

At issue may not be whether Thaksin is devoid of ideas, but whether his ideas bode well or ill for Thailand and to what ends and to whose benefit they serve. This book thickens the plot of Thai studies, its narrative fluid and lively. It should be required reading for anyone who wants to grasp what Thaksin is all about and where Thailand is headed under his watch.

THITINAN PONGSUDHIRAK
Department of International Relations
Faculty of Political Science
Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok, Thailand

***Regionalism and Multilateralism: Essays on Cooperative Security in the Asia-Pacific.* By Amitav Acharya. Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2003. Softcover: 391pp.**

The end of the Cold War had different effects on East Asia and Europe. This historic event led to the termination of the division of Europe along ideological lines and paved the way for the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the eastern part of the continent. It also resulted in the deepening of the European Union (EU) as the member states decided to change the regional grouping from a single market to an economic union. They also agreed to widen the EU's membership as virtually all European states west of Russia were invited to join the organization. The end of the Cold War transformed Europe from the realm of Mars to a domain of Venus largely because this event brought about a fundamental and systemic transformation of regional politics based on realism and the balance of terror to a new regime founded on the principles of liberalism and multilateralism.

This has not been the case in East Asia. The collapse of the Soviet Union removed the major strategic rationale that held the United States, Japan and China together in an informal entente. It also removed the lid over a number of local conflicts such as those in the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Strait. Consequently, the immediate post-1991 period was marked by the emergence of new apprehensions, and inter-state rivalries and tensions due to the uncertainty about the future positions, interests, and relations between China, Japan, the United States and India. The rapid growth of its economy and the removal of the Soviet conventional military threat from its northern border have enabled

Beijing to become a significant actor in the regional security equation. China now is not only an economic powerhouse but also a confident player in the regional politico-strategic game. It is considered by most states in the region as the newly emerging power with whom they must all have to reckon. And to most East Asian states, it is unclear whether China as great power will adopt a status quo or a revisionist foreign policy. There has also been concern that Japan is developing military capabilities to become a normal player or power in the regional security equation. Furthermore, the Taiwan Straits and the Korean peninsula have become major flashpoints in the regional security scenario. The persistence of lingering historical antagonisms, weakness of regional organizations, unstable relations among the great powers, and the possibility that some of the regional disputes are about to escalate into militarized conflicts — have all resulted in the widespread belief that Asia will become the most important zone of conflict in the 21st century. Indeed, the end of the Cold War seemed to have pushed the region deeper into Mars' fiefdom and has created the expectation that Europe's past could well be Asia's future.

Amitav Acharya's *Regionalism and Multilateralism* disputes these notions. Acharya argues that since the 1960s, but especially since the end of the Cold War, the region in general, and Southeast Asia in particular, has been conducting a significant experiment in multilateralism. He asserts that instead of a region plagued by balance of power politics and geo-strategic rivalry, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN) model of regionalism has become the model for regional security cooperation and thus, East Asian states (including the major powers) have been managing their relations on the basis of norms, identities and institutional mechanisms. The book is a collection of 14 well-written and highly theoretical essays identifying and examining the key features of East Asian regionalism. They address some of the significant issues related to Asian multilateralism, its dynamics as well as similarities and differences vis-à-vis its European counterpart, and its institutionalization in terms of its strength, limitations and future development. All the essays were written over a 10-year period from 1989 to 1999 — a period that was marked by the transition from the Cold War security system to the beginning of the post-Cold War regional order. This period also witnessed the birth, emergence and development of East Asian multilateralism.

The first chapter provides an introductory overview of the subject under study, while chapter 2 examines the different forms of regionalism in the Third World. Chapter 3 compares ASEAN's approach to regional security with that of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Chapter 4 attempts

to determine whether ASEAN is a security community or a defence community. Chapter 5 looks into the various forms of bilateral and trilateral military–security cooperation among the ASEAN member states. Chapter 6 appropriately analyses the two security environments (Cold War and post-Cold War) that have determined the character and content of ASEAN’s regional order. Chapter 7 points to a number of positive developments in the region that might lead to the formation of a regional security community and wrangles with the immediate post-Cold War belief that Southeast Asia will be a major flashpoint of violence and disorder. Chapter 8 scrutinizes the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a unique regional security institution in East Asia, while Chapter 9 discusses efforts by the ASEAN member states and the United States to foster a conditional engagement with East Asia’s biggest and most important regional actor in the post-Cold War era — China. Chapter 10 provides a theoretical discussion of the dilemma and interface between sovereignty, non-intervention, and regionalism in Southeast Asia. Chapter 11 argues that multilateralism in the region is a process-oriented phenomenon, rather than simply a result of systemic changes in the international system. Chapter 12 discusses a new and positive direction in Great Power relations that could either compete with or complement the existing process of East Asian multilateralism. In chapter 13, Acharya makes the relevant point that Asia-Pacific multilateralism is likely to be weak for the foreseeable future, thus necessitating some type of balancing and coordinating by the major powers in the Asia-Pacific (pp. 325–26). Finally, chapter 14 identifies the challenges facing Asian multilateralism and explores the capabilities of this institution in facing these challenges.

Each essay deals with a specific aspect of East Asian multilateralism and is either highly conceptual or theoretical. Together, these 14 essays are not easy to read let alone comprehend. While academics and graduate students will surely appreciate the book, this writer opines that policy-makers and analysts will not have the time and the patience to read or even appreciate the book’s massive data and profound insights. A conclusion containing a general summary of all the essays would have made the book easier to read and understand. Acharya’s work shows not only the author’s deep knowledge of Southeast Asian affairs and East Asian multilateralism; it also underscores his courage and conviction to be a voice in the wilderness. At a time when most academics, analysts, and policy-makers were predicting the region’s possible slide into a realist quagmire, Acharya dared to be different.

He argues that the Southeast Asian countries’ experiment with multilateralism is becoming an effective tool in addressing the intra-

state tensions, uncertainties, and anxieties that emerged during the immediate post-Cold War period. Acharya points out that despite the region's strong tendency to become a realm of Mars, multilateralism is expanding in Southeast Asia and is making some limited but substantive headway into the entire region (pp. 2–3). Finally, he observes and maintains that the Asian states are capable of developing their own form of multilateral institutions and processes that will enable them to localize universal principles of multilateralism via the “Asia-Pacific Way” (pp. 243–44). Such a development would validate the constructivist position that anarchy is what states make of it and that the realist logic simply does not hold water in all situations.

Recent events in East Asia, however, again point to the region's possible detour from the liberal path to the realist direction. China's rapid economic growth and arms modernization, its tense relations with Taiwan, Japan and the United States, the growing rivalry between Japan and China over the East China Sea, Japan's efforts to assume a greater security role in the region, and the emerging geo-economic competition between the United States and China in Southeast Asia foreshadow a back-to-the-future (realist) scenario for the region. It is still early to predict how these developments will alter the regional security landscape. Perhaps multilateralism will enable East Asian states to mitigate these adverse trends and to effect changes in regional politics without resort to war. If this will be the case, then Acharya's prognosis that multilateralism will ensure that “East Asia's future will not be Europe's past” is prescient.

RENATO CRUZ DE CASTRO
International Studies Department
De La Salle University
Manila, The Philippines

***Remapping East Asia: The Construction of a Region.* Edited by T.J. Pempel. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2005. Softcover: 315pp.**

This volume, in the words of the editor's excellent introduction, addresses an “overarching ambiguity [which] characterizes East Asia”. The region has more than a century of “... internal divisiveness, war, and conflict”, and “several nettlesome territorial disputes”. It is observed that the region is not as integrated as Western Europe, the