ignore the fact that General Murdani was not a novice in foreign policy matters. He had experiences in dealing with foreign/security matters while he had been Deputy of Indonesia's State Intelligence Coordinating Body (BAKIN).

The hope that General Murdani's visit to Vietnam could lead to breakthrough failed to materialize. During his visit to Indonesia in March 1984. Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach failed to show Vietnam's accommodating attitude in finding a peaceful political solution to the Kampuchea conflict. President Suharto reiterated ASEAN's September 1983 Appeal for The Kampuchean Independence, which called for phased withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. He also suggested that an international peace-keeping force that would be deployed after the Vietnamese troops withdrawal might include troops from ASEAN countries. President Suharto asserted that Pol Pot and his followers could be ousted by the Kampuchean people themselves after the elections.98 Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach rejected President Suharto's assertion by saying that Vietnam could not accept the ASEAN Appeal of September 1983 on the ground that it amounted to a call for a unilateral withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea.99

Nguyen Co Thack's visit to Indonesia was coincidental with the coming of Thai Deputy Prime Minister Pichai Ratakul in Jakarta. He played down General Murdani's statement in


Vietnam by saying: "We will not like to let one statement in ASEAN countries upset us. However, Pichai Ratakul also stressed that Vietnam was indeed a threat to Thailand's security and security of other ASEAN countries. The presence of Thai Deputy Prime Minister at the time of Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach's visit strongly indicated that Thailand wanted to make sure that Indonesia would not go too far so as to deviate from ASEAN's principal consensus.

In April 1984, Vietnamese troops launched a military assault on various anti-People's Republic of Kampuchea resistance camps along Thai-Kampuchean border. According to Thai sources, Vietnam had deployed about 1,250 troops to launch the military assault. Thai military forces responded to this attack by deploying air force to fire rockets at Vietnamese positions inside the Thai territory after ground fighting had wounded 34 Thai troops in another sector of Thai-Kampuchean border. In the next month the ASEAN Foreign Ministers organized one-day emergency meeting in Jakarta. The meeting confirmed Indonesia's displeasure with Vietnam's belligerent attitude. The emergency meeting on May

100. Sinar Harapan (Jakarta Daily), March 10, 1984.

8, 1984 issued a joint statement attacking Vietnamese action against the Kampucheans who lived along the Thai-Kampuchean border. It also condemned Vietnamese attacks on Thailand's territory and regarded the Vietnamese actions as violations of Thai sovereignty and territorial integrity. They also reaffirmed their support for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea. 102

President Suharto's speech before the gathering of ASEAN Foreign Ministers reflected Indonesia's hardening attitude towards Vietnam. He assured ASEAN Foreign Ministers that Indonesia never sacrificed ASEAN unity in its attempt to appease Vietnam. 103 Indonesia's ASEAN partners seemed to be assured of Indonesia's commitment to ASEAN unity so that they decided to request Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja to be ASEAN's interlocutor in dealing with Vietnam.

At the Annual Foreign Ministers Meeting in Jakarta on July 9-10, 1984, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers came out with a strong statement. One ASEAN official claimed that the statement were the strongest, harshest and most strident to

102. ASEAN Documents Series, n.11, p.121.
have come out of any ASEAN meeting. In the past, Indonesia had always been a restraining factor for other "hawkish" member, particularly Singapore, from criticising Vietnam harshly. But now as a result of Vietnam's belligerent attitude, Indonesia adopted a more strident attitude which was closer to the frontline state of Thailand.

At the end of the Annual Meeting, ASEAN Foreign Ministers issued a joint statement condemning the "illegal occupation of Kampuchea by Vietnamese forces". The meeting also affirmed "the validity of the Appeal for the Kampuchean Independence of September 21, 1983" which, according to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, "offered reasonable basis for comprehensive political settlement in Kampuchea." The Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN countries did not fail to condemn the "recurrent acts of Vietnamese aggression along the Thai-Kampuchea border and the intrusion of Vietnamese troops as well as frequent artillery bombardment on Thai territory."

Despite appeal and condemnation from the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, Vietnam persisted with its belligerent attitude.

105. Ibid., July 26, 1984, p.18.
106. ASEAN Documents Series n.11, p.92.
Vietnam was apparently convinced that this time it would eliminate militarily anti-Vietnamese resistance groups. In November 1984, Vietnamese forces launched military assaults on the military bases of the Khmer resistance groups. The Vietnamese forces were finally able to overrun the KPLNF's base at Phoh Malai in January 1985 and Sihanoukist's headquarter also fell into the hands of the military forces of Vietnam in March 1985. According to Thai scholar Sukhumband Paribatra, the main goal of this aggressive military policy was to find a solution to the Kampuchean problem by certain date perhaps sometimes in 1987 by pacifying the "inland front of the resistance groups".

Responding to the news that all the CGDK's military bases had fallen into the hands of Vietnamese forces, the Indonesian Foreign Minister asserted: "there is no power on earth that can destroy the fighting spirit of a nation as going on in Kampuchea. Within a very short time they will regain their strength". He also reiterated: "ASEAN's policy towards Kampuchea will not change, that is Vietnam has to withdraw from Kampuchea. Political cost that Vietnam

has to bear is enormous and therefore, Vietnam will have to leave Kampuchea sooner or later.\textsuperscript{110}

ASEAN Foreign Ministers again reasserted Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's call for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops and expressed their determination to find a political settlement of the Kampuchean conflict. This statement was issued after one day emergency meeting in Bangkok on February 10, 1985. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers also realised the seriousness of Vietnamese military attacks on the CGDK's military bases, they made an appeal to the world community to provide arms and ammunitions to the anti-Vietnamese resistance groups. They also expressed serious concern about the intrusion committed by the Vietnamese forces into Thai Territory and condemned it as a blatant violation of Thailand's sovereignty and territorial integrity.\textsuperscript{111}

Keeping in view that the hardening attitudes on both sides, Indonesian Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja took an initiative to go to Vietnam on February 14, 1985. The main purpose of the visit was to improve Indonesia's bilateral relations with Vietnam. The conflict in Kampuchea was also included in the agenda of discussion between the

\textsuperscript{110} Sinar Harapan (Jakarta Daily), January 10, 1985.

\textsuperscript{111} ASEAN Documents Series, n.11, p.112.
two countries foreign ministers. In the course of discussions, Nguyen Co Thack put forward five point proposal that Vietnam would like to discuss with the ASEAN countries. These five points were, (1) Solution to the American Soldier's missing in action (MIAs) question; (2) The formation of international commission on Kampuchea wherein Vietnam could also serve as a member; (3) The withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea; (4) The holding of general elections under international supervision, but without participation of the Khmer Rouge; (5) Removal of American military bases from Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{112}

Response from Indonesia's ASEAN partners to the Vietnamese proposal was discouraging. Malaysia responded to the proposal by saying that it was not optimistic that the five point proposal could solve the conflict in Kampuchea bearing in mind that Vietnam had talked about peace and the withdrawal of its troops from Kampuchea in the past, but nothing had happened. Meanwhile, the Philippine's Foreign Ministry official responded by saying: "so far all the statements from Hanoi have only touched unspecific details regarding the problem. What important is to cease the hostilities and the withdrawal of its troops from Kampuchea. As far as American military bases are concerned,\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{112. Suara Karya (Jakarta Daily), March 18, 1985.}
it is a bilateral matter between the Philippines and the United States".113

During his visit to Vietnam, Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja had also attempted to improve Indonesia's commercial relations with Vietnam. Trade relations between the two countries had in the past been hampered by lack of banking and shipping links. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja signed a memorandum of understanding covering twelve commodities. On its side, Vietnam ordered textiles from Indonesia worth US$ 351, 000.114

The signing of memorandum of understanding between Indonesia and Vietnam paved the way for Indonesian trade delegation to make a visit to Hanoi two years later. The visit had got a full support from the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces General Murdani. The trade delegation was led by Brigadier Djukardi Odang of Panca Niaga Private Limited, an army-run company. As a result of the visit, Indonesia could set in motion export of fertilizer, cement, textiles and rice amounting to US$ 33 million in two years (1985-1987).115

113. Sinar Harapan (Jakarta Daily), March 26, 1985.
In April 1985, General Murdani received Vietnamese Minister of Defence General Van Tien Dung in Jakarta. After the talks, General Murdani issued a statement saying that there was a possibility of military cooperation between the two countries. General Murdani's statement caused serious embarrassment to Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja. He categorically denied that the visit of General Van Tien Dung would pave the way for a broad security cooperation between Indonesia and Vietnam. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's quick response reflected his greater concern with the sensitivity of Indonesia's ASEAN partners.

In April 1985, a new initiative to find a peaceful political solution to the Kampuchean conflict came from Malaysian Foreign Minister Tengku Ahmad Rithauddeen. He put forward his proposal about "proximity talks" to the ASEAN Foreign Ministers when they met in Bandung, West Java on the occasion of 30th anniversary of the Bandung Conference. The idea of proximity talks envisaged talks between the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) and the Vietnamese backed People's Republic of Kampuchea through a

116. Ibid., n.116, p.525.
mediator. The conflicting parties would sit in different rooms and a mediator would mediate the talks. 118

President Sihanouk of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea gave an ambivalent response to the idea of proximity talks. Personally, Sihanouk welcomed the idea nevertheless he also emphasised that he could not accept the Malaysian proposal for proximity talks because "my coalition partners and certain group who supported Democratic Kampuchea refuses to accept the dialogue with the Heng Samrin regime". 119 Apparently, Prince Sihanouk was under pressures from China not to accept the idea. Prince Sihanouk had earlier criticised China's belligerent attitude which prevented any possible dialogue with Vietnam to find a peaceful political solution to the Kampuchean conflict. 120

The Khmer's People National Liberation Front and the Khmer Rouge expressed their readiness to hold talks directly with Vietnam. The reason they gave was that it was eventually Vietnam, not the People's Republic of Kampuchea which could end conflict in Kampuchea. They also argued that negotiating with the People's Republic of Kampuchea

would achieve nothing since it could not guarantee the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea. This was stated by the KPLNF's spokesman to the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN countries when ASEAN Foreign Minister held an emergency meeting in Bangkok to discuss the Malaysian proposal.

Following the refusal from the CGDK to accept the "proximity talks" proposal and in order to break the deadlock, Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila made a visit to China. The result of the visit was a new version of the "proximity talks" proposal. In Thai version, the CGDK would directly hold talks with Vietnam. However, the representative of the People's Republic of Kampuchea would be allowed to participate at the invitation of Vietnam. Unlike, the Malaysian proposal which had not got the support of China. Thai proposal for "proximity talks" got a strong backing from China. China's support paved the way for the CGDK to openly support Thailand's version of the "proximity talks." 122

Thailand's "proximity talks proposal came to nought when Vietnam stated that it could not accept the proposal. It called the proposal as "usual trick that Thai regime

always does to complicate the situation in Kampuchea and accuses Vietnam of invading Kampuchea. But, for the last six years, the accusation has deceived none. Everyone knows that the Vietnamese volunteers came to Kampuchea to help the Kampuchean people toppling the savage Pol Pot regime.\textsuperscript{123}

The proposal for the "proximity talks" finally suffered serious setback when the ASEAN countries's main ally, the United States hinted that it was against any dialogue with the People's Republic of Kampuchea since it could imply a recognition of the regime in Phnom Penh.\textsuperscript{124} Having been rejected from the ASEAN countries's main foe, Vietnam, and ASEAN's main ally, the United States, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers quietly dropped the proposal for the proximity talks.

Indonesia could not hide its disappointment with the failure of the proximity talks proposal. In his speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations, Indonesia's Deputy Ambassador S. Wirjono expressed Indonesia's anguish that even after six years of acrimonious debates in the General Assembly, a solution to the conflict in Kampuchea remained as far as it was in 1979. Indonesia,

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{123} Kompas (Jakarta Daily), July 7, 1985.
\end{quote}
according to S. Wirjono, had been the main supporter of the principal of equality among nations and the right of self-determination and peaceful co-existence. He further stressed that the Indonesians have fought against external interference and every kind pressures either political, economic or ideological, upon other nations and that they would continue to condemn firmly every form of interference in other country's national politics.  

In November 1985 President of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) Prince Norodom Sihanouk proposed a "cocktail party" meeting where concerned parties like Vietnam, China, the Soviet Union and rival factions in Kampuchea could meet in a formal way. He expressed his hope that an informal cocktail party could presumably be held in the near future. He further stressed, "I am talking about cocktail party as a big diplomatic reception as an initial step since most of the people are still afraid of confrontation. It is important to invite the parties involved and the four factions to Paris where they can meet."  

Indonesia welcomed Prince Sihanouk's "cocktail party proposal". Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja expressed  

126. Pelita (Jakarta Daily), November 9, 1985.
Indonesia's readiness to host the meeting. "We welcome the idea and prepare to provide the venue for the meeting in Indonesia", said he.¹²⁷

Despite the fact that the Indonesian Foreign Minister had expressed his government's acceptance of Prince Sihanouk's "cocktail party" proposal, he offered his own version of the "cocktail party" Indonesia's version of the "cocktail party" meeting envisaged the inclusion of the four warring factions in Kampuchea (the Khmer Rouge, KPLNF, Moulinaka and the PRK) without the participation of the major powers (China's the Soviet Union and the United States). In essence, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's version of "cocktail party" meeting was a similar to the Malaysian premature idea of "proximity talks".¹²⁸ In justifying his proposal, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja said: "a smaller "cocktail party" comprising the belligerent Kampucheans alone would be more effective and may bring real progress towards the ending of the conflict".¹²⁹

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¹²⁷. Centre for Regional Studies, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, Perumusan Politik Luar Negeri ASEAN: Studi Kasus Kamboja (Foreign Policy Formulation of ASEAN: Case Study of Kampuchea) (Jakarta, 1986), p.112.

¹²⁸. The Jakarta Post (Jakarta Daily), November 30, 1985.

¹²⁹. The Jakarta Post (Jakarta Daily), November 30, 1985.
As a follow up action, the Indonesia Foreign Minister flew to Singapore and Thailand in order to gain support from both these countries for his "cocktail party" proposal. Both Singapore and Thailand had generally shown tougher stand towards Vietnam. Singapore and Thailand ultimately agreed to support Indonesia's proposal for the "cocktail party" meeting. 130 Unexpectedly, the opposition to Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's proposal for the "cocktail party" meeting came from Prince Nordom Sihanouk. In an interview with the Agence France Press (AFP), Prince Sihanouk stated that he had already discarded his idea for the "cocktail party" meeting. He also expressed that he was "pessimistic about the chances of success of an Indonesian proposal for an informal meeting of all Kampuchean groups. I do not expect the Indonesian proposal to be successful." 131

Prince Norodom Sihanouk's rejection of Indonesia's proposal came in the wake of his meeting with the Chinese leaders along with other coalition partners in the CGDK, namely Son Sann of the KPLNF and Khieu Samphan of the Khmer Rouge. The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss Chinese military help to the resistance groups to counter

130. The Jakarta Post (Jakarta Daily), November 30, 1985.
131. Ibid., December 12, 1985.
the possibility of Vietnamese dry season military attacks. According to Prince Sihanouk, China promised to provide not only military aid, but also financial aid worth US$ 312,000 to each group. It was, therefore reasonably clear that Prince Sihanouk's rejection of the "cocktail party" proposal had something to do with Chinese carrot policy towards the CGDK and its stick policy towards Vietnam and Vietnamese-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea. 132

Prince Sihanouk's rejection of Indonesia's proposal for a "cocktail party" meeting killed the idea prematurely. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja could only say that if time was not ripe enough, Indonesia would not force to have a "cocktail party" meeting to solve the conflict in Kampuchea. However, he also expressed his sense of hopelessness when he stated "The Kampuchea problem can happen simply because the Kampucheans can not unite that made it possible for foreign powers to intervene and cause political chaos." 133

Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's sense of hopelessness was clearly reflected in an official document published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The document stated:

The Kampuchean problem continue to distress Indonesia and ASEAN. The Continuation of the problem can cause

133. The Jakarta Post (Jakarta Daily), December 26, 1985.
instability in Southeast Asian region and therefore it needs an urgent solution. As a country that has a deep interest in the creation of peace and stability of Southeast Asian region and therefore it needs an urgent solution. Indonesia and other ASEAN countries have always tried to find a peaceful political solution to the Kampuchean problem. In this context, Indonesian Foreign Minister has put forward a framework for the solution of the problem... One of them is a strategic framework which takes into account the United States in Southeast Asian equation... The other one is Indonesia's proposal for the "cocktail party" meeting which attempts to invite the Kampuchean leaders and have an informal meeting. It is hoped that it can paved the way for the solution to the conflict in Kampuchea. Unfortunately, the proposal has so far failed to bring any result. 134

The failure of the proposal for the "cocktail party" meeting forced Mochtar Kusumaatmadja to take a back seat and consequently, diplomatic activities concerning the conflict in Kampuchea were less intense than any time since 1979. ASEAN Foreign Ministers were apparently worried that if they persisted with the attempt to find a peaceful political solution to the Kampuchean problem regardless the failure so far, it could create an impression that ASEAN was a single

134. Indonesia, Institute of Research and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kedudukan dan Peranan Indonesia Dalam Peta Politik Dunia (The Status and Roles of Indonesia In The Map of World Politics) (Jakarta, 1987), p.32.
issue regional grouping. It was, therefore, understandable that there was no fresh initiative from the ASEAN countries in 1986. Amidst this lack of fresh diplomatic initiative, a new situation emerged which eventually helped to coerce the conflicting parties to adopt a new kind of attitude towards the conflict in Kampuchea. These were (1) economic problems and natural calamities in Vietnam; (2) serious internecine conflict among the constituent members of the CGDK; (3) an improvement in Sino-Soviet relations. The first two factors need to be discussed here, while the third factor would be analysed in the fifth chapter.

Vietnam's economic problem stemmed from two important factors, the mismanagement of monetary reforms introduced in September 1985 and the typhoon which devastated many agriculture areas in northern parts of Vietnam. The monetary policy declared on September 14, 1985 aimed at changing over an old currency note to a new one. The old currency note of ten Dong was exchanged for one Dong note. The main objective of this reform was to regain control of fairly large amount of money taken away by the speculators or the one circulating in the black market that had escaped from the government control. However, disclosure of the proposal for the introduction of new currency note and the unavailability of small currency notes caused serious economic disruption.
As a result, inflation rate that had been running at about 50 per cent shot up to 350 per cent in 1986. ¹³⁵

Vietnamese communist party's newspaper Nhan Dan articulated the worsening economic situation in its editorial. It stated that the hectic implementation of the monetary reform "had led to prices abruptly skyrocketing, the market plunging into a mess, the socialist sector being driven into a passive and awkward encountering more difficulties". ¹³⁶

The other factor was typhoon and floods that hit many areas under agriculture in northern parts of Vietnam. In some parts of the country, farmers in Vietnam also suffered from severe pest which devastated much of the paddy fields. Much of Vietnam's agricultural output depended on intensive cultivation system rather than on extensive cultivation in uncultivated areas. Shortage of fuel and fertilizer also hampered paddy cultivation. According to Vietnam's needs it had to produce two million tonnes of fertilizers if it had to achieve its rice production target. However, Vietnam could only produce 1 million tonnes of fertilizer in 1985.

Consequently, in 1985 rice output dropped 133,000 tonnes short of the planned 18 million tonnes. Vietnam also failed to reach its planned target of 19.2 million tonnes of foodgrains in 1986.\textsuperscript{137}

Vietnam failed to increase or at least to maintain its foodgrains output at the time it continued to experience 2.2 per cent rate of population growth a year and it might be even much higher. 1988 population data showed that Vietnam had 62.2 million people.\textsuperscript{138} The Vietnamese government put the blame for the failure to increase the foodgrains output on the inability of the planners to formulate concrete policies, complacency among local officials and corruptions.

The second important factor which eventually forced the conflicting parties to adopt a different attitude towards the Kampuchean conflict was the internecine conflict among the constituent members of the CGDK. The Khmer Rouge, the KPLNF and the Moulinaka could present themselves at the political level as a single united group under the umbrella of the CGDK. However, in the battlefield they failed to

\textsuperscript{137} David M Finkelstein, "Vietnam: A Revolution In Crisis,"\textit{ Asian Survey} Vol.27, No.9, September 1987, p.978.

create a strong coordination or effective cooperation among themselves. There had been many military clashes between the Khmer Rouge and the KPLNF guerillas and between the Moulinaka fighters and the Khmer Rouge fighters.139

There had been tension in the groups within the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, those who wanted to form a joint command with the Moulinaka and those who wanted to maintain separate command and distinct fighting force. Hing Kunthon and Abdul Gaffar Peang Meath led a faction who wanted to have a joint command with the Moulinaka. In August 1985 the KPLNF President Son Sann dismissed both Hing Hunthon and Abdul Gaffar Peang Meath from the Executive Committee of the KPLNF. The dismissal of these two leading figures within the KPLNF sparked a crisis. Son San seemed to be reluctant to work in tandem with the Sihanoukist force.140

The Khmer Rouge was the strongest among the three anti-Vietnamese resistance groups. It had been trying to play a dominant role vis-a-vis other resistance groups. This caused serious apprehension among the KPLNF and the Sihanoukist leaders. In July 1985 Prince Norodom Sihanouk threatened to resign from the Presidency of the CGDK after

139. Centre for Regional Studies, n.128, p.114.
140. Suara Karya (Jakarta Daily), October 8, 1985.
38 of his guerilla fighters had been killed by the Khmer Rouge.141

The Khmer Rouge's attempt to dominant its coalition partners within the CGDK was one factor that was responsible for Prince Sihanouk's decision to take one year leave his position as President of The CGDK. In his letter to his son Prince Ranaridh on May 7, 1987, Prince Norodom Sihanouk expressed his distress on the brutality and violations of human rights carried out by the Khmer Rouge against the Kampuchean refugees. He warned that his leave would only be until May 7, 1988 but he could prolong it if the Khmer Rouge did not stop their violations of human rights.142

Prince Sihanouk's decision to take a year's leave from his post as President of the CGDK preoccupied the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting on June 15 1987 in Singapore. Prince Sihanouk's decision caused fears among the ASEAN countries that those states which had voted for the CGDK at the annual deliberations of the General Assembly of the United Nations might stop doing so.143 The ASEAN Foreign Ministers also heard a report from their envoys, Ambassadors

141. Sinar Harapan (Jakarta Daily), October 8, 1985.
143. ASEAN Secretariat, 20th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting And Post Ministerial Conference With The Dialogue Partners (Jakarta, 1987), p.20.
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Nana Sutresna of Indonesia and Zainal Abidin Sulong of Malaysia. The two envoys had been despatched to meet Prince Sihanouk in Pyong Yang. Prince Sihanouk had informed the two envoys that he had won greater freedom of action by going on leave and he was in a better position to attend whatever form of meeting that may be held. He also asserted that he was willing to meet the leaders of the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin regime if they came to him as "Father of Khmer People".144

Indonesia tended to see the decision of Prince Sihanouk to take a year's leave as his attempt to strengthen his position as the only political leader in Kampuchea who could bring about a political solution to the conflict. Indonesia viewed his decision to take a year's leave as an attempt to send a signal to Vietnam that it should hold talks with him because at the moment he was free from any political attachment.145

On July 27, 1987 Indonesia's Foreign Minister flew to Vietnam to discuss the possibility of arranging informal talks between the conflicting parties. After two days of discussion with his Vietnamese counterpart, Nguyen Co Thach,

145. Centre for Regional Studies, n.128, p.115.
Mochtar Kusumaatmadja came out with what was later called as "Ho Chi Minh Understanding". The Ho Chi Minh Understanding basically contained Vietnamese agreement to attend a "cocktail party" meeting which would be held in Jakarta. The idea of "cocktail party" envisaged that Indonesia would invite all those conflicting parties, both the CGDK and the Vietnamese-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea. At a later stage, Indonesia would invite Vietnam as well.146

Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja saw Vietnamese willingness to attend the informal meeting a step further than his earlier proposal for a "cocktail party" meeting. The previous proposal for "cocktail party" meeting had to be dropped because of Vietnamese refusal to attend it. Vietnam claimed that it was matter between the Kampuchean themselves to solve the conflict in Kampuchea.

Thai Foreign Minister Siddhi Savetsila did not share Indonesia's Foreign Minister sense of optimism. According to Thailand and Singapore Mochtar Kusumaatmadja had fallen into the Vietnamese trap. Both these countries expressed their criticism at the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok on August 16, 1987. The Thai Foreign Minister tended to see that by inviting Vietnam only at a later stage, he saw

it as a Vietnamese ploy to twist the Kampuchean issue from the Vietnamese aggression in Kampuchea. He also expressed his strong objection to the Ho Chi Minh Understanding and demanded that Vietnam should be invited from the beginning of the informal meeting on equal footing with other conflicting parties in the conflict in Kampuchea. 147 Mochtar Kusumaatmadja could not hide his dismay with the opposition from his ASEAN partner at the Bangkok Meeting. He had thought that he had achieved a breakthrough by making Vietnam agree to participate in the proposed "cocktail party" meeting, however Thai Foreign Minister objected to the understanding he had earlier achieved with Vietnamese Foreign Minister. Expressing his displeasure Mochtar stated: "It is quite interesting to query further why they framed the joint statement the way they did". Quite interestingly, Mochtar Kusumaatmadja used the word "they" instead of "we" which had been commonly used in talking about a joint decision by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers. 148

Thailand's opposition to Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja's proposal for a "cocktail party" meeting caused disappointment in Indonesia. Centre for Regional

148. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, n.147, p.5.
Studies, Indonesian Institute of Sciences in its publication alleged that Thailand had failed to lessen its suspicion towards Vietnam. It also alleged that Thailand had been dependent so much on Chinese generosity and the power of the United States's defence strategy in Southeast Asia. Centre for Regional Studies also accused Thailand of having developed vested interests in the continuation of the conflict in Kampuchea. It stated: "the case of Chinese policy regarding the sale of heavy weaponry with easy installments (to Thailand) give us clear indication that this country has not done much in finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Kampuchea."149

Vietnam quickly rejected the modified version of the "cocktail party" meeting as proposed by the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Bangkok on August 6 1987. A Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokesman noted that the original version of "cocktail party" meeting that had been agreed to by the Foreign ministers of Indonesia and Vietnam had earlier been accepted by Indochinese Vice-Foreign Minister in Phnom Penh on August 12-13, 1987. He asserted that the modified version of "cocktail party" meeting issued after the Bangkok Meeting was unacceptable to Vietnam.150

149. Centre for Regional Studies, n.128, p.119.
The internal differences within ASEAN regarding the "cocktail party" meeting proposal dissipated in the wake of the United Nations General Assembly debates on Kampuchea. On September 27, 1987, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers met in New York to discuss their common position. They agreed to issue a "joint explanatory note" regarding the ASEAN position vis-a-vis the "cocktail party" meeting proposal. All the ASEAN Foreign Ministers agreed with the idea of the Ho Chi Minh Understanding that Foreign minister Mochtar had achieved with Nguyen Co Thach on July 27, 1987.\(^{151}\) The Joint Explanatory Note stated that ASEAN member countries welcomed: "Vietnamese readiness to participate in the informal meeting or "cocktail party" meeting which would be initially held among the Cambodians."\(^{152}\)

It was apparently clear that Thailand and Singapore had agreed to support the original version of the "cocktail party" in their attempt to undercut any waverers among members of the United Nations General Assembly due to their perceived split within ASEAN. By agreeing to accept the original version of the "cocktail party" meeting proposal, both Thailand and Singapore practically abandoned their

\(^{151}\) Institute of Research and Development, n.135, p.32.
\(^{152}\) Centre for Regional Studies, n.128, n.119.
insistence on Vietnamese participation at the early stage of the "cocktail party" meeting.

The United Nations General Assembly debate on Kampuchea was conducted on October 14, 1987. In the wake of the United Nations General Assembly debates, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Kampuchea Hun Sen announced on August 27, 1987 a new reconciliation policy. The policy included for the first time an offer to hold general elections with the presence of foreign observers. It also referred to a neutral and non-aligned Kampuchea. The new reconciliation policy offered political roles to all members of the CGDK with the exception of Pol Pot and Ta Mok. Prime Minister Hun Sen also offered top ranking position to Prince Sihanouk. The main aim of the announcement was to persuade the United Nations General Assembly members to give up their supports to the CGDK.153

Prime Minister Hun Sen's announcement of his government's new reconciliation policy towards his foes failed to convince members of the United Nations General Assembly. In the event, ASEAN member countries could succeed in their attempt to keep the CGDK seat in the General Assembly of the United Nations when 117 member countries

were in favour of maintaining CGDK seat while 21 countries were against it and 16 countries had abstained.154

The eight years conflict in Kampuchea took a dramatic turn on December 2, 1987 when Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) Hun Sen arrived in a small village Fere-en-Tardenois north of Paris to meet Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The meeting took place in a friendly atmosphere. Although Prince Sihanouk had never recognised the PRK government as a legal government he nonetheless addressed Hun Sen as "his excellency". On his side, Prime Minister Hun Sen addressed Prince Sihanouk "Samdech" or Monseigneour".155

At the end of the meeting, both the Kampuchean leaders issued a joint statement called for negotiations to be held between the conflicting parties to find a political solution to the Kampuchea conflict and the convening of an international conference to guarantee the agreement. Both Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Prime Minister Hun Sen agreed that they would meet again in January 1988 in the same venue and later in Pyong Yang, North Korea.156

154. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, n.147, p.5.
155. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, n.147, p.5.
Indonesia's Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja welcomed the meeting between Prince Sihanouk and Prime Minister Hun Sen and stated that the meeting raised a new hope and great expectation for further efforts towards a solution to the Kampuchean conflict.\textsuperscript{157}

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\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Sinar Harapan} (Jakarta Daily), December 4, 1987.