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Defining Harmony in Southeast Asia: Competing discourses, challenges and interpretations

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COMPETING DISCOURSES, CHALLENGES AND
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FIRST PLENARY SESSION

Chairperson: Dr. Peter Smith

1. Transboundary Haze: The Role of Malaysia and ASEAN.
- *Sharifah Mastura Syed Abdullah*

Defining Harmony in Southeast Asia: Competing discourses, challenges and interpretations

The Third International Malaysia-Thailand Conference on Southeast Asian Studies
Organised by Mahidol University International College, Thailand and Faculty of
Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia
29 November 2005

Assistant Prof.Dr.Parichart Suwanbubbha

I am very honored by the joint organizers, both the Dean, Professor Dr.Sharifah Mastura Syed Abdulla from Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia and Prof.Dr.Chamiya Brockelman from Mahidol University, Thailand. I appreciate very much the cooperation by both Universities in organizing this important international conference to bring good understanding, harmony and peace to our regional community. May I share with you that the scope of my work interest is concerned with religion, dialogue for peace making and transformative learning? Therefore my talk today more or less will be focused on such mentioned areas.

Abstract

Defining harmony is a vital challenging task at the present time since some communities in Southeast Asia are more or less under the unstable political situation. Others are struggling with violence in their countries. Moreover, the influential impact of globalization affects immensely on morality and human dignity among people especially the young generation. Therefore, it is necessary to rethink of the understanding about 'harmony' and how to translate the good spiritual teachings which support the essence of harmony into action. In this consideration, one may realize the concept of 'diversity,' 'interconnectedness,' 'justice and full participation,' 'the acceptance of any miserable guilt and consequences' including the proper attitude to deal with any situations. These concepts are composed of the authentic essence of harmony which is the challenging interpretation needed to be applied in Southeast Asian contexts. In order to secure inner value and to promote the idea of harmony, one may need to reconsider the concrete methods in terms of transformative learning. At the same time, the process of dialogue especially inter-religious dialogue should be encouraged locally and globally to enhance the understanding about the practices of harmony and should be considered as the tool for harmony in order to increase the good sake of the whole.

What is harmony?

As far as I can recall my understanding about harmony, I think of Buddhist teaching on 'the six directions' of the proper roles and mutual relationship between a group of people such as parents and children, teachers and students, husband and wife, friends and friends, employers and employees, monks and lay people. (D.III 189-192) We believe that if each person of these 6 pairs fulfills his or her roles, duty and responsibility gracefully, 'harmony' in society will be present definitely. However, it seems to me that harmony is *relative*. It depends on the context of each individual. It may vary in accordance with each individual experience.

For some, it means order and rules, for others it means living peacefully, without insecurity or strife, yet for others it represents the serenity of being, safely ensconced in the one with no individual desires or thoughts... It may be a 'Symphony of Beingness' which is an accord of vibrations, of sounds, of colours, of feelings, it is Beauty in the most absolute sense. It is a putting together of everything and the creation of a wonderful adventure.

(Veziau, <http://www.peacefromharmony.org>)

Furthermore, it is more interesting to learn about other definitions of 'harmony' according to 'Global Harmony Day Founder' as follows:

Harmony is a method of connection and organizational order of the relations between people including all constructive feelings, processes, phenomenon and qualities. Harmony is the most effective organization and most desired order of universal relations between humans in a society and in all its spheres: economical, political, cultural and social, including family. Harmony excludes violent struggle and unity of diversity in mutual destructive struggle.

(Semashko, <http://www.peacefromharmony.org>)

From these above definitions, one may notice the implication of common concepts of 'order', 'relationship,' interconnectedness,' 'peace,' within the meaningful word harmony.

For our Southeast Asian context, it is challenging how to relate harmony to be present in the surrounding of unstable political situation, worsening economic crisis, various forms of violence, terror and natural disasters.

The Challenging Interpretation of Harmony

Generally speaking, one may need to revisit the hidden implication of harmony for the suitable social context. In other words, it seems that 'harmony' reflects some other important concepts, that is, (1) the courage to deal with diversity such as being willing to accept the autonomy of any different cultures and diverse identities. (2) The mindful and proper attitudes towards what happens, such as the positive and negative sides of globalization without being too extreme to respond. This is also important factor to experience 'harmony'. (3) Besides, the effort of maintaining 'justice' and 'full participation' are also the basic requirement for harmony and development of peace. Above all, (4) the respect of human dignity and promoting human security of people are the vital ingredient for 'harmony'.

It is noted that the essence of harmony seems to be close to the concept of 'peace' and non-violence. It may be both a competing discourse and complimentary of each other. As I have mentioned earlier, I believe in the supportive roles of any religions and spirituality on the promoting of harmonious community. In my case, Buddhism is my

spiritual practices. Then I would like to share with you some of its teachings which go well for harmony.

Interconnectedness for Supporting a Concept of Harmony in Diversity

One of important teachings which is useful for consideration is the teaching of *interconnectedness*. Everything depends on each other. Especially, Buddhists believe in the concept of rebirth. Therefore, each individual may be born as relatives, brothers, sisters in the great numbers of their reborn time. This teaching suggests us to think that everyone may be related in some ways or other ways. For example, the disabled may be our parents or members in our family in some of the previous life. Their lives are also valuable and should not be considered as 'burden' of society. Other people could depend on them in terms of good example of life survival. This *interconnectedness* teaching also implies to a concept of *diversity*. When each unit in this universe moves, it affects on others as well. ***Therefore each unit in society should be responsible to maintain the balanced harmony and order of this universe.*** Although each unit may possess different kinds of identity and autonomy, each still depends on each other and should be able to live together peacefully. If I am not wrong, being created in the *image of God* may mean that each person is not only valuable individual but also vital part of the community as well. Each person's action will affect more or less on others in one way or other ways. Therefore the crisis such as ecological destruction, structural and domestic violence including terrorism should not be considered as personal responsibility of any houses or any communities but people should identify themselves as parts of the problems to reduce them together. The same as the serious problems of all kinds of violence which threaten national security of Thailand or Mynmar or the Philippines should be considered as the threat and crisis of the neighboring countries in Southeast Asian as well. By being aware of the interconnectedness and diversity, social harmony will take place.

Translation of the Teaching into Action for the Authentic Harmony

Being aware of the problems in the universe and identify oneself to those problems then take action to reduce them are the characters of *socially engaged religion*. Both laity and ordained ones who belong to this group will support global justice, human rights, disarmament, environmental protection, gender balance and inter-religious dialogue. They usually reinterpret the teaching into action. Cooperating in a community and networking is much more powerful in dealing with problem-solving. Again, talking about engaged Buddhism, it reminds me of *ethic of stewardship* in Christianity and the teaching of 'brotherhood' in Islam that everyone has responsible to take care of other creature together with God as well. For example, as Wilber's statement, 'getting actively involved in respect for nature, in any number of ways (recycling, environmental protection, nature celebration) not only honors nature, it promotes our own capacity to care.' (Wilber 2001, 138) By such doing, Christian friends could be involved in reducing the environmental crisis and doing socially engaged Christianity as well. The same as Muslim sisters and brothers do. Therefore the example of an expression of faith to God by 'carrying the Cross and emptying oneself' has been transformed into action. The teaching in Islam that 'no one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself' (Nawawi's collection of Forty Hadiths) is another authentic example for translation into action..

The same as Buddhists who care for the healthy and balanced quality of the Lake of Songkla they join in walking in *Dhamma (Dhamma Yatra)*. They talk and share with the villagers how to preserve the environmental balance in order that the nature will not harm them in various forms of natural disasters. These socially engaged religions will be able to give hope for harmony responding to the cry of global ecological victims.

The Proper Attitude in Encountering Everything in order to gain Harmony

One fundamental teaching in Buddhism is *seeing everything as it is*. It suggests us to look over all situations holistically. That is, everything may be composed of both the negative and positive, wide and deep aspects. Talking about negative aspects such as suffering in life, death and all disasters is not pessimistic but it is the encouragement to remind people of the truth of natural law: arising, maintaining and disappearing. It means that suffering (including everything) is not permanent. It happens, then maintains and finally disappears due to its coexisted conditions. Whenever people realize this reality and the whole picture of each thing, they will be able to control them. For example, globalization provides both pleasant and unpleasant effects to humankind. We may have more leisure and comfort from the progress of technology and communication but we may suffer from its threat of the possibility to judge each other from the material without considering the human value. In this sense, money and power of the rich would also be more important than the dignity of each individual especially the poor and the marginalized. In fact, power and money are not bad by themselves. It depends on how people use them. Wealth is acceptable in Buddhist society as long as it is derived from the right livelihood. 'Worthy of blame also is the one who, having earned wealth, becomes enslaved through clinging and attachment to it and incurs suffering because of it.' (Phra Rajavaramuni 1992, 43) At the same time, poverty is a suffering in the world for a laity. 'Woeful in the world is poverty and debt.' (A.III, p.350-2) However, Buddhism proposes another teaching *not to cling to anything and not to be too extreme both in the luxurious and suffering sides*. In our case, both wealth and poverty are the ordinary phenomena. Money and material goods are neutral, it depends on how people use them whether to belittle the dignity of others or not. Furthermore, globalization may be used as the instrument of power by some groups of people and some powerful countries that can be accessible to all resources. It is important to note that this negative impact of globalization will cause the social and economic injustice to most people lacking opportunity. To repeat, both globalization and power, by themselves are acceptable as long as people realize them holistically and do not be slave of them. If ones realize such holistic aspects of these concepts, ones could turn the crisis into opportunity and could control the situations by preventing humankind from loosing hope.. Harmony will not go so far by the proper attitude towards all things.

A Proposal from Religion to promote Harmony as a tool for Combination of Retribution and Restitution

In order to promote the proper attitude in encountering with the 'whatever' situations, one needs to have a proper method to transform people. In case of any miserable things happen, religions may provide the justice and offer chances for everyone. That is, 'no harmony can exist unless there is admission of guilt, retribution and restitution.' (Galtlover, <http://www.peacefromharmony.org>) Most religions provide

the refuge for people to cope with guilt and any consequences. It means that ourselves as human beings should be brave to turn our faces to accept the failure and rise up again through the channel of religions and spirituality. In additions, such courageous practices will cover the confidence in *the concept of justice* which is very important virtue and goodness to bring peace and harmony to the whole.

Up to this point, it is important to encourage people to identify their belief system clearly. They may be able to show how their belief could impact their relationship to the world around them. By this approach, it should be a good sign to show that religion could give hope for the hopeless situations. In other words, we as religious persons who involve with spiritual education should also aim at introducing transformative learning to our people. There are various definitions of it but we may consider one. We may realize that proper approach in teaching religion and spiritual development could give light of harmony for the world.

This is learning that includes reflection as well as analysis, focus on personal growth as well as skill mastery, developing tolerance for ambiguity, openness to reframing, imagination as a way of understanding as important as rational argument. It focuses on spiritual realities as a significant force in personal and cultural habits and methods of judgment and action.

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Inter-religious Dialogue as an Harmonious Method

The above content of transformative learning more or less goes hand in hand with the inter-religious dialogue which Wilber describes beautifully. '*Mutually respectful dialogue is indeed the time-honored method of linking self and other in a dance of understanding, a dance which is deeply conducive to integral embrace.*' (Wilber 2001, 138) As we know, Dialogue focuses on '*deep listening*' (Bohm: <http://www.Thedialoguegrouponline.com/whatsdialogue.html>) Roughly speaking, deep listening is not only hearing but understanding the standpoints of others. As Swidler (Swidler 1987, 6) explains more that we would do dialogue in order to *learn* about *different* reasons, positions, needs and stories of others, then *grow* the understanding, loving-kindness and sympathy to others. We may *change* the misunderstanding, bias, suspicion, prejudices and prejudgment towards others, after dialogue we can cooperate to join hand, head and heart to reduce the problems of humanity. Such kind of deep listening could take place when people have '*mindfulness*' and intend to hear and listen to other people's stories. In the real situation, Mahidol University Research Center for Peace Building has organized the process of Dialogue for Buddhist and Muslim military, officers, student leaders, religious leaders and local people in the deep South of Thailand where violence takes place daily. We let them listen carefully each time while other people share their stories. The important point is we let them '*stay still*' and '*being with themselves*' as a kind of contemplative moment for a while then each person starts sharing and listening to each other,

Before people are ready for doing dialogue, we let them participate in various activities and games and let them share the feeling and lessons or essence they get

after each activity. By this experiential approach of learning, they have a chance to hear, to feel, to think, to reflect and to analyze from what they heard.

During the process of dialogue, any tension may take place, it is a good time to challenge them about various virtues. Once in our work, we conduct dialogue to solve the problem of garbage disposal between Buddhist government officers and Muslim local villagers. For sure, it is not the problem of different religious belief but it is the claim to support their position and actions that each side is right. What I like to highlight is the social status between these two groups is not the same. The former is governmental officers such as Mayor of the district and his followers, the latter is local Muslim people. One of the ground rules of dialogue is realization of '*full equality and participation*' of both sides. The former asked for the right to explain first in order to win over in doing Dialogue. The facilitator did not allow any privilege without following the ground rules. The officers then were not pleased at all. In addition, we would like to remind them of understanding a concept of 'power' by letting them participate in the game of power. This game is: having a pair of partner in dialogue to take turn sitting on the floor and stand in front of his or her partner. Each one has different identity such as a man or a woman, an officer or a local villager, junior or senior, a Muslim religious leader or a Muslim young lady etc. They took turn to sit and stood and they described how they felt sincerely. Each person experienced both pleasant and unpleasant feeling. It seemed that they could sympathize the position of the others. Then we added more body of religious knowledge what is the criteria to judge people in accordance with Buddhist and Islamic teachings. By this way, we think that they have more or less a chance to cultivate personal growth and tolerance. We added more teaching to support the concept of human dignity and security. We then realize that process of dialogue did work more effectively when we related their doing dialogue with religious dimension.

Inter-religious Dialogue and Transformative Learning

To repeat, Buddhist teaching and practices have a tendency to support the nature of Dialogue in the sense of 'deep listening' through the practice of 'mindfulness' in meditation both in 'traditional meditation' and 'meditation in action.'. Moreover, ground rules to be taken during the process of dialogue could be done better if that person becomes the authentic Buddhists or even other followers in every religion. For example, the practice of tolerance, honesty, treating others humanly, no hidden agenda, open-minded to hear the difference and being patient and welcome both self-criticism and letting others criticize one's belief respectfully. These qualifications can be found in the moral teaching of each religion. Therefore we may say that dialogue and inter-religious dialogue are more or less a kind of a transformative learning to challenge the spiritual development and growth of the partners of both sides. *It may be thought positively that this practical way of dialogue would be an harmonious and peaceful method to reduce the suspicion, conflict, and prevent any forms of violence.* We have tried this process of dialogue in the South. Although it cannot stop the daily violence immediately, it is welcome and get 'heart' from a group of local people.

Challenging Tasks of Creating Harmonious Communities through Action

As we mentioned earlier that ones should be in the reality and look at 'everything as it is' or 'all things as they are' It implies a sense of *living our life in the present moment* as well. Although Buddhism talks about the result of previous *kamma* (action) which affects on the life of the underprivileged, the poor, the Buddha also emphasizes *kamma*, actions performed in every single moment of the present. The results of the actions done in the present may affect on next hour, next month, next year or next life. This kind of belief should encourage us to make a difference to create the harmonious communities. For example, women who have been suffering by the domestic violence should realize her human dignity and potentiality to resist such injustice. By this realization and the awareness of performing 'new action' in the present, they may have a chance to change the suffering situation.

Certainly it sounds impossible for the suffering to help themselves. But through the belief of no grace from outside power, human beings need to depend on themselves and other human -made supporters. Therefore, suffering and transformation should be included and considered as 'communal *kamma*', their neighbors and other networkings need to perform the new action in the present to help them whether the advices, moral supports including other practical help. By these new and skilful *kamma* in the present moment, will be the way to change the unbearable situations. Therefore, according to Buddhist perspective, the better harmonious world could be happen by the good conditions of both individual and communities at the present moment. Only we have trust, confidence, encouragement, patience and hope in this natural law, we will realize the consequence eventually.

In conclusion, while our people in Southeast Asian countries have been facing any undesirable situations, we still have hope to be aware of and have proper attitudes to cope with such problems. The important things are just begin with each individual to translate our hope and thinking into action. Through the proper way of practices and the process of dialogue, we will be able to reduce chaos and maintain harmony. This is a real challenging for each individual and Southeast Asian communities to make a difference.

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PLENARY PAPER

Transboundary Haze: The Role of Malaysia and ASEAN

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Abstract

This paper provides a review of transboundary haze pollution. It defines its issues traces the history of the episodic haze occurrences since late 1980's and discusses the management responses to the challenges both for Malaysia and Indonesia and for all other affected ASEAN member countries. At present, Malaysia and other ASEAN countries are increasingly faced with air quality deterioration due to internal air pollution problems as well as transboundary haze pollution from neighbouring countries. The main cause of the internal pollution is the process of economic development while the transboundary one i.e. haze is intentional land clearing attributed to commercial oil palm and timber plantations, forest fires, illegal logging practices and activities of local small holders. The haze pollution is episodic in nature. The level of pollution is measured by Air Pollution Index (API) which is derived based on five pollutant contents of SO₂, O₃, CO, NO₂ and PM10. The 1997 haze episode has affected Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia (Southern Sumatra and Southwest Borneo). All these countries expressed unhealthy conditions for more than 50% of the time while Kuala Lumpur and most part of Southern Sumatra recorded hazardous level where API reading exceeded 301. Other haze episodes are recorded in April 1983, August 1990, September 1997, August 2005 and mid July 2006. Management responses on these episodes include setting up of various ASEAN initiatives such as: the implementation of regional haze action plan; the Asean agreement on transboundary haze pollution; the Asean peatland management initiative; the zero-burning and controlled burning guidelines; and the activation of the panel of ASEAN experts on fire and haze assessment and coordination. It is estimated that 6 million acres of forest were burned while 70 million people were directly affected by the pollution. The economic cost of the 1997 haze episode is almost USD1.4 billion. Indonesia's losses were attributed to short term health cost while cost to Malaysia exceeded USD300 million mainly from the industrial production losses and lost revenues from big drop in tourism. Singapore lost USD60 million mainly from drop in tourist visits. Long term cost such as damage to health is not taken into account. Transboundary pollution is a multi faceted problem affecting several ASEAN member countries. An integrated approach is needed to alleviate the problem, including the role of civil societies and the support of the NGOs. The effectiveness of ASEAN cooperation depends not only on full commitment of each member country but also their capacity to meet their respective obligations as stipulated in these agreements and regional plans.

INTRODUCTION

In many megacities of Asia, the challenge is to manage air pollution which they themselves created through increased use of motor vehicles, industries and infrastructural development. In Malaysia, for more than two decades now, we are faced not only with our own internal air pollution problem which we ourselves created in the process of economic development but also air quality deterioration in the form of transboundary haze pollution from neighbouring Sumatera and Kalimantan, Indonesia during the dry months of June - September/October and February - March.

The main cause of this transboundary air pollution, a phenomenon which is referred to locally as the 'haze', is intentional land clearing variously attributed to commercial oil palm and timber plantations, forest fires, illegal logging practices and local small holders. The haze itself is 'episodic' in nature. It is characterized by high level particulate matter concentrations and other gaseous pollutants. The haze itself is a health hazard, disrupts air and sea transport and affects millions of people in Sumatera, Kalimantan, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam and, of course, Malaysia. Conditions can become worse and prolonged when such months with the haze episodes coincide with the occurrence of the well known El Nino.

This report provides a review of this transboundary haze pollution. It defines the issues, traces the history of the episodic haze occurrences since the late 1980s, and discusses the management response and the challenges both for Malaysia and Indonesia and for all the other affected ASEAN member countries, especially Singapore and Brunei Darussalam.

THE ISSUE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE 1997 HAZE

The haze phenomenon was first realized in the early 1960s (Sham et al. 1991). Unfortunately available records were scanty during these early years although the haze even then had become almost a regular feature of our Malaysian environment, notably during the dry months of February to April and June to September/October. Perhaps the haze of September 1982 and April 1983, which coincided with the occurrence of widespread bush fires and agricultural waste burning in Indonesia, were among the first to hit the headline. It attracted a great deal of public attention and created intense debates in the local media. Since then, there has been a number of haze 'episodes' of different magnitudes and intensities in Malaysia with varying socio-economic and health-related consequences.

Perhaps the longest and the worst episode and the one which received the most attention occurred during September to November 1997. It was caused not only by external sources that exacerbated the contribution from internal sources but also coincided with the El Nino, which prolonged the dry season until the middle of the following year, thus setting a conducive environment for the haze formation.

During the September to November 1997 haze episode, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia were severely affected. The main cause of the haze was mainly intentional land-clearing in Sumatera, Indonesia attributed to land clearing by commercial oil palm and timber plantations, government-sponsored transmigration

projects, and local small-holders. Internal sources such as open burning and pollutant discharges from motor vehicles were also contributory factors. Azman (1997) argued that in the 1997 haze, only about 20% of the haze composition in Kuala Lumpur was attributed to local pollution largely from motor vehicles and industries; the rest originated from outside the national boundary.

An estimated 70 million people were affected by the haze, with the worst-hit areas being in southern Sumatera and southwestern Borneo. Conservative estimates by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) put the total amount of burned forest at 6,000,000 acres. The fires were further enhanced by the meteorological conditions prevailing at the time. In the latter case, the southwest monsoon winds bearing pollutants from the forest fires blew across Kalimantan, Sumatera, Singapore, Southern Thailand, Brunei Darussalam and almost all parts of Malaysia. The episode was further exacerbated by the fact that it also coincided with the El Nino phenomenon, which affected Indonesia and most of Southeast Asia at the same time prolonging the dry season and intensifying forest fire risks.

Samples of air pollution levels, as indicated by the air pollution index (API) taken during the haze period in September and October of 1997 for urban centres in the Klang Valley Malaysia are shown in Table 1.1. The air pollution index (API) is derived based on 5 pollutants — SO₂, O₃, CO, NO₂ and PM₁₀. For PM₁₀ and SO₂, the mean concentration is averaged for an hour after 24 hours exposure. For CO, the one-hour reading is taken after 8 hours of exposure and for O₃ and NO₂; the readings are taken after one hour of exposure each. Indices for each of the pollutants are then computed; the highest index recorded is taken as the API reading.

Table 1.1. Percentage frequency of occurrence (days) with specific API categories for urban centres in the Klang Valley during the haze period, September to October 1997.

API Category	Kuala Lumpur	Petaling Jaya	Klang	Kajang
Good (0 - 50)	0.0	8.2	4.2	20.0
Moderate (51 - 100)	30.6	34.6	32.0	26.0
Unhealthy (101 - 200)	49.0	49.0	59.6	50.0
Very Unhealthy (201 - 300)	18.4	8.2	4.2	4.2
Hazardous (301 and above)	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

[Source: Calculated based on data from DOE]

It is observed that all centres experienced 'Unhealthy' condition for more than 50% of the time; Kuala Lumpur had 69.4%, Petaling Jaya 57.2%, Klang 63.8% and Kajang 54.0%. For 'Very Unhealthy' days Kuala Lumpur had the highest share with 20.4%, Petaling Jaya 8.2%, Klang 4.2% and Kajang 4.0%. Kuala Lumpur also recorded 2.0% of days with 'Hazardous' API readings. Meanwhile API readings for Kuching indicated four months of moderate to unhealthy conditions. The El Nino which lasted until mid-1998 prolonged the dry season in many parts of Malaysia, Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries. In Malaysia, the prolonged dry season

severely affected water supply in the Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley area. The situation became so critical that water rationing was imposed on the Klang Valley beginning the second half of April 1998.

The haze from forest fires that ravaged Indonesia and much of Southeast Asia during 1997 cost the region almost USD 1.4 billion. More than 90% of Indonesia's losses were attributable to short-term health costs (WWF, 1999). Costs to Malaysia exceeded USD 300 million, mainly from industrial production losses and lost revenues from a big drop in tourism. Singapore lost more than USD 60 million, mainly from a drop in tourist visits. Indonesia also lost nearly USD 90 million from foregone tourist revenues, airline cancellations and airport shutdowns, while Malaysia and Singapore together suffered almost USD 12 million in health costs. The study did not take into account such costs as long-term damage to health and losses directly attributable to fire, which are believed to be considerable, possibly equaling, if not exceeding, those of the haze alone.

SELECTED MAJOR HAZE EPISODES: 1980 - 2006

Since about 1980, there have been several reports of haze episodes affecting Malaysia. The 1997 haze, the worst to hit Malaysia so far, was discussed earlier in the previous section. This section provides a brief description of some selected major haze episodes that have affected Malaysia during the 1980 to 2006 period. A large part of this section has been heavily based on newspaper reports and the electronic media.

Haze 1983

One of the earliest reports on the haze episodes was documented in April 1983 (The New Straits Times, 1983a). According to this report, two Malaysia Airlines (MAS) flights between Ipoh and Penang were cancelled on the 4th April 1983 due to severe haze. Visibility was down to 1,000 meters. The Meteorological Department said the intense haze prominent in the northern states was mainly caused by suspended dust particles due to the dry spell. The haze was also aggravated by the occurrence of thermal inversion which prevented atmospheric mixing and enhanced the suspension of dust particles in the air.

The hazy conditions with varying severity persisted until the end of April. It was severe on 20th April whereby three MAS flights scheduled to depart from Sandakan Airport were cancelled. Visibility was down to 100 m at 8:00 am (The New Straits Times, 1983b).

Haze 1990

The hazy condition which was widely reported in the local media in August 1990 occurred during the period from 15th till 30th August, with the worst haze condition recorded from 20th till the 30th August. Complaints of increased asthma cases, poor visibility and a general feeling of depression were reported in the local papers (The New Straits Times, 1990a; 1990b).

The August haze also caused several transport disruptions. The fighter jet fly-past and parachuting display scheduled for the National Day celebration on 31st August were cancelled and light aircraft banned from flying until further notice. In Port Klang, poor visibility caused at least one ship to run aground and delayed the arrival and departure of 30 vessels. According to reports (The New Strait Times, 1990b), Subang Airport was closed to incoming flights for nearly two hours following the two incidents involving the Royal Malaysian Airforce (RMAF) fighter jets. Several incoming MAS flights during the period were diverted to Penang or Singapore while outgoing flights were delayed.

Based on available records at Petaling Jaya during 1977 to 1989, the mean total suspended particulate (TSP) values for August and September were normally between 80 to 95 μgm^{-3} . However, during the first week of August 1990, TSP levels were consistently above 100 μgm^{-3} . The values were lower in the following week due to scattered rain in Selangor. This break however was short-lived. From 16th August, the TSP levels rapidly increased reaching an unprecedented value of 516 μgm^{-3} over a 12-hour period on 27th August 1990. A more detailed account of the 1990 haze was documented in Sham et al (1991).

Haze 2005

The haze episode in 2005 which occurred during August to September was the worst since the 1997 haze. It began around 3rd August when almost 600 hotspots detected in Riau and North Sumatera, including a forest fire incident in Cyberjaya, Wilayah Persekutuan caused a sudden thick haze in the affected areas. In Sepang and Petaling Jaya on this occasion, ground visibility was as low as 1.0 km, while in Seremban ground visibility was down to 500 m. The hazy condition with varying intensities continued until past mid-September of 2005 (The New Straits Times, 2005a).

On 10th August, eight locations (Ipoh, Sri Manjung, Tanjung Malim, Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Selangor, Nilai and Seremban) experienced 'unhealthy air' with API values ranging between 101 and 200. Visibility in Subang was about 3.0 km in the morning but dropped to 0.8 km by 2 pm, and 100 m by 5 pm. In Petaling Jaya, visibility dropped from 6 to 7 km in the morning to 1.0 km by 5 pm. Ships plying the Straits of Malacca were warned of the reduced visibility to about 1.0 km in the middle and southern parts of the Straits (The New Straits Times, 2005b). By 11th August 2005, two areas in Selangor (Port Klang and Kuala Selangor) were declared as haze emergency zones with API rising above 500. In Port Klang and Kuala Selangor the API readings were 529 and 531 respectively. Many schools were closed as air quality deteriorated. The hazy conditions persisted until well after mid-September of 2005.

Haze 2006

In 2006, Malaysia experienced three short-term slight to moderate haze episodes due to transboundary haze pollution, namely in mid July, mid August and late September to October 2006.

In the July episode, three air monitoring stations located in the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia i.e. Seberang Perai in Penang, Port Klang in Selangor and Sri Manjung in Perak recorded unhealthy status for the period of 17, 18 and 19 July 2006. In mid August 2006, air quality monitoring stations in Sarawak i.e. Kuching, Sibu, Sarikei, Samarahan, Sri Aman, Petra Jaya and Bintulu recorded unhealthy levels.

The haze was more intense in late September and early October 2006. The worst hit was Sri Aman in Sarawak, which registered the highest Air Pollutant Index (API) of 221 (very unhealthy level) on 6 October 2006. Hazy condition was also experienced in Peninsular Malaysia, where twenty stations recorded unhealthy air quality levels on 7 October 2006.

In this connection, the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources reiterated that it was important for Indonesia to ratify the ASEAN Transboundary Haze Agreement before member countries can contribute to alleviate the problem. In the meantime, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia was reported to have said that the haze problem would plague the region for many years to come unless ASEAN member countries were willing to pool their resources to combat the menace (New Straits Times, 2006; The Star, 2006)

To summarise, it is noted that generally the duration of a particular haze episode varies according to prevailing weather conditions or whether the haze coincides with the occurrence of El Nino. The latter has the effect of prolonging the dry weather, resulting in the extended duration of the haze episode such as in 1997. The magnitude of the haze, on the other hand, depends on the intensity of the internal and external sources of pollution. In many cases, external sources from Kalimantan and Sumatera determine the severity of the haze. In this instance, the southwest monsoon, this generally blows over Kalimantan and Sumatera during May to September/October transports the pollutants from forest and peat fires and burning of agro-wastes across to Singapore, Brunei Darussalam and Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia. It is the transboundary nature of the pollution that has now become the concern of not only Indonesia but also her affected neighbours.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

For many years, and especially since the early 1990s, ASEAN member nations have worked together on regional plans to reduce open burning and control air pollution. However, the 1997 haze episode provided ASEAN with a sense of increased urgency to address the issue.

Since the severe land and forest fires and transboundary haze pollution in 1997, ASEAN member nations have taken many initiatives including actions on the ground to address land and forest fires and the resulting transboundary haze pollution. These initiatives include:

1. the implementation of the Regional Haze Action Plan (RHAP);
2. the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution;
3. the ASEAN Peatland Management Initiative (APMI);
4. the zero-burning and controlled-burning guidelines; and

5. the activation of the Panel of ASEAN Experts on Fire and Haze Assessment and Coordination.

The Regional Haze Action Plan (RHAP)

In June 1995 ASEAN Environment Ministers had agreed on an ASEAN Cooperation Plan to address haze pollution. The Cooperation Plan contains broad policies and strategies to deal with transboundary haze pollution. Three main objectives were identified as follows:

- a) to prevent land and forest fires through better management policies and enforcement;
- b) to establish operational mechanism to monitor land and forest fires; and
- c) to strengthen regional land and forest fire-fighting capability and the mitigating measures.

In order to meet these objectives, three strategies were proposed and agreed on, i.e. Preventive Measure, Regional Monitoring Mechanism, and Fire Fighting Capability.

Preventive Measures

Under the RHAP strategy ASEAN countries fully recognize the need to strengthen national policies and strategies to prevent land and forest fires. It also recognizes that while some member countries have already developed their policies and strategies, others are still in the process of improving them based on their own particular development needs, priorities and constraints. Nevertheless, ASEAN countries generally agreed to develop their National Plans taking cognizance of the need to address land and forest fires in their policies and strategies. The following common elements were agreed upon and included in the National Plans of each member countries:

- a) Policies to curb activities that may lead to land and forest fires, and control emission from mobile and stationary sources, including the prohibition of open burning and the strict control of land clearing practices during the dry period.
- b) Strategies to curb activities that may lead to land and forest fires, and control emission from mobile and stationary sources, including formulation of air quality management legislation to prohibit open burning; strict enforcement of laws and legislation; implementation of air quality monitoring and reporting regimes. The setting up inventory of sources of emission, both mobile and stationary; establishment of national task force committee to develop strategies and response plans to deal with fires and smoke haze is also part of the strategy, including utilization of information technology to provide haze-related information to relevant agencies to prevent and control spread of fire, and to enhance public awareness on the haze situation.
- c) Guidelines and support services to discourage activities that can lead to land and forest fires;
- d) Operating procedures for the early mobilization of resources to prevent the spread of fires;

- e) Development of markets for the economic recovery and utilization of biomass and appropriate methods for the disposal of agriculture wastes.

Regional Monitoring Mechanisms

Under this strategy the RHAP will strengthen the mechanism to provide an alert of the first outbreak of land and forest fires, an assessment of meteorological conditions, a prediction and systematic tracking of the spread of fires and haze, and the necessary data to support enforcement action. As part of this effort, the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) would be further streamlined and strengthened. The ASMC shall serve as a regional information centre for compiling, analyzing and disseminating information derived from satellite imagery and meteorological data necessary to detect and monitor land and forest fires and the occurrence of smoke haze.

The ASEAN ASMC located in Singapore has been streamlined and strengthened to serve as a regional information centre for compiling, analyzing and disseminating information derived from satellite imagery and meteorological data necessary to detect and monitor land and forest fires, and the occurrence of smoke haze.

It also includes the region's early warning system to provide an alert of the first outbreak of land and forest fires, an assessment of meteorological conditions, a prediction of the spread of fires and haze, and the necessary data to support enforcement action.

An intranet among the relevant ASEAN meteorological service and environment agencies were also established to improve communications and enhance the effectiveness of existing early warning and monitoring mechanisms. Since late 2003, the coverage of ASMC has been extended to the whole region.

Fire Fighting Capability

National and regional land and forest fire-fighting capability will be strengthened through the following measures:

- a) The inventory of land and forest fire-fighting capabilities of each country and identification of resources that can be made available for regional fire-fighting efforts (completed by March 1998);
- b) A programme to strengthen the fire-fighting capability of individual countries and the region, and compilation list of equipment and technical expertise needed at the regional level to tackle land and forest fires (completed by March 1998);
- c) The sources of technical assistance for (b) within and outside ASEAN, and, if required, an assistance programme by each donor country. Technical assistance may include forest fire-fighting equipment, aircraft such as water bombers, high-tech equipment and experts for command post operations (completed by March 1998);

- d) An operating procedure to activate the development of the fire-fighting resources in each country for regional fire-fighting operations (established by June 1998); and
- e) A mechanism in each country to provide, in the event of an outbreak of land or forest fires, regular updates to the Haze Technical Task Force (HTTF) on progress made in the efforts to fight the fires. The updates would include the number of hotspots and their locations, analysis of fire types, problems encountered, adequacy of deployed resources, and effectiveness of enforcement and ground operations (established by June 1998);

The RHAP was adopted at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Haze in December 1997. Three ASEAN member countries (Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia) agreed in December 1997 to collectively take measures to prevent future forest and peat fires and haze. According to the Plan, Malaysia takes the lead in prevention, Singapore in monitoring and Indonesia in fire-fighting (Figure 1.1).

The ASEAN Environment Ministers Meeting on Haze (AMMH) is held regularly. Its aim is to review the region's approaches in preventing a recurrence of the haze and monitoring matters related. Reporting to the AMMH is an ASEAN Haze Technical Task Force (HTTF) involving environmental officials. The HTTF, chaired by Indonesia, oversees efforts in prevention, monitoring and combating the haze both at the national and regional levels.

The Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution 2002

In 1999, ASEAN took a step further by adopting the policy on zero-burning. In October 2000, the Environment Ministers agreed to forge ahead with the formulation of an ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (ATHP) and an intergovernmental committee (INC) was formed to draft the Agreement. The Agreement aims to further operationalize and institutionalize existing arrangements in addressing transboundary haze pollution. It calls for parties of the Agreement to undertake:

- a) Legislative and administrative measures to prevent and control activities related to land and forest fires that may result in transboundary haze pollution; and
- b) National and joint actions to intensify regional and international cooperation to address transboundary haze pollution.

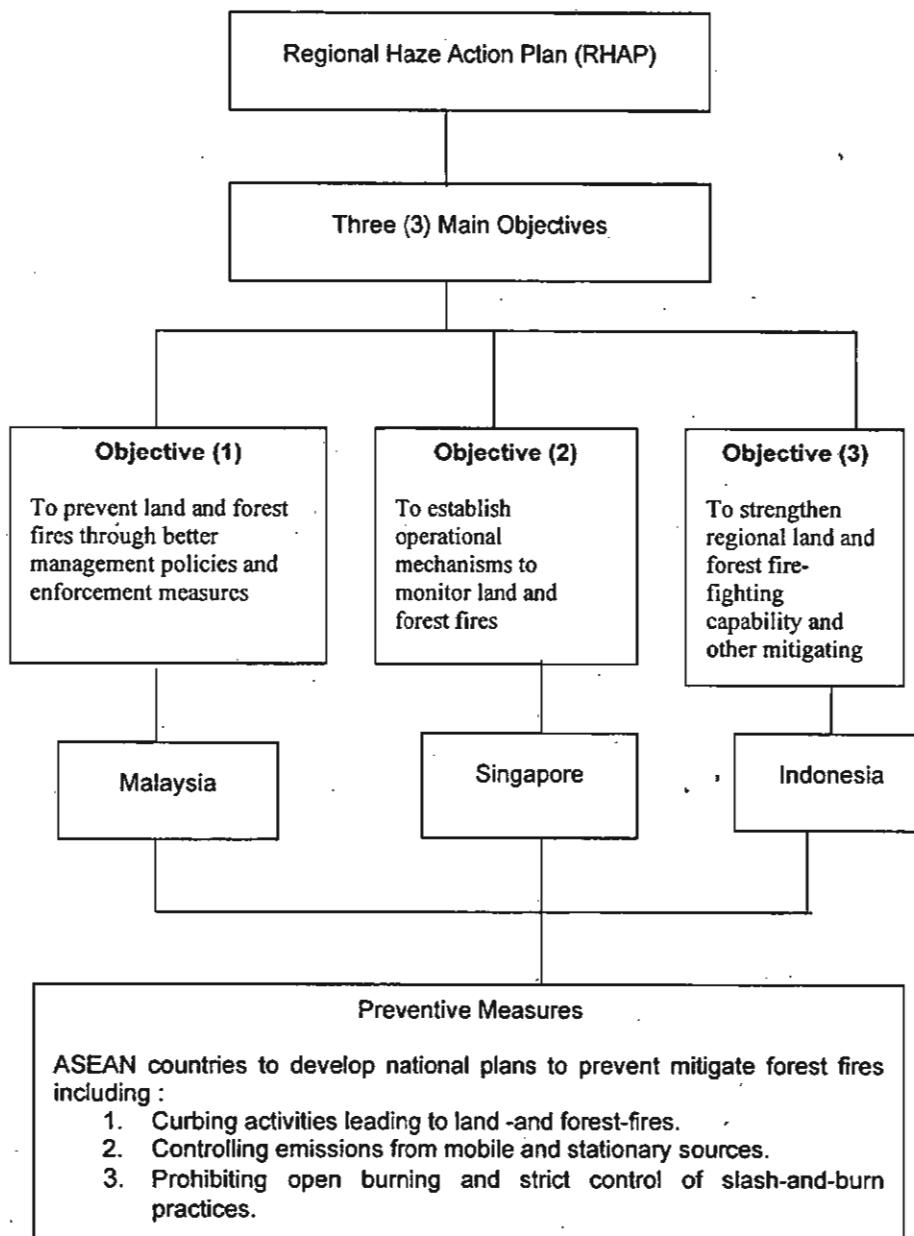


Figure 1.1. ASEAN regional haze action plan.

The Agreements also seeks to formalise mechanism for (a) communication and sharing of information on land forest fires and the resulting transboundary haze pollution, through the establishment of an ASEAN Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control.

The ASEAN ATHP was signed by 10 member countries of ASEAN on 10 June 2002 in Kuala Lumpur during the World Conference and Exhibition on Land and Forest Fire Hazards. The Agreement is one of the first such regional arrangements in the world that binds a group of contiguous states to tackle transboundary haze pollution resulting from land and forest fires.

The ASEAN ATHP contains a preamble and six major parts with a total of 32 Articles as follows:

- Part I : General Provisions (4 Articles: Articles 1 to 4)
- Part II : Monitoring, Assessment, Prevention and Response (11 Articles: Articles 5 to 15)
- Part III : Technical Cooperation and Scientific Research (2 Articles: Articles 16 to 17)
- Part IV : Institutional Arrangements (3 Articles: Articles 18 to 20)
- Part V : Procedures (7 Articles: Articles 21 to 27)
- Part VI : Final Clauses (5 Articles: Articles 28 to 32)

Basically the objective of the Agreement is to 'prevent and monitor transboundary haze pollution as a result of land and/or forest fires which should be mitigated, through concerted national efforts and intensified regional and international cooperation'. It should be 'pursued in the overall context of sustainable development and in accordance with the provision of this Agreement' (Article 2).

The Agreement itself focuses on matters regarding monitoring, assessment, and prevention of transboundary haze and the kind of technical cooperation, R&D and institutional agreement required in order to meet the objectives of the Agreement.

Some of the basic infrastructures have already been put in place, largely in response to the Regional Haze Action Plan (RHAP) which was agreed to earlier by ASEAN. Some of these include the establishment of the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) and the ASEAN Haze Technical Task Force (HTTF).

The ASEAN Ministers responsible for environment agreed to work towards ratifying the ASEAN ATHP as soon as possible to ensure that regional efforts are further enhanced through the legal mechanisms provided for in the Agreement. The Agreement requires at least six ratifications to enter into force. The ASEAN ATHP finally came into force on the 25 November 2003 following the deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification by the Government of Thailand with the Secretary General of ASEAN on the 26 September 2003. The Agreement provides for its entry into force 60 days after the deposit of the sixth instrument of ratification. Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Vietnam had earlier deposited their instrument of ratification/ approval. It is interesting to note that at the time of writing Indonesia has still not ratified the Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution 2002.

Following the haze episode in October 2006, a Sub-regional Ministerial Meeting on Transboundary Haze Pollution was held in Pekanbaru on 13 October 2006. The Meeting was attended by the Ministers and other high ranking officials responsible for the environment from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Nine province Governors from Indonesia, ten regents of the Riau Province as well as representatives of ASEAN Secretariat were also present in the Meeting as observers.

According to the joint press statement issued by the ASEAN Secretariat, the Meeting discussed urgent measures to jointly tackle the common problem caused by transboundary haze pollution. The Meeting assessed the sub-regional efforts to manage the problems caused by transboundary haze pollution and noted the efforts taken by countries in the region while acknowledging that the haze problem has not been adequately addressed. The Meeting appreciated the Indonesian efforts to tackle

land and forest fires that resulted in transboundary haze pollution and was committed to support Indonesia in its endeavour.

The Meeting seriously discussed many important topics including an update of regional transboundary haze situation and weather forecast, progress update by Indonesia of its measures adopted to prevent and mitigate land and forest fires in Sumatera and Kalimantan. At the same time the Meeting highly appreciated Malaysia's initiative in the funding and operationalization of the ASEAN transboundary haze pollution control. The Meeting also respectfully urged Indonesia to urgently finalize the ratification of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution in accordance with its national law.

The Meeting further agreed to set up a Ministerial Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of short and long-term plans to effectively tackle the haze problem. The Committee comprises the Environment Ministers from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

NATIONAL POLICIES IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

While not all ASEAN member countries have implemented pollution control policies effectively as yet, they all have begun developing and implementing the various national action plans to address problems of air pollution caused by internal sources and those exacerbated by the transboundary haze.

Apart from the respective policies and legislation to control air pollution caused by internal sources, the most common policy objective is to 'to prevent and control fire and haze'. The policies and effectiveness of implementation of such legislation, of course, vary from one member nation to another. Such variations are, in part, related to the nature and severity of the problems faced by each nation. Differences may also depend on the level of economic development of a particular nation.

Indonesia, for example, is the largest ASEAN nation with nearly 10% of the Earth's rainforests. It places a high priority on both conservation and effective utilization of its forest resources. It specifically establishes target levels for land conversion and at the same time ensures the protection and conservation of its remaining rainforests. It allows controlled expansion of its productive plantation agriculture, partly to eradicate poverty and partly to redistribute its population so that it does not concentrate too heavily on Java Island. It restricts the amount of land that can be cleared and burned for plantation agriculture in areas that are invaluable in terms of ecological biodiversity. In this regard, Indonesia puts restriction, but not a total ban, on the burning of agricultural wastes for domestic fires and the burning of household and industrial wastes. Indonesia's haze plan is silent on the timing of such practices. Rightly, the latter should be banned especially during the dry period, which typically extends from July through October (Abu Bakar Jaafar, 2006). The Indonesian authorities have been cited in the press for inaction against slash-and-burn clearing, an unhealthy practice by many contractors and subcontractors involved in large plantation development and management. If 'business-as-usual' prevails in the next few years when the economy picks up again after the 1997 crisis, haze due to

such policies may again blanket the region unless, of course, Indonesia can ensure that the management of such plantation and agricultural activities is based on best practice and zero-burning.

Brunei Darussalam and Singapore have one of the most stringent policies on air quality. They both recognize the importance of monitoring and assessment in the management of air quality including transboundary haze and open burning. Most legislation pertaining to air quality and their implementation are already in place; and in the case of Singapore, the public transport is exemplary.

Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines are, of course, a lot bigger than either Brunei Darussalam or Singapore and are faced with different kinds of problems that cause air quality to deteriorate. In addition to urban mobile sources and industries, for example, these ASEAN member countries are faced with issues like land and forest fires and open burning.

Hitherto, only Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and Thailand have established and enforced emission standards for motor vehicles and industries. The other ASEAN member nations are still working on it and/or are in the process of implementing such standards.

MALAYSIA'S RESPONSE

a) Legislation

In Malaysia, efforts to control sources of air pollution, open burning and haze started in the 1970s when the Motor Vehicle (Control of Smoke and Gas Emissions) Rules 1997 (made under the Road Traffic Ordinance, 1954) and the Clean Air Regulations 1978 were enacted. In addition, the Control of Lead Concentrations in Motor Gasoline Regulations 1985 also contributed to air pollution control management.

Under the Motor Vehicle Rules 1977, it is an offence for motor vehicles to emit dark smoke in excess of 50 Hartridge units. This is especially relevant with respect to diesel-powered vehicles such as buses, lorries and taxis which operated in concentrated numbers in urban centres. Standards for gas emissions for petrol-driven vehicles are also being enforced by the Department of Environment (DOE).

The Environmental Quality (Clean Air) Regulations 1978 provide for detailed specifications on waste burning, dark smoke emissions by factory chimneys, and the emission of air impurities generally. Under the Clean Air Regulations, certain potentially polluting industries are not allowed to be anywhere within 1000 m of a residential area without prior written approval from the Director-General of DOE. It is also stipulated that (1) burning of industrial and trade wastes must be done in an approved incinerator; (2) the installation, resizing and alteration of fuel burning equipment should first obtain the prior written approval of the Director-General of DOE, and (3) open burning of industrial wastes or refuse is prohibited. With effect from October 1978 it was also mandatory for new industrial and trade premises to ensure that smoke emissions are not darker than shade no.1 on the Ringelmann Chart

for burning equipment using liquid fuel, and shade no.2 for those using solid fuel. For trade premises which were in operation before October 1978, the smoke emissions should not be darker than shade no.2 of the Ringelmann Chart with effect from March 1979.

The Environmental Quality (Control of Lead Concentration in Motor Gasoline) Regulations 1985, requires that lead content in motor gasoline be reduced to 0.15 gm/liter on and after 1 January 1990. Indeed, the response from motor gasoline companies was so good that now virtually all patrol pumps are selling unleaded petrol.

Controls of air pollution through legislation such as those described above are mostly short-term and remedial in nature. As a complementary strategy to minimize pollution, *Guidelines for the Siting and Zoning of Industries* (DOE, 1976) were introduced. The main feature of this Guideline is the incorporation of environmental component as an integral element in the medium-term development planning process with a view of bringing about an ecologically balanced relationship between development and environment. Under this guideline, the use of 'buffer zones' is encouraged between industries and residential areas or even between different industrial areas. The guidelines also allow for light industries to be located near housing or in built-up areas. However, as the potential for pollution increases, the distance from the residential areas needs to be increased accordingly from 500 to 1000 meters for general industries to 1500 to 3000 meters for 'special industries'.

Apart from *Guidelines for the Siting and Zoning of Industries* (DOE, 1976), there are other guidelines which directly attempt to control air pollution. These include *EIA Guidelines for Municipal Solid Wastes and Sewage Treatment and Disposal Projects* (DOE, 1995a) and *EIA Guidelines for Mines and Quarries* (DOE, 1995b).

During the haze period, all legislations pertaining to air pollution including open burning and earthworks were enforced more strictly. Indeed, many of the litigations and prosecutions of non-compliance took place during the haze period (The New Straits Times, 1997). Several construction activities were advised to be put on hold and as a precaution, several schools in Sarawak were closed when the API were exceedingly high, in excess of 500.

More recently in the midst of the 1997 haze, the EQA 1974 was amended to reemphasize Malaysia's concern regarding open burning. The amendment, EQA (Amendment) 1998, was officially passed by Parliament on May 13, 1998 and accepted by the Senate on the 4th June 1998. It was gazetted as Act A 1030 on 1st July, 1998 following the Royal sanction on 25 June, 1998. The amendment must have been one of the fastest amendments to be approved by Parliament, the Senate, and the Yang Dipertuan Agong signifying its urgency.

In the Amendment, two new provisions (Section 29A and 29B) were introduced. Section 29A prohibits any form of 'open burning' with a penalty of RM 500,000 or five years jail or both for non-compliance. Section 29B states that the owner(s) or the occupier(s) of a premise will be held responsible for open burning occurring in that premise.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT

What has been described so far are the management responses and initiatives at the regional, international and national levels. However, while legislation and institutions in the administration of policies and programmes of environmental management are important, public support is equally crucial in order to ensure the success of such programmes. The bottom line is no conservation programme, however good it may be designed, can be completely successful without public support, which can only come from well informed citizens who are aware and fully committed. This must include all sections of the communities, from administrators, politicians and the private sector right down to the ordinary man in the street and school children. At both the regional, national and local levels, efforts to educate the public and disseminate environmental information must be intensified. Since environmental education is basically aimed at a community actions, efforts to reach different target groups must be varied and involve not only governmental institutions but also a wide variety of professional groups, the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The role of NGOs in environmental education has long been accepted. Their activities are aimed at both effecting changes and shaping attitudes, and so, directly or indirectly, they are involved in environmental education. Of great significance is the role of the NGOs in providing a mechanism for feedback to the government and its regulatory agencies and negative side-effects of programme implementation. In many respects, they perform a watch-dog function on behalf of the public on the use and abuse of natural resources, conservation, professional practices and other activities that adversely impinge upon the environment. The government, for its part, should be willing to listen to alternative views without prejudice. In some cases, this can be difficult as environment and development are closely linked, and environmental NGOs may easily be dismissed as being anti-development and trouble makers.

Apart from creating awareness, enhancing commitment to conservation through environmental education, and hence public support for environmental programmes, economic instrument as management tools in environmental conservation should also be applied whenever the situation warrants it, although these may not be too popular with certain quarters. Experiences have shown that preventive measures tend to become more effective when they are packaged in terms of dollars and cents. Indeed, several of these economic instruments are already in place, mainly in the form of economic incentives, and should be expanded further if there are objections from certain groups (Table 1.2). In this respect, the gradual acceptance of ISO 14000 by Malaysia is a move in the right direction. The ISO 14000 is an effort by the International Organization for Standard (ISO) to 'standardize' environmental management system internationally covering environmental management systems, environmental auditing and related environmental investigations, environmental labeling, environmental performance evaluation and life cycle assessment.

A system of this kind enables an organization to establish, and assess the effectiveness of procedures to set an environmental policy and objectives, achieve conformance with them, and demonstrate such performance to others. For many years, this initiative has been dominated by developed countries like the U.S., Canada, the U.K., France, Norway, Australia, Germany and the Netherlands. Indeed, some

influential business houses have already begun or are planning to apply specific environmental standards to their trading partners. Once ISO 14000 is in place, there is every reason to believe that it will become commercial standard for environmental management. An organization which is unable or unwilling to play the game and meet such standard will lose trading partners and limit its strategic alliance capability. Malaysia is fully aware of ISO 14000, its advantages, consequences and possible trade implications both at an organizational level and as a trading nation operating in highly competitive international environment. A number of trade organizations in Malaysia are already implementing the ISO/DIS 14001 Environmental Management Systems - Specification with Guidance for use on a voluntary basis.

Table 1.2. Examples of incentives for the protection and conservation of the environment.

1.	Pioneer status investment tax allowance (ITA) for companies undertaking a forest plantation project.
2.	Pioneer status ITA for companies undertaking reprocessing of certain waste such as agricultural and chemical wastes.
3.	Pioneer status ITA for companies storing, treat and disposing of dangerous toxic wastes.
4.	Special capital allowance for companies providing facilities for storing, treating and disposing dangerous toxic waste produced by its own factory.
5.	Exemption of import duty, sales tax and excise duty on machinery equipment to manufacturing companies for the control of population.
6.	Exemption of import duty, sales tax and excise duty on machinery equipment and raw material required for undertaking activity listed in (2) and (4).
7.	A price differential of 3 cents/liter between leaded and unleaded petrol through a price reduction on unleaded petrol effective from January 1, 1994.
8.	Import and sales tax exemption for catalytic converters.
9.	Import duty for new diesel powered passenger cars reduced to 120%. Motor vehicle license fees on road tax reduced for new generation diesel-powered motor vehicles that half of the existing rate.
10.	Donations to an improved organization established exclusively for the protection and conservation on the environment are allowed as deductions in the computation of income tax purposes.
11.	A forest plantation project is recognized as a strategic project of

national interest and is eligible for the special incentives:

- (a) Pioneer status with 100% tax exemption for 10 years; or
- (b) Investment tax allowance at the rate of 100% for 5 years,

(Source: The 1994 and 1995 Budget Speeches by the Minister of Finance Malaysia)

An equally important point to remind ourselves of is the need to realize that environmental management and conservation are a shared responsibility. While the environment is a common concern, its intensity and extent of usage vary from one group of the community to another. Some use it more than others and, in the process, destroy it; some benefit excessively from it. In view of the different contributions to environmental degradation and benefits derived from environmental resources, the 'shared responsibility' should somehow be differentiated, in line with the spirit embodied in Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration in 1992. This is important in that it lays the basis for the equitable sharing of responsibilities. While every member of the community is expected to assist, the more endowed section of the community, especially the corporate sector will need to shoulder greater responsibility and contribute more substantially to environmental cause.

THE CHALLENGES

From the foregoing discussion it will be observed that ASEAN nations have already formulated an overall response mechanism for the region. The Haze Action Plan and the Agreement on Transboundary Haze for example, are already in place and they are continually being refined, perfected and gradually implemented. This system will provide the means for early fire detection through satellite monitoring, aerial and ground surveillance weather forecasting, and surface-based atmospheric modeling. In addition, its fire fighting forces will be coordinated at the national level with fire fighting teams from other nations that can come to the assistance of local fire fighters. This network in turn, will be linked through communication channels via the internet, a regional intranet emergency response service, telephone and telefax capabilities, and radio channels dedicated to emergency response communications. Regional plans are also being developed, refined and perfected to increase the capacity for enforcement of regulations, promote public education and awareness, provide regional air quality monitoring capabilities, commission studies to assess health and socioeconomic impacts, design and implement a fire danger rating system, and enforce effective land use planning to promote sustainable development on a regional basis.

The Regional Haze Action Plan (RHAP) and the Agreement on Transboundary Haze (ATH) signed by member nations of ASEAN notwithstanding, the effectiveness of such efforts will depend not only on full commitment of each of the members but also the capacity to meet their respective obligations. In this regard, it is worth noting that the Agreement on Transboundary Haze contains no explicit provisions about what to do in case of noncompliance of Parties to the Agreement. This is important as the entire success or failure of the Agreement hinges on compliance. Article 27 of the Agreement states that 'any dispute between Parties as to the interpretation or application of, or compliance with, this Agreement or any Protocol thereto, shall be settled amicably by consultation or negotiation'. No sanction was explicitly mentioned in the Agreement *per se* although this could be taken up

again (if need be) in the Protocol. However, even if the Protocol is agreed upon the dispute should only be settled amicably by consultation or negotiation. As for now, it appears that negotiation and consultation are the only final recourse to settle matters regarding compliance, interpretation and application of the Agreement. To what extent this approach is effective is difficult to say. Only time can tell. So far the result has not been too encouraging.

The strength of an organization such as ASEAN and in particular the RHAP and the subsequent ATH is as strong as 'the weakest link' among the member nations involved. In this regard, the Indonesian authorities, for example, have been identified by the press for inaction against slash-and-burn clearing and unhealthy practice by contractors and subcontractors involved in some large plantations. The Panel of ASEAN Experts on Fire and Haze Assessment from Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Malaysia observed that ASEAN as a block would be unable to successfully deal with the regional haze problem unless Indonesian authorities take firm measures to suppress slash-and-burn farming methods. The Panel also stressed the importance of Indonesian authorities to finance fire-fighting and prevention efforts. The problem, however, becomes increasingly complex because Indonesia lacks the fund to finance fire fighting and prevention efforts and hence, fails to meet her obligations as stipulated in the Agreement on Transboundary Haze.

This is where the proposal by Malaysia to establish a special haze fund is timely. The objective of the fund is to assist affected members of ASEAN and should be jointly managed by the nations involved. However, while the special fund is generally helpful, the root cause of the problem is still not addressed, i.e. bad practice in managing agricultural wastes, be it from large plantations or any land clearing activities. Overcoming and treating the fires (both open burning and fires resulting from land and forest clearing) after they have already taken place is certainly not the right way to address the root cause of the problem.

The Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution itself, while providing a good framework for better cooperation among ASEAN member countries, is only a first step in a long process towards the creation of an effective legal instrument to cope with the regional haze problem. More efforts are needed to refine it and fill the gaps. The question of how best to deal with errant party (parties) to the Agreement, for example, has not been explicitly addressed in the Agreement. This is a delicate issue that needs to be resolved first before legal instrument can hope to be effective. Traditionally, in ASEAN it may not be too easy and neither is it so desirable to apply sanction even if provisions on sanctions have been addressed in the Agreement or as part of the Protocol. Sanctions have never been an approach in resolving a problem or dispute among ASEAN member countries. In the case of transboundary haze from Indonesia, it may perhaps be more desirable to look for solutions other than legal. Socioeconomic approaches may probably be a better alternative to alleviate the haze problem in the long term.

Transboundary haze pollution is a major regional problem. It cannot be contained by any single member nation of ASEAN without the cooperation from other neighbouring nations. Indeed, no government, however committed, is able to control effectively many such environmental problems alone without the support and cooperation from the public. Support from the latter, however, can only come from a

public who is aware of the problem and is sufficiently committed to contribute in the control, mitigation and management of the problem. It is in this regard that the Secretary-General of ASEAN emphasized the point that it was all very well for ASEAN to have agreements and action plans to tackle the haze problem, but their implementation needed the support of civil society groups (Jakarta Post, 2002).

One immediate challenge which is shared by almost all ASEAN member nations concerns the effective enforcement of the existing environmental and environment-related legislations. Many observers feel that while some ASEAN nations have some of the best sets of environmental legislations the effective implementation of such legislation is far from impressive. A good piece of legislation is only effective if it can be enforced such that it meets the objectives for which it was enacted in the first place. This requires support facilities. It requires manpower and resources, the cooperation of the various government agencies and the support of the state and local governments. Likewise, the support from the public is equally crucial.

No legislation and no conservation programme, however good it may be designed, could be successful without public support. This could only come from well-informed citizens who are aware of their right to quality environment. This includes all sections of the community from politicians, administrators and the private sector right down to school children and ordinary public. There is thus a need for a concerted effort to educate the public and disseminate environmental information involving government institutions, the media, the private sector and the NGOs to reach the different target groups.

CONCLUSION

This section of the report has been concerned with transboundary haze pollution in Southeast Asia. It provides a review of the haze problem by first defining the issue followed by a brief description of some of the haze episodes since about the 1980s. It then discusses the management response and the challenges both for Indonesia, the affected member countries of ASEAN (Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam) and ASEAN as a region. This report argues that transboundary haze is a multi-faceted problem affecting several ASEAN member countries. A holistic approach is needed to alleviate the problem, including the role of civil societies and the support of the NGOs. Although the RHAP and the ATH have been put in place, the effectiveness of such efforts will depend not only on the full commitment of each of the members but also their capacity to meet their respective obligations as stipulated in these Agreement and Regional Plan. In this connection, it is perhaps worthwhile as a last resort, to consider seriously the proposal by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to the ASEAN leaders in Cebu, Philippines on the 12th January 2007 to introduce sanctions against errant ASEAN members who are signatories to the ATH (New Straits Times, 2007). This is to ensure that the ATH is not just a mere treaty but a respectable and effective instrument. The implementation is critical. It needs a strong political will that transcends rhetorics and narrow sectional interests at every level of operation.

Parallel to the legal instruments discussed above, it may be helpful for ASEAN to also consider an alternative approach to alleviate the haze problem, i.e. the socioeconomic option. The objective of this option shall be to improve the economic position of the people in Sumatera and Kalimantan and to instill good housekeeping practice among those involved in oil palm and timber plantations, and other agricultural activities. The rule which prohibits 'open burning' must also be strictly enforced with stiff penalties.

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MAHIDOL-UKM 3

**DIFINING HARMONY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
COMPETING DISCOURSES, CHALLENGES AND
INTERPRETATIONS**

**The Third International Malaysia-Thailand Conference
on Southeast Asian Studies**



29 November – 1 December 2007

SECOND PLENARY SESSION

Chairperson: Dr. Peter Smith

1. The Complexities of Language Concerns in a Multi-Ethnic Nation. – *Saran Kaur Gill*

PLENARY PAPER 2

The Complexities of Language Concerns in a Multi-Ethnic Nation

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Abstract

This paper will highlight aspects of language complexities that concern both the majority and minority communities in Malaysia's multi-ethnic and multi-lingual landscape. These are challenges that resonate with the concerns of most citizenry in many other multi-lingual and multi-ethnic nations. These are linguistic complexities coloured by the needs of nation building at varying points in time and which can lead to both harmony and disharmony amongst varying ethnic groups.

In the Malaysian context, this begins with the post-independence period of the post-colonial shift in language policy from English to Bahasa Malaysia. This raises the need for developing a symbol of national identity and unity, which posed great challenges for the institution and modernization of Bahasa Malaysia as national language and language of education. In the wake of the 21st century, Malaysia has faced once again one of the greatest challenges in language policy and planning – this is the shift in language of education from Bahasa Malaysia to English for science and technology. The paper will unravel the macro-reasons that have led to this drastic situation and give voice to the former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed, who was instrumental for this change. Against this backdrop arises one of the present challenges faced by many nations across the globe – this is the challenge of maintaining and sustaining both national collective and ethnic community linguistic identities in the face of both international and national linguistic dominance.

INTRODUCTION

The area on the complexities of language concerns in a multi-ethnic nation is often referred to as the 'sociology of language' of which language policy and planning is a major component and deals with language as a "social problem and resource." (Spolsky, 1998:7) Language, which is a rich means of communication between various communities, can end up being the instrument that causes social discord in those very circumstances. Therefore in this paper we examine the relevance and concerns of various languages, whether national, international or ethnic languages, from the perspective of varying members of society – what do the roles and functions of these languages mean to members of society, how and when do they use it? How are decisions made on the selection of languages for their national roles? What is the impact of decisions made on the status of dominant languages, on minority languages that may exist in society? This paper will journey along the following course:

1. Nationalistic Language Policies in Post-Independence Malaysia
2. Change in Language Policy in the 21st Century: Unraveling Reasons
3. The Maintenance of Ethnic Identity for a Minority Community in the Face of these Multiple Linguistic Challenges

NATIONALISTIC LANGUAGE POLICIES IN POST-INDEPENDENCE MALAYSIA

The Growth of Nationalism and the Selection and Institution of Bahasa Melayu as the National and Official Language

After Malaya obtained independence from the British in 1957, the dominant ethnic group was plagued with the following questions: to quote Crouch, “who are the owners of the country? What are the symbols of national identity? What is the meaning of the nation’s history?” (Crouch, 1996: 155)

These feelings of anxiety coupled with enforced imperialism resulted in an acute need amongst the dominant ethnic group for “their own cultures and histories be restored to a place of honour.” There was a strong need for the Malays to legitimize themselves in the land that they considered theirs – calling Malaya “Tanah Melayu” (Land of the Malays) and calling themselves “Bumiputera” (sons of the soil) were part of these efforts.

This was what Horowitz (1985: 185) in his extensive discussion of ethnic group relationships refers to as the need for groups, and especially dominant ethnic groups, to establish “relative group worth” and “relative group legitimacy” through political domination and the high symbolic content of politics of ethnic entitlement.

Therefore, one of the strong symbolic claims that was asserted during this period was that of the institution of Bahasa Malaysia as the national language and official language - the language of education and administration. After all, the establishment of a national language is “the most powerful symbolic vehicle of nationalism.” (Coulmas, 1988: Preface)

There was a strong feeling that a national language was needed not only to affirm their legitimacy as the dominant group in this country but also as a tool to unify the multi-ethnic citizenry of the nation – to provide a strong sense of cultural identity at the national level.

The need for a common national language is highlighted through the words of our beloved first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who says,

“It is only right that as a developing nation we should want to have a language of our own. If the national language is not introduced our country will be devoid of a unified character and personality – as I could put it, a nation without a soul and without a life.” (Cited in Francis Wong and Ee Tiang Hong, 1975: 75)

In the post-independence years, it was one thing to make Bahasa Malaysia official, but this status decision brought with it the need for corpus planning. The

Malay language had an agrarian and literary background. Therefore, for Bahasa Malaysia to be taken seriously as an intellectual language and to gain educational capital, it needed to be modernized and scholars had to be encouraged to write or translate specialized knowledge into the language. Modernization was then the first challenge.

The Modernisation of Malay

One of the more well-known activities was “The General Formula for the Coining of Scientific and Technological Terminology in Bahasa Malaysia.” The government set up a team of Malaysian and Indonesian language planners and academicians, including scientists who held a total of 6 joint meetings over a period of 16 years from 1972 to 1988 to pursue this activity (Hassan Ahmad, 1988: 38). This development of terminology of about half a million new words was considered one of the most significant achievements in language planning in the region.

Where then did this place English?

The transition from English to Bahasa Melayu as the main medium of instruction began in 1969 in schools and reached university level in 1983.

The role of English then became that of the first second language – from being the medium of instruction in schools, it became a subject that was compulsory to take but not to pass for all students in the school system.

Having discussed the change in language policy from English language to Bahasa Malaysia, which spanned a period from the post-independence years to the 1980s, we move on to the 1990s. This period saw increasing signals for modification of language policy again, culminating in 2002 to a shift back to English for the field of science and technology as language of instruction.

CHANGE IN LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE 21st CENTURY: UNRAVELING REASONS

Approach to Language Policy and Planning

The use of the term “change in language policy” adopted in this paper is not based on legislation through formal written language policies, but rather refers to change in language practice and application. There are many aspects of the implementation process that are found wanting and irrespective of whether one agrees or disagrees with the change or whether the implementation processes could have been approached differently, it is essential for all members of society to understand the government’s reasons for this decision.

There are many reasons for this change (which have been dealt with in an article published by Gill (2005) but for this paper I will focus on one. We will begin with an interview conducted with the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Mahathir, which was part of a two-year government funded research project “Language Policy and Planning in Higher Education in Malaysia: Responding to the Needs of the Knowledge Economy.”

Tun was asked,

With regards to the recent change in the MOI in schools which now have impacted higher education, what were the reasons that provided the impetus for this change in language policy for the fields of science and maths?

Our education system is like any other education system. It's meant to enable us to acquire knowledge. If we have the knowledge available in the national language, by all means, go ahead but the fact is that in science the research that is being done is moving at a very fast pace. Everyday literally thousands of papers on new research are being published and practically all of them are in English. To translate English into Bahasa, would require a person with 3 skills. Skill in the 2 languages and skill in the subject that is to be translated and we don't have very many people who are qualified to do that or who wish to do that. That is why it is easier if you learn English and the students can have direct access to all the knowledge that is available in English." (Interview conducted by Gill on the 16 June, 2005).

Unraveling Factors Impacting the Change in Language Policy

This leads us to one of the major reasons for this change – the need to access science and technology in English and this has raised the challenge of translation and indigenous writings in Bahasa Melayu. This then raises the next question, which is, why have all the efforts thus far not been sufficient for the nation to be able to access information and knowledge in the field of science and technology?

Crucial access to information in the field of science and technology: the slow pace of Publications/Translations in Bahasa

Shaharir, an established professor of maths, explicates cogently the various reasons for the slow rate of publications in Bahasa Melayu. These range from lack of recognition of publications in Bahasa Melayu in the promotion schemes of academics, to the lengthy process of publication which demoralises the efforts of the academic writers. (Shaharir, 2001: 107-119).

This is compounded by the fact that the translation process progressed at a slow pace. According to Hj. Hamidah Baba, executive director of the National Translation Agency (ITNM), a full time translator can only translate 5-8 pages a day, while a part-time translator can manage to translate a maximum of 3 pages a day (Hjh. Hamidah Baba, 2001: 7).

These reasons together with the knowledge explosion in English, concretely depicted by the fact that, "there are over 100,000 scientific journals in the world and this number is increasing at the rate of 5000 articles per day adding to the 30 million existing" (Bilan cited in Martel, 2001: 51) paint an increasingly challenging situation for access to knowledge and information in English.

It is in line with the need to develop a strong knowledge based society that provides credence to Tun Mahathir's redefinition of the concept of nationalism for Malaysia when he says,

"We need to move from the extreme form of nationalism which concentrates on being a language nationalist only, not a knowledge nationalist, not a development oriented nationalist. I feel that we should be a development oriented nationalist. We want our people to succeed, to be able to stand tall, to be respected by the rest of the world. Not to be people with no knowledge of science and technology, very poor, very backwards, working as servants to other people. If we have no knowledge we will be servants to those with knowledge."

(Interviewed by Gill, 16 June 2005)

FUTURE CHALLENGE FOR THE NATION: BALANCING NATION'S DEVELOPMENT AND THE SUSTENANCE OF NATIONAL AND ETHNIC LINGUISTIC IDENTITIES

The increasing dominance of the English language in educational systems has given rise to one of the most critical concerns amongst many nations in present times. There is a fear that nations will develop a generation who will forsake their cultural heritage in their pursuit of technological and economic power. This is similarly expressed by Tsui and Tollefson (2004: 7), who remind us that the change in the medium of instruction to English, "... may produce nationals who are ambivalent about their own identity, and nations that are stripped of their rich cultural heritage." Thus, many nations are facing the challenge of having to develop a balance between national languages and the increasing spread and functions of English. This is a concern of the Malaysian nation as well but time constraints do not permit a discussion of this very important issue.

Along parallel lines, in situations of similar linguistic complexities, minority communities in many nations have to work at creating a balance between their ethnic and the national and the international linguistic needs.

We move now to a contrasting scenario – to examine how a specific minority ethnic community, specifically the Punjabi community, has coped with the reinstitution of their ethnic language and identity in the face of these multiple linguistic challenges.

There are in addition to the significant minority groups of Chinese and Tamils, many other ethnic-based minority groups of lesser numbers. Of these, one lesser numbered minority group is that of the Punjabi-Sikh community, whose members number 46,800, making up 0.2% of the total population.

SUSTAINING ETHNIC IDENTITY FOR A MINORITY COMMUNITY IN THE FACE OF MULTIPLE LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES

Language, Ethnicity and Education Systems

To belong to an ethnic group means possessing a common descent, cultural heritage, religion, language and a distinctive history and destiny (Smith, 1981: 66; Joseph, 2004: 162) Of these, the one integral distinctive characteristic is that of language, which is a strong determinant of one's identity, at both national and ethnic levels.

Reasons for Gradual Decline of the Functional Roles of the Punjabi Language

The working paper on the Historical Background of Punjabi Education in Malaysia (Randhawa, 2004) and the cover story of the Sikh Magazine (Jaspal S., 2003: 24) aptly and timely trace the challenges facing the development of Punjabi education in Malaysia and its gradual demise. There were many varied reasons for this gradual marginalisation of mother-tongue education and we will begin with the dominant political nationalistic reason.

As has been discussed earlier, during the post-independence period, Malaysia, focused, like a number of other countries, on the essential “educational agendas of nation-building, national identity and unity” (Tollefson and Tsui, 2004: viii) The authorities were very serious about ‘the progressive development of an educational system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction,’ (para 3 of the Preamble of the Act, 1957). As a result, significant resources were channeled to enhancing the status and functional use of Bahasa Melayu in the education system. Consequently, there was a reduction in the budgets for the upkeep of schools that used the vernacular as the medium of education, particularly those schools of the lesser-numbered ethnic minorities.

In parallel with the above was the fact that for the Punjabis, as a minority ethnic group, of immigrant ancestry who moved to this nation during colonial times, the priority then for this group, like many other immigrant minority groups was to succeed educationally, economically and socially. This is further explicated by Skutnab-Kangas (1999: 56) who says, “For many ... minorities, ethnic identity was not initially seen as important. Rather they focused on school achievement, educational opportunity and equality.” Mastering the dominant languages were seen “as possessing instrumental value which their own languages, cultures and ethnicities could not promise.” This led to “the loss of their own linguistic resource, their own language or at least the chance of developing it to a high formal level.”

A drastic consequence of the above situation was that religious and language studies began to deteriorate amongst the Punjabi community. They seemed to have lost a “cultural core value” of attachment to one's language or mother tongue. Once the language is lost in carrying out cultural practices, traditions and in practicing the religion, then these aspects of culture can only be conducted in a superficial, memorized manner without much meaning. To lose out on the meaning of aspects

integral to one's culture in one's ethnic group, is to lose out on an intrinsic part of one's inner identity.

This therefore raises the question of why and how should a minority community sustain and maintain their ethnic language? Should they not just ensure that their children are able to compete educationally and economically through the national language and English and not worry about their ethnic socio-cultural values and identity?

There is a school of thought that feels that mastery of the ethnic minority language leads to strengthening of ethnic boundaries and results in an inability to partake in a collective national identity. This then raises the following question: Are we not able to sustain identities at different levels serving different functions and needs – the ethnic, the national and the international linguistic needs? Stephen May, who has worked extensively on linguistic rights in New Zealand, reminds us that,

“... it is clear that many of us can and do hold multiple and complementary identities – social, political and linguistic – at one and the same time Certainly, one can hold both a regional and national identity without these necessarily being conflictual. Why then should this not also be the case for ethnic and national identities? (Stepan, 1998; Taylor, 1998) (cited in May, 2001:106)

If one is sure of one's ethnic roots then one can have a strong sense of national collective identity. But if this is marginalized, then it will be difficult for the ethnic groups to reconcile to their loss of ethnic identity whilst at the same time face the challenges of working towards a collective national identity. After all, as stressed by Fishman (1991: 31), “... an accepting and unconflicted view of one's own culture may be a building block of and a pre-condition for accepting unconflicted views of other cultures. Security begets security.”

Therefore it was crucial for the minority Punjabi-Sikh community to re-establish its ethnic identity through a reversal of the shift in the Punjabi language.

Community-Driven Reverse Language Shift (RLS) Measures

Out of this complex situation, came a strong realization that if anything was to be done it has to be initiated by the community, the heartland of where the language needs to be recaptured before looking outward for assistance from political and governmental institutions.

Therefore, as a base force to activate and energise the collective spirits, the Sikh elders comprising a four member team, led by Santokh Singh, who provided inspiring and determined leadership, decided to do something about the increasingly demoralizing situation.

Working hard and putting in their best efforts, the committee first developed the now established Punjabi Education Trust Malaysia (PETM). After many discussions, group dynamics and negotiations, the Punjabi Education Trust Malaysia, by November 2000, launched the new Punjabi education programme. There are now 20 Punjabi Education Centres nationwide with more than 3000 students and 220 teachers. (cited in Jaspal S. 2003, 26).

CONCLUSION

What needs to be worked on for the nation in this period of globalised forces is a blueprint of language planning and policy for our nation to plan and assist its multi-ethnic population in establishing ethnic, national and international identities – a blueprint that will work out the resources and plans for the continued enhancement and development of Bahasa Melayu as our national language as it faces the challenges of globalisation, the development of human resource equipped with English language competencies to be able to acquire international identities and a sense of security and concern that ethnic identities are being considered through planned provision of ethnic language teaching. Only through these crucial considerations can there be the pursuit of the integral balance needed between the collective national identity and the individual ethnic identity as well as international communicative needs for the multi-ethnic citizens of Malaysia.

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MAHIDOL-UKM 3
DIFINING HARMONY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:
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29 November – 1 December 2007

SESSION 1
EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Chairperson: Dr.Peter Smith

1. Crisis Communication Plan: A Case of the Negative Events in Thailand and Effects on Tourism Businesses. – *Kaewta Muangasame & Naphawan Chantradoan*
2. Searching for Security through the Haze: An Examination of the Complexities of Intra-ASEAN Cooperation. – *Tang Siew Mun*
3. A Comparison of the Impact of the Home Literacy Environment on the L1 Reading Frequencies of Students from Two Different Universities: Implications for the Learning of an L2. – *Nicholas Ferriman*
4. Personal Epistemological Development during the Undergraduate Education: Beliefs about Knowledge and Knowledge Acquisition of Thai University Students. - *Takayoshi Fujiwara & Brian J.Phillips*

Paper 1 Crisis Communication Plan: A Case of the Negative Events in Thailand and Their Effects on Tourism Businesses

*Kaewta Muangasame &Naphawan Chantradoan
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Abstract

Crisis management strategy has recently become a very critical business concern, particularly when the organizations need to cope with impulsive circumstances such as the natural disasters, the unstable economy, and the acts of terrorism, etc. It is clearly essential to apply the preparedness strategy which leads to effective solutions for the problems arose. This article is centred on how Crisis Communication upon negative events could harmonize the related organisation and generate the impacts to the tourism businesses in case of negative events in Thailand. The tourist purchasing decision was investigated and analysed to see how much media influences the behaviour of the customers in their decision making.

This paper has covered the tourist decision making behavior and its implication. Tourism is a demand-driven industry, and the crises and disasters determine strong fluctuations in the tourism demand. However when digging further into its root, demand was not only affected by the external determinants, the internal determinants also play a very important role. It was found that the number of tourists visiting Phuket after the Tsunami crisis has increased enormously, and this was because the personal determinants of the tourists. Numbers of the tourists who visit Phuket after the Tsunami said that they wanted to come back because they feel related, and connected to the destinations, hotels, and local people. They would like to help and maintain good relationship with people who helped them.

The focus of this research is upon the problems of communication planning and the implementation of the plan before, during, and after a crisis. It was found that large hotels and international chain hotels are well prepared with the Crisis Communication. It was integrated into the firm's marketing strategies using the basic instruments namely product (destination) policy, price policy and distribution policy. The thorough crisis communication plan is more systematic and very well functioned proven by the previous Tsunami Crisis in Phuket in the year 2004. The immediate internal and external crisis communication policies and plans are based on security management and risk management theories. The flow of information within the firm is a significant factor towards the successful of immediate crisis communication management. It could summarise that a good preparation such as training with any crises need to be developed and measured frequently.

Crisis management strategy has recently become a very critical business concern, particularly when organizations need to cope with unforeseen circumstances such as natural disasters, unstable economy, acts of terrorism, etc. It is clearly essential to apply the preparedness strategy which leads to effective solutions for the problems they may arise. This article focuses on how Crisis Communication on negative events generates impacts on the hotel and airline businesses. The tourist purchasing decision will be investigated and analyzed to see how much media influences the behavior of customers in their decision-making.

This paper is intended to supply a general definition of crisis management and focuses on Crisis Communication instruments. Moreover it also aims to identify the essential nature of unpredictable situations and to use such negative events as a source of factual background materials in order to form the basis of theoretical discussions. The paper includes a review of the media theories, cases following negative events, the method for handling a crisis condition, crisis communication planning, and the ineffective Crisis Communication which shows obvious impacts on the tourist purchasing decision. Various aspects of the strategies for tackling crises are examined including preplanning, response, recovery and future planning.

It has been shown that most of the large hotels, such as international chain hotels and resorts are well-prepared in Crisis Communication. It has been integrated as a part of their marketing strategies where they apply all together the following instruments: product (destination) policy, price policy and distribution policy. They have adopted the immediate crisis communication policies and plans based on security management or risk management theories. Moreover, the communication channel has been found to be very significant in terms of enhancing positive images of the destination or the organizations after a crisis.

On the other hand, the small hotels and newbies in the hotel businesses seem to lack an understanding of effective crisis communication methods. They are also reluctant to channel funds for crisis planning although there is an interest in the concept. To collect the data, the primary research tool employed comprised in-depth interviews. Moreover the secondary researches which are normal practices on crisis management in tourism business, and the information about the effects of negative events towards destinations will be identified.

Crisis planning

Some authors use the life cycle concept from the marketing theory to identify the situation of the crisis. The most detailed crisis life cycle was explained by Faulkner (2001). This model was also used in the case of Katherine Floods in Australia and the Foot and Mouth Outbreak in UK.

The crisis life cycle below illustrates the various stages of crises. The very first point, the pre-event is where action can be taken to prevent disasters. The prodromal stage is where the crisis is notified. Emergency is when the people or firms have been affected and action has to be taken to help people and secure the property. The Intermediate phase is when the utilities are restored, while long term is

when damages are repaired or sometimes it is called the healing stage. The last phase is when new facilities are built and improved.



Source: Own, adapted from Faulkner (2001)

Figure 3: Crisis Life Cycle

Glaesser (2003) identifies that there are different activities in every phase of a crisis. The two main functions are crisis prevention and crisis coping. He illustrates the details of each function by using the following table to show the activities that firms can take into consideration.

Crisis prevention				Crisis coping
Crisis precautions		Crisis avoidance		Employment of instruments
Planning	Implementation	Early warning	Adjustment	

Source: Glaesser (2003)

Table 3: Phases of crisis management

Moreover, the crisis prevention's main purposes are to be used as tools for identifying at what stage the crisis really is, and to prepare for possible future devastation. On the other hand crisis coping is to bring the crisis to an end and to make sure that the negative consequences will not repeat in the future.

Ritchie *et al.* (2003) supported that the Crisis Life Cycle is very useful for the crisis-management-team. It can be used as a guideline to consider what strategies should be developed and implemented at the various stages of a crisis. By understanding the life cycle concept, more effective and efficient strategies can be further developed to reduce or even stop the negative impacts of such phenomena.

Primary research

The responses from hoteliers in Phuket and Khao Lak

The research was aimed at investigating the crisis communication plan: a case of the negative events in Thailand and the effects on tourism businesses. In order to gather information, the authors contacted seven resort hotels in Phuket and Khao Lak where they had the experience in dealing with negative events in Thailand. Of these, all seven agreed to be interviewed. These seven resort hotels have different operational strategies according to the sizes of the hotels. The respondents were asked to answer eight main questions in order to measure the crisis communication plan, the background of problems, and how they dealt with crises. The respondents were management staff who could point out the objectives, and analyze how the crisis

communication plan should be implemented. Cases of previous negative events in Thailand were discussed in more details.

Most of the hotels allowed the authors to conduct the interviews without considering anonymity issues. One of the hotels did not want its name to be listed in this research. Therefore in the following section, those large international-chain hotels will be addressed as Group 1 which consisted of Hotels A, B, C, and D. The small locally owned hotels will be addressed as Group 2 which consisted of three small hotels with the initials E, F, and G

Area One: Effects of crises and negative events in Thailand.

Hotel A: Thailand did not really pay any attention to crises. This includes both types of crisis which occurred by the acts of god and man-made type. The hotel itself concerns heavily on safety issues, particularly for the international-chain hotels which need to maintain the same international standard. Safety and hygiene have to be assessed and evaluated by external inspectors, agencies, organization and association where the hotel is a member. The quality standard will be assessed annually. Therefore, hotels need to improve themselves and bring it up to the international standard acceptance.

Natural disasters have fewer impacts to the hotel comparing to man-made disasters. In the year 2005 where the hotel got hit by the Tsunami, there were many negative effects right afterward. However, the hotel received supports from the loyal customers who wanted to come back and help the local community and people. From the middle of the year 2006 until now, there are more customers than before. The motivation factor that drives the tourist back to Phuket and the hotel is surely the hospitality of Thai people.

Hotel B: The tourism demand for this year seems to be splendid than before the Tsunami hit. The manager of hotel B also mentioned that the man-made crisis such as the Ground Zero- September 11 created more impacts when speaking about the hotel occupancy level. In general, hotel guests understand the logic of uncontrollable situation. The consequences can be easier accepted, and it would take shorter period to recover from the damages, and regain the trust from customers. The majority of hotel guests who have returned to Phuket supported that they wanted to visit a memorable place of their own experiences or relatives.

Hotel C: The hotel was physically affected only little by the Tsunami in the year of 2004, however; the consequences of the wide-spread bad news about the lost and deaths in Phuket due to the big wave had made it more psychologically serious. The hotel employees and guests were panic and the cancellation rate had increased dramatically in the first 6 months.

Hotel D was badly hit by the Tsunami in 2004. The effects from this natural crisis include many physical damages in the resort area, and it has to be heavily reconstructed. Hotel D has to spend almost 2 years to renovate the resort in the post Tsunami stage. The hotel just started to re-open again in November 2006 after a long term recovering phase. Many of the hotel employees have lost their lives and their relatives. The people who survived from the hit did not want to come back to work.

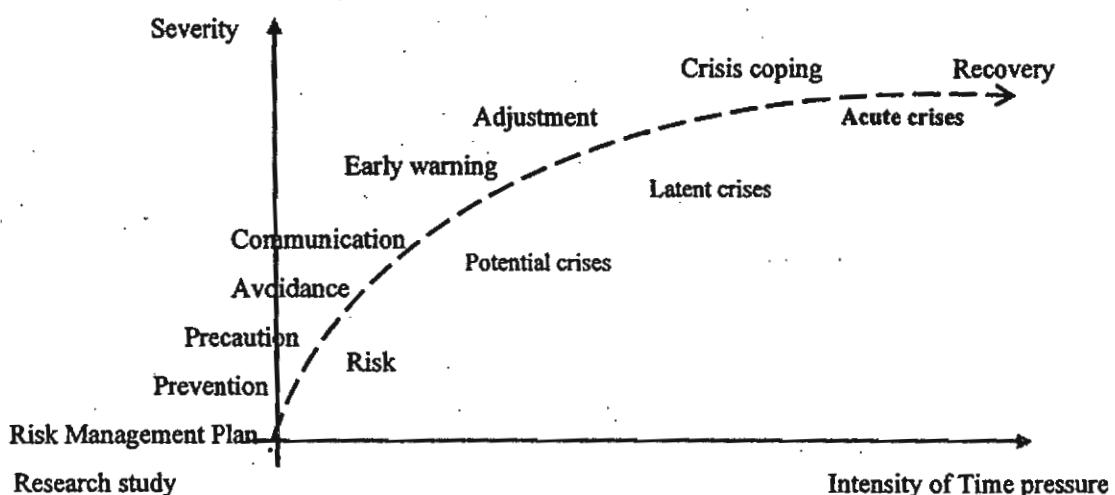
The hotel had to deal with staff emotion right after the crisis and provide them not only with financial support but also with psychological support. The manager of hotel D mentioned that they had very positive feedbacks afterward which could be seen from high level of occupancy. Major target customers are Scandinavian and European visitors. Most of them re-visit the hotel and the destination because they feel connected with the local people and the hotel. They want to come back and review their memories.

As most of the interviewees were working in Phuket at the time of the Tsunami occurred in 2004, they tended to talk more about the experiences they had during and after this big shocking natural crisis. Generally every hotel was affected by the Tsunami both directly and indirectly at certain degrees. But of cause the cancellation rate was suddenly rose in all hotels and resorts. Therefore every hotel since then realized the need for better preparation to meet future crises of all types. Some hotels have already gone beyond a simple fire evacuation plan and contingency plan to be more précis and efficient.

A very interesting fact found from the interviews was that all hotels were concerned about man-made crises more than they were about natural crises. This corresponds to the earlier studies on natural crises and human-induced crises. As stated in the previous chapter, the human-induced crises would generate much more loss and would take longer time to recover. Even though the political instability in the southern provinces of Thailand now does not impact the tourism businesses in Phuket, yet from the point of view of some interviewees, it could be give a negative image for the country as a whole, and that will affect their businesses in the broader sense...

It has been proven that although Tsunami was highly devastating, yet hotels in Phuket and Khao Lak recovered very quickly, and that their businesses have fared better than before. The Tsunami at last was not the a complete nightmare in the eyes of the hotel managers and local stakeholders since it did not only bring back normal businesses, but it also brought new businesses to the destinations.

According to Glaesser (2003), crisis planning should be implemented in the early period, this also includes the study and analysis of potential risks. For better understanding of risk and crisis phases and management strategies, the following graph illustrates in more details.



Own, adapted from Glaesser (2003)

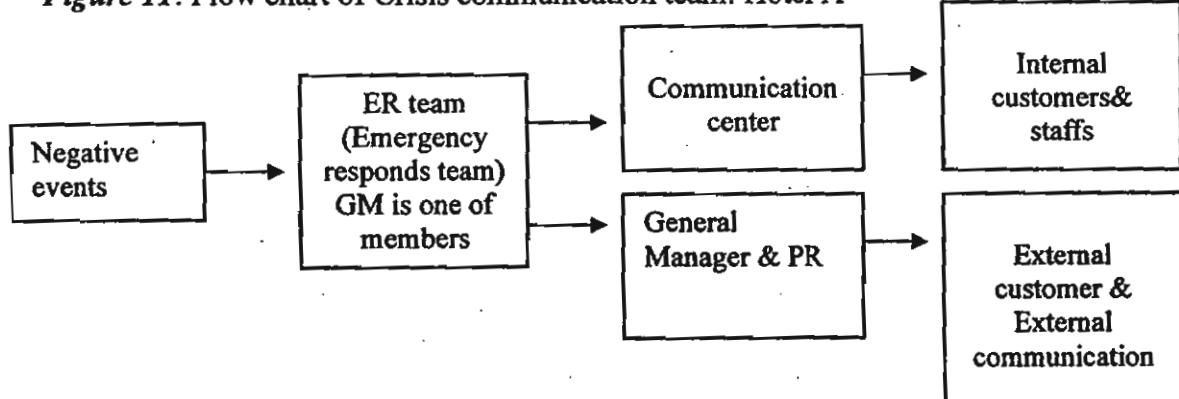
Crisis Management Approaches

Figure 10: crisis management approaches

As shown in the figure 10, there are different management approaches throughout the life cycle of a crisis. The work starts with the research and analysis of potential threats and ends with the recovery strategy.

Area Two: Crisis management application, especially communication plan
Hotel A has long practiced and implemented many emergency and evacuation plans, although they never knew how to apply those plans should there be any unexpected and very sudden crisis. Nevertheless, the hotel was able to deal with where was a sudden crisis. When it was impacted by the Tsunami, the hotel adopted its emergency plan and applied it to the incident. The new communication plan was set, and it proved to be very significant for crisis management. The hotel also set up an emergency response team or the ER team to deal with the crisis. A flowchart of the crisis communication team can be seen in figure 11. The General Manager of the hotel is also part of the team. The process of crisis management does not rely on single one person. It is the formula of wisdom of the crowd, which refers to the effectiveness of collaboration within the organization. However, the team should also be aware of language barriers between team members, and the efficiency in time.

Figure 11: Flow chart of Crisis communication team: Hotel A

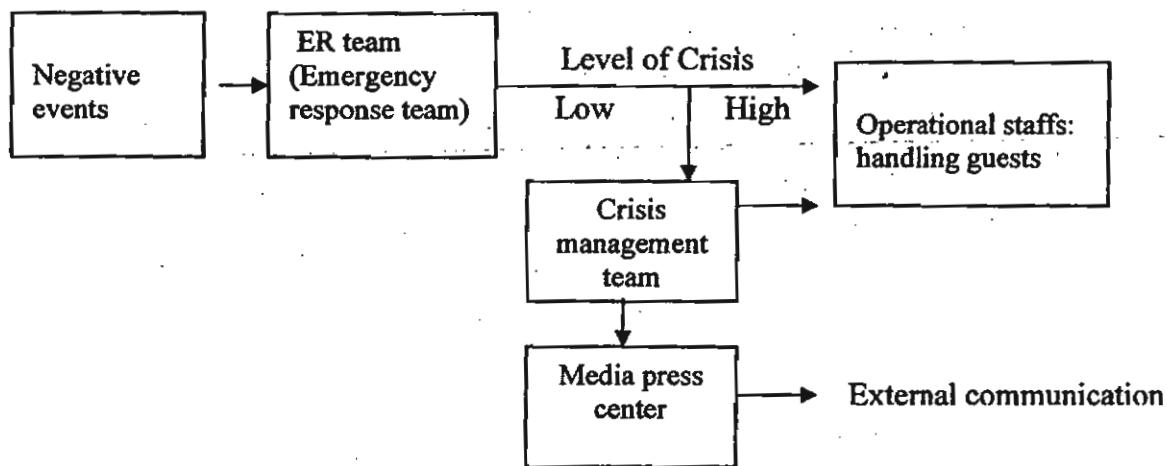


Hotel B set up a press centre for external communication. All messages would be only communicated by the GM.

In dealing with internal customer, the hotel implemented an emergency form for the Tsunami. The purpose of this emergency form was for the hotel customers to inform the hotel about their losses and other damages incurred. The hotel also offered free dinner in the ballroom for all crisis affected customers. The hotel management staff responded to the information and requests as quickly as possible to avoid dissatisfaction and miscommunication. Although the hotel already has a crisis management plan before, but it was not designed for the Tsunami. Hence when the hotel was impacted by the, Tsunami in the year 2004, they used the natural crisis management plan (fire and flooding response) to manage the crisis.

The staff of hotel B is currently aware of the crisis plan but still required more training. They know that they have to look after all guests, however they are not really sure of the order of actions to be taken with respect to the crisis management plan. The operational staff has regular training in handling hotel guests (providing physical and psychological support) during a crisis. The management team, on the other hand are aware of the crisis management procedures. The crisis training for management staff is conducted every six months to ensure that they will respond effectively. After the training, the operating staff will need to follow the management staff who have direct contact with the ER team (room, restaurant, security supervisors from the various departments, management staff the third level manager). This is to provide the right information and to ensure the procedure of handling the crisis as shown in the flow chart below. Moreover, the hotel also has the crisis management team (including GM, hotel manager, engineering manager, HR head, sales & marketing communication manager) in case the crisis is beyond the ER team's capability to handle. This means that if the negative events becomes bigger than expected, then both team will have to work together.

Figure 12: Flow chart of crisis communication team: Hotel B



ER team: The third level manager: supervisor (training every six month)

Crisis management team: Top level manager (GM, hotel manager, engineering manager, HR head, sales & marketing communication manager)

Hotel C: Crisis management planning was created and implemented after the impacts of SARs, Avian Flu and Tsunami. In addition, there are normal procedures of evaluation and communication that the hotel employees have to be trained on. The manager of the hotel mentioned that now every department head will have to carry the “walkie-talkies” so that when a crisis happens they will be informed immediately. They are now having workshops on crisis management but it seems like not every hotel employees are aware of its significance. The internal flow of information within the hotel is as following diagram:

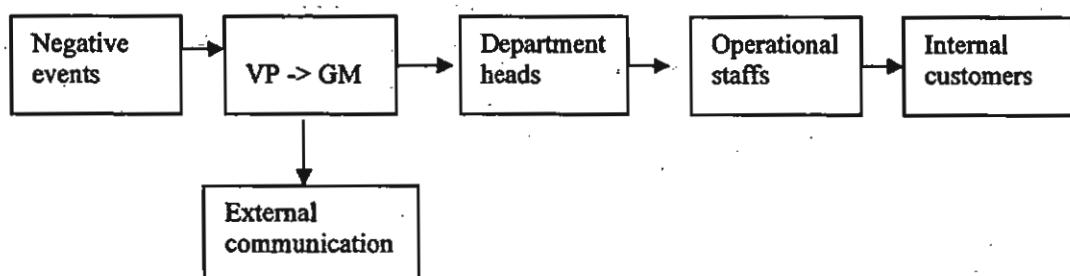


Figure 13: Flow chart of crisis communication team: Hotel C

After a crisis happens, the staff will first have to report to GM. No matter where the GM is, they have to inform him/ her immediately. Then the GM will tell who to do what, when, where, and how. Later every department head will be informed and lastly the operational staff will be informed.

The external communication plans of this hotel are:

1. Offer fam-trips but this is only to boost up the sales along with offering discounted promotional packages.
2. Only scripted information will be communicated to the media or external sources.

Hotel D had no plans to deal with Tsunami or any negative events like earthquake or flooding before. The hotel has been opened only a few months before the Tsunami and they had no plans to manage negative events. They actually had planned to conduct the emergency plan after the low season starts. However, they lost everything with the Tsunami. The manager explained that as the hotel has no plans, therefore they couldn't efficiently sort out many problems. Within the first 24 hours after the Tsunami, everyone, including hotel guests and the staff themselves, simply tried to survive. The unpredicted situation caused a lot of damage and death. The only thing hotel D could do to help the guests was to load the guest up to the hilltop by running as fast as they could. Therefore, the communication has been influenced and interfered by panic.

In the first 24 hours:

- The hotel had to contact the crisis center and loading guests to the hilltop
- They had to think about how to transfer surviving guests to safer areas.
- There was no electricity and telephone access, therefore the only way to communicate was to just walk to a safer area (hilltop) and to try get in contact with their relatives.

Dealing the crisis within 1-2 days

- Still no contact with external medias, hotel, association
- The whole area of the hotel was closed for safety issue to prevent stealing and crimes.
- Everyone was helping to find the death bodies.
- Staff and guests were satisfied with help of Thai people and the way the hotel reacted.
- The only important issue was “safe comes first”. Nothing about communication plan was emphasized (internal and external communication).

Dealing with the crisis 1 month later

- Hotel staff came back to the hotel, helping to collect guests' belongings and send them back to the embassy.
- Cleaning up the hotel and plan the reconstruction*
- The government created the Tsunami centre for the flow of communication (crisis communication plan).

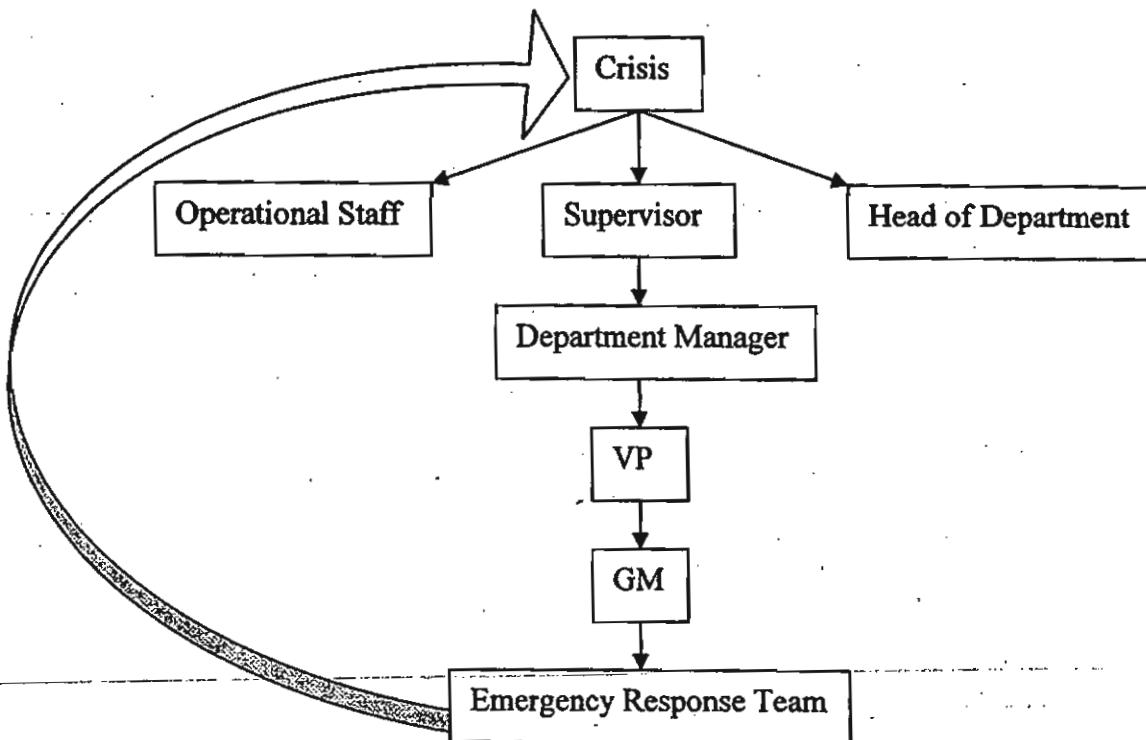
Dealing with the crisis 1 year later

- Recovered the resort infrastructure from their own funds.
- Took care staff mental problem and life crisis.
- Recruited the employees back to work if they would like to.

Hotel D was the first resort to recover from the situation and decided immediately after 1 month that they still wanted to run this business.

Communication is said to be one of the very best strategies when dealing with the crisis in every point in time. Start from the beginning when it is called “Pre-event phase”, to communicate the meaning, severity and potential of crisis to the employees is very important.

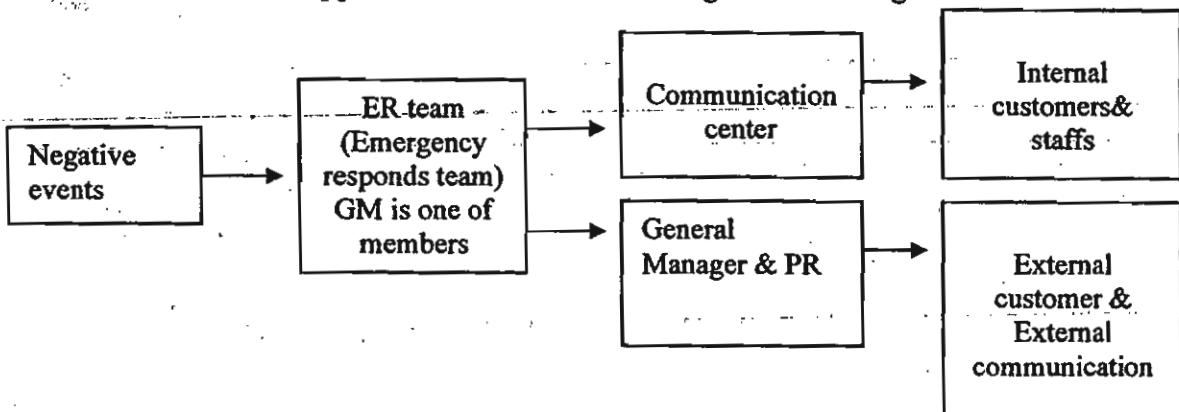
The communication plan could be in the form of training or workshops provided to the hotel staff. This effective internal-communication program could create better understanding of the nature of the negative events or crises for better management. The internal flow of communication is some hotels shown above are very complicated and time consuming. In crises, there is a need of immediate actions and simultaneously decision making. The longer it takes to communicate, the more lost would incur. Complicated protocol shown below is one big mistake that extends the transferring time and manipulates the original message.



Own (2007)

Figure 14: Traditional Crisis Communication Flow

Today, the traditional practices are replaced by the contemporary practices. As a result the flow of information looks a lot less complex, and less time consuming. Shown below is a new approach that hotels are moving towards using it.



Own (2007)

Figure 15: New approach crisis communication flow

Additionally when it moves to the “Active phase”, the employees know how to react and communicate to the customers. At this critical point, communication center should already be set and ready to give out facts and information needed by the public, clients, and internal staff as well. The most impressive action that hotels used during the Tsunami was when one of the hotels set up its own press center. All news and information are released from the press center. Apart from being the contact point for hotel guests, media, and public, the press center was also acted as a call

center for the hotel staff and their relatives. This turned out to be a very intelligent approach which enabled the hotel to manage the flow of information and news much more effectively.

The communication during the "Post-active phase" is excessively important as it helps boost up the sales. Different communication strategies must be applied. Some sample hotels use press conference and fam-trip to rebuild and maintain the trust from their customers. As previously mentioned in chapter 2, the tree actors model which represent the connection between stakeholders, affected destination, and media has to be taken into account. The communication approach that should be implemented now in this Post-active phase is basically aiming to regain the confidence among the customers. Nevertheless, it also intends to create positive psychological effects to the hotel staff and local community.

Area three: Customer occupancy, cancellation after crisis. How the hotels boost up the sales?

Hotel A boosted up the sales by cutting prices to compete with other hotels. After the year 2006, the hotel has set the price higher than before the Tsunami crisis. It might be because of the amount of customer come to Phuket more than ever before. Hotel D had no doubt about guest cancellation because it was hit directly and severely. Cancellation had been done automatically because of media announcement. After almost 2 years, hotel D created promotional champagne to increase the sales volume by contacting with travel agencies and welcoming all inspectors who would like to come and see how the resort has improved. After a while those agencies and inspectors have been sending more and more guests to the hotel. Majority of the guests today are returning guests who had experienced the Tsunami in 2004. Another obvious effect apart from enormous number of deaths and lost from crises raised by the interviewees was about dramatic drop in sales in the beginning of the year 2005 until the year 2006. Price policy is one of several crisis management instruments that could be used to boost up the sales. The hotels altered not only their product but their price policies during their recovery period as well. Prices were cut down in some hotels.

Price bundling of products was used more often than before. There are several cases that the hotels combine their products and sell at a more attractive price to their agencies. From the interview, there were only few international chain hotels that did not really implement any changes in either prices or products just because had the support from fund raising and from the head quarters or branches abroad or they were not affected by the crisis.

In the context of consumer behavior and decision towards the crisis, it is found from the interviews that the impacts of man-made crises have higher influencing power than those of natural crises. For natural disasters, the majority of tourists tend to come back to the hotels and the destinations faster and more often than expected. This obviously supports the previous researches on the impacts and recoveries of different types of crises.

Area Four: Media plays important role? How

Hotel A did not deal with the other hotels in the area because of the hotel A was not really affected. Three days later the hotel informed all customers in their database, and travel agencies about the situation.

Hotel B had no websites, the manager said it was not necessary to make it bigger. The other hotels in the area had already done the websites. Therefore, they had to try to minimize the negative images that caused by the media which were news broadcasting and the world-wide-web.

Hotel D mentioned that media was very important and they need a strategic plan to deal with. The only person who dealt with the media at the time of crisis in 2004 was the GM. The GM of hotel D was in charge of external and internal communication. There were no public relations or marketing department who could give appropriate reaction and responses.

From the in-depth interviews with seven hotels, it is found that hotels tend to neglect the power of media. Only those who were affected by the negative impacts of the crisis value the importance of the media. However, the hotels did not approach the media, they were engaged with taking care of their customers. A GM of one hotel said that there were reporters everywhere, the best thing was to have a press center and so the reporter could only get the news from there.

Media as mentioned in chapter 2 is one of the most important factors that influent the decision making of the travelers. Media crisis, one type of crisis was discussed in many interviews. Perceptions that the tourists have towards the destination as Decrop (1999) discusses in the paper can come from mediated sources such as guide book, brochures, and mass media and may also come from personal sources for instance tour operators, travel agents, and personal experiences. Mediated sources can reach more number of consumers within a short period of time whilst the personal sources are said to be more effective but slower, and reach less number of consumers, it is also harder to control. This is why the hotels should not forget how important mediated sources are. The pro-active approaches which mean making the move first such as providing the press releases and news to media would be a wise way to have a control over the information given out to the public.

Area Five: Dealing with the customer feeling

Hotel B does have the letter that they put in the room to inform every guest about how to deal with Tsunami and other crises and the steps that they have to do when a crisis happens.

Hotel D had no plan to deal with the customers' feeling during crisis but the majority of survived staff could make guests to feel better. They set up a team, and brought the hotel guests to stay over night in their house. Besides, they helped the hotel guests as much as they could, even though staffs themselves were in a harsh trouble.

Apart from providing the customers with their basic physical needs, some hotels tried to make their guests feel better by providing extra instructing information

and services. This is supported by the study of Ritchies et al (2005), one of the basic five points in crisis communication plan is to give information of what, when, where, how, and what action should be taken.

Area Six: Dealing with the staff and how communication plan is developed. Hotel A has a very basic training from their orientation. Four to five groups will be in the intensive training program. The ERT (Emergency Response Team) has to deal with every negative event. The flow can be seen as in the following diagram.



Figure 16: The Emergency Response Team (ERT) operation

Hotel B dealt with staff by giving them funds to recover the crisis situation. HR team responded very well in this situation. After the hotel realized negative events, the hotel has many regular training for staff like how to deal with the panic, how to deal with crises with different concept to make sure they will respond quickly to help customers.

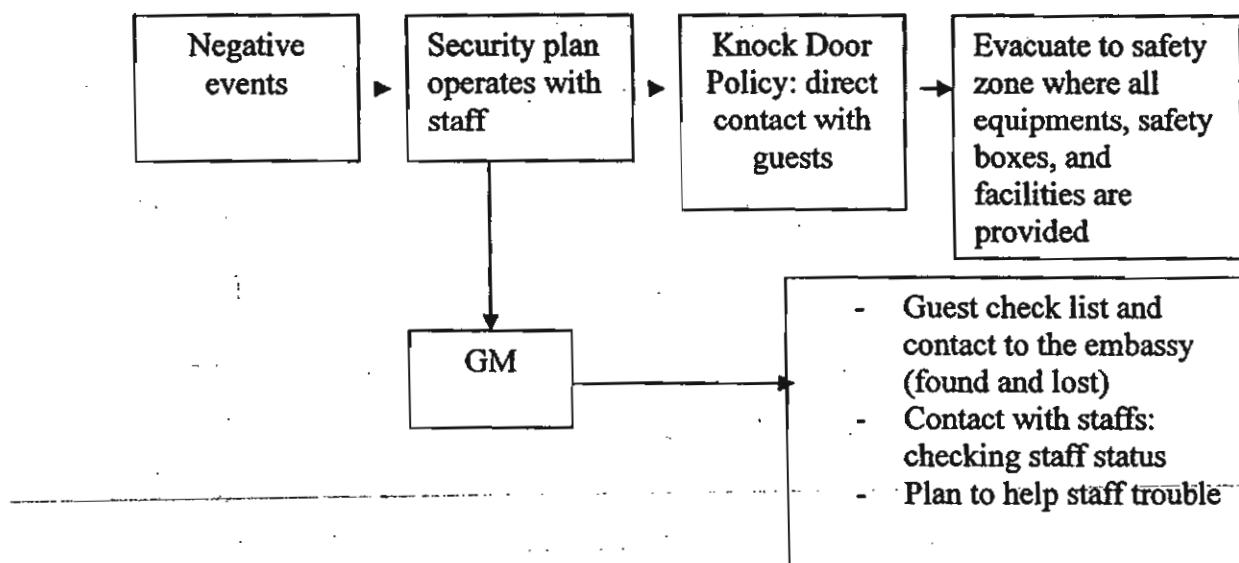
GM and PR are the only channels for communication. They are responsible for announcing news and updates for the organization.

- They have a communication center for customers with 24 hours service.
- Management staffs are in charge of answering and giving the information to the customers who are panic and need to contact their relatives. When the hotel got hit by the Tsunami, there was no electricity, no telephone signal.
- The customers also wanted to know the current situation. All of updated information has been posted on the notice board. Therefore, it could make customer feel less nervous with the crisis situation.
- Hotel A has no communication center before but there is the emergency plan to adapt and create this center after 24 hours of crisis until 3 days later. Providing food and drink to the guests for free. All Information was responded by Management team members who were in charge of the communication center. Staffs were not allowed to answer any questions without approval. Therefore it was better way to go to the communication center to find out the truths or the right messages.

Hotel C stated that they immediately operated following the guiding principle such as printing guest lists and staff list to fortune in case of computer system was broken. In addition they have conducted new guiding principle as follows:

- Setting community joined with other chain hotels for Tsunami funds through websites. (Customers support almost 100 millions baht to help victims including the hotel staffs)
- During the crisis, the hotel needs to have a meeting every month with the ER team.
- Surprise drills, Tsunami drill, fire drills every 3 days. To check how effective of training.

Hotel D had a solid comment about communication strategies. The manager said, as a leader he needed to be strong and confident to pass through the difficult time. The internal crisis communication flow of hotel D after the Tsunami in 2004 can be seen as following illustration:



Own (2007)

Figure 17: The internal crisis communication flow of hotel D

It is noticed that the hotel has set the criteria and crisis procedure according to the past experience crisis which is the Tsunami in 2004. However, if next time the negative events hit harder than the ever before, it will cause severe problems. For example, if they set the safety zone on the third floor, so if the Tsunami waves are bigger than last time, the third floor will not be safe enough to be used as the evacuation ground.

The training of Hotel D has been created for staff to ensure they will survive and have abilities to help the guests. The hotel Manager mentioned that the staff will be trained during low seasons which including how the warning system works, and Tsunami crisis training. Moreover, the safety zone should be a helicopter parking area. From the interview, it can be seen that Hotel D shows more concern on the safety issue than short term benefits.

Area seven: Government involvement

All hotels said that the government did not help them much. The government is not being consistent, they were so alert during the first period when a crisis hits. There were no funding from the government, affected hotels usually rely on charity, donation, and insurance compensation. One manager of a hotel we have interviewed actually said that "We help ourselves. We actually help them not they help us."

However, the most important thing is to improve and regain positive image of the destination. Moreover, the government plays a very important role in restoring the

positive image of destination. This will create confidences among the tourists, it is not only beneficial to one hotel but for the destination or a country as a whole.

Area Eight: Suggestion to government

Hotel A had no comments or suggestion to the government, the hotel manager said it was totally understandable about the ability and power of the government.

The manager of hotel B said, now government has a better communication team or crisis management team, so they know what they should do first when crisis happen. Consistency for government is the key. The plan that makes sense, and it makes customers happy are very important. Hotel C answered that the government should communicate with hotel before they communicate with the world. Hotel D, E, F, G recommended that the government need to help the local community, and not only trying to promote what they have been done. Doing is more significant, and they should do it effectively. This will help coping with crises.

As for this last point, the stakeholder network needs to be taken into consideration again. Now it is necessary to look at what benefits each party in the stakeholder network is aiming for, and what each party can give back to the community. As hotel C mentioned that the government and those affected companies should coordinate first before give out the message to the public. Considering the diagram of Three Actors Model presented by Glaesser (2006), it is agreeable that internal communication should be very well managed before discussing about the external communication.

Additional to this last point, the help from government can be in the form of workshops, training programs, and professional consultancy services, not all the time that it has to be the monetary remuneration.

New hotel business approaches crisis communication plan

New hotel businesses which conducted of 3 small hotels with the initials E, F, and G. It could be summarized that all hotels plan for crisis management of communication plan which the hotel adopted from fire training and applies to conduct special training for Tsunami. In other words, new hotel business started to use communication strategy by arranging fam-trips for travel agencies and presses to show how the business is ready to for a customer.

In terms of dealing with staff, Hotel E and F gave extra bonus for their staff every month post Tsunami and keep continue to give a salary and if someone has some problems with emotional issue, they can leave without pay until they want to come back. That is make them less pressure.

Hotel E and F has been trained by government to prepare for negative events such as Tsunami, the hotel seems depends on the government offering. However, communication plan flow by organizing the crisis centre and Front office staff respond to all of guest as the first contactor by using a knock door policy. If Tsunami happens, staff will go direct to the guests and bring them to the crisis centre. The hotel E and F concept are like personal service then training is most important to avoid panicking and less experience need to be prepared regularly. Government training is helpful for the small hotel but need to verify how training is workable in this area.

Importantly all hotels recommended that it doesn't work if hotels concerns themselves without helping local community. Community is still struggling how the hotel and destination can be improved.

The hotel G has planned to use crisis planning to apply with the new business but it's not the first year. It might be the next year after they have done introduction stage, building up brand awareness and making sure the profit will lead to the point. After that they will concentrate on the crisis planning according to giving the knowledge about how to deal with customer and staff within the negative events. It concluded that new business couldn't support the cost for something intangible, no dateline when it will be happened like Tsunami or any crises. In this point of view, all hotels need to reconsider about how crisis management in case of communication plan is significant.

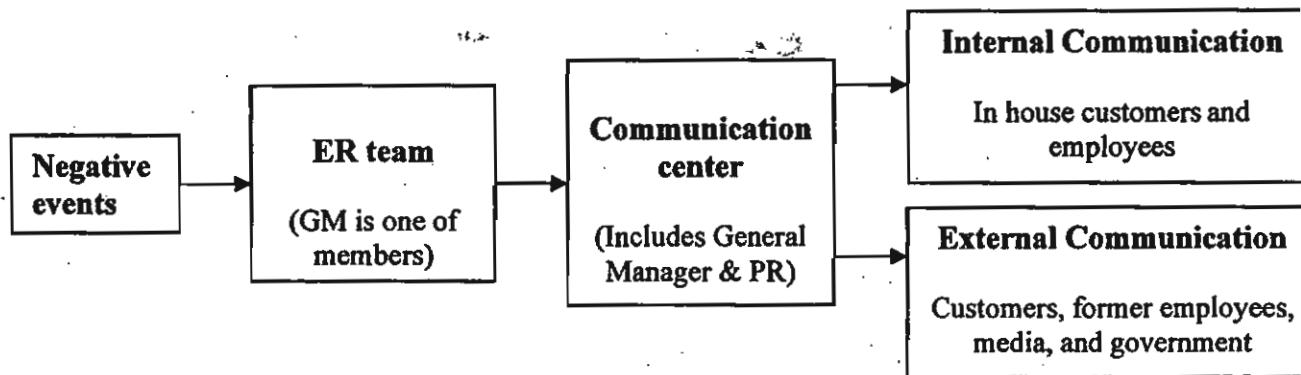
Summary

In the field of tourism, crisis management is mandatory and it also involves the management of communication within and outside the organization. The destinations or organizations that are not well prepared to resist or react to a crisis or disaster may not survive the first impact of a crisis. By implementing appropriate and feasible approaches of crisis communication plan, it will help the affected firms or the countries to react properly.

The research has elaborated the theoretical frameworks of crisis management that are most important and applicable for tourism business. It has reviewed various definition of crisis in general. The most recent definition that could be applied to tourism industry states that a crisis is "self-inflicted" of the organization or when a firm has its own failure. Therefore, the crisis management has to start from within the firm.

Similar to risks, a crisis can be classified by its severity, possibility, and time pressure. A Crisis Classification Matrix created by Burnett (1998) has illustrated that the crises has the total of 16 types, and it can be in different level of severity (from level 0 to level 4). By using this classification matrix, a firm can apply the appropriate tools to solve the problem.

The focus of this research is upon the problems of communication planning and the implementation of the plan before, during, and after a crisis. It was found that large hotels and international chain hotels are well prepared with the Crisis Communication. It was integrated into the firm's marketing strategies using the basic instruments namely product (destination) policy, price policy and distribution policy. The thorough crisis communication plan is more systematic and very well functioned proven by the previous Tsunami Crisis in Phuket in the year 2004. The immediate crisis communication policies and plans are based on security management and risk management theories. The flow of information is a significant factor towards the successful of immediate crisis communication management. The most feasible communication plan according to the result of the interview with several hotels that should be implemented is shown in the following diagram.



Own (2007)

Figure 18: Immediate Crisis Communication Plan

The above model is inspired by the result of the interviews, and combination of all methods each hotel used when they faced with Tsunami crisis in 2004. Apart from the Immediate Crisis Communication plan that should be employed in the pre-event and during the event stages; the press releases, fam-trips, and press conferences are also found very important in terms of enhancing positive image of the destination or the organizations after a crisis. The communication strategies used after the crisis is to include the key stakeholders into the crisis management plan for future collaboration.

Suggestions

This research might open up the possibility for hotels and resorts in Thailand to think comprehensively about the execution of Crisis Management policies and its communication plan. It is probable to extend the scope of this research to different type of crises, or to focus on the man-made crises and its effects towards tourism. Further research survey is needed to analyze the frequency of man-made crises which have a stronger influence on the decline in tourism demand. The implication of crisis management is underlining within Thailand's tourism business. Currently the government of Thailand has set a special team who is responsible for risk and crisis management of the country, the board members conduct several tourism organizations and companies. The corporation with the government sectors are recommended for future researches.

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Paper 2 Searching for Security through the Haze: An Examination of the Complexities of Intra-ASEAN Cooperation

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Abstract

Open burning and traditional agriculture practices in Sumatra, Indonesia have brought to the fore environmental degradation as a security threat. Air-borne particles – set off intentionally or otherwise – were blown hundreds of miles by monsoon winds to Malaysia and Singapore. In 1997 and 2006, haze caused millions of dollars in lost tourism dollars and imperiled the health of Malaysians and Singaporeans. These states, along with Indonesia, endeavored to find a lasting solution to the problem. What seemed to a simple case of inter-state cooperation turned out to be anything but. Drawing on the theoretical concepts of collaboration and coordination and using the haze issue as a case study, this paper addresses the larger question of the complexities of intra-ASEAN cooperation. It argues that cooperation is hampered by differing priorities and perceptions of security held by Indonesia and other ASEAN states. Indonesia, which holds the key to the problem appears to be dragging its feet and is less amendable to a multilateral approach to resolve the issue. When self-interest takes priority over communal interest, cooperation is problematic and this seems to be the case with efforts to combating the haze threat in Southeast Asia.

INTRODUCTION

Political collectives are rare in an international system where states are predisposed to act individually to pursue their *individual* national interest. Informed by the notion of self-help, states rely on themselves and internally generated strength for self-preservation and empowerment. Granted that this essentially realist worldview is widely shared and adopted, in reality political entities do find ways to cooperate and forge collaborative ventures. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is *sui generis* as arguably the most successful regional organization amongst developing nations. From an ostensibly anti-communist outfit, ASEAN has flourished as a respectable actor. It is an integral actor in East Asian affairs and have, in recent times, been courted by the likes of China, Japan, India and the U.S. The European Union has institutionalized its relations with ASEAN through ASEM (ASEAN-Europe Meeting), in which the former hold formal talks and consultations with ASEAN on issues of mutual concern. Notwithstanding these developments, detractors have criticized ASEAN as lacking in substance and in spite of its forty odd years in existence have accomplished few achievements of note. This paper evaluates the efficacy of ASEAN in the management of transboundary haze.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM: THE CASE OF THE 1997/9 TRANSBOUNDARY HAZE

Transboundary haze became a central issue in 1997 when uncontrolled open burning, exacerbated by the El Niño phenomenon. Farmers and plantation workers typically use fire as a cheap and efficient method to clear forests and vegetation for commercial purposes. The Indonesian Ministry of Environment cautioned against open burning. Unsurprisingly, these warnings were ignored as fire is commonly used by small and big landowners to clear land, which produced haze and degraded air quality. Nevertheless, the haze is a temporary phenomenon and would usually clear with the advent of the raining season in September. Instead of rain, El Niño prolonged the dry season and set in motion the haze problem throughout Indonesia and beyond:

The use of fire for land clearing is not restricted to Kalimantan and Sumatra – and fires were reported from 23 of Indonesia's 27 provinces in 1997-98 – but the large number of fires set on those massive islands by plantation firms and government projects clearing tens of thousands of hectares at a time produced enough smoke by July to create a blanket of haze that spread hundreds of kilometers in all directions.¹

Transboundary haze is not a new problem, with at least five other serious cases (1982-3, 1987, 1991, 1994, and 2006) in the last quarter of the century. The extent and devastation wrought by the 1997 sets it apart from other antecedents. "By late September, approximately one million km² were haze-covered, affecting about 70 million people."² The effect of the haze was felt beyond Indonesia. "In late September, the API reached values of over 800 in Kuching, Sarawak, and 300 in Kuala Lumpur."³ These readings indicate a high degree of contamination. Air pollution index (API) readings between 101-200 is considered "unhealthy," 201 to 300 is "very unhealthy" and 301 to 500 is "hazardous" and values above 501 possess as "significant harm" to living beings. The brunt of the devastation caused – directly or indirectly – by haze is borne by Indonesia. It is estimated that 85% of the US\$4.46 billion damaged was incurred by Indonesia. Of this total, US\$2.78 billion was attributed to fire and US\$1.01 billion to the haze (see Table 1). Indonesia was at the epicenter of the forest fires and was directly affected by the haze. The human suffering endured by Indonesians was phenomenal. Indonesia spent US\$924 million compared to US\$16.8 million by neighboring countries to address short-term health problems caused by the haze. The difference between the quanta spent on remedial health care is a clear indication of the vast number of Indonesians affected by the haze. The death toll stood at 527. The figure for non-fatalities was also staggering: 298,125, 58,095 and 1,446,120 were treated for asthma, bronchitis and acute respiratory infection respectively (see Table 2).

¹ Barber, Charles Victor & Schweithelm, James, *Trial by Fire: Forest Fires and Forestry Policy in Indonesia's Era of Crisis and Reform* in Matthew, Richard, Halle, Mark & Switzer, Jason (Eds.) *Conserving the Peace: Resources, Livelihoods and Security* (Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2002), p. 129.

² Ibid., p. 130.

³ Barber, Charles Victor & Schweithelm, James, *Trial by Fire: Forest Fires and Forestry Policy in Indonesia's Era of Crisis and Reform* (n.p.: World Resources Institute, 2000), p. 20.

Table 1: Fire- and Haze-related damages from the 1997 Indonesian Forest Fires (US\$millions)

Type of Loss	Loss to Indonesia	Loss to other Countries	Total
FIRE-RELATED DAMAGES			
Timber	493.7		493.7
Agriculture	470.4		470.4
Direct forest benefits	705.0		705.0
Indirect forest benefits	1,077.1		1,077.1
Capturable biodiversity	30.0		30.0
Fire-fighting costs	11.7	13.4	25.1
Carbon release		272.1	272.1
<i>Sub-total</i>	2,787.9	285.5	3,073.4
HAZE-RELATED DAMAGES (summary)			
Short-term health	924.0	16.8	940.8
Tourism	70.4	185.8	256.2
Others	17.6	181.5	199.1
<i>Sub-total</i>	1,012.0	384.1	1,396.1
TOTAL DAMAGES	3,799.9 (85%)	669.6 (15%)	4,469.5

Source: Glover, David & Jessup, Timothy (eds.) *Indonesia's Fires and Haze: The Cost of Catastrophe* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999, reprint 2006). Available at <http://www.idrc.ca/openebooks/332-1> [accessed: 13 September 2007].

Table 2: Health Effects from Fire-Related Haze Exposure in Eight Indonesian Provinces, September-November 1997*

Health Effects	Number of Cases
Death	527
Asthma	298,125
Bronchitis	58,095
Acute respiratory infection (ARI)	1,446,120
Daily activity constraint (number of days)	4,758,600
Increase in outpatient treatments	36,462
Increase in hospitalizations	15,822
Lost work days	2,446,352

* The eight provinces are Riau, West Sumatra, Jambi, South Sumatra, West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan and East Kalimantan.

Source: Barber, Charles Victor & Schweithelm, James, *Trial by Fire: Forest Fires and Forestry Policy in Indonesia's Era of Crisis and Reform* (n.p.: World Resources Institute, 2000), p. 19.

The impact of the 1997 forest fires and haze also had an irreversible impact on flora and fauna. Sumatra and Kalimantan – areas where the hazard was most pronounced – are home to several endangered species like the orang utan and the Sumatran tiger. Widespread destruction of primary forests effectively destroyed the support system and habitat for these and many other wildlife. Together with the destruction of plants and fragile ecosystem, the cost for the fires and haze could be immeasurable.

To be sure, the El Niño phenomenon was a catalyst and amplified the degree of environmental degradation but it was not the cause of the 1997 fire forest and the resulting haze. Fault lies squarely in the hands of irresponsible and short-sighted parties. Narayan Sastry explains:

The forest fires in Southeast Asia in 1997 was entirely man-made. The main reason for setting fires was to clear the land for vegetation – either primary growth forest or overgrowth – for shifting agriculture, plantations, or transmigration-program settlers. Fires were often used to resolve land disputes and, in particular, to drive off settlers. Although the fires were originally blamed on slash-and-burn farmers, examinations of satellite images have shown that large plantation

companies, many with ties to the Suharto government, used the fires to clear vast areas of land.⁴

Sastry's analysis points to a larger and systemic problem associated with forest fires and haze. That the fires were set off by small bands of farmers practicing traditional method of farming – slash-and-burn – is irrefutable. Nevertheless, the impact by systematic and large scale clearing of land by plantations companies takes the problem beyond the social realm. Fires were not accidental but instrumental and purposive acts to enhance financial gains. Not only has the rampant acts of degradation threatened and destroy the imbalance of the ecosystem, it had undermined the harmonious relationship forged between societies that had co-existed with nature and relied on the jungle for their livelihood. The destruction of the forests robs these communities of their heritage and culture, forcing them to flee and perhaps even to abandon the lifestyles of their forefathers. The cost of the forest fires and haze runs in the billions and had negatively impacted on the human security.

Estimates by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) on the opportunity cost of resources lost to the countries affected provide a sobering picture of the stakes involved:

... Indonesia could have used its lost resources to provide basic sanitation, water and sewage services for 40 million people, or one-third of its rural poor. WWF estimates that the losses suffered by Singapore tourism alone could have fully funded the Community Chest in that country, which comprises fifty charities and benefits 180,000 people, for three years. Malaysia could have financed all of the federal government's social programmes for the last three years out of the resources that is lost to the fire and haze.⁵

Transboundary haze is not merely an environmental issue. Its ramifications go beyond clean air and protecting wildlife and fauna. Even as the flames of the 1997 fires are put off, the citizens of the affected countries continue to shoulder the burden of our mismanagement of environment, in terms of lost opportunities and incomes that would otherwise derived from the devastated jungles and forests.

⁴ Sastry, Narayana, "Forest Fires, Air Pollution, and Mortality in Southeast Asia," *Demography*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 2-3.

⁵ Quoted in Severino, Rodolfo C. *Southeast Asia in Search of an ASEAN Community: Insights from the former ASEAN Secretary-General* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2006), pp.108-109.

**Table 3: Haze-related Damages Arising from the 1997 Forest Fires
(US\$millions)**

Type of Damage	Indonesia	Malaysia	Singapore	Total
Short-term health damages	924.0	8.0	8.8	940.9
Industrial-production losses	D/U	157.4	N	157.4
Tourism losses	70.4	127.4	58.4	256.2
Airline and airport losses	17.6	0.2	6.9	24.7
Fishing decline	D/U	16.2	N	1.62
Cloud seeding	D/U	0.8	N	0.8
Total	1,012	310	74.1	1,396.1

Key: D/U Data unavailable N Negligible

Note: Damages exclude long-term health damages, reduced crop productivity, aesthetic value of reduced visibility, avertive expenditures, accidents, loss of life, evacuations, and loss of confidence by foreign investors. Small discrepancies in totals reflect rounding.

Source: Glover, David & Jessup, Timothy (eds.) *Indonesia's Fires and Haze: The Cost of Catastrophe* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999, reprint 2006). Available at <http://www.idrc.ca/openebooks/332-1> [accessed: 13 September 2007].

CONCEPTUALIZING COOPERATION

In an anarchic international system, cooperation is often seen as problematic as states are deemed to be self-regarding. Instead of exploring avenues for mutual benefits, states often ask “who benefits more?” This forms the crux of the problem realists identify as *relative gains*. In this paradigm, states eschew cooperation and prospective gains for fear that such collaboration would strengthen its competitors and to the detriment of one’s self. Relative gains is an important obstacle hindering international cooperation, but it is neither a sufficient nor necessary condition explaining the failure of states to cooperate. The neo-liberal school posit that cooperation is widely observed with states opting to focus on *absolute gains*. This paradigm is more conducive to cooperation as it places premium on mutually beneficial payoffs. The neo-realist and neo-liberal schools of thought present differing perspectives on cooperation and instruct us to the different motivation that animates inter-state relations. In reality, cooperation is also contingent a various variables such as issue, context and the relationship among the parties involved. For example, relative gains calculations are more subdued – or perhaps ignored – among allies. Such was the case in the post-1945 period when the US contributed resources and political capital to rebuild its wartime enemy – Japan – even doing so might serve to rehabilitate a potential challenger to its primary because Japan was seen as a

bulwark against communism in Asia. Thus, although the international system is one of anarchy, cooperation is widely practiced and observed.

The Prisoner's Dilemma game model as shown in Figure 1 conceptualizes the dynamics of inter-state behavior. Framed in the context of two suspected criminals caught by the police, this model suggests that actors acting to maximize their own personal interest leads to less optimal outcomes. In this scenario, each suspect has two options – remain silent or confess. Acting rationally, each would opt to confess in exchange for a lighter sentence. If A confesses and B remains silent, A would obtain the highest payoff of "4" (A_2, B_1). Likewise, B would surmise that it is in his/her best interest to confess to avoid a higher jail sentence (A_1, B_2). However, the interactive result of both confession leads them away from their anticipated outcomes, with both receiving a payoff of "2" instead of the anticipated "4" (A_2, B_2). If both had eschewed a strategy to forgo the highest payoff (4) and remained silent, each would be rewarded with a payoff better than A_2, B_2 and receive the A_1, B_1 of "3." However, the net result of the actors' most dominant strategy is A_2, B_2 , although both would much prefer A_1, B_1 to A_2, B_2 . "But the preferred A_1, B_1 outcome is neither individually accessible nor stable. To arrive at the Pareto-optimal outcome requires that all actors eschew their dominant strategies."⁶

FIGURE 1: PRISONER'S DILEMMA

		ACTOR B	
		B_1	B_2
ACTOR A	A_1	3,3	1,4
	A_2	4,1	2,2

⁶ Stein, Arthur, "Coordination and Collaboration: Regimes in an Anarchic World," in Baldwin, David (Ed.) *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
p. 35.

The lesson drawn from the Prisoner's Dilemma model conjoins states to control their natural predilection for maximizing their *individual* interests and benefits in order to avoid jeopardizing their positions. It is also important to note that international relations is an interactive game whereby the final outcome of is dependent on one's behavior as much as the behavior of the other party. Both actors could avoid a less desirable outcome A₂, B₂ by committing themselves to cooperate. Stein explains that ...

[b]because each actor requires assurances that the other will also eschew its rational choice, such collaboration requires a degree of formalization. The regime must specify what constitutes cooperation and what constitutes cheating, and each actor must be assured of its own ability to spot others cheating immediately.⁷

The solution to Prisoner's Dilemma is to regulate the behavior of the parties involved in a manner that guides both parties to achieve A₁, B₁. As argued by Stein, overcoming Prisoner's Dilemma requires (a) compliance by both actors to forgo their dominant strategy, (b) a clear understanding of the expected norm of behavior, and (c) be able to identify and monitor compliance. In addition, the incorporation of punitive retaliation would serve as a strong disincentive for cheating.

THE FAILURE OF ASEAN COOPERATION

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was formed on August 1967. Beginning with five members – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand – the organization now encompasses ten Southeast Asian countries. Motivated by anti-communist designs, ASEAN has evolved into arguably one of the most successful regional organizations in the developing world. It is in the process of building an ASEAN community and had made significant progress at economic integration with the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). ASEAN had progressed by leaps and bounds, with a concerted effort at forging cooperative ventures in politics, socio-cultural, economic and security spheres. For all its successes, detractors point to the frustrating pace in which ASEAN functions. The use of consensus as the decision rule effectively gives each member state a veto over all deliberations. This results in ASEAN progress at the pace dictated by the "lowest denominator" state. The failure of unanimity forced Singapore to break ranks with ASEAN to negotiate a free trade agreement with the US. ASEAN's management of transboundary haze is yet another example how the organization is prevented from taking positive measures to contain and mitigate the threat by its archaic consensus rule-making.

Recognizing the need for collective action and the gravity of the threat posed by transboundary haze, ASEAN formally entered into a framework to address the problem. The Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution was signed by all ten ASEAN states in June 2002. ASEAN's response had won it accolades from among others, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). The Agreement was

⁷ Stein, "Collaboration," pp. 41-42.

entered into force on 25 November 2003. The responsibilities of the parties to the Agreement are as follows:

- (a) Required to cooperate in developing and implementing measures to prevent and monitor transboundary haze pollution, and control sources of fires by developing early warning systems, exchange information and technology, and provide mutual assistance.
- (b) Required to respond to a request for relevant information sought by a state or states affected by such transboundary haze pollution, when the transboundary haze pollution originates from within their territories.
- (c) Required to take legal, administrative and/or other measures to implement their obligations under the Agreement.⁸

The Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution is the embodiment of ASEAN's sense of collective purpose and resolve to mitigate and prevent forest fires, and to control transboundary haze pollution. Some of the major ongoing ASEAN activities include:

- (a) Development of 'zero burning' guidelines targeted to plantation companies and timber concessionaires;
- (b) Promotion of 'zero burning' policy by ASEAN through dialogue sessions and corporate awareness campaigns;
- (c) Development of controlled burning guidelines to smallholders, farmers and shifting cultivators;
- (d) Development of standard operating procedures for monitoring, assessment and joint emergency response;
- (e) Simulation exercises to enhance coordination and communication mechanisms among Member Countries in joint emergency response;
- (f) Training programmes to strengthen law enforcement capability of ASEAN Member Countries (AMCs);
- (g) Community-based fire management activities; and
- (h) Public and community awareness campaigns.⁹

Two workshops were held in 2004 and 2006 in Kuala Rompin, Malaysia to enhance capacity-building. Similarly, two guidelines on the "Implementation of the ASEAN Policy on Zero-Buring" and "the Implementation of Controlled Burning Practices" were formulated for the same purpose. ASEAN Specialized Meteorological Center (ASMC) – based in Singapore – "has been designated to and continues to play a leading role in long-rang climate forecasting, early warning activities, and detection and monitoring of fires and haze in the region."¹⁰ It appears that ASEAN has successfully harnessed its cooperative spirit that would no doubt stand it in good stead to ward off future haze threats. Such optimism proved to be unfounded as the region continues to be plagued by the haze menace, albeit not in the same intensity and scale of devastation as in 1997. 2006 would see a replay of the events of 1997, in spite of the institutional arrangement by ASEAN to combat transboundary haze.

⁸ ASEAN Secretariat Press Release, 25 November 2003. Available at <http://haze-online.or.id.news.php?ID=1069644529> [accessed: 13 October 2007].

⁹ ASEAN, "ASEAN's Response." Available at <http://www.haze-online.or.id/help/response.php> [accessed 13 October 2007].

¹⁰ ASEAN, "ASEAN's Response."