

## **SEAMEO AND ASIAN REGIONALISM: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW\***

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For the past twenty-four years, a unique type of inter-governmental organization has been in existence in Asia. This is the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organizations, or SEAMEO, which has silently but steadily pursued its mission and goals with a modicum of success and confidence, if not also spunk and savvy. Yet, not much is publicly known about this regional organization and its existence is probably known only to educators from SEAMEO-member countries and Papua-New Guinea and a few others from countries outside the Asia-Pacific region which had at one time or another provided financial and technical support to SEAMEO's program and projects. This is rather surprising and unfortunate, if not also lamentable, considering that SEAMEO has proven to be a fine example of functional cooperation in this part of Planet Earth. In fact, if we give due regard to SEAMEO's origins, its initial and even later funding and technical support, SEAMEO's history has been the story, as well, of international cooperation to meet regional concerns. SEAMEO's experience thus exemplifies how affluent nations have willingly shared resources and expertise to help solve educational problems, some seemingly insurmountable, afflicting the Southeast Asian Third World.

As SEAMEO approaches the 25th anniversary of its birth, it should merit at least an overview treatment. This article is a modest contribution towards that effort.

### **A Post-World War II Phenomenon**

SEAMEO's history is but a chapter of the larger history of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. It is only fitting, therefore, that we begin with a brief discussion of regional cooperation, or regionalism, in Southeast Asia as well as the Asian and non-Asian origins of SEAMEO. Such an endeavor will enable us to gain a greater appreciation of SEAMEO's role as a vehicle for regional cooperation and its place in the history of international cooperative efforts in Southeast Asia.

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\*This article was adopted mainly from the first chapter of the author's The INNOTECH Story (Quezon City: SEAMEO-INNOTECH, 1989), research for which was partially undertaken in Singapore and Bangkok in April 1986.

An important phenomenon in international politics since the last global war has been the rise of regionalism. This is reflected in the elaborate structures and burgeoning network of supranational, inter-governmental and non-governmental institutions, or of just simple or even ad hoc projects of regional cooperation — all addressed to issues and concerns which lend themselves to solutions in a regional context.<sup>1</sup> These institutions have ranged from the relatively cohesive European Economic Community (EEC), or Common Market,<sup>2</sup> to the very loose South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).<sup>3</sup> To these may be added the South Pacific Forum and South Pacific Commission.<sup>4</sup> While such developments are hardly reassuring to the idealistic advocates of "one world" and of the "all or nothing" — not piecemeal — approach to international integration, it is well to keep in mind that the United Nations itself allows and has in fact welcomed, if not altogether encouraged, the emergence and strengthening of regional institutions as instruments of cooperation. The record attests that regionalism as manifested in whatever form or purpose — defense, economic, cultural, and social development — has been found to be compatible with the aims and purposes of the United Nations. More so, since regional organizations or movements also contribute, in their own ways, to the promotion of international understanding, peace, and security.<sup>5</sup>

### The Asian Record

What has been the record of Asian regionalism, particularly in Southeast Asia? A quick glance at Asian political history since the end of World War II reveals that like other regions of the world Asia, or at least some of its sub-regions, quickly responded to the imperative of regionalism. Thus, such now momentous gatherings as the New Delhi Asian Relations Conference in 1949, the Baguio Conference in 1950, the Bandung Conference in 1955 and, last but not least, the tripartite meeting of the heads of government of Indonesia, Malaya and the Philippines in 1963, which gave birth to the short-lived MAPHIL-INDO.<sup>6</sup>

To the above may be added the Bangkok-based Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which was known as the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) when it was established in 1947.<sup>7</sup> However, ECAFE was —and so is its successor — more of a regional arm, or a subsidiary organ, of the United Nations, not unlike such familiar UN specialized bodies as the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Labor Organization (ILO), and World Health Organization (WHO), to name a few, which have regional offices in Bangkok or Manila. Strictly speaking, ECAFE was not an Asian regional organization since it included members of the United Nations who did not physically belong to the region. It is not like the EEC, SEAMEO or SAARC.

Between these two modes of intergovernmental cooperation — a regional arm of a world organization and intrinsically regional organization — is the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB),<sup>8</sup> a contemporary of SEAMEO, which includes non-Asians but is not a mere Asian extension or arm of a world organization such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), or World Bank.

It is probably asking too much of the peoples of Asia for them to establish, now or in the near future, an all-Asian mechanism for cooperation, even for limited objectives only. Not even the peoples of "historic Europe," which include those of European Russia and Central Europe, and who possess a common heritage of "Western" civilization, have been able to realize or attain the vision of a single European organization, except perhaps the "Concert of Europe" during most of the nineteenth century; the present Council of Europe is essentially composed of Western European nations.<sup>9</sup> The diversity among the peoples of Asia is too immense, even within the Indian, Chinese and Islamic world-cultures, and their modern heritage is not a single Asian civilization but several.<sup>10</sup>

A setting of cultural diversity notwithstanding, there are nevertheless geographic areas of Asia whose inhabitants share some common historical experiences —colonialism for one— to say nothing of common economic aspirations and social problems. By reason thereof, these peoples are strong candidates for regionalism — more so since not a single one among them can hope to solve even their own share of the problems by relying on its own resources. Coming face to face as newly-independent states "long separated by colonial experience," according to a knowledgeable western observer of Asian affairs, these peoples "are becoming acquainted and confronting common problems."<sup>11</sup> Drawing extensively from the "lessons of the past," one of which is that an organization with non-Asians as regular members does not have a future — SEATO for example — some Southeast Asian nations have banded together to establish their own instruments of regional cooperation. Although their efforts had enjoyed financial support and technical assistance from countries and agencies outside the region, especially during the take-off stages of their projects, the instruments which these Southeast Asian countries have fashioned were intrinsically indigenous organizations, not only in form but also in dynamics,<sup>12</sup> and with regular and voting members coming from the region.

The peoples of Southeast Asia have also learned that an ambitious organ of cooperation that has the potentiality of intruding into "sensitive" sectors of national sovereignty —security, for instance — has no place yet in the world of newly-independent and sovereignty conscious Southeast Asian states. Neither are they likely to lend enduring support to one that is merely consultative in

nature. Former Philippine President Diosdado Macapagal's proposed "Greater Malayan Confederation" of 1962, which became a consultative forum as MAPHILINDO (for Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines) in 1963, may be offered as an example. They have therefore limited themselves, in the meantime at any rate, to projects or endeavors or regional cooperation in non-controversial but nevertheless vital areas, with assurance or at least expectation of concrete and tangible accomplishments. The term "functional cooperation" has been applied by specialists on international institutions to such efforts.

In the sphere of economic cooperation, three Southeast Asian nations launched the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in 1961.<sup>13</sup> This organization was doing relatively well as a vehicle for economic cooperation among the Federation of Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand when, in 1963, the Sabah crisis between the new Federation of Malaysia and the Philippines erupted. ASA consequently became moribund, until it was literally reincarnated as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, this time with the addition of Indonesia and Singapore.<sup>14</sup> ASEAN has steadily promoted economic cooperation and, in addition, forged a remarkable consensus on a number of political issues among its members, and on December 15-16, 1987, the Third ASEAN Summit Meeting was finally held in Manila.

In the field of educational cooperation for social, cultural and technological development, mention may be made of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL) and SEAMEO — all established at almost the same time.<sup>15</sup>

### How It All Began

SEAMEO appeared on the international landscape of Southeast Asia in November 1966, although it has become an article of faith — and is so enshrined in official SEAMEO lore — that it was born a year earlier, when the challenge to regional cooperation for social development was given impetus and made all the more attractive by prospects of external support, especially by the United States Government.

It may be asked: how come the U.S. suddenly developed such an interest in the social development of Southeast Asia? At the risk of oversimplification, it may be offered that it all started in 1964, when President Lyndon B. Johnson told his listeners at a Johns Hopkins University lecture series that he was seriously thinking of "meeting the challenge of the underdeveloped world." "We are the world's great arsenal of industry and ideas," he said, "and we just cannot allow a separation between rich and poor nations." "People are going to have food for their children and an education for their souls," he added.<sup>16</sup>

Nothing further was heard from President Johnson until seven months later when, in response to the views specifically addressed to him, by seventeen nations on the worsening situation in Southeast Asia, he elaborated on his proposal the year before for helping the nations of the underdeveloped world. The venue for what turned out to be an important speech, a historic watershed as it were, was, like the year before, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. After stating, correctly, that the "countries of Southeast Asia are homes for millions of impoverished people" who get up at "dawn and struggle until the night to wrest existence from the soil," and as a consequence "often are wracked by diseases, plagued by hunger" and die at the productive and "early age of 40," Pres. Johnson went on to say:

Stability and peace do not come easily in such a land. Neither independence nor human dignity will ever be won, though, by arms alone. It also requires the works of peace. The American people have helped generously in times past in these works, and now there must be a more massive effort to improve the life of man in that conflict-torn corner of our world.

But, President Johnson emphasized, the nations of Southeast Asia must take the initiative: "The first step is for the countries of Southeast Asia to associate themselves in a greatly expanded effort for development." President Johnson then promised: "for our part I will ask the [U.S.] Congress to join in a billion-dollar American investment in this effort as soon as it is underway." He included North Vietnam, at the same time expressing the hope that "all other industrialized countries, including the Soviet Union, will join in this effort to replace despair with hope and terror with progress."<sup>17</sup>

President Johnson's message conjures to mind U.S. Secretary of State George C. Marshall's commencement address at Harvard University in 1947, which led to the launching of the immensely successful European Recovery Program that bore Marshall's name, and which originally embraced all countries of Europe — those of the Soviet bloc included — provided that they devised a European-wide blueprint for economic recovery.<sup>18</sup> The Johnson Plan, if we may call it that, also placed the United States behind a Southeast Asian-wide blueprint for social development — as well as economic and technological development — but it would not underwrite individual countries' blueprints.

What motivated President Johnson, keeping in mind that at the time American military involvement in Vietnam had already escalated to a very high level? Dr. Robert Jacobs, an early American consultant to SEAMES (SEAMEO's Secretariat), offered the view that President Johnson probably wanted to demonstrate to the whole world, particularly those nations which had earlier expressed concern over the situation on mainland Southeast Asia, that bombing North Vietnam into submission was not all that the United States was capable

of doing in Southeast Asia: it was also very much interested in assisting in the economic and social development of the region — through “works of peace” — and as an eager partner in a cooperative enterprise.<sup>19</sup>

Plausible enough, but it might be added that on the American domestic scene, President Johnson had also launched the “Great Society,” which he must have sensed would certainly be derailed by massive and costly American intervention in the Vietnam War if it went on indefinitely. Last but not least, President Johnson, who was reportedly an egotist, probably wanted history to be kinder to him and his presidency.<sup>20</sup>

Whatever his motives and reasons, what Pres. Johnson unveiled in 1965 was a policy which enables American participation in the establishment of the Asian Development Bank and eventually provided U.S. funding support for the various educational projects of SEAMEO.

But to continue with our narrative, on the afternoon after his second Johns Hopkins address, President Johnson named Mr. Eugene Black, former president of the World Bank, as his adviser on the economic and social development of Southeast Asia. It was in this capacity that Mr. Black made a trip to Manila and Bangkok in late 1965 to “inaugurate [American] participation in these programs,” to use his own words: Manila for the ADB founding conference and Bangkok for the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Meeting.<sup>21</sup> By coincidence, the Education Ministers and Ministers “responsible for Economic Planning” among the Asian members of UNESCO were holding a conference in Bangkok when Mr. Black stopped over on his way to Manila on November 30, 1965. Also in attendance was the late Senator Geronima T. Pecson, then Chairman, UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines. The Minister of Education of Thailand thereupon invited his fellow ministers from Laos, Malaysia, and Mrs. Pecson, to meet with Mr. Black and party, as well as the representatives of such international bodies as ECAFE, the UN Technical Assistance Board (TAB), and United Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Some lower officials of the Thai Education Ministry as well as the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok were also present.<sup>22</sup>

What took place was a dialogue of sorts, with Mr. Black mainly listening to the educators as they catalogued their individual countries’ educational problems, with a problem or two common to the region thrown in for good measure, together with some suggested solutions, one of which —Mrs. Pecson’s — was the “transfer of the East-West Center (from Honolulu) to Asia where it would become much more accessible to the people in the area.” Mr. Black was evidently impressed and genuinely sympathetic. Since he encouraged the Southeast Asian educators to “develop concrete regional projects for which US and ADB would be willing to give consideration.”<sup>23</sup> Buoyed by Mr. Black’s

words of encouragement, the four Southeast Asian educators adjourned their informal meeting with President Johnson's special advisor, with the firm understanding to get together again within six months, at the latest, to develop specific or concrete regional projects.<sup>24</sup>

### Towards the Manila Conference

The unanimous decision to meet anew signaled the beginning of intensive regional cooperative efforts by the education ministers and their assistants and experts. Quarterbacking that commitment was a modest secretariat in the Thai Ministry of Education, the establishment of which was promptly given funding support by the United Nations TAB. This is the origin of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat (SEAMES) which was to play the role of organizational dynamo of educational cooperation in Southeast Asia. Under the Interim Directorship of the hardworking Dr. Kaw Swasdi-Panich of Thailand, the fledgling secretariat quickly husbanded and mobilized the educational talents and enthusiastic foreign educational specialists, in an impressive display of regional and international cooperation. The multi-national efforts resulted in the preparation, in less than a year of frenetic activity, of project proposals for consideration by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education at their first formal meeting in Manila on November 25-28, 1966, including one for the "establishment of an appropriate organizational structure for implementing regional cooperation in education."<sup>25</sup> The last named proposal had been prepared with the assistance of two foreign consultants or experts, one of whom was Dr. Charles B. Fahs.<sup>26</sup>

At the Manila conference the education ministers of Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and South Vietnam decided to constitute themselves into a Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Council (SEAMEC); the foreign consultants had recommended a "Southeast Asia Education Council." Although meeting formally only for the first time, the seven education ministers/secretaries decided that the Manila Conference was the second Conference of SEAMEC, consequently baptizing the Bangkok tete a tete with Mr. Black almost exactly a year earlier as the "First". This is historically inaccurate, strictly speaking, but it has stuck.

The Manila Conference also endorsed the creation of SEAMES, to be permanently located in Bangkok instead of a roving one hosted by the member countries on a rotation basis, as proposed by one country delegation. A draft charter for SEAMEO was also approved, subject to further refinement and polishing by "experts in international law before ratification."<sup>27</sup>

### The Third SEAMEC Conference and After

With so much homework in their hands, as it were, SEAMES and SEAMEC decided not to convene a ministerial conference in 1967. The Third SEAMEC was held, instead, in early 1968, confusing further chronologically-oriented observers, historians in particular.

In many respects the Third SEAMEC Conference, which was held in Singapore on February 6-8 1968, was a milestone in SEAMEO history and, therefore, of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia. The SEAMEO Charter was signed on the second day of the conference, thus paving the way for the legalization of the existence of the organization. Also approved were the proposed structure of the permanent Secretariat (together with the appointment of Professor Sukich Nimmanheminda of Thailand as the first permanent Director) and the draft development plans of four regional centers, thereby preparing the way for their commencing interim operations. These were the Regional English Language Center (RELC), Regional Center for Education in Science and Mathematics (RECSAM), Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) and the SEAMEC Central Co-ordinating Board for Tropical Medicine (TROPMED).<sup>28</sup>

By 1969, with the launching of the SEAMEO Regional Center for Tropical Biology (BIOTROP) just before the end of 1968, the romance of adventurous pioneering in regional functional cooperation seemed to have plateaued, except among the proponents of a Regional Center for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH), who were encountering difficulties in launching their project.<sup>29</sup>

Then the Fifth SEAMEC Conference took place. The following has been said of the conclave:<sup>30</sup>

For those who have participated in the work of SEAMEO from the beginning, the Kuala Lumpur Meeting seemed to mark a milestone in the development and establishment of SEAMEO. In early Conferences of the Ministers there was uncertainty regarding the future of the Organization; there was hesitation in making commitments, and there were apprehensions regarding the problems to be faced. At the Kuala Lumpur meeting . . . there was an air of confidence, and there was unmistakable evidence of support for the Organization on the part of the Ministerial delegations. SEAMEO had come a long way from the early days.

Indeed, because SEAMEC subsequently established the SEAMEO Educational Fund (SEDF), "paving the way for [the] financial viability of the Organization."<sup>31</sup>

SEAMEC reached yet another milestone when it admitted the Khmer Republic as SEAMEO's eight regular member at its Sixth Conference, while during its Eight (1973) it established the category of Associate Membership;<sup>32</sup> there are now four associate members, namely: Australia, Canada, France and New Zealand.<sup>33</sup>

In January 1974, the Ninth SEAMEC Conference approved a revised funding plan for the second and subsequent five-year phases of permanent operations of the SEAMEO regional centers.<sup>34</sup> Since this scheme obligated countries hosting centers/projects to underwrite their capital and operating costs — except those under the category of Special Funds which were the responsibility of SEAMES — this decision could not but "be regarded as an embodiment of the spirit of regional cooperation."<sup>35</sup> In its own way, therefore, the Ninth SEAMEC Conference was a significant event, a benchmark, in SEAMEO's history. In this connection, it might be mentioned that project development activities such as regional and national seminars, technical workshops, etc. leading to the adoption of broad development plans and launching of the regional centers/projects, and the latter's operating and project requirements during the ensuing interim phase of operations (lasting for a year or two) were almost completely underwritten by the U.S. government. So was 50% of their capital and operating needs during the first five years of permanent operations, to say nothing of certain programs — training scholarships, for example — through SEAMES.<sup>36</sup>

### **Indochina and the Ordeal of SEAMEO**

But to proceed with our narrative, everything seemed to be going to everybody's liking when the unfolding events in Indochina in the summer of 1975 created a crisis for SEAMEO in general and for INNOTECH in particular, since the Center was then located in Saigon.<sup>37</sup> With three of its eight regular members — or almost one-half — suddenly unable or unwilling to continue their participation in the affairs of the regional organization, SEAMEC undoubtedly had a king-size problem in its hands. It was an inauspicious and incongruous way to mark the tenth anniversary of the birth of SEAMEO.

Thanks, however, to a favorable legal opinion that it could legally transact business despite a dubious quorum. SEAMEC acted quickly and adopted a Provisional Modus Operandi<sup>38</sup> to enable SEAMEO and its centers/projects to provide the SEAMEO region with the services expected of them. The momen-

tum of regional cooperation helped SEAMEO overcome the ordeal generated by the Indochinese crisis.

### Objectives, Functions and Structure

If one did not read SEAMEO's Charter and simply tried to distill its objectives from an observation of the operations, activities and programs of its Secretariat and its centers/projects, or from a perusal of the proceedings of the annual ministerial conferences, he would readily come to the conclusion that SEAMEO simply strives to promote the educational (or social), cultural and scientific development of the peoples of the Southeast Asian region through co-operation. Such a conclusion would just as readily be off the mark, albeit not completely, because SEAMEO's Charter states, in Article I (1), that:<sup>39</sup>

The purposes of the Organization is to promote cooperation among the Southeast Asian nations through education, science and culture in order to further respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are the birthrights of the peoples of the world.

In other words SEAMEO has a loftier objective than the mere attainment and promotion of a desirable state of material life. Regional cooperation for the enhancement of education and culture, science and technology is only a means to a higher goal, which is, to reiterate, "to further respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are the birthrights of the peoples of the world." In short, SEAMEO's ultimate goal is to serve the larger purpose of human existence in this part of the global community.

The decision-making organ of SEAMEO, as the preceding pages have shown, is SEAMEC, which also passes on key matters concerning and emanating from the regional centers/projects. SEAMEC was assisted in this crucial role by the Project Officers/High Officials Meeting from 1967 until 1977, when the body was split into the High Officers Meeting (HOM) and Center Directors Meeting. Since 1978, this role has been discharged solely by the HOM, which is ordinarily composed of deputy ministers/undersecretaries or directors general of education (usually the members of the Center/Project Governing Boards), representatives of associate members and, of course, SEAMES which convenes the meeting towards the end of each year. HOM not only screens the agenda for the SEAMEC Conference early the following year, but may even decide on matters which it feels the Council need not be bothered with. It has, therefore, more than a facilitative role.<sup>40</sup>

By now, it must be obvious to the reader that SEAMES is the executive arm, or the work horse, of SEAMEO. Among others, it prepares the agenda of the Ministerial Conference and sees to the implementation of the resolutions. In carrying out this responsibility, SEAMES is assisted by the Center Directors Meeting (formerly combined, as noted above, with the High Official Meeting), although that is not the only meaningful function of the latter.

At the helm of the SEAMEO Secretariat is the SEAMES Director, who used to be a Thai. Since 1972, however, the position has been rotating among the member countries.<sup>41</sup> The Director's term is three years, renewable, as appropriate. There are a Deputy Director, two Assistant Directors (for Program and Finance), two Program Officers, an Information Officer, a Publication Officer, a Finance Officer, a Documentation and Administrative Officer, plus a complement of support staff, mostly from Thailand. SEAMES shares a concrete structure in Bangkok with UNESCO.<sup>42</sup>

### **The Regional Centers and Projects**

Mention has repeatedly been made of the regional centers/projects. Their existence makes SEAMEO somewhat unique among regional institutions; they are the instrumentalities, the arm as it were, which carry out SEAMEO's regional programs falling within their respective areas of expertise, from their host countries and with SEAMES's indispensable support, part of which is financial.<sup>43</sup>

There are currently six operational centers and one project, namely: BI-OTROP (hosted by Indonesia), INNOTECH (Philippines), RECSAM (Malaysia), RELC (Singapore), SEARCA (Philippines), SPAFA (Thailand)<sup>44</sup>, and TROPMED (Thailand). An eighth center — VOCTECH (for Vocational and Technical Education) — is scheduled to start operations from Brunei Darussalam in July 1990.<sup>45</sup>

Each center/project has a Governing Board or Central Coordinating Board (for TROPMED), of which the SEAMES Director is an ex-officio member but without a vote, and a Director or Project Coordinator, as the case may be, and a complement of division heads, program/project directors, specialists and consultant. And, like SEAMES, each has its own library and even printing facilities.

### **SEAMEO and ASEAN**

This paper was intended to provide the reader with an understanding of SEAMEO's place in the geography of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia.

It is only natural and proper, therefore, to conclude it by mentioning SEAMEO's relationship with ASEAN.

A resolution adopted by the original signatories to the SEAMEO Charter (except Laos) states that "the development of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization shall be within the framework of higher regional organizations established by their governments."<sup>46</sup> This in a nutshell situates SEAMEO in the hierarchy of regional values among its full-fledged or regular members, the active ones anyway, who happen also to be the regular members of ASEAN. The latter entity is unquestionably a "higher regional organization" than SEAMEO; there has not been a single SEAMEO Summit Meeting (meeting of heads of state or government) while there have already been three ASEAN Summits, the last having taken place in Manila only in 1987. To think that SEAMEO is older than ASEAN, or claims to be, by almost two years!

Since ASEAN has remained strictly an inter-governmental organization, SEAMEO must by virtue of the resolution quoted above also remain as such. Thus, SEAMEO may not presume to be more "integrated" than ASEAN and as such assume "supranational" powers, if only because ASEAN is not a supranationality.<sup>47</sup>

What, by the way, is the actual state of SEAMEO-ASEAN relationship, or the operational as distinguished from the conceptual. There is currently none, although efforts have been made to establish a linkage between the two. For instance, following the twelfth SEAMEC Conference in 1977 and pursuant to its authorization, SEAMES initiated discussions with ASEAN representatives with a view to synchronizing their respective programs and thus "avoid duplication of efforts."<sup>48</sup> It is worth pointing out that ASEAN has a cultural program, with assured funding by the Japanese Government.

After almost a ten year hiatus, SEAMEC adopted a resolution requesting the "Secretariat to continue its efforts to establish working relations with ASEAN for the purpose of implementing ASEAN activities which fall within the competence of SEAMEO so as to avoid duplication of efforts." The following excerpts from the SEAMES Director's report on his efforts to implement the Council's resolution needs no elaboration:<sup>49</sup>

... during the year [i.e., 1985] under review I had discussions with the Director-General in charge of ASEAN in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, who advised me not to pressure [i.e., press] the matter .... The question of establishing working relations with ASEAN ... was raised at the 8th High Officials Meeting and I informed the Meeting that although there had been no formal action since the Council adopted the... resolu-

tion, for the moment there was the mutual understanding to explore all possibilities for joint action in order to avoid duplication of activities.

The absence of formal linkage or working relationship between SEAMEO and ASEAN, however, has not in any way impaired their viability and, for SEAMEO in particular, capacity for sustained operations along highly technical and functional lines. In fact, on August 21-22, 1989, SEAMES conducted a two-day "Brainstorming Session" in Bangkok to formulate SEAMEO's plans and strategies for "human resource development [in the region] in the upcoming decade."<sup>50</sup> Only the second such exercise in SEAMEO's history — the first took place in 1970<sup>51</sup> — it was attended by "education experts" from the six active SEAMEO-member countries and from Canada, France and the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>52</sup> It is a fitting way to mark SEAMEO's forthcoming 25th Anniversary and a measure of its buoyant optimism for the future. It is also a concrete index of wholesome and productive regional and international cooperation in the SEAMEO region.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For an introduction to the subject of regionalism in past and contemporary world politics, see: Joseph S. Nye, "Comparative Regional Integration," International Organization, XXII:4 (Autumn, 1968), 855-880; Bonifacio S. Salamanca, "Regional Integration and the Confederal Principle," Historical Bulletin (Manila), XI:1 (December, 1963), 269-283; Sunil Banik, "Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration Movements and the Asian Development Bank— Hope of the Less Developed," Asian Studies (Quezon City), VI:3 (December, 1968), 395-420; Lalita Prasad Singh, The Politics of Economic Cooperation in Asia: A Study of Asian International Organizations (Columbia, Mo.:University of Missouri Press, 1966). For Southeast Asia, in particular, see Bernard K. Gordon's "Regionalism in Southeast Asia," in Robert O. Tilman (ed.), Man, State, and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia (London: Pall Mall Press, 1969), pp. 506-522.

<sup>2</sup>A recent work on the Common Market is John Pinder's "European Community and Nation-States: A Case Study for Neo-Federalism," International Affairs, 62:1 (Winter 1985/6), 41-54. Two earlier studies of F. Roy Willis, "Origins and Evolution of the European Communities," The Annals, 444, November, 1978, pp. 1-12, and Ernest B. Haas, "International Integration: The European and Universal Process, International Organization, XV:3 (Summer, 1961), 366ff.

<sup>3</sup> See Lok Raj Baral, "SAARC But No 'Shark': South Asian Regional Cooperation in Perspective," Pacific Affairs, 58:3 (Fall, 1985), 411-426. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka was formally launched in August, 1984.

<sup>4</sup> Robert A. Scalapino, "Asia's Future," Foreign Affairs, 66:1 (Fall 1987), p. 104.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph S. Nye (ed.), International Regionalism (Boston: Little & Brown, 1968).

<sup>6</sup> Salamanca. "Regional Integration." I was an original member of the University of the Philippines Study Committee on President Diosdado Macapagal's Greater Malayan Confederation in 1962, which prepared the MAPHIL-INDO proposal.

<sup>7</sup> See David Weightman, Toward Economic Cooperation in Asia: United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1963.) ECAFE was formally established in March 1947.

<sup>8</sup> A good study of the Asian Development Bank is Sumil Banik's "Regional Economic Cooperation." See, also, Gordon, "Regionalism in Southeast Asia," p. 521.

<sup>9</sup> The late Professor Hajo Holborn, a former mentor of mine at Yale, has a brief discussion of the Concert of Europe, or the Congress System, in The Political Collapse of Europe (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951); a fuller discussion is The Concert of Europe, Rene Albrecht-Carrie, (ed.) (New York: Walker, 1968). For the Council of Europe, see Willis, loc. cit., and the more extended treatment by Arthur Henry Robertson, The Council of Europe, 2nd ed. (London: Stevens, 1963).

<sup>10</sup> One needs only to read any of the many standard history texts on Asia to grasp the diversity of its cultural heritage. John K. Fairbank & Others, East Asia: Tradition and Transformation (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967) is an example. For Southeast Asia, see Lauriston Sharp, "Cultural Continuities and Discontinuities in Southeast Asia," Tilman, Man, State, and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia, pp. 45-54, and Charles A. Fisher, "Southeast Asia: The Balkans of the Orient? A Study in Continuity and Change," Tilman, pp. 55-71.

<sup>11</sup> Scalapino, "Asia's Future," p. 104.

<sup>12</sup>The five-year plans of SEAMEO's regional centers are an example. Dr. Robert Jacobs, noted American educator whose services were made available to SEAMEO during its formative years, told the author that he and his colleagues had to convince US-AID (Washington) to give in to the Southeast Asian educators' strong desire for a five-year budget cycle, instead of the American practice of three years. Interview, July 27, 1986, Philippine Plaza Hotel, Pasay City.

<sup>13</sup>ASA's background and all-too-brief existence is treated in Gordon, "Regionalism in Southeast Asia," pp. 507-513.

<sup>14</sup>A pioneering study is Dr. Estrella D. Solidum's Towards Community in Southeast Asia: The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 1970). See also Gordon, "Regionalism in Southeast Asia."

<sup>15</sup>See Amnuay Tapingkae (ed.), The Growth of Southeast Asian Universities Versus Consolidation (Singapore: Regional Institute of Higher Education, 1974); Francis Wong Hoy Kee, Comparative Studies in Southeast Asian Education (Kuala Lumpur: Heineman Educational Books, 1971); Proceedings of the ASAHL Thirteenth General Conference and Seminar, 14-17 January 1981 (Manila: The Philippine Council for ASAHL, 1984).

<sup>16</sup>"Remarks to the Faculty and Students of Johns Hopkins University, October, 1, 1964," Public papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, 1963-1964 (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 1181-2. I am indebted to Dr. Jacobs (interview on July 27, 1986) for leading me to this document and the succeeding one, and to Miss Lucy Concepcion of the Thomas Jefferson Center Library (Makati, Philippines) for xeroxed copies of both documents.

<sup>17</sup>"Pattern for Peace in Southeast Asia." Address by the President at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, April 7, 1965," in Documents on American Foreign Relations, 1965, Richard P. Stebbins (ed.), (New York: Harper & Row for the Council on Foreign Relations, 1966), pp. 140-147. The quoted passages are on pp. 144 and 145.

<sup>18</sup>For the origins of the Marshall Plan, see Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department (New York: The American Library, 1970), chap. 26. Also, George F. Keenan, Memoirs (1925-1950) (New York: Bantam Edition, 1969), Chap. 14. For later development, see Bayard Price, The Marshall Plan (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1955).

As late as 1968, Mr. Lee St. Lawrence of the Regional Economic Development (RED) Office, USAID (Bangkok), was saying that “[a] programme that would elicit financial support from the USG would be one that was clearly regional in character.” SEAMEO Second Project Meeting of Directors/High Officials, Bangkok, 25th-28th June 1968, Final Report, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup>Interview with Dr. Jacobs, July 27, 1986.

<sup>20</sup>See, for example, Doris Kearns, Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream (New York: Harper & Row, 1976, esp. the “Prologue,” and Dr. Robert A. Caro, The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Path to Power (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), esp. chaps. 2-3.

<sup>21</sup>Eugene R. Black gives a personal account in his Alternative in Southeast Asia, New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1969.

<sup>22</sup>“Minutes of the Meeting Between Mr. Eugene R. Black, Special Adviser to the President of the United States of America and the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education, Ministry of Education, Bangkok, Thailand, 30 November 1965,” in Resolutions of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Council (SEAMEC), Bangkok: SEAMES, n.d. pp. 1-5.

<sup>23</sup>A transcript of Mr. Black’s remarks during his meeting with the educators is among bound materials at the SEAMES Library. See Documents Prior to TW [for Technical Workshop?].

<sup>24</sup>“Minutes” of the Black Meeting (see note 22, above).

<sup>25</sup>SEAMES Director’s Annual Report, 1971, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup>I personally met Dr. Fahs, then with the Rockefeller Foundation, sometime in 1951 or 1952, when he visited the Department of History in Diliman, Quezon City, which had a research project under a Rockefeller Grant-In-Aid. I was then a part-time research assistant in the project. By the way, the past Grant-in-Aid (GIA) program of the University of the Philippines System for financially needy students was named, at my suggestion, from the Rockefeller Grant-in-Aid to the Department of History.

<sup>27</sup>Second SEAMEC Conference, Manila, November 25-28, Final Report, p. 43. The text of the Draft Charter is on pp. 35-42.

<sup>28</sup>Third SEAMEC Conference, Singapore, 6th-8th February 1968, Final Report, pp. 15-28.

<sup>29</sup>INNOTECH did not take off until mid-1970, when it started interim operations in Singapore. See my The INNOTECH Story, esp. chaps. 2 and 3.

<sup>30</sup>SEAMES Director's Annual Report, 1971, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup>SEAMEO, Resource Book on SEAMEQ, Revised Edition. Bangkok, 1984, p. 22.

<sup>32</sup>Sixth SEAMEC Conference, Saigon, 11th-14th January 1971, Final Report, vol. II, p. 18. The decision to create Associate Membership was also adopted at this conference (p. 7) — “pending amendment of the charter.” The Charter was formally amended at the Seventh SEAMEC Conference, Vientiane, January 24th-28th, 1972 (Final Report, Vol. I, pp. 24-29), while the conditions for Associate Membership were adopted only by the Eight SEAMEC Conference, Phnom Penh, 22nd-26th January 1973 (Final Report, Vol. I, pp. 3-40).

<sup>33</sup>France was the first Associate Member to be admitted (April 27, 1973), followed by Australia (November 1, 1973) and New Zealand (November 12, 1973). The SEAMES Director's Annual Report, 1973, pp. 4-5. Canada was admitted as the fourth Associate member during the Twenty-Third SEAMEC Conference held in exotic Bali, Indonesia on February 4-5, 1988 (Final Report, Vol. I, p. 27.)

<sup>34</sup>See “Funding Plans for Centres After First Five-Year Permanent Phase,” (Mc9/WP/24) in Ninth SEAMEC Conference, Bangkok, 28 January-1 February 1974, Final Report, Vol. II.

<sup>35</sup>Resource Book on SEAMEQ, p. 23.

<sup>36</sup>See “Funding Plans for Centres” (note 34 above).

<sup>37</sup>The INNOTECH Center had to leave Saigon in a hurry on April 30, 1975, and stayed in Bangkok (at SEAMES' offices) until the transfer to Manila in July 1976. It had been in Saigon (from Singapore) only for less than two years when Saigon fell to onrushing North Vietnamese forces. I have discussed at length INNOTECH's search for a home in The INNOTECH Story, Chap. IV.

<sup>38</sup>Resource Book on SEAMEQ, p. 23-24. According to Dr. Vitaliano Bernardino, Sr., SEAMES Director from 1975 to 1978, the legal opinion was provided by Prof. Dr. Adul Wichiencharoen of Thailand (interview, December 27, 1987). Professor Dr. Adul himself was SEAMES Director from 1961 to 1986, the first to serve for two terms as Director. See biographical profile of Dr. Adul in SEAMEO Quarterly, 3:4 (October-December 1980), 9.

<sup>39</sup>I have reproduced the 1983 version of the Charter as Appendix 1 of The INNOTECH Story.

<sup>40</sup>Interview with Dr. Abraham I. Felipe, December 7, 1986. A former Deputy Minister of Education of the Philippines. Dr. Felipe once served as Chairman of the INNOTECH Governing Board.

<sup>41</sup>SEAMES Director's Annual Report, 1972, p. 44. This rotation system was adopted so as to "encourage regionalism in SEAMEO." Dr. Sudjono D. Pusponegoro of Indonesia was the first non-Thai to serve as SEAMES Director. This portion of my paper, among others, also benefited greatly from the comments of Dr. Aurelio Elevazo, former Assistant Director of SEAMES and as of this writing an Assistant Secretary for International Education and Information, Philippines Department of Education, Culture and Sports.

<sup>42</sup>This building at 920 Sukhumvit Road was constructed for these international organizations built by the Thai Government.

<sup>43</sup>SEAMES grants scholarships for training and staff development, among others, as well as assists the regional centers in soliciting foreign funding for their research projects.

<sup>44</sup>SPAFA was "reconstituted" into a Regional Center for Architecture and Fine Arts in 1986. Twenty-First SEAMEC Conference, 23-25 January, 1986, Final Report Vol. I, pp. 18-20.

<sup>45</sup>SEAMEO Quarterly, 12:2 (April-June 1989), p. 16. For the SEAMEC decision (24th Conference, 12-13 January 1989) setting up the SEAMEO Regional Center for Vocational and Technical Education, see idem, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January-March 1989), p. 10.

<sup>46</sup>Fourth SEAMEC Conference, Djakarta, 7th-10th January 1969, Final Report, Vol. I, "Proceedings."

<sup>47</sup>The supranational character of EEC is treated in Pinder, "European Community and Nation-State," Willis, "European Communities," and Haas, "International Integration."

<sup>48</sup>SEAMES Director's Annual Report, 1977, p. 16.

<sup>49</sup>SEAMES Director's Annual Report, 1985, pp. 33-34.

<sup>50</sup>SEAMEO Quarterly, 12:3 (July-September, 1989), 10, 47.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid. The first was held on September 2-4, 1970. For details, see my INNOTECH Story, pp.

<sup>52</sup>SEAMEO Quarterly, 12:3 (JULY-September, 1989), 10. The cover story of this number (pp.4-5; 7) is appropriately entitled "West Germany's Support of SEAMEO Touches the Lives of Southeast Asians."