

ABSTRACT

This paper studies Cambodian National Interest toward ASEAN Forum from 1997 to 2005. While this is approach to the study of Cambodian National Interest toward ASEAN Forum, this paper applied the "Rationale Actor Theory" from Graham T. Allison as the appropriate approach in explaining the impact for Cambodia more specifically.

While the whole world prepares it self for a new millenium that will be characterized by the trends of globalization and regionalization, Cambodia is writing a new page of its long history. For Cambodia this will be a new era of reform and opening art and integration into the regional and global economies. This key event will no doubt determine the course of the country's future development. As we know, Cambodia had distruction condition because of war, conflict, and political instability. Following years of political instability, Cambodia has been run by a coalition government comprising the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and The National United Front for an Independent, Neutral, Peaceful and Co-operative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC).

In July 1997, forces loyal to the co-prime minister and leader of the CPP, Hun Sen, take over Phnom Penh. The other co-prime minister, Prince Ranariddh, flee the country. The ASEAN responds by delaying Cambodia's admission to the grouping and some Western countries freeze aid to Cambodia. The impact is Hun Sen say that without joining ASEAN, Cambodia never die. But it's not longer because in April 1999 Cambodia became fully ASEAN membership.

As small and weak nation emerging from decades of war and destruction, Cambodia could not afford to continue its past policy of isolation and over-reliance on bilateral diplomacy alone. While a number of National Assembly members wondered about the possibility of violating this constitutional provision on the "Policy of Permanent Neutrality", many thought that this article did not bar Cambodia's entry into ASEAN. ASEAN membership was Cambodia's priority. There are five major rationales which could explain Cambodia's quest for ASEAN membership. This include so-called: (1) strategic rationale, (2) economic rationale, (3) diplomatic rationale, (4) prestige rationale, and (5) legitimacy rationale.

All in all, Cambodia's quest for ASEAN membership was not easy, smooth, or speedy. In the thirty two years since ASEAN's incaption, Cambodia had missed opportunities to be integrated into regional institution. The ellection in 1993, Cambodia's foreign policy has pursued a new "open door" frame work policy through strategic engagement with the outside world, especially with ASEAN. Joining ASEAN forum can not only defend but also protec the national interest of Cambodia in a changing world. The political interest is the state of Cambodia had same status with others countries in the world. The economy interest is Cambodia can interesting investors to investment into Cambodia. But in the other hand, as a members of ASEAN, Cambodia must join in A Trade Area (AFTA) and must doing democratization. As the coun developing economy from destruction, Cambodia has not ready yet Furthermore, situation of Cambodia's politic still instability. Cambodia get more advantages than losses from its membership.