

= Southeast Asia Treaty Organization =

The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was an international organization for collective defense in Southeast Asia created by the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty , or Manila Pact , signed in September 1954 in Manila , Philippines . The formal institution of SEATO was established on 19 February 1955 at a meeting of treaty partners in Bangkok , Thailand . The organization 's headquarters were also in Bangkok . Eight members joined the organization .

Primarily created to block further communist gains in Southeast Asia , SEATO is generally considered a failure because internal conflict and dispute hindered general use of the SEATO military ; however , SEATO @-@ funded cultural and educational programs left long @-@ standing effects in Southeast Asia . SEATO was dissolved on 30 June 1977 after many members lost interest and withdrew .

The United States still considers the mutual defense aspects of its treaty active for Australia , France , New Zealand , Philippines , Thailand , and the United Kingdom .

= = Origins and structure = =

The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty , or Manila Pact , was signed on 8 September 1954 in Manila , as part of the American Truman Doctrine of creating anti @-@ communist bilateral and collective defense treaties . These treaties and agreements were intended to create alliances that would contain communist powers (Communist China , in SEATO 's case) . This policy was considered to have been largely developed by American diplomat and Soviet expert George F. Kennan . President Dwight D. Eisenhower 's Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (1953 ? 1959) is considered to be the primary force behind the creation of SEATO , which expanded the concept of anti @-@ communist collective defense to Southeast Asia , and then @-@ Vice President Richard Nixon advocated an Asian equivalent of NATO upon returning from his late @-@ 1953 Asia trip . The organization , headquartered in Bangkok , was created in 1955 at the first meeting of the Council of Ministers set up by the treaty , contrary to Dulles 's preference to call the organization " ManPac " .

SEATO was intended to be a Southeast Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) , in which the military forces of each member would be coordinated to provide for the collective defense of the members ' country . Organizationally , SEATO was headed by the Secretary General , whose office was created in 1957 at a meeting in Canberra , with a council of representatives from member nations and an international staff . Also present were committees for economics , security , and information . SEATO 's first Secretary General was Pote Sarasin , a Thai diplomat and politician who had served as Thailand 's ambassador to the U.S. between 1952 and 1957 , and as Prime Minister of Thailand from September 1957 to 1 January 1958 .

Unlike the NATO alliance , SEATO had no joint commands with standing forces . In addition , SEATO 's response protocol in the event of communism presenting a " common danger " to the member nations was vague and ineffective , though membership in the SEATO alliance did provide a rationale for a large @-@ scale U.S. military intervention in the region during the Vietnam War (1955 ? 1975) .

= = Membership = =

Despite its name , SEATO mostly included countries located outside of the region but with an interest either in the region or the organization itself . They were Australia , France , New Zealand , Pakistan (including East Pakistan , now Bangladesh) , the Philippines , Thailand , the United Kingdom and the United States .

The Philippines and Thailand were the only Southeast Asian countries that actually participated in the organization . Both shared close ties with the United States , particularly the Philippines , and both faced incipient communist insurgencies against their own governments . Thailand became a member upon the discovery of the newly founded " Thai Autonomous Region " (the Xishuangbanna

Dai Autonomous Prefecture) in Yunnan (in South West China) - apparently feeling threatened by potential Chinese communist subversion on its land . Other regional countries like Burma and Indonesia were far more minded with domestic internal stability rather than concern of communist threat , and thus rejected joining it . Malaya (including Singapore) also chose to not participate formally , though it was kept updated with key developments due to its close relationship with the United Kingdom . The rest of Southeast Asian countries : Vietnam , Cambodia and Laos were prevented from taking part in any international military alliance as a result of the Geneva Agreements signed 20 July of the same year concluding the end of the First Indochina War . However , with the lingering threat coming from communist North Vietnam and the possibility of the domino theory with Indochina turning into a communist frontier , SEATO got these countries under its protection - an act that would be considered to be one of the main justifications for the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War . Cambodia , however rejected the protection in 1956 .

The majority of SEATO members were not located in Southeast Asia . To Australia and New Zealand , SEATO was seen as a more satisfying organization than ANZUS ? a collective defense organization with the U.S. Great Britain and France joined partly due to having long maintained colonies in the region , and partly due to concerns over developments in Indochina . Pakistan , however , was simply interested in joining over the appeal of potential support for its long struggle against India . Last but not least , the U.S. upon perceiving Southeast Asia to be a pivotal frontier for Cold War geopolitics saw the establishment of SEATO as essential to its Cold War containment policy .

All in all , the membership reflected a mid @-@ 1950s combination of anti @-@ communist Western nations and such nations in Southeast Asia . The United Kingdom , France and the United States , the latter of which joined after the U.S. Senate ratified the treaty by an 82 ? 1 vote , represented the strongest Western powers . Canada also considered joining , but decided against it in order to concentrate on its NATO responsibilities .

= = = Secretaries @-@ General = = =

Secretaries @-@ General of SEATO :

= = Military aspects = =

After its creation , SEATO quickly became insignificant militarily , as most of its member nations contributed very little to the alliance . While SEATO military forces held joint military training , they were never employed because of internal disagreements . SEATO was unable to intervene in conflicts in Laos because France and Britain rejected use of military action . As a result , the U.S. provided unilateral support for Laos after 1962 . Though sought by the U.S. , involvement of SEATO in the Vietnam War was denied because of lack of British and French cooperation .

Both the United States and Australia cited the alliance as justification for involvement in Vietnam . American membership in SEATO provided the United States with a rationale for a large @-@ scale U.S. military intervention in Southeast Asia . Other countries , such as Great Britain and key nations in Asia , accepted the rationale . In 1962 , as part of its commitment to SEATO , the Royal Australian Air Force deployed CAC Sabres of its No. 79 Squadron to Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base , Thailand . The Sabres began to play a role in the Vietnam War in 1965 , when their air defence responsibilities expanded to include protection of USAF aircraft using Ubon as a base for strikes against North Vietnam .

= = Cultural effects = =

In addition to joint military training , SEATO member states worked on improving mutual social and economic issues . Such activities were overseen by SEATO 's Committee of Information , Culture , Education , and Labor Activities , and proved to be some of SEATO 's greatest successes . In 1959 , SEATO 's first Secretary General , Pote Sarasin , created the SEATO Graduate School of

Engineering (currently the Asian Institute of Technology) in Thailand to train engineers . SEATO also sponsored the creation of the Teacher Development Center in Bangkok , as well as the Thai Military Technical Training School , which offered technical programs for supervisors and workmen . SEATO 's Skilled Labor Project (SLP) created artisan training facilities , especially in Thailand , where ninety @-@ one training workshops were established .

SEATO also provided research funding and grants in agriculture and medical fields . In 1959 , SEATO set up the Cholera Research Laboratory in Bangkok , later establishing a second Cholera Research Laboratory in Dhaka , Bangladesh . The Dhaka laboratory soon became the world 's leading cholera research facility and was later renamed the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research , Bangladesh . SEATO was also interested in literature , and a SEATO Literature Award was created and given to writers from member states .

= = Criticism and dissolution = =

Though Secretary of State Dulles considered SEATO an essential element in American foreign policy in Asia , historians have considered the Manila Pact a failure and the pact is rarely mentioned in history books . In The Geneva Conference of 1954 on Indochina , Sir James Cable , a diplomat and naval strategist , described SEATO as " a fig leaf for the nakedness of American policy " , citing the Manila Pact as a " zoo of paper tigers " .

Consequently , questions of dissolving the organization arose . Pakistan withdrew in 1972 after East Pakistan seceded and became Bangladesh in 26th March 1971 . France withdrew financial support in 1975 , and the SEATO council agreed to the phasing out of the organization . After a final exercise on 20 February 1976 , the organization was formally dissolved on 30 June 1977 .