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The aims of this thesis are : (1) to compare the characteristics and scope of the ASEAN political cooperation during the cold war (1967-1989) and the post-cold war period (1989-1997); (2) to study the factors that determine the characteristics and scope of the post-cold war ASEAN political cooperation.

The analytical research is based on the primary sources of many ASEAN documents which are in the minutes of the ASEAN meetings, formal speeches made by leaders of the ASEAN countries, and interviews given to the press. It is also based on secondary sources such as articles, books, and researches involved with the ASEAN political cooperation.

Political cooperation throughout the first part of period consisted mostly of the attempts to solve bilateral conflicts which had existed even before the birth of ASEAN. Because there were no formal frameworks for the settlement of intra-regional disputes, member countries used the best efforts in the informal bilateral summitry to try to solve the problems. Later on, they tried to exclude superpowers out of the region by initiating the concept of Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality in 1971 with no real power of enforcement. The invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam however, seemed to stimulate collective political defence among members. They joined their united efforts through various means, formally through the United Nations and informally through using back door diplomacy with China and the Soviet Union.

The post-cold war period we saw the ending of the Cambodian conflict. However, the atmosphere of political uncertainty created suspicion and insecurity in the region. Thus one can see that ASEAN has been trying hard to build new forms of political cooperation: ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), and the PMC meetings. At the same time, the intra economic blocks started to shape up in the forms of growth triangle, quadruple economic cooperation, etc. while AFTA has been going on concurrently.

The attempt to form ASEAN-10 began to take shape with the admission of Vietnam as the seventh member, Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar will follow Vietnam's example sooner or later. Not before long ASEAN-10 will be united as a political and economical group which will grow stronger and understand each other better. The group will definitely constitute a new and active regional actor, and will play a more active role in the world arena.

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