THE MAKING OF
SOUTHEAST ASIA
“This book is a landmark in the process it describes. Southeast Asia’s ‘quest for identity’; its imagining of a common destiny, has found a worthy chronicler and analyst in Amitav Acharya.”

Anthony Reid
Emeritus Professor,
Australian National University

“extremely insightful, timely, and instructive”

Harvard Asia Quarterly

“… this is a thought-provoking book, loaded with valuable observations and insights. It also provides a needed corrective to orientalist perspective and to the sometimes tunnel vision of international relations scholars. It is highly recommended, and should be added to the reading lists of every Southeast Asia international relations course.”

Contemporary Southeast Asia

“The book succeeds on a number of levels. For one thing, it pays close attention to the notion of ‘region’ rather than simply examining the various individual parts that constitute the area we now regard as Southeast Asia. In doing so it stakes out new ground not only in theoretical terms but practical ones as well. Moreover, because the development of a regional identity has been consumed with efforts to create a unity amongst its members, the charting of its successes, its failures, its hopes and prospects is a worthwhile task in itself. The author is not simply content to lay out the history of these in analytical fashion but rather seeks to go beyond in assessing the way in which regionalism has affected how they see themselves in terms of regional identity.”

International Affairs

“… an excellent and compelling historical overview of regional relations and regionalism in Southeast Asia. One of Acharya’s stated objectives in writing the book is to address a lack of historical analysis among political scientists when it comes to examining Southeast Asia … This is an important book, which makes a valuable contribution towards the study of Southeast Asian regionalism by opening new areas for discussion and debate about this concept.”

Canadian Council for Asia Pacific Security (CANCAPS) Bulletin
“In his comparative approach, … [Acharya] challenges the ‘gap’ between discipline-based approach and the country-specific approach adopted by many area specialists … While dealing with great complexity, Acharya is able to present his ideas clearly and concisely …”

Journal of Contemporary Asia

“The book … is timely in its attempt to discern the conceptual meaning of Southeast Asia’s efforts to forge its own identity … The Quest for Identity will be a welcome source for newcomers to the field. With its easy-to-read and subtle presentation of major topics, readers should be tempted into a deeper exploration of the field of Southeast Asian international relations.”

International Relations of the Asia-Pacific

“… numerous insights and important but neglected facts to be learned from this account …”

Australian Journal of International Affairs

“a perceptive study … Southeast Asia is different from Europe, South Asia or the Middle East … If … ASEAN’s core countries managed heroically to imagine themselves in Benedict Anderson’s sense to be an entity, it was mainly because of the Cold War and the conflict in Vietnam. In the process, they developed cohesion, confidence and a sense of purpose. Acharya also exposes the hype …”

Times Higher Education Supplement
The Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) was established as an autonomous organization in 1968. It is a regional research centre dedicated to the study of socio-political, security and economic trends and developments in Southeast Asia and its wider geostrategic and economic environment. The Institute’s research programmes are the Regional Economic Studies (RES, including ASEAN and APEC), Regional Strategic and Political Studies (RSPS), and Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS).

ISEAS Publishing, an established academic press, has issued more than 2,000 books and journals. It is the largest scholarly publisher of research about Southeast Asia from within the region. ISEAS Publishing works with many other academic and trade publishers and distributors to disseminate important research and analyses from and about Southeast Asia to the rest of the world.
THE MAKING OF SOUTHEAST ASIA
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF A REGION

AMITAV ACHARYA

CORNELL UNIVERSITY PRESS
Ithaca and London

INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
Singapore
Dedication

The late Ananda Rajah, a social anthropologist and close personal friend, was a steadfast enthusiast behind my attempts to imagine and interpret Southeast Asia and live the region for a dozen years. It is to his beloved memory that this book is dedicated.
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Preface

In 1999, when I first discussed with Oxford University Press in Singapore the idea of writing a book on Southeast Asia, the commissioning editor asked for a manuscript that could be used as a text for university courses on the international relations of Southeast Asia. What turned out, however, was not as much a “textbook” (in the sense of being a comprehensive narrative of major issues and developments), but an argument about how Southeast Asia’s international relations should be understood and analysed. The book’s narrative on Southeast Asia’s modern international relations was structured around a central thesis: that regions are socially constructed, and that regionalist ideas, a desire for regional identity and intraregional patterns of interaction are crucial factors in the making of Southeast Asia as a region. Hence, they should be given as much attention as the role of external powers and the balance-of-power dynamics stressed in the traditional literature on the region. It is this argument about the imagination and social construction of the region that would make *The Quest for Identity: International Relations of Southeast Asia* provocative reading and generate a lively debate among the scholarly and policy community interested in Southeast Asian affairs. In this sense, the book’s major purpose has been accomplished.

The *Making of Southeast Asia* incorporates and significantly expands on *The Quest for Identity*. Among other changes, it contains two new chapters. Chapter 2 presents the perspective and analytical framework of the book, drawing upon recent writings on regions and regional identity in the scholarly literature as well as some of the commentary, both positive and critical, that the first edition generated. Chapter 8 examines the challenges facing Southeast Asia’s regional concept since
the onset of the Asian economic crisis in 1997. The book also provides important new material on the contribution of Southeast Asian studies to the regional concept. Chapter 3 adds to the discussion of the precolonial state systems that introduces more variations among them, and provides an expanded evaluation of alternative historiographical perspectives that reinforce or challenge the claim of Southeast Asia to be a region. Chapter 3 adds new material on Southeast Asian nationalist ideas of regionalism. A rich collection of photographs has been added to illustrate and supplement the text throughout the book.

A key purpose of *The Making of Southeast Asia* is to build a dialogue between area studies and disciplinary (international relations) approaches to the study of Southeast Asia. Despite the growing sophistication of “Southeast Asian studies” in general, including “a diversification of authors, [and] a corollary diversification of their intellectual debts and inclinations”, (Don Emmerson’s words),¹ as well as growing “indigenization” (Ben Anderson’s term)² of scholarship on Southeast Asia, one still gets the sense that discipline-based specialists and traditional area studies scholars of Southeast Asia do not communicate very well with each other, despite some recent efforts to bridge the gap.³ Their pathways have diverged significantly since the growing visibility (sometimes to the chagrin of some area specialists) of international relations as a discipline unto itself. This is unfortunate, especially for those who have devoted significant parts of their careers to living and working in the region, and to studying its international relations. Moreover, it is unrealistic to speak of the indigenization of scholarship on the region without taking into account its international relations, because a good and growing volume of indigenous scholarship on the region concerns its regionalism (ASEAN in particular).

To a certain degree, this book is inspired by theoretical developments in the discipline of international relations and the debates between rationalist and social constructivist approaches. At the same time, I have benefited immersely from my interactions with those from disciplines other than political science who are also interested in investigating Southeast Asia’s emergence and claim to be a region. While writings and debates about Southeast Asia’s regionness are not rare among historians and other area specialists, this book is the first attempt undertaken by a discipline-based scholar to incorporate insights from
that literature into a study of the international relations of the region. I am thus particularly fortunate to have the encouragement of the leading historians of the region, Anthony Reid and Anthony Milner and a highly gifted anthropologist, the late Ananda Rajah. This is thus by no means a book drawing upon primary historical sources, but it uses, especially in the initial chapters, the classic writings of area specialists as its "primary" material with which to draw a picture of how "Southeast Asia" emerged, and what it means.

I am indebted to several outstanding scholars of Southeast Asia, especially Don Emmerson, Kevin Hewison, Carlyle Thayer, Richard Stubbs, Donald Crone and Diane Mauzy, for their support and constructive critiques of the first edition and suggestions for further improvement. The Making of Southeast Asia would not have seen the light of the day but for a generous Visiting Professorial Fellowship offered to me by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore. My sincere thanks goes to the then Director of ISEAS, Ambassador K. Kesavapany for this invaluable opportunity. The Managing Editor of ISEAS, Mrs Triena Ong, deserves my special gratitude for taking on this project. At ISEAS, Sheryl Sin provided excellent editorial support while Mark Tallara helped with the collection of photos. I acknowledge the crucial assistance of a young Indian scholar of Southeast Asia, M.V. Malla Prasad, who offered valuable suggestions for improving the draft and retyped the entire manuscript. Tan Kwoh Jack provided excellent research assistance for Chapter 8 and updated the bibliography. And the inimitable Roger Haydon of Cornell University Press embraced this project with his usual enthusiasm and critical eye, proving once again why he is so widely regarded as one of the outstanding publishers and editors among scholarly presses.

The photos in this book, presented in three sections, are intended to be supplementary, rather than merely illustrative of the text. Photos are not necessarily presented in a chronological sequence, but generally relate to the themes of the different chapters. Each of the three sections speak to the previous chapters, except Section A, which also speaks to the themes of Chapter 4.

Amitav Acharya
Washington, D.C.
February 2012
NOTES


3 A particularly admirable recent effort to integrate theories and concepts in comparative politics with Southeast Asia area studies is Erik Kuhonta, Dan Slater and Tuong Vu, Southeast Asia in Political Science (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008). A similar effort to bridge international relations theory and Southeast Asian studies can be found in Amitav Acharya and Richard Stubbs, Theorizing Southeast Asian Relations (London: Routledge, 2009).
# List of Abbreviations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCI</td>
<td>ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACFTA</td>
<td>ASEAN-China Free Trade Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACSC</td>
<td>ASEAN Civil Society Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEC</td>
<td>ASEAN Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFFMA</td>
<td>ASEAN Federation of Furniture Manufacturers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFTA</td>
<td>ASEAN Free Trade Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIJV</td>
<td>ASEAN Industrial Joint Venture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALTSEAN-Burma</td>
<td>Alternative ASEAN Network on Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMDA</td>
<td>Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMIA</td>
<td>ASEAN Music Industry Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMP</td>
<td>Asiatic Mode of Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANS</td>
<td>Armee Nationale Sihanoukist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APCET</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Coalition for East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APF</td>
<td>ASEAN People’s Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSC</td>
<td>ASEAN Political-Security Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APT</td>
<td>ASEAN Plus Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARF</td>
<td>ASEAN Regional Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASA</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCC</td>
<td>ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN-ISIS</td>
<td>ASEAN Institutes for Strategic and International Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEANTA</td>
<td>ASEAN Tourism Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEM</td>
<td>Asia-Europe Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSC</td>
<td>ASEAN University Sports Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGDK</td>
<td>Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMI</td>
<td>Chiang Mai Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMECON</td>
<td>Council for Mutual Economic Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPM</td>
<td>Communist Party of Malaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSCAP</td>
<td>Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPJ</td>
<td>Democratic Party of Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRV</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAC</td>
<td>East Asian Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAEC</td>
<td>East Asian Economic Caucus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAEG</td>
<td>East Asian Economic Grouping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EASG</td>
<td>East Asia Study Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAVG</td>
<td>East Asia Vision Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAGA</td>
<td>East ASEAN Growth Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAMF</td>
<td>East Asian Monetary Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAS</td>
<td>East Asian Summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEPSEA</td>
<td>Economy and Environment Program for Southeast Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFEO</td>
<td>École française d’Extrême-Orient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOI</td>
<td>export-oriented industrialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPG</td>
<td>Eminent Persons’ Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCAP</td>
<td>Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>UN Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI</td>
<td>foreign direct investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPDA</td>
<td>Five Power Defence Arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GATT</td>
<td>General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNP</td>
<td>gross national product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICK</td>
<td>International Conference on Kampuchea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IISS</td>
<td>International Institute for Strategic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMT-GT</td>
<td>Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISI</td>
<td>import-substituting industrialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>JIM</td>
<td>Jakarta Informal Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPNLF</td>
<td>Khmer People’s National Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEP</td>
<td>New Economic Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIC</td>
<td>newly industrializing country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organization of American States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>official development assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PECC</td>
<td>Pacific Economic Cooperation Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKI</td>
<td>Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRK</td>
<td>People’s Republic of Kampuchea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Preferential Trading Arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUPJI</td>
<td>Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Jama’ah Islamiyah (General Guidelines for the Jemaah Islamiyah Struggle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAC</td>
<td>Southeast Asia Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAMEO</td>
<td>Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEATO</td>
<td>Southeast Asian Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIJORI</td>
<td>Singapore-Johor-Riau growth triangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZOPFAN</td>
<td>Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total land area</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Population density</th>
<th>Gross domestic product(2/) at current prices</th>
<th>Gross domestic product per capita at current prices</th>
<th>Year of Independence</th>
<th>Year of joining ASEAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>km(^2)</td>
<td>thousand</td>
<td>persons per km(^2)</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>5,765</td>
<td>406.2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10,758.6</td>
<td>26,486.0</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>181,035</td>
<td>14,957.8</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>10,359.2</td>
<td>692.6</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>1,860,360</td>
<td>231,369.5</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>546,864.6</td>
<td>2,363.6</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1967</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>236,800</td>
<td>5,922.1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5,579.2</td>
<td>910.5</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>330,252</td>
<td>28,306.0</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>193,107.7</td>
<td>6,822.0</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1967</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>676,577</td>
<td>59,534.3</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>24,972.8</td>
<td>419.5</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Philippines</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>92,226.6</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>161,357.6</td>
<td>1,749.6</td>
<td>1898/1946</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>4,987.6</td>
<td>7,023</td>
<td>182,701.7</td>
<td>36,631.2</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>513,120</td>
<td>66,903.0</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>264,322.8</td>
<td>3,950.8</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>331,212</td>
<td>87,228.4</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>96,317.1</td>
<td>1,119.6</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** ASEAN Finance and Macro-economic Surveillance Unit Database, ASEAN Merchandise Trade Statistics Database, ASEAN Foreign Direct Investment Statistics Database (compiled/computed from data submission, publications and/or websites of ASEAN Member States' national statistics offices, central banks and relevant government agencies, and from international sources)

**Symbols used**
- n.a. not applicable/not available/not compiled
- Data in *italics* are the latest updated/revised figures from previous posting.
- \(p/\) preliminary

**Notes**
- \(^1/\) Refers to/based on mid-year total population based on country projections, 2009 is preliminary figures
- \(^2/\) 2009 annual figures for Lao PDR and Myanmar are taken from the IMF WEO Database April 2010.
- \(^3/\) Computed based on IMF WEO Database October 2009 estimates and the latest actual country data
- \(^4/\) 1898 (independence proclaimed from Spain); 1946 (independence recognized by the US)
1. Bagan

Bagan (formerly Pagan), Myanmar, was the cultural and political centre of one of the “imperial kingdoms” of Southeast Asia, from the eleventh century till the thirteenth century.

*Source:* Photo taken by the author.
2. Champa
The Po Nagar Tower in Nha Tranh, Vietnam. Champa was one of the early classical states of Southeast Asia, covering central and southern Vietnam, although its territorial extent and power varied considerably with time. Some argue that there was not a single Champa, but several domains with that name, consistent with the fluid territorial and political contours of the *mandala* concept.

*Source:* Photo taken by the author.

3. Borobudur
Built around ninth century AD by the Sailendra dynasty in central Java, the Borobudur is the largest Buddhist temple in the world.

*Source:* Photo taken by the author.
4. Angkor
The Bayon, built in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century by King Jayavarman VII, is a majestic symbol of the Angkoran mandala, one of the most extensive and powerful kingdoms of Southeast Asia, covering at its height the Mekong delta, modern Cambodia, and parts of central and northeastern Thailand.

*Source:* Photo taken by the author.

5. Srivijayan Temple, Chaiya, Thailand
Centred in Palembang, Sumatra, the Srivijayan empire at one point controlled commerce in the Malacca Straits and extended its jurisdiction over the Malayan peninsula and southern Thailand, including Chaiya and Nakhon Si Thammarat.

*Source:* Photo taken by the author.
6. Malacca
Porta de Santiago, the surviving gatehouse of A Famosa, a fortress built by the Portuguese shortly after their capture of the Malay Sultanate of Malacca in 1511. The fall of Malacca ushered in the era of European colonialism in Southeast Asia.

Source: Photo taken by the author.

7. Malacca
A sixteenth-century caravel (a small, highly manoeuvrable Portuguese sailing ship) fires a salute as it anchors off Malacca.

Source: Artwork by Hervey Garret Smith/National Geographic/Getty Images.
8. First Filipino Jose Rizal
The statue of the Philippine hero Jose Rizal, one of Asia's earliest and foremost nationalist leaders.

Source: Photo by Jack Birns/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images.
10. Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere
Leaders attending the Greater East Asia Conference in Tokyo, 5 November 1943. Left to right: Premier Ba Maw of Myanmar, President Chang Ching-hui of Manchukuo (Manchuria), Premier Wang Ching-wei of the Nanking government, Premier Tojo of Japan, Prince Wan Waithayakon of Thailand, President Jose Paciano Laurel of the Philippines and Premier Subhas Chandra Bose of the Free State of India. The Japanese victory over European colonial powers stoked nationalist sentiments in Southeast Asia, destroyed the Western “colonial partition” of Southeast Asia, gave various parts of Southeast Asia “a common ruler” for the first time, and implied a greater recognition of the distinctiveness of Southeast Asia.

Source: Courtesy of The Mainichi Newspapers Co., Japan.

9. The Fall of Singapore
World War II, 15 February 1942: some of the 120,000 British, Australian, Indian and Chinese forces captured by the Japanese forces, stand before their Japanese guards.

Source: Photo by Paul Popper/Popperfoto/Getty Images.
11. The Liberation of the Philippines
9 January 1945: General Douglas MacArthur (C) and General Richard Sutherland (L) & Col. Lloyd Lehrbas wading ashore during American landing at Lingayen Gulf.
Source: Photo by Carl Mydans/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images.

12. Japanese surrender
12 September 1945: Mountbatten’s wartime Southeast Asia Command (SEAC) helped popularize the idea of Southeast Asia as a region. Opposite is Japanese General Itagaki Seishiro signing the surrender document.
Source: Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, National Archives of Singapore.
13. Aung San of Myanmar

Aung San, leader of the Myanmar’s Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League (seen here arriving in London in January 1947 for talks with the British government on Myanmar’s future), had a regionalist imagination, calling for an “entente” of countries and regions neighbouring Myanmar, including Yunnan, and India’s Northeast region, and imagined an “Asiatic Federation”.

Source: Photo by George W. Hales/Getty Images.
14. Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, India, 23 March–2 April 1947
Organized by India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, this was the first post-World War II congress (albeit unofficial) of Asian nations. Worried about Indian and Chinese dominance, Southeast Asian delegates to this conference from Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaya “debated … a Southeast Asian Association … even dreamt of a ‘greater Southeast Asia, a federation’”.

Source: Photo by Volkmar K. Wentzel/National Geographic/Getty Images.
15. A Triumph of Indonesian Nationalism
Queen Juliana of the Netherlands at the ceremony of Transfer of Sovereignty of Indonesia, 27 December 1949 at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam. The cause of Indonesian independence was helped by the anti-colonial sentiments expressed at the Second Asian Relations Conference organized by Nehru in New Delhi in January 1949.

Source: Photo by Keystone/Getty Images.

16. French Defeat in Dien Bien Phu
Battle in Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam, May 1954. Vietminh troops taking prisoners away after their victory. The French defeat led the United States to be more interested in the creation of a regional defence pact to counter communism in Southeast Asia.

Source: Photo by Collection Jean-Claude Labbe/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images.
17. Birth of SEATO
U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (L) during the Manila conference (8 September 1954) where he signed the Treaty (Manila Treaty) establishing the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO). SEATO proved to be a divisive factor in Asian and Southeast Asian regionalism, with Myanmar and Indonesia (along with India and Ceylon), refusing the invitation to join the alliance, as Thailand, the Philippines and Pakistan had done.

*Source: Photo by Howard Sochurek/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images.*

A postcard showing the five official sponsors of the Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung Indonesia during 18–24 April 1955. They were collectively and formally known as the Conference of South-East Asian Prime Ministers, or the Colombo Powers, suggesting that the boundary between what was then “South-East Asia” and what later came to be known as “South Asia” was not clear.

*Source: Author’s own collection.*
Delegates at Bandung. Prominent is the newly anointed leader of Egypt, Gamel Abdel Nasser. At this stage, there were no concrete effort to develop a “Southeast Asian regionalism”, and Bandung did not create any permanent regional or cross-regional grouping of Asian and African nations, although it paved the way for the subsequent emergence of the global Non-Aligned Movement.
Source: Author’s own collection.

Premier U Nu (L) of Myanmar, Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Indonesian Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo conversing during the Bandung Conference. Nehru played a central role in early post-war Asian regionalist efforts, organizing two Asian Relations Conferences in New Delhi (in 1947 and 1949), and being a co-sponsor of the Bandung Conference. Nehru enjoyed close personal ties with several nationalist leaders in Southeast Asia, especially Myanmar and Indonesia. At that time India was seen as an inspirational, if not overbearing diplomatic actor in the region that would later develop a more distinctive identity as Southeast Asia.
Source: Photo by Howard Sochurek/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images.
1. Malaysian Merdeka (Independence)
From left to right: the Duke of Gloucester, the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong (the king of Malaya), an aide-de-camp and Tunku Abdul Rahman (1903–90), the first prime minister of Malaya, attend the Malayan Proclamation of Independence ceremony at Merdeka Stadium, Kuala Lumpur, 31 August 1957. The Tunku played a key role in the creation of Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in 1960, the first formal regional organization of Southeast Asian countries, comprising Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Although ASA did not last, it was a direct precursor to ASEAN.

Source: Photo by Central Press/Getty Images.
2. Ho Chi Minh: The Revolutionary Leader of Vietnam (1940 photo)
In 1945, Ho was keen to mobilize pan-Asian sentiments (even proposing a “Federation of Free Peoples of Southern Asia”) to further Vietnamese independence. But once he took to armed struggle to fight the French and then the United States, he focused on the strategic unity of Indochina as a single revolutionary battlefield that was viewed in the West as a formula for Vietnamese expansionism. Vietnam’s position thus became distinct from that of the “moderate” nationalists in Malaya, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia (under Soeharto). ASEAN was founded in 1967 but was denounced by Hanoi (until the late 1980s) as a front for Western imperialism.
Source: Photo by Keystone/Getty Images.

3. Insurgency, Malaya
British troops of the Special Air Service (SAS) in the Malayan jungle in search of communist rebels, 1953. A shared concern for regime survival against common internal threats such as the Communist Party of Malaya insurgents was a catalyst of ASEAN’s formation.
Source: Photo by Popperfoto/Getty Images.
4. Insurgency: Southern Philippines

Muslim rebels from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) gather on 27 January 2010 in the Southern Philippine town of Mamasapano in Maguindanao as peace talks are resumed in Malaysia. The Philippine government and the MILF had resumed peace talks to try to reach an agreement to end the decades-long conflict which has left over 120,000 people dead and as many displaced from their homes. The rebellion was rebranded as a terrorist movement after 9/11, posing a test for ASEAN counter-terrorism cooperation.

Source: Photo by Jeoffrey Maitem/Getty Images.
5. Sukarno to Soeharto

President Sukarno (R) of Indonesia walks with the Major General Soeharto (L) in Indonesia, 11 March 1966. Sukarno was asked by the Indonesia Army to give Soeharto supreme authority to restore order after the 30 September 1965 murders of six generals, which the Army blamed on the Indonesia Communist Party (PKI). In March 1976, the Indonesian Parliament (The People's General Assembly) stripped President Sukarno of all powers and appointed Soeharto as the Acting President. Sukarno was placed under house arrest until his death in June 1970. Compared to his predecessor, Soeharto proved to be a stronger advocate of Southeast Asian regional cooperation, including ASEAN.

Source: Photo by Beryl Bernay/Getty Images.
6. Thanat Khoman
Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman of Thailand, 1 January 1966. Khoman played a key role reconciling Indonesia and Malaysia after Sukarno’s Konfrontasi policy, a reconciliation that paved the way for ASEAN’s creation in 1967.
Source: Photo by Bill Ray/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images.

7. Adam Malik
Indonesian Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, returning to Djakarta after the Bangkok Conference on 1 January 1966. The Bangkok Conference ended the Indonesia-Malaysia conflict (Konfrontasi), and presaged ASEAN’s conflict mitigation role.
Source: Photo by Co Rentmeester/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images.
8. Signing of the ASEAN Declaration, Bangkok, 8 August 1967
From left: Narciso Ramos, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Adam Malik, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Thanat Khoman, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Tun Abdul Razak, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, and S. Rajaratnam, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore. The Declaration founded ASEAN.

Source: Courtesy of the ASEAN Secretariat.
9. ASEAN Heads of Government at the First ASEAN Summit, Bali, Indonesia, 23-24 February 1976
From left to right: Prime Minister Hussein Onn of Malaysia, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, President Soeharto of Indonesia, President Kukrit Pramoj of Thailand.
Source: Courtesy of the ASEAN Secretariat.
10. Vietnamese Invasion of Cambodia
Khmers Rouge prisoners after the fall of Phnom Penh to Vietnamese forces, Cambodia, 1 January 1979. Vietnam's full-scale invasion of Cambodia on 25 December 1978 toppled the murderous Khmer Rouge regime and started the Third Indochina War, which tested ASEAN's role in regional conflict management.

Source: Photo by Jean-Claude Labbe/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images.

11. Brunei Joins ASEAN
Soon after gaining its independence from Britain in January 1984, Brunei Darussalam was admitted into ASEAN as its sixth member.

Source: Courtesy of the ASEAN Secretariat.
Cambodian faction leaders including Hun Sen (second from left), Prince Norodom Sihanouk (fourth from left) and Khieu Samphan (extreme right), applaud after signing the peace treaty which ended the Cambodia conflict.

Source: Photo by Eric Feferberg/AFP/Getty Images.

13. Economic Development, Rubber
A young Tamil girl pulling sheets of crepe off a roll in a rubber factory in Malaya, circa 1955.

Source: Photo by Horace Bristol/Three Lions/Getty Images.
14. Economic Scene: Batik
Women make batik by hand in Surakarta, Java Island, Indonesia, 1955.

Source: Photo by J. Baylor Roberts/National Geographic/Getty Images.

15. Japan and Southeast Asian Industrialization
A worker prepares colour television sets on a production line at Japanese giant Sony Corp.’s Malaysian factory in Kajang, 2 October 2000. Investments by Japanese corporations created a transnational production structure that promoted the economic development and regional integration of Southeast Asia.

Source: Photo by Jimin Lai/AFP/Getty Images.
Raffles Quay, Singapore Harbour, circa 1955.

Source: Photo by Three Lions/Hulton Archive/Getty Images.

17. Singapore, 2012
Raffles Quay, Central Business District, Singapore, January 2012.

Source: Photo taken by the author.
18. **Malaysia, Industrialization**
Malaysia, Shah Alam, Proton car factory. Rapid economic growth in Southeast Asian countries involved a shift from resource-based economic development to manufacturing.

*Source:* Photo by Gary Cralle/Getty Images.

19. **Skyline of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

*Source:* Photo by Getty Images.
1. Vietnam Joins ASEAN

Brunei's ruler Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah (R) shakes hands with Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam at the 28th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, 29 July 1995. Vietnam officially became the seventh member of ASEAN, a diplomatic breakthrough given its hostility towards the grouping since its inception.

Source: Photo by Romeo Gacac/ AFP/ Getty Images.
2. Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)
First Informal Meeting of Ministers, Canberra, November 1989.
Source: Courtesy of the APEC Secretariat.
3. ASEAN Regional Forum
Source: Courtesy of the ASEAN Secretariat.
4. ASEAN Plus Three

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao (2nd L) asks Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri (2nd R) to lead down the stage while Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi (R) and South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun (L) look on after a group photo of ASEAN+3 meeting in Nusa Dua, Bali, 7 October 2003. ASEAN's policy is to engage the three East Asian countries, despite the risk of being caught in the rivalry between China and Japan.

Source: Photo by Roslan Rahman/ AFP/Getty Images.
5. East Asia Summit

U.S. President Barack Obama (2nd R) waves with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (L), Myanmar President Thein Sein (R) and Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah (2nd L) at the East Asia Summit in Nusa Dua on Indonesia's resort island of Bali on 19 November 2011. Obama sent Hillary Clinton to Myanmar in December, the first visit there by a US Secretary of State in fifty years, to encourage democratic reform. The U.S. entry into the EAS countered potential Chinese dominance of East Asian regionalism.

Source: Photo by Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images.
6. Ali Alatas
Indonesia’s longest serving foreign minister (1988–98) spanning Presidents Soeharto and Habibie. Alatas played a key part in the negotiations to end the Cambodia conflict leading to the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement, and in ASEAN’s post-Cold War development, during which time he represented the traditional ASEAN approach to regionalism, including the non-interference doctrine.

Source: Photo by Torsten Blackwood/Getty Images.

7. Surin Pitsuwan
As Thailand’s Foreign Minister in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997, Pitsuwan, a Muslim (seen here at an Islamic school, Pondok Pesantren, Pabelan near Yogyakarta, Indonesia), became known for his advocacy of “flexible engagement”, which called for reforming ASEAN’s non-interference doctrine to deal with human rights issues in Myanmar and transnational challenges facing the region. He went on to become ASEAN’s Secretary-General for a five-year term starting in 2008.

Source: Photo taken by the author.
8. The Fall of Soeharto
Indonesian President Soeharto signs an agreement in Jakarta, Indonesia on 15 January 1998 with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as its Director-General Michel Camdessus watches. The letter outlined major reforms and austerity measures linked to a massive bailout led by the IMF. A vivid symbol of the political consequences of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the image was widely seen as the ultimate humiliation of the Indonesian president who had provided ASEAN with leadership and direction while ruling with an iron fist over Southeast Asia's most populous nation for thirty-two years.
Source: Photo by Agus Lolong/AFP/Getty Images

9. Terrorist Attack in Bali
A view of the bomb blast site at Legian area on 16 October 2002 in Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia. The blast occurred in the popular tourist area of Kuta on 12 October, leaving 180 people dead and 132 injured. The attacks, known as Southeast Asia's 9/11, underscored the threat posed by transnational terrorism to the region. It led to counter-terrorism cooperation among the ASEAN countries, and between individual ASEAN countries and Western nations such as the United States and Australia.
Source: Photo by Edy Purnomo/Getty Images.
10. Haze: Singapore Out
Tourists take photos of the haze-shrouded Singapore skyline (compare with Photo 17, Section B) on 21 October 2010 as smoke from forest fires in nearby Sumatra caused serious pollution in Singapore and Malaysia. Singapore’s National Environment Agency said the air quality in the city-state reached “unhealthy” levels, advising people with heart or respiratory ailments to reduce physical exertion and outdoor activities until the pollution levels eased. The recurring haze problem led to unprecedented criticism of Indonesia from Singapore and Malaysia, thereby denting ASEAN’s non-interference doctrine.
Source: Photo by Aziz Hussin/AFP/Getty Images.

11. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)
A traveller wears a mask to protect against the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus as she checks her flight departure time at Changi International Airport on 30 April 2003 in Singapore. The SARS crisis prompted a united and ultimately successful response from Southeast Asian countries in cooperation with China and Western nations.
Source: Photo by Paula Bronstein/Getty Images.
12. Banda Aceh, Sumatra before the Indian Ocean tsunami, 26 December 2004

13. Banda Aceh, Sumatra after the tsunami
The tsunami prompted an outpouring of international aid and alerted Southeast Asia to the need for cooperation in disaster prevention management.

14. Making Mischief in the South China Sea?
This photo dated 20 March 1999 shows the newly built four-level Chinese fort at the Mischief Reef, an area claimed by the Philippines located in the disputed Spratly islands in the South China Sea. China, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam have claims in the Spratlys. China became more assertive in pursuing its claim a decade later, ending its “charm offensive” and stoking fear and mistrust among its Southeast Asian neighbours.

*Source:* Photo by Romeo Gacad/AFP/Getty Images.
15. Two Faces of the Asian Values Debate
Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (L) greets Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad (R) after the opening of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) general assembly in Kuala Lumpur, 5 September 1997. At the centre is Abdul Hamid Othman, Minister in the Prime Minister's department. The two leaders, which were to fall out dramatically in September 1998, when Anwar was arrested on charges of corruption and sodomy, also symbolized the divergent political views within Southeast Asia. Mahathir championed “Asian values” and cultural relativism in human rights, which many saw as a justification of his authoritarianism, while Anwar called for more liberal values in Asia and was among the first leaders to call for a more interventionist approach by ASEAN in promoting human rights and democracy in Southeast Asia.

Source: Photo by Francis Silvan/AFP/Getty Images.

16. The Strongmen of Myanmar
Military rulers Than Shwe (L), Maung Aye (C) and Khin Nyunt (R) stand with State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) members in this photo taken in Yangon, Myanmar on 21 February 1997. For over two decades, Myanmar provided the key test of human rights and democracy in Southeast Asia. ASEAN initially favoured “constructive engagement” and opposed sanctions against the regime, but gradually changed its stance in the 2000s to more diplomatic pressure and criticism after realizing that the old policy harmed its international standing.

Source: Photo by Emmanuel Dunand/AFP/Getty Images.
17. Hope for East Timor
Large crowds gather at Dili, East Timor on 25 August 1999 during the last day of campaigning for a referendum to decide the future of East Timor. The majority (78.5 per cent) of East Timorese chose independence, rather than autonomy within the Indonesian Republic. Brutal violence and massacres, carried out by pro-integration militias backed by the Indonesian armed forces, broke out soon after the voting, leading to intervention by an Australian-led force. Indonesia’s Southeast Asian neighbours initially did not participate in the operation due to a lack of capacity to intervene and out of deference to the principle of sovereignty and non-interference.

Source: Photo by Paula Bronstein/Getty Images.
Indonesian Muslim women queue to vote on 5 April 2004 in Jakarta, Indonesia in the country’s second parliamentary elections since the fall of the long-serving Soeharto in 1998. The government and civil society of the newly democratic Indonesia supported the cause of human rights and democracy in the region, including in Myanmar.

Source: Photo by Dimas Ardian/Getty Images.
19. Support Democracy in Myanmar
An Indonesian activist holds a painting of pro-democracy Aung San Suu Kyi during a protest in Jakarta on 28 July 2003. Scores of activists showed their support for Suu Kyi as Myanmar Foreign Minister Win Aung met Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri. Indonesian democratization saw support for Myanmar’s democratization from civil society groups, even as the governments of ASEAN countries were reluctant to pressure the regime.

Source: Photo by Inoong/AFP/Getty Images.
20. A Sense of Cultural Identity
Thai dancers perform a traditional dance during the opening ceremony of the 15th ASEAN Summit at the elite beach resort of Hua Hin, Thailand on 23 October 2009. Developing a regional identity through cultural exchanges and “peoples’ engagement” is a key purpose of ASEAN’s Socio-Cultural Community, which complements the ASEAN Economic Community and ASEAN Political-Security Community.

Source: Photo by Christophe Archambault/AFP/Getty Images.