INTRODUCTION

The member States of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India together represent approximately a quarter of the world's population, their territories occupying a strategic location. Their diplomatic interactions and the respective stands they took at the United Nations are the most telling barometer of the political climate in this region.

India and the ASEAN States have more than one common meeting ground but their interaction at the UN is significantly different from that at other international forums. The United Nations is one organization which with its political processes and published records provides a clearer indication of the positions taken by the international actors. Furthermore, as a global organization where all international issues are openly debated, member States are called upon to stand up and be counted on one side or another. Again its organizational setting has made it the nerve-centre of international diplomacy. The difference between India

1For instance, the nonaligned movement, Commonwealth and ESCAP. The vital difference is that Commonwealth and NAM do not keep records. Decisions are arrived at by consensus. Business is conducted in secrecy and differences are smoothly brushed under the carpet.
and ASEAN, and the reasons thereof, may never have been clearly delineated and highlighted had there been no international body in the form of United Nations. Hence, one gets a more accurate picture of foreign policy strategies and security perceptions as well as extra-regional linkages by a study of the diplomatic interactions at the United Nations. This study seeks to investigate how India and the ASEAN States have made use of the UN mechanism in pursuit of their national interests.

It is a fact of history that India and States now comprising ASEAN had long been connected integrally in their economic, social and political life and benefited mutually from the interchange.² There are no bilateral disputes and India’s relations with all the six ASEAN States have been cordial. Yet, they have chosen to differ on several international issues.

While India has cordial diplomatic relations with the ASEAN States at the bilateral level, it had a contact mechanism with ASEAN as a collectivity till recently. ASEAN, on the other hand, already has such formal contact mechanism with Australia, Canada, Japan,

²See K.M. Panikkar, The Future of India and South-East Asia (Bombay, 1945).
South Korea, New Zealand, the United States and the
European Community. An attempt to start dialogue with
India a few years back has only now borne fruit. Given
the proximity, the historical ties, and the shared
aspirations as Third World States, India and ASEAN must
come together.

How have India and ASEAN reacted to international
issues? To what extent differences have been sharpened?
On many international issues the positions that ASEAN has
taken have been opposed to those of India. What are the
reasons for this continuing drift? Is it due to a
difference in the foreign policy objectives or security
perceptions? To what extent, if any, is the divergence
in approach and differences on international issues due
to extra-regional linkages? These and related questions
are the subject of this study. The objective of this
study is to indicate areas where cooperation between
India and ASEAN is desirable. One way is to identify
differences that need to be resolved.

This study will be divided into seven chapters.
The first chapter gives the historical background of the
immediate post-War period and the foreign policy
objectives of India and the States now constituting
ASEAN. The second chapter attempts to show how States

India has been invited to participate as a
'sectoral dialogue partner' by ASEAN. Its participation
would be on matters relating to trade, investment and
conduct diplomacy at the United Nations in pursuit of their foreign policy strategies. As the world is moving almost unwittingly, to greater interdependence, we find surprisingly a greater reassertion of national sovereignty. This characteristic duality of our times gets reflected in the United Nations. The UN provides a forum to reconcile the larger humanitarian interest with the national interest.

The third chapter takes up some specific cases relating to international conflicts and tensions in which India and ASEAN were not directly involved, but certainly their policies greatly influenced the developments. The first section of this chapter deals with Superpower relations. The post-War period witnessed the emergence of a bipolar world though subsequent developments show that the trend is towards multipolarity and alternative centres of power are emerging; it is also true that no member State of the United Nations can afford to ignore certain realities. The Cold War had been interspersed with periods of detente, but Superpower tensions persisted. These differences have had their effect on India and ASEAN among others. While India had come closer to the erstwhile Soviet Union, the Philippines provided bases (Subic Bay and Clark Field) to the United States. How independent are India and ASEAN States in
making their foreign policy formulations? Does the voting on international issues show a certain pattern, as far as India and ASEAN are concerned? At the time of writing this, the international political environment is in a state of flux\textsuperscript{4} and all indications are that India and ASEAN would come together. Subsequent chapters shall take up specific issues. In all the chapters the period covered would be from the formation of ASEAN (1967) till 1987, although subsequent overall developments have been taken into account as and where necessary.

Chapter four deals with conflicts and tensions in South and South East Asia -- where India and ASEAN were directly or indirectly involved. The first section is devoted to Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. It was during this war that the USS Enterprise moved menacingly in the Indian Ocean waters. India was prompted by the uncertain situation to sign the Indo-Soviet Treaty. At such a juncture India needed all the help it could get. But ASEAN chose to adopt a pro-Pakistan-China-United States approach. This precluded a closer Indo-ASEAN relationship.

The second section deals with the question of East Timor, and the stands that India and ASEAN have

\textsuperscript{4}With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union the situation has now changed beyond recognition.
taken. The third section deals with the question of Afghanistan. Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979 and the debates and discussions that followed in various forums of the United Nations again brought forth the fact that India and ASEAN have divergent security perceptions. While the developments in Afghanistan concerned India directly, because of Afghanistan's proximity, the Vietnamese attack of 25 December 1978 of Kampuchea, was a cause for concern to the ASEAN. Again, differences between India and ASEAN showed up at the United Nations on the representation question and other substantial issues with regard to Kampuchea.

The fifth chapter covers a variety of arms control issues.

The sixth chapter takes up the Law of the Sea and the Question of Antarctica. Some of the most critical set of issues were involved in the Law of the Sea -- issues which covered the whole gamut of laws relating to exploitation of seabed resources, exclusive economic zones, denuclearization etc. In these set of issues the national interests of India forming a continental peninsula with a large continental shelf, and the archipelago countries which command the sea lanes, conflicted. Similarly, Antarctica places India
and ASEAN, if not opposite, but on different positions. India having become one of the 'have' powers as a Consultative Member of the Antarctic Treaty, found it unrealistic and counter-productive to think in terms of a new regime in Antarctica. This showed up the differences with ASEAN, particularly one member -- Malaysia.

In the concluding chapter, an attempt has been made to show how differences between India and ASEAN emanate not so much from differences in foreign policy objectives as from divergent strategies which are themselves a result of geostrategic compulsions.