ASEAN SUMMIT DIPLOMACY: WHAT PROFIT IN CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN?

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INTRODUCTION

Summit diplomacy. The label conveys a sense of importance, of great expectations. From the summit of a mountain one can see far and wide. The rarefied air is suitable for only the most experienced practitioners of the art. ‘Diplomacy’ is filled with denotative meanings - of older ideals such as Metternich and the Concert of Europe, Bismarck and German unification, recent failures such as Wilson and the League of Nations or Chamberlain and Nazi Germany, and successes - qualified or not - of the United Nations and U.S./U.S.S.R. détente. Combined, ‘summit diplomacy’ might be the best of the highest and most powerful decision processes in the international arena.

But is it? Summit diplomacy was essentially all there was in the 17th through 19th Centuries - the era of princes, of kings, and traditional diplomats. The citizens of the world had scant say in most countries of those eras. But as the 20th Century dawned, waxed, and waned, the stranglehold of Europe on the rest of the world was broken. Two devastating hot wars and one long cold one processed international relations in a manner unseen since the wars of the Protestant Reformation four centuries earlier. With the dawn of a new millenium, the landscape of international relations has changed.
The question, then: is summit diplomacy an instrumental tool of the new international order, or is it an obsolete holdover, or even an irrelevant concept driven more by domestic political agenda than by international relations.

The argument is not easy to craft. It appears that summits can be very useful in working international relations, both on bilateral and multilateral bases. However, as with all tools, summits have strengths and weaknesses. They also vary in their utility based on a variety of factors, such as the issues addressed, the health of the players in the summit, and the general condition of the international arena during the period of the summit in question. Also, more than many items, summits do not necessarily have immediate results. The success or failure of a summit may be better judged several years after the event. Rather like wine, the ingredients selected may appear promising in any given year, but until the agreements have been implemented and the effects assessed, there is really no way for sure to determine if a vintage summit has been produced, or vinegar. (Though even vinegar can be used to cook!)

This paper will start with a theoretical framework explaining summits. While many sources exist on specific summits, analysis of summits as a social science seems to have begun only in the 1980s. A brief discussion of historical relationships will follow, trying to relate past similar conditions to those of the present. A review of two major summit forums will then be made. The first will be assessments on the G-7 Summit series. But the paper’s focus will be on relating some of those assessments on summit activity to the developing Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit process.

THEORETICAL ASSESSMENTS

In terms of 20th Century diplomacy, summits have been increasingly used since the mid-1970s. The breadth of topics as well as number of forums has led some to wonder if the term was being worn out through overuse. However, the continued use is assured, if only through force of habit. Therefore, the question comes, what are the purposes, realistic goals, and achievable outcomes for summits based on observed data over the recent years.

In broad terms, summits have been postulated for a variety of reasons. Symbolic meetings between major powers, and final stage negotiations on major issues (especially arms control) were among the most important in the Cold War. Other general issues include exchange of information or views, handling specific crises, definition of strategic policy among allies, and even handling of issues in presumably unpublicized side meetings between leaders.

This broad number of issues has made general assessment of summitry difficult. However, the G-7 group of industrialized nations (G-7) has had
an extended and highly documented run of summits, generating some analysis. Using the G-7, Prof. John Kirton of the Univ. of Toronto reviewed summit diplomacy theory in 1989, calling attention to the similarities between the state of the G-7’s world to that of the Concert of Europe, starting in 1819. He has called the G-7 an International Concert.  

Kirton’s analysis turns the G-7 summit series into an International Concert by drawing on four specific elements. Through his analysis, it might also be possible to draw on similar elements to review the effectiveness of other summits, at least as concerts. This should be useful in establishing effective management mechanisms for other groups if the current trend towards increased summit activity continues.

First, there has to have been a decisive shock to the existing international system to kick off a new concert. Drawing analogies, Kirton points out the Concert of Europe was formed in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. The G-7 Concert was formed by the triple shock of the “collapse” of the Bretton Woods financial system, the Arab Oil Embargo and subsequent oil price increases, and major international security events of the US loss in Vietnam and the Indian nuclear test - all of which occurred in the few years of the early 1970s. From this, it can be generalized that summit or concert diplomacy as a recurring event requires some ‘shock to the system’ to be potentially effective. The shock must be sufficient for the collective summit participants to see the need to meet on a recurring basis to prevent a similarly severe reoccurrence.

The second concert element is the existence of an “effectively equal and collectively predominant interdependent great powers in the system.” Important in this element are the terms “equal,” “collectively predominant,” and “interdependent.” Kirton points out that the US was, on its own, often individually predominant. However, taken together, it did not outbalance all other economies of the G-7. Therefore, it was possible for even a relatively minor G-7 country such as Canada or Italy to be a swing player - for or against the US, at any rate. For their interests, these seven countries clearly represented all the above elements in the their system. Extending to general concert summitry, the rules can be that the collected participants must in some manner balance each other, that they be collectively important to the issue or region at hand, and that there be interdependence of some significant magnitude. OPEC could be a quick example where, though not powerful in certain ways, their control, interests, and interrelationships on oil production and prices are clearly vital to all concerned, and thus benefits from summit/concert style diplomacy amongst the member countries.

The third element required for an International Concert is for an institutionalization of the summit itself. Included in the institutionalization is a system for preparation, conduct, and follow-up - all the while remaining supportive of the primary element, which is the interpersonal interactions of the country leaders themselves (i.e. leaving the ‘summit’ in ‘summit diplomacy.’) Institutionalization need not occur at once. Even the G-7 was
not envisioned as a recurring meeting. But once its utility had been established, a series of processes arose to provide the necessary support. These processes have become full time, as befits an annual meeting. This does not necessarily address a separate question, "can one-time summits serve an effective purpose?" Given the increasing range of bilateral and multilateral summits annually, the greater question remains that of making the routine summits productive. For these 'routine' summits, the question of effectiveness year to year would appear to rest to some extent on the mechanisms in place to keep the group focused on the issue at hand.

The final element of concert diplomacy is the ability to provide stability and order to the international system. In other words, the concert works to prevent the shocks that caused its creation in the first place, and has the power to achieve that goal. Therefore, effective summit diplomacy at any level would require the ability of the players to stabilize the status quo of an issue or region, as well as the ability to manage any change in a manner that minimized adverse impacts to the summit participants.

The four elements of effective recurring summit diplomacy then are: 1) an initiating event due to a major system shock; 2) equal and interdependent players; 3) institutionalization; and 4) ability to influence stability and change. These lead Kirton to postulate three criteria for assessing the performance of a diplomatic concert. The first is the degree to which the concert protects its participants from major system shocks. The second is the success of any new international ordering that the concert must produce in response to change requirements. The final measure of effectiveness is the degree to which a concert is able to create specific mechanisms to maximize the welfare of the concert members directly and the overall system in general.

The quantitative measure of these criteria for the G-7 has been researched a bit. A score card reflecting general summit success as well as individual country goal achievement has begun to be created for each summit. This exposes some of the problems with measuring immediate summit decisions against factual outcomes that are necessarily long-term oriented. However, the effort can be made, primarily through a review of policies espoused prior to the summits, and the issues facing the participants as they approached each summit. By reviewing subsequent country data (economic, political, or otherwise,) the summits further back in time can be grouped and analyzed to determine if they were in deed effective in especially the final criteria above - improving the overall welfare of the specific concert as well as associated areas of influence.

ONE CURRENT SUMMIT CONCERT: G-7

The G-7 started as a one-time event to address the major issues affecting the senior NATO countries and Japan in 1975: collapse of fixed exchange rates; rise of the OPEC cartel and oil prices; and US loss in Vietnam and the Indian nuclear tests. However, US President Ford called another summit
the next year to help bolster a flagging reelection campaign, adding Canada to the list. This second successful summit, while not helping Ford get reelected, did confirm the G-7 Summit as an annual affair. Over ten years later, scholars and academicians were finally taking note.

The attempts to critique the record of the G-7 Summits include focuses on overall outcomes, as well as year to year reviews. Kirton, for instance, reviews data and other studies that generally work on three major sectors to judge summit success: "political direction," "policy coordination," and "socioeconomic management." He concludes that the first is measured by anecdotal and insider review of the details of each summit. The second is measured by the overall coordination and control of each summit's agenda and introduction of new issues. The final factor is a compendium of goals and data that corresponds roughly to the earlier mentioned points of protection against shocks, ordering of the international system, and improving the system's overall welfare.

Three different levels of success for the G-7 are identified in three distinct periods. The first period, 1975 - 1980, was considered a period of high summit effectiveness. The period was marked by a lack of shocks to the system, high turnover of issues addressed and agreed to by the participants, and consensus in the agreements reached. The second period, 1981 - 1985, was considered a period of low effectiveness. Fewer new issues were added, and many older issues remained year to year. The consensus of the concert was less marked (contributing perhaps to the lack of issue resolutions,) and there were a number of system shocks that hit the G-7 (including the Afghanistan invasion, Third World Debt Crisis of 1982, and the start of the Iraq/Iran war.) The final period, 1986 - 1988 (N.B. 1988 the most recent for Kirton's article) was considered of medium effectiveness. The economies of the G-7 were generally stable, rapprochement with the Soviet Union was underway, and the only major system shock (1987 stock market collapse) had been adequately controlled.

Other assessments of the effectiveness of this same period provide a more generic review. For instance, only approximately one third of agreements promised by the summit leaders were actually delivered. While not a great score in an academic sense, it statistically eliminates a null hypothesis that summits result in no action. The same study found that for the next period (1988 to 1995,) the delivery of promised agreements improved to 43%. This was attributed to more specific (that is, better defined, and therefore more attainable) goals. It is noted that a number of the goals in this period were environmentally oriented, or related to aid to the former Soviet Union - items that, while affecting laws, policy, and money, are more directly controllable than things such as inflation, rates of exchange, and other free market forces.

A number of studies have looked to define why certain periods were highly effective, and others less so. Areas studied have included: GNP’s and relative national power changes; rates of GNP growth (actual and relative;) largest member (in this case US) debt ratios; changes in leadership (and
associated losses of group-memory;) and even confluence or division in the overall party structure (conservatives verses liberals) of the leaders-all of these with and without time-lag effects. To date, while many of these prove promising, none fit the entire curve of the effectiveness studies. The most promising work seeks to associate economic data and associated national power with either a pro- or anti-hegemonic drift in summit politics. A ‘pro-’ meaning proposes that a hegemon accepts restrictions for the greater good of the group, and therefore greater concert effectiveness. ‘Anti-’ predicts group efforts to thwart hegemonic initiatives, and therefore reduced effectiveness. The problem is certain sets of data during the 1975 - 1988 period supports both theories.\(^\text{15}\)

Overall, the G-7 continues to be an important meeting for the participant countries. The effectiveness of the most recent rounds - including issues such as the introduction of the Euro and various EU/US trade disputes - will not likely be known for several years. However, the question of ‘if’ the summit has an impact is gone; it is merely a question of how to make each summit more efficient to each participant specifically, and the international order in general.

**ASSESSMENT OF SUMMIT CONCERT: ASEAN**

The G-7 has enough similarities to the Great Powers of the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) Century to make a comparison with the Concert of Europe obvious even without complex summit theory and statistical data analysis. But can the same attributes of summit and concert diplomacy be used to study other groupings? The ASEAN forum will be used as a sample.

ASEAN has several surface similarities with the G-7. Formed in 1967, ASEAN has been around longer than the G-7. It has always contained (plus/minus) about the same number of countries. The concerns also focus on economic betterment as well as security and other issues affecting the collected grouping. The major differences are wealth, reach, culture, and regime type. ASEAN represented only 4\% of World GNP, compared to the G-7’s 46\% (GNP in purchasing power parity terms.)\(^\text{16}\) The concerns of the G-7 were and remain global in terms of investment and resources. ASEAN has been predominately regional in concern. Culturally, the G-7 represents six relatively uniform European-origin countries plus Japan. ASEAN contain countries that officially espouse four of the world’s major religions, contain widely diverse languages and cultures, and have at race or religious differences as major internal stability issues in a large percentage of the present members.

Finally, all G-7 countries have had mature democracies throughout their tenure; regime differences have been measured along a conservative to liberal axis of democratic views. ASEAN, on the other hand, consisted even at its formation of two restricted democracies, two military autocracies, and one civilian dictatorship. It now consists of two freer democracies, four restrictive or troubled democracies, a hereditary sultanate, two transitioning Communist-socialist oligarchies, and a military autocracy.\(^\text{17}\) These differences noted, ASEAN as a ‘concert’ will be examined using Kirton’s criteria.
The first criterion was a decisive event or series of events leading to the formulation of the concert. The years prior to the formulation of ASEAN included several events that can be so considered. Perhaps the most significant event was the Confrontation initiated by Indonesia against Malaysia in 1963, and not resolved until 1965. The exit of Singapore from Malaysia, also in 1965, would have been an additional shock. The Suharto overthrow of Sukarno occurred also in 1965, resulting in a major realignment of Indonesia away from the PRC. Finally, the region was continuing to reel from the heavy US involvement in Vietnam. In summary, all of these events would be ample shocks to any system. The proposal to form ASEAN as a vehicle of dialog to impact regional security and economic development is certainly one of the elements of a concert.

The second criterion is equal and collectively predominant interdependent powers in the system of the concert. Measured as national power in either economic or military terms, the criterion for the first twenty years has some merit as a regional concert. As finalized soon after establishment in 1967, Indonesia predominated in terms of population, and Singapore was the grouping’s dwarf. Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines fell on a continuum between these two, however. Much like the US verses the other six in the G-7, Indonesia did not outweigh the rest of the collective group in any measure except population - which, being a poor, scattered archipelago, it was unable to harness to direct benefit. More importantly, however, was a strongly shared cultural bias to require a consensus on any major decision. This cultural requirement served to flatten any major power discrepancies, at least while ASEAN retained its original make-up.

However, since 1984, ASEAN has begun to violate this criterion. Brunei was admitted in 1984, bringing ASEAN to six member countries. However, Brunei is so small as to have virtually no measurable military, and as a sultanate, the nation’s GDP is essentially all private. The expansion in the 1990s has further complicated the issue, as shown in Table 1. The GDPs of the available countries in 1999 is so disparate it is hard to graph in an effective visual manner. Since ASEAN runs under a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1999 GDP (Billions USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brunei</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>138.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>79.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>134.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
consensus process, each leader is conceptually allowed an equal vote. While the equal vote concept is in line with concert summits, the allocation of equal consensual rights to vastly different powers is antithetical to what concert diplomacy was in the 1800s, or essentially is today in the G-7. As long as the five major powers of ASEAN exercise an effective power brokerage system behind the scenes, then ASEAN summity can still be considered in a summit context.

The third criterion is institutionalization of the summit. The first problem that arises is that the summit process did not occur until relatively late. The first summit did not occur until 1976 - nine years after ASEAN’s formation. Though a second summit followed immediately, after that there was another long break; summits were not held regularly until 1995, when a series of informal summits were added to fill multi-year gaps between planned summits. However, a permanent ASEAN secretariat was established soon after the 1967 formation of ASEAN.

The fourth and final criterion is the ability to provide stability and order to the international system covered by the concert. This criterion is perhaps the one most open for more major debate. The satisfaction of this criterion requires some measures of effectiveness. The approach to assess the effectiveness of ASEAN summits will be the previously mentioned criteria of Kirton: 1) protects participants from major system shocks; 2) success of any new international ordering that is produced in response to change; and 3) creation of specific mechanisms to maximize the welfare of the concert members directly and the overall system in general.

MEASURES OF ASEAN SUMMITRY EFFECTIVENESS

A number of post-formation shocks have rocked ASEAN and its region. The first was the fall of the nominally democratic South Vietnamese regime to Communist North Vietnam in 1975. The only ASEAN activity of note prior to this event was the proposal of the Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) in 1971. It might be noted that the ASEAN summits One and Two occurred AFTER the Vietnam shock (1976 and 1977) and should be seen as responsive in nature. The first summit produced two binding treaties. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation emphasized noninterference in the internal affairs of neighbors, and the peaceful dispute resolution process. The ASEAN Concord included the requirement to ratify the Amity treaty, as well as the ZOPFAN goal and broad discussions of unified efforts to improve the economy and societies of Southeast Asia.

The next shock to the system was the invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam in late 1978. This event generated some of the most consistent ASEAN joint efforts in international diplomacy since its formulation. However, it did not generate another specific summit. Almost a decade later, the Third ASEAN Summit produced another major declaration, including much of the stated goals from the ASEAN Concord, adding in the desire for resolution
of the Cambodian crisis as well as the intent to make Southeast Asia a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ.) The usual words to boost economic ties were beefed up to include future directions for a preferential trade area - this in the middle of the worst economic crisis to that point to have hit the region since World War Two.

After 1987, summits began to be held more frequently, and by adding informal summits in 1996, the summit finally became an annual reality. However, this was not to forestall the severe shock to the system caused by the 1997 Financial Crisis. The Second Informal and Six ASEAN Summits both addressed the issue in a reactionary mode, calling belatedly for improved governance and greater transparency, as well as bemoaning the downsides of globalization.

In short, the summit process for ASEAN has not been effective in forecasting and preventing shocks to the Southeast Asian system. In no case was a major system shock predicted by an ASEAN summit. The measures announced in response were almost always symbolic - the ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ are still dreams not realities, for instance. The only arguable success, regional return to economic growth following the 1997 financial crisis, is hampered by numerous forecasts of impending reversal as well as a widely stated believe that it was a strong US economy that was the single most important element in the regional recovery - not any actions by ASEAN itself.21

This leads to the question of whether or not ASEAN was more effective in the measure for change management. During the era of few summits, ASEAN was essentially powerless to affect change. Its first twenty years produced three summits, four major initiatives, and zero change control. However, its subsequent record is actually not bad. The 1987 summit initiated the discussions on a regional trade block has supported the high growth rate for nine years (1988 to 1996.) While it did not save the region from the two financial setbacks, it certainly has contributed to change management. The resultant ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) initiative’s signature at the next (1992) summit generated serious engagement from EU representatives and the US. This has led to the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the broader APEC grouping - both engaging ASEAN as an equal.

ASEAN Summits should also get credit for setting the goal at the 1992 summit of a 10-country membership in ASEAN. In fact, the Amity Treat was already modified at the 1987 summit to allow for all Southeast Asian countries of willing to sign the Concord and Amity treaties. These foundations led to the inclusion of Vietnam within a few years of the resolution of the Cambodian crisis, and the inclusion of all of Southeast Asia by the end of the decade.22

However, ASEAN did not handle all changes well. The secession of East Timor from Indonesia, for instance, was condemned as an option as late as the 1996 Informal Summit, and the subsequent support for the vote
and transition were led by non-ASEAN forces. The decision on regional security remains a draw. Efforts such as ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ remain unfulfilled, as most major nations do not recognize either yet. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) has provided a security-centered talk shop, but this has not significantly reduced tensions in the South China Sea, nor controlled piracy in the region, nor assisted in the admittedly internal Indonesian regime crises and rebellions.23

Overall, the change management score seems subjectively better than the shock prevention score. Two of five change issues (ASEAN enlargement and AFTA) have been addressed with success, with the jury still out on a third (ARF.) The failures are the attempts to drive the region to neutrality (ZOPFAN and SEANWFZ initiatives), which is largely beyond the control of ASEAN directly. Only the East Timor issue is a really unqualified failure on ASEAN's part to manage regional change effectively.

The final efficiency measure is whether or not summit activity bettered the welfare of ASEAN specifically, and its area of interest in general. Measures can include changes in the general peace, economic improvements, and general social changes over the period in question. In terms of general peace and security, the first decade of ASEAN saw constant communist insurgencies in all ASEAN member countries, and major wars in two future members. As of now, only three states have a continuing problem with insurrections (Indonesia and Philippines, and Burma.) Burma and Thailand are the only countries to have traded shots across a border recently. There the complications of an active drug trade and the insurrections make it difficult to always determine who is really doing the shooting.24 None the less, to go from five active insurgencies and two wars, to three insurgencies and no wars is surely an improvement attributable to some extent to the decision to enlarge ASEAN.

Economic data for the first twenty years is largely irrelevant. Thought the first summit (1976) mentions economic cooperation as a common interest, it was not until the third summit (1987) that the interest became a clearly articulated goal. Therefore, economic data comparison will start with 1988 data. As a benchmark, the ASEAN performance will be compared with the G-7's performance. Since the founding ASEAN-525 account for 95% of the current ASEAN-10's GNP, and since ASEAN increased from six to ten nations over the period 1995 to 1999, only the data on the original ASEAN-5 will be used for this comparison.

By any of several measures, ASEAN did well over the ten-year period 1988 to 1997. The financial crisis, which hit in the middle of 1997, is measurable in the flattening of several factors. However, the year was still one of positive growth in some of the economies of ASEAN. Figure 1 shows the average GDP change year on year for ASEAN-5 compared to the G-7.26 It is interesting to note both the higher level of ASEAN growth, and the
Figure 1: Comparison of Annual GDP Change, G-7 & ASEAN

GDP Annual Change

general matching of the shape of the two curves. Only as the financial crisis takes hold is there a pronounced drop in the ASEAN rate (which holds only for 1998 - 1999 and 2000 have been good years for ASEAN.) Another measure of economic growth is increasing exports. Figure 2 shows ASEAN and G-7 data for the same timeframe. Over the decade, G-7 export value increased 80%; ASEAN-5 value increased 194%.

Figure 2: Comparison of Export Growth, G-7 & ASEAN
However, the question can be asked if the ASEAN summits had anything specific to contribute to this success. The mooted preferential trade arrangement in 1987 transformed itself by 1992 into the launch of AFTA. However, intra-ASEAN trade data\(^9\) for 1994-1998 shows a constant decline (see Figure 3.) Though the 1997 Financial Crisis could be blamed for a reversal in that year or later, that is not the case - trade was already on a downhill run. Since AFTA has been the most significant summit-endorsed economic move, there can be some doubt as to its success.

**Figure 3: Intra-ASEAN Trade, Percent Annual Growth**

The final criteria, general social wellbeing, is harder to link to the summit activity. All the summits are filled with regional help promises. The most significant outpouring of this help came during and after the Indonesian unrest in 1998. This may have been more to buy off a potential regional disaster than in the category of social help (i.e. it may have been a non-summit move [coordinated or not] that prevented a major regional shock from becoming a regionally catastrophic shock.) Be that as it may, social wellbeing has improved markedly during the ASEAN period, especially for the five longest members. Example data for the period of the early 1980s to the late 1990s shows that young child mortality declined fifty percent - as much as the G-7 for that period (though ‘from’ and ‘to’ different levels.) Access to basic services increased significantly for the main ASEAN countries, on average 62% for sanitation and 39% for access to safe water (factors ranged from 25% to 100% improvements.)\(^9\) While linkage to summit activity is probably weak, the least that can be said is that the leadership did not inhibit the improvements in these areas - something that can not be said over this period for regions such as Africa and certain other areas of the collapsing Communist ‘Second World.’
Table 2: Summary of Effectiveness of ASEAN Summits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>No. of Events</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shock Prevention</td>
<td>Failed to predict and handle numerous systemic shocks; contribution to Indonesia in 1998 possible exception</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Near Fail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Management</td>
<td>AFTA and Enlargement effective, ARF Still in debate; East Timor and Indonesian Transition ineffective</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Fewer wars and insurrections</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Overall: Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Growth</td>
<td>Good growth, but who gets the credit? Also, AFTA effectiveness still subject to future Successes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Improvement</td>
<td>Good progress, but who gets the credit?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor to Fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:

Table 2 shows a summary of all the criteria. The summits appear to have had at least the some marginally positive effectiveness as measured by Kirton’s criteria. While a general failure at preventing shocks (the donations to Indonesia not being a summit activity,) the planning for change achieved success rates as good as that of the G-7. Even if the regional security efforts are judged a failure in the future, ASEAN so far has a 40% success rate for foreseeing and accommodating regional change - about par for the course in international summity.

Also notable is economic success of the post-third summit period (1988 onwards,) not only in the numbers, but also in the implementation of the AFTA. This significant accomplishment need not suffer much from the setbacks of 1997/98. While some revisionist efforts are underway, most countries are adhering, under group pressure, to some semblance of the original deregulation schedule. The increasing attention given to AFTA by other trade blocs is enough of a positive note to conclude that in this area it has at least accomplished something. The social factors can not be linked to specific summit activities. But since they increased markedly throughout the period, neither can they be used as a detractor to summit progress.
CONCLUSIONS: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The G-7 / ASEAN Summit series comparison serves to highlight the potential for positive impact by effective summits. Though the G-7 effectiveness has been assessed to vary over time, it is precisely because it has had the time to do its work that it could make an impact. The critical summaries of the G-7 are no longer whether or not it has had a positive impact, but how to make it routinely more effective than in the past. For the ASEAN summit series, it is clearly obvious that ASEAN summits had no impact while it was an occasional and reactive body. The turning point came at the 1987 summit, after which the frequency increased significantly - becoming essentially an annual affair by 1995.

Perhaps the greater question is 'where next, ASEAN summitry?' The G-7 is, for instance, transforming itself into the G-8, try including Russia in many of its functions. One might ask, "Why?" Or better yet, "Why only Russia?" For instance, China's 1999 GNP is triple Russia's GNP, and though its per capita GNP is one third that of the Russian Federation, at purchasing power parity (PPP) levels, it is only 18% less than Russia's. China has the larger standing army, its share of nuclear weapons and means to deliver it, and its share of domestic regime challenges and opportunities, and it, too, holds veto power on the UN Security Council. Yet there is no talk of the G-9. China remains firmly a member of the G-77. Russian financial support is a plank of most of the recent G-7 summits - but China only gets support to enter the WTO - a bootstrap approach to improvement. Perhaps it is unfair to say that the G-7 maintains an Euro-centric view of the world, but so it seems.

Thus perhaps enters the opportunity for ASEAN summitry. Rightly focused in the past on regional development and security, the ASEAN leaders have the chance through the power of their own-going reforms and growth to impact Southeast Asia - even all of East Asia - by including appropriate themes in their decision processes. If the summits can maintain the focus on improving regional stability, economic viability, and regional unity, then ASEAN will be able to acquire the collective negotiating power that has eluded its individual leaders while abroad.

This is exactly the problem that hinders other developmental organizations. For example, the G-77 appears too unruly to be a useful mechanism for change for the entire developing world. Though various leaders have often gone to G-77 conferences, the 37 year-old organization held its first summit only in April 2000. The summit has had mixed reviews at best. The problem with the 133-member group is an inability to agree on collective decisions.

ASEAN, as a grouping of only ten nations, has the opportunity to work issues important to its development in a unique manner. However, this will
not be without its challenges. The grouping must seek unity in economic efforts. The old ASEAN-5 accounts for 95% of the current ASEAN-10’s GNP - a disparity that needs to be evened out. ASEAN itself only accounts for about nine percent of the world population - but only four percent of the world GNP(PPP) (compare G-7 12% and 46% respectively.) However, during the last two decades of the 20th Century, ASEAN grew at almost twice the rate of the G-7. The potential is there, provided ASEAN leadership keeps the focus on proper growth mechanisms.

This is particularly true if ASEAN can work AFTA into an East Asian trade bloc, including at least China. China has been an avid supporter of ASEAN institutions since being invited to participate. It has strong opinions on the security related ARF and its progress, clearly favoring this approach over bilateral exercises with the US that many ASEAN nations are currently doing. It also is very interested in the old East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC) proposed in 1991 by Malaysia. The recent series of meetings labeled ASEAN+3 (ASEAN and China, Japan, and South Korea) have many of the underpinnings of the old EAEC concept. This group of nations would indeed be a formidable affair. However, even if Japan and Korea remained out due to concerns on the US and/or G-7, the inclusion of China as a major partner would still be a coup for ASEAN.

The declarations, statements, and communiqués during the summits of the 1990s showed a marked increase in sophistication and coordination. The breadth of topics increases significantly in the minutes of each summit, as does the detail in the plans. This demonstrates both increasing breadth of concern by ASEAN leaders, as well as a maturing ASEAN Summit institutional support network. In this manner, ASEAN summity is beginning to resemble the concert diplomacy that can be attributed to the G-7.

The ASEAN summit will not approach the G-7 summit in terms of ability to impact world events for decades - if ever. The gap in economic performance is just too great to overcome in a matter of decades. However, ASEAN neither has nor needs the world view of the G-7. ASEAN is clearly positioned to handle Southeast Asian issues, if the leaders of the summits are willing to work towards concrete plans of advancement.

Given the unconfrontational manner of societies in Asia, the process is not likely to be a quick one. Perhaps more problematic is the overarching concerns of regime stability that characterize the region. These concerns appear to offset the hypothesized advantage of long-term summit membership that would add stability and focus to the process. Of the leaders of the Third ASEAN Summit in 1987, two still remain in power, and two of the regime types have changed - issues both significantly different than G-7 experience.
The challenge for ASEAN summity is to work within the regional customs and among the widely different types of regimes to still achieve goals improving the region. Coupled with this is the issue of disparity in the power of the summit participants. A leader-follower mentality is a hard relationship to establish. But it must be if ASEAN summity is to achieve the potential for impact on its interests within and without its boarders. The population, natural resources, and location of ASEAN give it the same potential as the G-7. The issue remains that of development, and whether the differences between the players will hinder or help that development. ASEAN has had a few successes. This is partly due to a late start to the process. Since the real summit work began in the late 1980s, there has been an improvement in efficiency. The question is, can the leaders sustain that improvement, or will they be pulled apart, looking fearfully both within and without, by sacrificing overall growth to maintain relative power, and by looking towards outside allies in pursuit of economic and security goals at the expense of regional partners.

It is a very open question, indeed.

NOTES


2. Barston, Ibid.; and Baylis, John, and Steve Smith; Globalization of World Politics; Oxford Univ. Press; New York, NY; 1997; pg. 256.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.
8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Kirton, /kcon2.htm; and "Explaining Summit Success: Prospects for the Denver Summit Remarks Delivered at the University of Colorado at Denver;" 19 June 1997 http://www.library.utoronto.ca/g7/annual/daniels1997idocument.html


12 Kirton; /kcon2.htm.

13 Kirton; /kcon2.htm and /kcon3.htm; and Hajnal op. cit.

14 “Explaining Summit Success...” op. cit.

15 Kirton, /kcon3.htm and /kcon4.htm.


17 A nice and not entirely dated survey of issues is contained in Mathia Alagappa’s Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia; Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA; 1995.

18 Lyon, Peter; War and Peace in Southeast Asia; Oxford Univ. Press; London, UK; 1969; pp. 188ff.

19 Chronology available from the ASEAN website: http://www.asean.or.id, including the link History (asa_his2.htm).

20 “The Declaration of ASEAN Concord ”and “The Treat of Amity and Cooperation,” both ASEAN documents, and available, e.g. on the ASEAN website.

21 E.g. “A Wild And Crazy Ride;” Asiaweek; April 28, 2000 VOL. 26 NO. 16.

22 For documents, see the Manila Declaration, December 1987, and the Framework Agreement on Enhancing Economic Cooperation and the Agreement on the Common Effective Preferential Tariff Scheme for the ASEAN Free Trade Area, January 1992; both available on the ASEAN website.

23 See, for instance, Collins, Alan; Security Dilemmas of Southeast Asia; MacMillian Press; Hampshire, UK; 2000.


25 Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand; GNP based on World Bank, op. cit.

27 Ibid., except only from the IMF data.

28 From the ASEAN website, http://www.asean.or.id/stats/afta_mva.htm.

29 World Bank 1999/2000; op. cit..

30 Ibid.


33 From World Bank Data, op. cit.

34 From a talk on China and Asia-Pacific Security given by the China Institute for Contemporary International Relations to the National University of Malaysia's M.A. in Diplomacy and Strategy Class 2000/01, 21 August 2000.

35 From a talk on China's foreign policy specific to ASEAN given by the China Academy of Social Sciences to the National University of Malaysia's M.A. in Diplomacy and Strategy Class 2000/01, 21 August 2000.


37 Kirton, op. cit.; /kcon3.htm.

38 Dr. Mahathir of Malaysia and Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei.

39 The military rule of Thailand and the dictatorship in Indonesia have changed.

40 Liberal to Conservative changes or vice versa are hardly comparable to the aforementioned regime changes.