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# **CONTINENT, COAST, OCEAN**

Established in 1972, the **Institute of the Malay World and Civilization**, also known by its Malay acronym **ATMA**, of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), is the only full-fledged academic research institute in Malaysia that concentrates on the study of the “Malay World”, the vast maritime-riverine complex of Southeast Asian Studies. The research activities are conducted through an application of the three major academic orientations, namely, disciplinary (sociology, economics, history, etc.), thematic (development studies, communication studies, gender studies, etc.) and area studies (Malay studies, Chinese studies, European studies, etc.)

Research is the Institute’s core activity around which other activities are built and generated, organized around five major areas of interest related to the Malay World, namely, (i) theory construction, (ii) language, (iii) literature, (iv) culture, and (v) education. For each area, a senior scholar is designated as the lead scholar-cum-coordinator for all research and related-activities, including securing research funds. ATMA has since 1983 published its journal, *SARI*, which is now available online. In 1999, ATMA constructed a portal on Malay World Studies accessible at [www.malaycivilization.com](http://www.malaycivilization.com).

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# CONTINENT, COAST, OCEAN

Dynamics of Regionalism in Eastern Asia

EDITED BY

OOI KEE BENG  
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# FOREWORD

Shamsul A.B.

The Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, had since April 2000 been holding a series of international conferences involving more than 100 scholars from Southeast Asia and the rest of the world on the theme “The construction of knowledge about the Malay world by Others”. They amount to an effort to understand in a systematic manner the Malay world as an analytical abstraction, a body of knowledge, and, more importantly, as a region that had actually mattered greatly to the rest of the world for more than a thousand years. In other words, ATMA has been developing from its own perspective a notion of “regionalism” that is arguably quite different from those articulated by scholars in the fields of international politics and economics. ATMA’s notion of regionalism is informed by the broad sweep of socio-historical analysis introduced by *The Annales School* in France, with the late Fernand Braudel as its main contributor.

It must be mentioned that the terms “Others” used in the said ATMA conferences refers to mainly non-English speakers and writers. This angle has been chosen because scholars and researchers in the Malay world, especially in Malaysia, have traditionally been too dependent on English sources when they construct/reconstruct and write/rewrite our history and have had very little input from Indian, Chinese, Arab, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, Japanese, French, German, and Nordic sources. Therefore, the series of conferences provides us with a golden opportunity to learn at first hand what others, especially non-English speakers, outside the Malay world have to say about the region and its civilizations in the reports, records and writings of travellers, missionaries, sailors, merchants, scientists, scholars, administrators, and the like who visited or stayed in the Malay world.

The overall result has been an exhilarating one for ATMA, to say the least.

We held two conferences involving the Chinese contribution, with participants both from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the expansive global Chinese diaspora: first, on "Chinese scholarship and the Malay world", held in mid-September 2002 (published as *Chinese Studies of the Malay World*) and, second, on "Building on Our Past and Investing in Our Future: An International Seminar on Multidisciplinary Discourse" held on 16–17 February 2004.

This book is the product of the second conference, which was a pioneering attempt by ATMA to deal with matters beyond the field of Malay world studies but not unrelated to it. It was also a chance to bring together scholars not only from the field of Malay world studies but also international politics and economics to brainstorm on whether the notion of regionalism could be expanded beyond the current interests of political analysts and economic advisers.

I think this we managed to do very well. The chapters in this book are a record of our endeavour, and in the end, it is the reader who must decide on the level of success achieved.

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*Bangi, 10 January 2007*



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# INTRODUCTION

Ooi Kee Beng and Ding Choo Ming

## HISTORICAL CONDITIONS OF REGIONALISM IN EASTERN ASIA

Research on East and Southeast Asia generally follows the common practice of focusing on nation states. Where this proves unsatisfactory (and this happens increasingly often), scholars resort to frameworks such as regional studies or “area studies” as alternatives, or phrase issues that are relevant to geographic regions beyond national boundaries. Where East Asia is concerned, national borders have remained more useful as boundaries for academic disciplines than they have been where Southeast Asia is concerned.<sup>1</sup>

The geo-political “leftover” that is Southeast Asia consists of a political and cultural plethora beyond what one would expect, given its relatively small land surface. The predominantly maritime nature of human contacts in the region, especially in the south, is the main reason for this. Southeast Asian studies, therefore, is a regional discipline by nature, where the region’s national policies must necessarily consider inter-cultural dynamics throughout maritime Asia from India to Japan. In fact, “culture” as understood in Southeast Asia assumes inter-cultural dynamics and hybridity to a larger extent than in continental regions such as East Asia.

Historical traditions in East Asia, influenced as strongly as they were by the bureaucratic class, have generally been about domestic order and barbarian invasions. This prolonged prejudice has allowed the history and reality of inter-state trade and communication through the ages to be overshadowed by central perspectives. However, wide-ranging extra-political factors were always significant, and exerted an influence that cannot be denied. In the case of China, the centre of its culture and its economy had been moving steadily southwards throughout the centuries under pressure from northern peoples pushing across porous boundaries. The inter-cultural exchanges involved and

how they have in fact impacted on Chinese civilization and politics are not widely known. This southward movement was to an extent slowed in the fourteenth century by the usurping third monarch of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the Yongle Emperor (reign period 1403–24), when he moved the imperial capital, which had shown a tendency to shift eastwards and southwards since the Tang Dynasty (618–907), if not already during the Later Han (25–220), to his own power base in Beijing, one of the traditional capitals of non-Chinese dynasties in the north, including the Yuan Mongols. While the Yongle Emperor exercised extraordinary authority and curiosity throughout his realm and beyond — sending seven gigantic naval expeditions under Admiral Zheng He (1371–1435) to the southern seas all the way to eastern Africa — the emperors who came after him were more defensive and perhaps more realistic, and pursued policies that in contrast introverted the Ming. This move northward and inward did not, however, change the fact that the cultural and economic focus continued its historical movement southwards into richer, gentler and safer lands.

When the Manchus invaded the empire in 1644, Ming loyalists fled south, making the presence of Chinese culture all the more obvious in warmer climes. Taiwan was wrested in the process from the Dutch in 1661 by Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong, or Guoxingye, “the guardian of the royal surname”) and his followers, only to be lost to the unstoppable northerners. The Manchurian Qing Dynasty enthroned itself in Beijing, and seeing the need to exercise control through the orthodoxy of Song Confucianism, they turned expressly conservative in their worldview, re-orientating the empire northwards and territorially creating the largest version of the Chinese Empire ever known. Nevertheless, contacts between coastal China and lands across the South China Sea continued unabatedly, as borne out by the reports of eighteenth century Chinese traveller-scholars such as Cheng Xunwo, Wang Dahai and Chen Hongzhao.

Merchants as a rule were not in the habit of recording their secrets and their various activities for posterity. Nevertheless, the strong presence of East Asian emissary and trading vessels, and of Chinese colonies throughout Southeast Asia, is undisputed and boasts a long history, gaining mention in a large number of contemporary documents.<sup>2</sup> It is this huge maritime world stretching from Japan to Indonesia, with its pre-modern and modern history of lingual, cultural and genetic hybridity, and of trade, migration, colonialism, invasion, piracy, conquest and warfare, that form the backdrop for the subjects discussed in this present book.

The coming of the British and other Europeans brought a new military and economic reality to the Pacific Ocean, which the Manchu regime could

not deny in the long run. Beijing's loss of effective control, in quick succession, over Hong Kong, the treaty ports and coastline, and then northernmost Vietnam and Tibet, caught its strategists and policy-makers wrong-footed. A series of catastrophic revolts throughout the nineteenth century in large areas of southern and eastern China left most of the economy in ruins, and subjected the population to great suffering.

The entry of the Japanese into international colonialism through the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95 earned these once isolationistic neighbours control over Taiwan, Liuqiu (Ryukyu), Korea, Shandong Province, and then Manchuria itself by 1931.

As Japan declared war on China in 1937, and on the allied European powers in 1941, the military impetus for synthesizing the modern history of East and Southeast Asia switched from European to Japanese hands. Japan's merciless war against China, and its occupation of European colonies in the region left deep wounds whose scabs still easily peel off to renew bleeding at the slightest touch. These open sores pose a stubborn hindrance to warm relations between governments and peoples throughout the region.

The fall of Imperial Japan in 1945 started a staggered regaining of most of what had been Qing territory by the central Chinese government. Interestingly, the Chinese capital moved north again to Beijing after the communists took power in 1949, from the Kuomintang's peace-time capital of Nanjing, and its war-time capital of Chongqing. This marked a paradoxical return to the afore-mentioned pre-1840 continental orientation in ideology, despite the globalistic pretensions of Marxist thought. The Kuomintang government, in turn, moved out to sea, so to speak, and found refuge for itself and China's imperial treasures on the newly retrieved Japanese colony of Taiwan.

The destruction of Japanese colonial ambitions turned out to be the death knell of European colonialism as well. Jealously guarded colonial turfs turned into nation states all throughout East and Southeast Asia, some through peaceful means as in British Malaya, and others through decimating conflicts as in Vietnam. Of all the territories in East and Southeast Asia, only Thailand and inland China emerged from the colonial era without experiencing direct external control.

With the withdrawal of foreign troops from the region, excepting American troops at special bases, eastern Asia would have been free to quickly forge new patterns of international relations if it were not for the extremism of the Cold War that lasted for forty years. It was only with the crumbling of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the demise of the Soviet Union thereafter that the frozen international relations within eastern Asia could start to thaw.

Over the following sixteen years, improvements in economics and in political ties were staggering. Deng Xiaoping's reforms in China proved a great success in the creation of wealth within China, and in the warming of relations in the region as a whole. The rebuilding of old and troubled relationships was, however, strongly configured by the disparate agendas of the many new national regimes. Trading and security trends were moving inexorably towards regionalism, encouraging nation states to conflate national goals with regional growth.

In Southeast Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — founded on 8 August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand — increased in relevance as it expanded to include all the states west of India and south of China, presently excepting only the freshly formed East Timor. It promises to provide these countries with sufficient clout in the future in negotiations with the giants to the north and the west. Be it ASEAN+1 or ASEAN+1+1, ASEAN+3 or ASEAN+3+3 — the last of which is what the East Asian Summit held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005 amounted to — the regional strategic tendency is quite clear.

For diplomatic and other reasons, China, despite its rising strength, has allowed ASEAN to retain the initiative. Nevertheless, since it perceives its interests to be best served by the continuous improvement of trading ties with resource-rich neighbours in the region, it is difficult for it to hide its impatience.

China's growth has largely been in the coastal areas, and the importance of this for the further development of regional economic integration will be hard to under-estimate. However, just when global international relations never looked better — leading even to populist books being published about the end of ideological differences and thus of history itself — grievances that had long been denied airtime, political consideration and academic acknowledgement burst onto TV monitors with a vengeance on 11 September 2001, as hijacked passenger planes attacked New York and Washington. History was resurrected from the dead, as a virulent form of terrorism appeared on the scene. The attacks led to highly controversial responses from the United States, and the moral support it enjoyed after 9/11 was quickly dissipated as its military was sent in retaliation to invade poverty-stricken Muslim countries.

In eastern Asia, terrorism and Islamic extremism threw a spanner into the machinery of proud economies still recovering from the financial crisis of 1997–98. The Bali, the Jakarta J.W. Marriott Hotel and Jakarta Australian Embassy bombings followed, leaving governments dazed. Not only did these lead to calls for action against terrorist suspects, security cooperation between



nations was also encouraged, such as the agreement between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore to coordinate patrols along the Straits of Malacca. The need for mutual defence has further heightened awareness among politicians that regional issues are as important as domestic squabbles. Hatchets will have to be buried and extenuating circumstances in historical wars will have to be re-circulated for improving intra-regional relations.

The *tsunami* disaster that struck on 26 December 2004 left 300,000 individuals dead all along the Indian Ocean coastline. It was now even more evident to governments and world organizations that jealously guarded national borders could be a big hindrance in times of emergency.

Border tensions have been diminishing at some points but growing at others, as exemplified by the warming of relations between Malaysia and Singapore on the one hand, and the worsening of the situation in southern Thailand and in the Sulawesi Sea on the other. In East Asia, the question of Taiwan remains a stubborn problem, although some would contend that it is a diminishing, mistrust between China and Japan — perhaps also diminishing — continues despite strong economic ties, while North Korea's isolationism in Northeast Asia keeps its hold on the world's attention. The nuclear test that Pyongyang managed to carry out in October 2006 shook its closest neighbours and the United States. China is expected to be much more proactive in the near future in influencing North Korea's relationship with the rest of the world.

Conflicts from the past, whether from the colonial period, World War II or the Cold War, linger on in very clear and uncomfortable ways. This multi-faceted heritage poses challenges to regionalism in eastern Asia that are just as hard to meet, as national issues of inter-ethnic relations, good governance and economic development are.

Spurred by the awareness that the past must continuously be re-thought if present ills are to be resolved, an uncommon joint initiative was taken by Malaysia's Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Taiwan's Fu Guang University, to organize a forum for discussing new ways of healing old wounds, studying old conflicts and dissolving old contradictions. On 16–17 February 2004, "Building on Our Past and Investing in Our Future: An International Seminar on Multi-disciplinary Discourse" was held at UKM in Bangi, Selangor. The subjects were varied, as one would expect. In the end, eleven articles that held relevance to inter-regional relations were chosen to form this present volume. The organizers hope that the others will be printed in other contexts in the near future.

Regional denotations may present a problem to the casual reader, and it should be stated at the outset that while some authors use the terms “East Asia” and “Southeast Asia” to distinguish between two clearly separated regions of Asia, there is a current trend, to subsume Southeast Asia under “East Asia”. In other cases, this combined region is merely called “eastern Asia”. We judge it better to allow the individual authors to denote as they wish, since it is often obvious within their contexts what the terms actually mean. “Asia” is generally used to denote the landmass east of Europe, while Asia Pacific connotes the lands and coastlines east, west and south of the Pacific Ocean.

This book is divided into four separate sections. The first deals with the impact of Japanese modernization since the Meiji Restoration (1868–1912) on the European colonial enterprise throughout eastern Asia, the destruction of the Qing, and the subsequent struggles of China’s Republican period. Hsu Chieh-Lin takes us through the history of Japanese diplomacy during the modern era, showing us in the process that the Japanese Occupation of most of eastern Asia was not a determined course of events. Internal conflicts in Japan during the crucial period before the world wars were symptomatically expressed through different trends of diplomacy. After a string of tragedies were inflicted on the whole region by the adoption of a “Pan-Asian” diplomacy in Japan, a conciliatory and “multi-directional Shidehara diplomacy” managed to regain favour, and continues to inspire Japanese foreign relations to this day.

In Arujunan Narayanan’s chapter, the highly-charged issue of Japanese guilt is broached. To Chinese, Koreans and many Southeast Asians, the war against the Japanese still conjure memories of atrocities that seek redress. This ranks alongside Taiwanese independence, and North Korean isolationism as one of the major hurdles to harmonious relations in eastern Asia. Happily, time does heal. We are otherwise surely doomed. Given the speed at which the global economy demands adjustments at all levels of socio-economic and political life, considerations about present paths must depend less and less on memories. As Narayanan reminds us, “there is no permanent enemy or friend in international relations but only permanent interests”.

Undeniably, memories of Japanese atrocities will remain among the victims and their loved ones. Some may try to keep the memories alive as a heritage of history or for political advantage. However, time heals, and a new generation that did not experience the atrocities will not give as much importance to them as the generation that experienced them had done. For the young, moving ahead is more important than thinking about matters relating to a war that occurred many decades ago.

Furthermore, the economic influence that Japan exercises over the whole region, China notwithstanding, has helped to soften attitudes about past tragedies.

The second section of this book considers the vital relation between economics and regional integration. Through a close study of the Malaysian case, Tham Siew-Yean reviews issues raised in the aftermath of the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997–98. Different schools have debated how the crisis could have taken place at all. Was the East Asian development model a myth? Tham suggests that “the diversity of experience in the subject of government intervention makes the synthesizing of these experiences into a single East Asian model over-simplistic”. Two schools of thought are discernible, the first of which considers “structural imbalances and policy distortions” as the culprits, contending that despite having earlier aided the success of the East Asian economies, these nonetheless contributed in the end to their fall. Tham finds no support for this view. The second school fingers free capital flows and investor panic as the cause of the crisis. Tham concludes that the miracle did occur, that the tigers were no myth, and that growth has but been temporarily hampered.

However, the playing field is found to have changed after the smoke cleared. According to Tham, the Malaysian government, for example, would do well to concentrate on productivity-driven growth, attracting foreign investments, and reducing reliance on protective measures for chosen branches, such as the automobile industry. Above all, enhanced use of “functional interventions such as sound macro-economic management, prudent fiscal policies and investment in infrastructure and human capital” is very much needed.

In Chen Yu-Hsi’s analysis of the crisis, the lesson to be learned is that two factors continue to carry considerable impact on the region’s economies — the processes of globalization, and the rapid development of information technology. Given this insight, a new paradigm for studying economic processes in eastern Asia is required. What had been happening before the crisis was that a paradigm of “developmentalism”, encouraged by a modernist disdain for traditional values, had in effect been challenged by economic growth fashionably ascribed to Confucian or Asian values, and backed by state intervention. This dualism lost most of its relevance after the crisis, according to Chen, and what is needed now is the courage to construct a new paradigm based on the stunning growth and impact of information technologies.

The third section is provocatively entitled “Inter-regionalism and Regionalism” to draw attention to the fact that regions have flexible boundaries. National borders are porous in all sorts of ways — economic, political,

cultural or military. Furthermore, multilateralism always exists alongside bilateralism, and bilateralism very often transcends the borders of formal regional bodies. As mentioned earlier, border conflicts still exist throughout the region, and whether or not we brand them leftovers of colonialism or the Cold War, or creations of the nation-state ideology, they are in no hurry to disappear. Thus, regional and inter-regional relations must continue to involve the acquisition of arms and the securing of alliances. Interestingly, how weapons are acquired varies over time, and is a good indicator of changes in the security situation. This is what is studied in Sun Yi-ching's chapter. The cogency of the logic used in Sun's analysis regarding the ratio between arms sale and arms aid from the United States to an ally becomes more apparent the more it is understood.

Studies of regional integration cannot avoid a look at the case of Europe. Surely, the processes started immediately after World War II in Europe to break the karmic circle of wars has succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of its creators. Although one should exercise caution when comparing different countries, let alone continents, with one another, lessons can be learned from the experience of others. In analysing the European Union, Klaus C. Hsu finds that it has succeeded extremely well, having delivered "half a century of stability, peace and prosperity". Political and economic integration has advanced to such a level that Europe now has a single currency — presently excepting those of Britain, Denmark and Sweden — and its politics influences the daily life of people throughout the continent. However, the next major issue that may lead to deep contentions is the existent cultural diversity, now intensified by the many new and poorer members from Eastern Europe, as well as by immigration. "In fact, the economic and political progress of the 1970s made it painfully clear to EU member states that a lot has yet to be done in the field of culture."

The compulsion to compare the EU and ASEAN is further strengthened by the fact that the two have been holding official discussion forums at venues in both Europe and Southeast Asia for quite a number of years. While the EU has expanded to include countries from the former Soviet Union, ASEAN members have found it expedient to negotiate sometimes individually and sometimes as a single unit with its giant neighbours to the north and the west. Given ASEAN's extremely low level of integration, there is a tension between the need for ASEAN integration and bilateral relations fostered by individual member countries with non-member countries. There is in essence no consensus as to how tightly knit the organization is to become. Hsu notes that unlike the EU case, ASEAN forums continue to be hampered by "the

continuing importance attributed to the national interests of individual member states, an apparent inability to manage their internal environment, and the need to cope with structural alignments previously associated with bipolarity in international relations”.

In his contribution, Khoo Kay Kim reminds us that “Southeast Asia–East Asia relations are not thoroughly studied and thus tend to be understood mainly in economic terms”. This is worth keeping in mind. Undeniably, there is a general propensity to allow economic explanations to fill knowledge gaps, especially when complicated matters such as inter-cultural influences occurring outside the official purview are concerned. Given the fact that inter-state and inter-people contacts — cultural, academic, religious or philosophical — have or will quickly develop economic ramifications, or that economic activities will soon lead to cultural exchanges, and furthermore given that the speed of change forces stronger reliance on quantitative rather than qualitative information, inter-regional and intra-regional phenomena will continue to be depicted through statistics, tables and graphs.

Regionalism and East Asia–Southeast Asia relations cannot dismiss the central and historical role played by China and the Chinese. Ming support for the kingdom of Melaka in the fifteenth century was as important to the status and commercial designs of the latter as good relations with Beijing today is to the future of Southeast Asian nation states. No doubt, the reasons for this can be stated in economic terms. However, the long tradition of Chinese migration to, and trade with, the Southeast Asian region has left a Chinese imprint that extends beyond economics. All Southeast Asian nation states have Chinese communities whose impact on the cultural landscape has been considerable. This is regardless of the level of cultural assimilation these communities have experienced. The long history of Chinese commerce and settlement in Southeast Asia, along with the nature of maritime trade, has configured inter-ethnic relations and integrated ethnic groups in unique ways. Khoo contends that the plural society common to the region, popularly understood as a colonial device, was in fact a locally favoured solution:

The British were not the first to encourage Chinese migration to Malaya and although they brought in the Indians and Jaffnese to work in both the private and public sectors, they were not responsible for the numerous cultural and ethnic associations that multiplied during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. [...] It would be more accurate to say that Malaya’s plural society existed – and continues to exist — because the various ethnic groups desired it.

The last section consists of essays suggesting strategies for change in the emergent regional bodies. While decolonization is often studied as a process within nation states, it is nevertheless true that the end of colonialism profoundly altered the power and trade balance as well as the epistemic structure of the region. This present book and the subjects discussed within it are a function of that tumultuous change. Recently initiated projects at the Institute of the Malay World and Civilization (ATMA) offer exciting examples of the changing infrastructure for the construction of knowledge about eastern Asia. Shamsul A.B., the director of the institute, and one of the minds behind the conference for which these papers were produced, explains in his article the rationale behind the databases his institute has been creating, and also the series of conferences it has been organizing. He also takes issue with Khoo Kay Kim's understanding of a plural society, and suggests that a plurality-plural society continuum is a more valid and powerful device for studying and comparing societies in the region. Shamsul postulates that the social plurality of the pre-colonial period was indeed transformed into coercive and divisive networks of plural societies, a process that today shows itself in the fact that scholars of pre-colonial-Southeast Asia find it necessary to abandon methodologies that they otherwise use when studying the modern period. This occurs because the empirical material requires it:

Whether or not an orientalist approach is employed, one cannot avoid writing about that period within a plurality framework, and one cannot ignore the region's diversity and traditions. In other words, this social reality to a large extent configures analytical frameworks for the study of that period.

In recent years, ATMA had essentially changed its own academic discipline. From the traditional study of the "Malay *ethnie*", the conceptual nucleus has been switched to the more promising and extroverted "Malay World". Not only does this strategy dismiss nationalistic tendencies, it also gives due attention to the maritime nature of the region and the influence this has had on inter-cultural contacts of all kinds. Projects generated by this intended paradigmatic shift include a formidable series of international conferences about "The Construction of the Malay World by Others", where the comparison of knowledge construction in different scholarly traditions about one and the same region provides insights not only about the region as such but about the very workings of knowledge creation about the region. Another is the collection of databases about the Malay World that ATMA keeps freely available on the Internet <[www.malaycivilization.com](http://www.malaycivilization.com)>.

Just as security along the Silk Route was a major concern for all Chinese emperors, and just as the safety of commercial shipping wrinkled the brows of rulers throughout ancient Southeast Asia, safeguarding the regional infrastructure for commercial and other activities throughout eastern Asia is essential to the welfare of all the countries in the region. This is a Herculean task indeed. Regional growth is highly dependent on the reliability of regional transport and communication networks, and on a powerful regional “security architecture”. K.S. Nathan discusses in his chapter the challenges that must be faced by all eastern Asian regimes, both where traditional and non-traditional security issues are concerned. Terrorism is but one of many critical questions they have to deal with. “Piracy, illegal immigration, drugs, religious militancy and environmental pollution” are among some of the non-traditional threats given further currency by globalization, and by the multilateral push for stronger regionalism. Nevertheless, concerns about terrorism are strong, drawing relations with the United States into the picture and adding salience and significance to old tensions within and between nations.

The answer obviously lies in constructing shared perceptions of a world order in which cultural pluralism encourages multilateral approaches that emphasize not only the military component in combating global terror, but also the political, social, and economic and diplomatic strategies required to harmonize local, national, regional, and global identities.

The U.S.-led fight against terrorism, though recently initiated, has strongly influenced inter-cultural relations and perceptions throughout the region. Mohamad Abu Bakar considers the uncomfortable fact that “due to the lack of nuanced information about Islam, many non-Muslims have become uncomfortable with the Muslims in their midst”. Be that as it may, he states, the point must be accepted that “Islam is here to stay”. Strategies for the future must recognize this and in the process realize Islam’s “commitment to development” and its “art of improvisation”. He is optimistic that this is forthcoming. As he puts it,

Since Muslims and non-Muslims share certain common values, a convergence of cultures is not impossible. With or without the adoption of Western-style democracy and the operation of a market economy, moral principles governing human relations in Asia must remain in place. Respect for authority, the promotion of civil society, and the importance of the family, are some of the perennial concerns of all Asians.

Without a doubt, there is a long list of regional tensions that needs ironing out over the coming decades. Judging from the arguments and perspectives advanced in this book, solutions that rely on multilateral cooperation appear the way to go. It is hoped that the finer points of academic reasoning contained in this volume will not be ignored by politicians and administrators, but will instead influence their decisions for the better.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> See the anthology *Southeast Asian Studies: Pacific Perspectives*, edited by Anthony Reid, Arizona State University, USA, 2003.
- <sup>2</sup> See *Chinese Studies of the Malay World. A Comparative Approach*, edited by Ding Choo Ming and Ooi Kee Beng, Eastern Universities Press, Marshall Cavendish, Singapore, 2003, and Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450–1680, Volume Two: Expansion and Crisis*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988.