

FOREIGN POLICY □ Marcos Agayo

## Toward ASEAN solidarity

THE Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was organized to provide its members with a stronger base for attaining common goals including economic development and promotion of peace. Philippine involvement in the ASEAN is premised on this principle stated by President Marcos: "National problems call for national solutions, but in the world in which we live, many problems cannot be solved in a purely national context. We have to reach out into the larger world and seek forms of cooperation with other countries conducive to the attainment of our goals."

The Philippines does not of course measure its involvement in ASEAN purely by national standards since ASEAN operates on "mutually advantageous relationships."

How do Philippine objectives tie in with those of ASEAN? First, the Philippine "policy of nonalliance" fits into the ASEAN declaration of establishing a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia. Second, the Filipinos' efforts to forge national unity are buttressed by ASEAN's principles of "self-determination, sovereign equality and noninterference in the national affairs of nations". Third, Philippine economic development programs—like export promotion, diversification of production, market expansion—are being fulfilled by ASEAN's declaration "to broaden the complementarity of their respective economies."

A Southeast Asian zone of peace, neutrality and freedom and ASEAN economic complementarity would help solve the regional problems of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy.

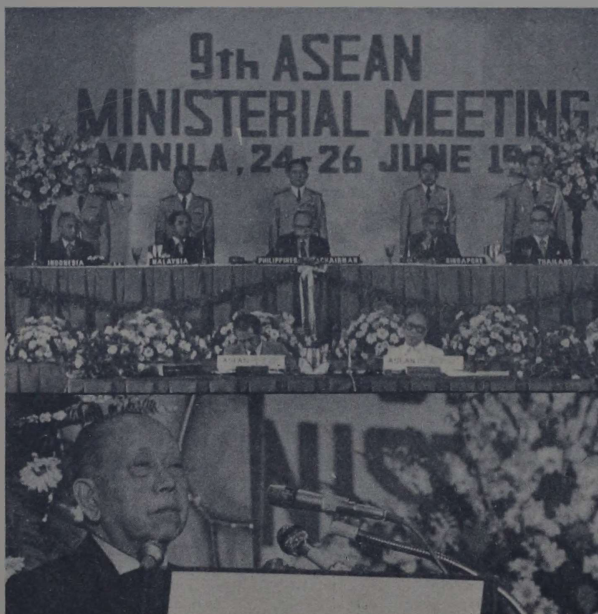
**Strength of ASEAN solidarity.** From 1967 when the ASEAN was formed until recently, the ASEAN went through "nine years of self-enriching experience". During this period, the members became acquainted with each other's national problems, the limitations of their speculations from each other, and the problems of national security as affected by the shifting power balance in the region.

Now, ASEAN has these uniting factors: a) "The leaders have shown that they respect the national sovereignty and independence of each state;" b) "They have ameliorated bilateral disputes between themselves;" c) The members have, through the Bali Summit last February, "the necessary political will (for cooperation)". During the summit, a Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and an ASEAN Declaration of Concord were signed.

The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, according to Carlos P. Romulo, "lays down the principles as well as the modalities for achieving regional peace, harmony and stability." (It formalizes the (the ASEAN's) determination to solve possible intra-regional disputes wholly and solely through peaceful means. . . Furthermore, the treaty emphasizes the need for national and regional resilience as an indispensable instrument in meeting the complex and rapid changes in the region and in Asia."

The Declaration of ASEAN Concord, on the other hand, lays down in realistic perspective the objectives of ASEAN cooperation embodied in the first ASEAN declarations at Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur. It also "confers legitimacy on (ASEAN's) cautious and tentative efforts at cooperation in the political field."

**Economic Cooperation.** Embodied in the Declaration of ASEAN Concord is a provision for economic complementarity. The idea behind economic complementarity, according to Carlos P. Romulo, is that "no single country in the region is capable at this stage of establishing economies of scale, but on a regional basis, we can." In pursuit of the complementation scheme, these industrial projects have been allocated: a)



Sec. C.P. Romulo: formalizing the determination to solve disputes.

a) a urea plant in Indonesia and Malaysia; b) a superphosphates plant in the Philippines; c) a diesel engine plant in Singapore; d) a soda ash plant in Thailand.

Most of the ongoing and projected activities of the ASEAN belong to the economic, trade, and industry areas. A noteworthy development is the acceptance by the World Employment Conference of the ASEAN labor ministers' stand on a "basic needs strategy". This strategy means that "the creation of an adequate level of productive and remunerative employment should be given the highest priority in drawing up development objectives". It also means that economic growth should be measured through amount of employment generated which promotes more equitable distribution of income.

Some other major developments in the economic, trade, and industrial areas are: a) the adoption by the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia, and Thailand of a liberal exchange rule where transfer of funds to and from these countries are no longer restrictive. This means that residents of the four countries can invest freely in any of the countries; b) the call by the economic ministers for a regional investment code to strengthen ASEAN bargaining leverage in dealing with foreign companies; c) the call for an agency in each member country's labor ministry to attend to matters of social concern and assist a regional body that will take charge of information exchange on labor; d) ratification of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and of the agreement establishing the ASEAN secretariat in Jakarta.

The ASEAN may eventually establish a common market depending on the achievement of high and viable levels of development and complementation, according to Industry Secretary Vicente T. Paterno.

The Ninth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in Manila endorsed all ongoing and projected ASEAN activities. It also boosted the ASEAN economic program further by calling for the speeding up of projects in transportation and telecommunications, civil air transport, air traffic services, meteorology, and shipping.

Other positive steps taken to implement the ASEAN Concord were the signing of two declarations: a) the ASEAN Declaration of Principles to Combat the Abuse of Narcotic Drugs,

which aims at intensifying cooperation among the ASEAN members and between ASEAN and other international bodies in the prevention and eradication of drug trafficking and abuse; b) the ASEAN Declaration for Mutual Assistance on Natural Disasters, which provides for the extension of relief assistance to a member country in distress by the other member countries. These declarations had been projected since 1972.

The problem of reorganizing the ASEAN did not go beyond taking note of the report on reorganization since continuation on some issues, like the regrouping of the permanent committees, remain.

The ninth ministerial conference demonstrated that the ASEAN has reached the take-off stage of solid cooperation. Its concrete output, however, is largely confined to the economic arguments. But political harmony was, of course, given a boost with the establishment of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

The big problem is political harmony with the other Southeast Asian nations—not necessarily harmonization of political philosophy but political accommodation. In dealing with this problem, ASEAN has avoided any ideological or security commitments that would invite opposition from the Asian Communist powers. Instead, the members now deal with Communist insurgency on a bilateral basis.

Presently, big power interference is a major obstacle in ASEAN relations with the Indo-China nations. A formula, as suggested by Carlos P. Romulo, is "the establishment of a system of countervailing forces acting in reciprocal deterrence. Given the numerous and varied interests, many of which intersect and cut across one another, the possibility exists that eventually a natural balance will emerge among the great powers in the region". Peaceful, not destructive, competition, in short.

A balance of power or, as officially sought by ASEAN, a Southeast Asian zone of peace, freedom and neutrality. A noted observer, however, says that it will be difficult to get the big powers to jointly agree on a neutral zone in the region; so, it is perhaps more practicable to establish treaties of nonaggression with each of the big powers. □

## Code of Conduct

ANY PERSON IN THE SERVICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES SHOULD:

I. Respect and uphold the Constitution and laws of the Republic of the Philippines.

II. Observe the highest standard of morality, integrity, honesty, loyalty and devotion to the public welfare.

III. Perform his tasks thoroughly, faithfully and efficiently.

IV. Be physically and mentally fit for public service and live within his income.

V. Expose corrupt practices in the public service without fear or favor.

VI. Serve the public courteously, justly and impartially regardless of kinship, friendship, social standing, religious or political difference.

VII. Discharge duties promptly without thought of gifts, benefits or any remuneration which may influence the proper performance of official functions.

VIII. Engage in no business with the government or with any private party, either directly or indirectly, which will be inconsistent with his position as a public servant.

IX. Divulge no confidential information coming to him by the nature of his office or duties.

X. Uphold, respect and observe these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust which he should neither violate, nor should he allow suspicion to arise that such trust has been abused or betrayed.

## A soldier's code

I. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES.

II. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL FIGHT ALL FORCES THAT WOULD DESTROY THE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE FILIPINO PEOPLE.

III. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL OBEY THE LAWS, LEGAL ORDERS AND DECREES OF MY LAWFUL SUPERIORS AT ALL TIMES.

IV. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL UPHOLD THE SUPREMACY OF CIVILIAN AUTHORITY OVER THE MILITARY IN WAR OR IN PEACE.

V. I AM A FILIPINO SOLDIER. I WILL LIVE AND DIE IN THE TRUE FILIPINO TRADITION OF VALOR AND HONOR, DUTY AND LOYALTY.

TO ALL THESE, I PLEDGE MY LIFE, MY TREASURE AND MY SACRED HONOR.