

# Bandung Revisited

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At the time when the American Independence Declaration has been signed, Thomas Paine murmured complainingly in the *Common Sense*, “Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia, and Africa, have long expelled her—Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart.”<sup>1</sup> Political freedom and democracy had been nurtured as well as trampled around the world but, as he hoped, the United States would be a place different from the others. Nevertheless, he would never have imagined at that time that almost 180 years later, a summit conference in Bandung, Indonesia, supposedly gathering all major countries in Asia and Africa, was destined to expel western influences and to build a region of their own, a region where their vision of freedom will not be trampled.

There also emerged an exhilarating myth in the 1955 Bandung Conference wherein China and India would lead all Asian countries to build a model area of developing countries. Unfortunately, the myth has been dissipated quickly in the 1960s. For India, it has come into a wrong turning internally and worsened relations with Pakistan who, ironically, was used to be one of Colombo Powers and a co-sponsor of Bandung Conference. For China, it reneged very soon the vows of non-interference which is one of the Ten Principles (*Dasa Sila*) of Bandung Declaration. More importantly, the war between China and India had disappointed all other countries who had expected to be lead by these two countries. As for Japan, it has been trapped in historical memories of imperialist actions and dared not to raise any new initiative for regional cooperation.

At the same time, Southeast Asia was encountering serious splintering with constant conflict within each country as well as among them such as, especially, Sukarno’s heinous *konfrontasi* against the newly established Malaya Union. While the first trial by Malaysia to establish an area organization—the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) has failed because the biggest member of Southeast Asia—Indonesia has not been included, its second trial of establishing Maphilindo (Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia) to unite all Malay nations has also been a failure because of Sukarno’s denial of the legitimacy of Federation of Malaysia y way of military actions.

This paper will be based on the progress of Asia-Pacific area cooperation as stimulated by the Bandung Conference and to explore who should be the most

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Paine, “Common Sense (Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs)” (<http://genius.com/Thomas-paine-common-sense-thoughts-on-the-present-state-of-american-affairs-annotated/>, accessed October 6, 2015).

appropriate leader(s) in the area. We will first expound on the emergence of the concept of “Asianness” and then discuss the rise and decline of nationalist regionalism and regionalism within “great power orbit”. We will then reveal the pivotal of success in autonomous cooperation of the Southeast Asian area while the rise of regional powers—Japan and China has brought more variables into area cooperation. Finally, we pinpoint some expectations with a little bit of disappointment.

#### The Emergence of Asianness

The Bandung Conference was nominally an assembly of Asian and African countries, but in reality was primarily a conference of Asian countries. At the same time, the non-alignment movement as initiated by Indonesia has de facto started from the conference, which was aimed to get rid of colonial domination and to raise the level of development by mutual cooperation among them. The conference has basically culminated in some declaration of principles, with no agreement on any solid implementing measures and with an obvious political purpose rather than negotiating regional economic cooperation. However, the concept of “Asianness” implicit in it should not be ignored. Especially when viewed from the tempting establishment of ASA in 1962, although it is nominally an association of Southeast Asian countries, all initiators regarded themselves as part of a larger Asian culture, politics and economy.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the establishment of Pacific Basin Economic Council (PBEC) in 1967), the Pacific Asia Forum on Trade and Development (PAFTAD) started from 1968, and subsequently the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) established in 1980 are all destined for a larger Asia as negotiating arena for cooperation.

The idea of Pacific Community has been transformed into the idea of Asia-Pacific (or Asia Pacific) primarily to involve ASEAN countries so as to assuage their fearing of being marginalized as well as to involve China in the near future. This development seemed, on one hand, to go back to preliminary purpose, particularly the one-sided wishes of Indonesia, of involving China into the group for discussing peaceful cooperation in larger Asia. However, on the other hand, it seemed to contradict the post-War plan of the United States. The U.S. was suspicious on China’s intensions in having forcefully interfered in the 1954 Geneva Accords concerning Indochina so that it expected Southeast Asia to replace China as main market and source of material supply for non-communist Japan which was prospering after the War. The U.S. expected Southeast Asia could play the role of dividing Japan from China and returning to pre-War bilateral economic relations so that China could be excluded

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Amitav Acharya, “Asia Is Not One,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, 69(4) (November 2010), pp. 1008-9.

from attempting to re-enter the area.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bandung Conference, there should be no doubt on the idea and fact that Southeast Asia is a specific area. Furthermore, from the point of view of today's world, this idea and fact is more meaningful than the idea of non-alignment or peaceful co-existence raised 60 years ago. At the same time, the "peaceful emergence" of China is also shaping international politics of Asia, which could be witnessed profoundly in the writings of James Lilley, former chairman of AIT and U.S. ambassador to China.<sup>4</sup> However, I wonder how many people in the area can realize that the present-day intimate interactions between China and ASEAN could, in fact, be traced back to the Bandung Conference. On the other hand, the recognized legacy of Bandung Conference is neither the consolidation between Asian and African countries (or even the non-alignment movement), nor the paranoid as expressed by John Dulles, former Secretary of State of the U.S., but rather the maneuvering of Southeast Asia and post-War United States. This is also why Barack Obama, in attending the 2014 APEC meeting in China, has said, "We are not finished yet. The Indispensable Nation must dominate everywhere. We departed when the Vietnamese humiliated us and drove us from the neighborhood. But we are back. We are pivoting."<sup>5</sup>

The Rise and Decline of Nationalist Regionalism and Regionalism within "Great Power Orbit"

As a matter of fact, viewed from the point of area cooperation, the U.S. has never left Asia, so that there is no such thing as "back". Just as William Henderson wrote in 1963, "... it is only in Southeast Asia where cooperative patterns have begun to develop and where there is an increasing pace of 'regional activity'."<sup>6</sup> The South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), originated from the U.S. Trumanism, has failed to recruit any Southeast Asian countries other than the Philippines and Thailand because of the non-aligning influence emanating from the Bandung Conference. And the appearance of Chinese representatives in the Conference (led by Chou En-lai) also had given a hard striking at U.S. planning for the region. U.S. involvement in the second Indochinese conflict (the Vietnam War) was meant to perpetuate its post-1949 Southeast Asia policy. But the contact between China and Southeast Asia in

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<sup>3</sup> Michael J. Montasanto, "Bandung 1955 and Washington's Southeast," in See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya (eds.), *Bandung Revisited: The Legacy of the 1955 Asian-African Conference for International Order* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), pp. 204-5.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, James Lilley, *China Hands: Nine Decades of Adventure, Espionage, and Diplomacy in Asia* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> John V. Walsh, "Obama's Pivot to Asia: Can China Contain America?" GlobalResearch, 16 November, 2014 (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/obamas-pivot-to-asia-can-china-contain-america/5414574>).

<sup>6</sup> William Henderson, ed., *Southeast Asia: Problems of United States Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1963), p. 92.

Bandung as well as the failure in SEATO's expansion had increasingly pushed the mind of the U.S. away from Southeast Asia.

If it is said that Bandung Conference has resulted in a setback in American planning for Southeast Asia, then it seems only in terms of political or security, but not economic, aspect. Although the Bandung Conference has been popularly regarded as an attempt to transcend the ideology of decolonization and explore the possibility of building new world order, there were, however, some achievement in economic (and energy) cooperation. Of course, the 1955 Bandung Conference, as well as the previous Asian Relations Conferences in 1947 and 1949 sponsored by India, occurred at the time when economic nationalism was in ascendancy. This is different from economic liberalism of the developed countries that emphasizes trade opening. The regionalisms developed in this period could be called regionalisms within "great power orbit".<sup>7</sup> This was represented first in the effort of the U.S., backed by the United Kingdom (UK), to create a regional collective defense organization. Established in 1954, the SEATO was geared to meet the perceived threat of subversion from the PRC. It also envisaged economic assistance to vulnerable countries.

Nevertheless, both of the above-mentioned regionalisms were not able to take root in Asia, which means that there was no effective regional organization. India and leaders of the Bandung Conference have legitimate rights to represent the region, but they all lack the ability to organize effective institutions. On the other hand, the great powers behind SEATO definitely possess capabilities, but they do not have legitimate rights to represent the region. Specifically, India, as leader of the Asian Relations Conferences, was able to provide substantive assistance to Indonesia's nationalist movement against the Netherlands, but decided not to provide any assistance to Ho Chi Minh, politics being part of the reason. Jawaharlal Nehru, prime minister at that time, clearly realized that Indian military involvement in many wars in Asia and other areas during British colonial period have irritated so many countries that it would not want to get involved into Indochina, making political situation more complicated. Therefore, it was very cautious on substantial assistance toward Asian nationalist movement. On the other hand, when India's territory had been divided after centuries of colonial rules and it was working hard to build economic foundations, there were actually not many usable resources.

A much more serious barrier to pan-Asia regionalism is the suspicion of smaller countries toward India and China. One statement by a Burmese participant returning

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<sup>7</sup> Amitav Acharya, "Foundations of Collective Action in Asia: Theory and Practice of Regional Cooperation," Chap. 2 in G. Capannelli and M. Kawai (eds.), *The Political Economy of Asian Regionalism* (Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute, 2014), p. 25.

from the 1947 Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi is revealing: "It was terrible to be ruled by a Western power, but it was even more so to be ruled by an Asian power."<sup>8</sup> At the Bandung Conference, Nehru's role in supporting China's communist government, along with the arrogant manner in which Nehru treated hosts Indonesia and other delegates, created a misgivings on the part of many other countries about Indian leadership. The economic outcome of the Bandung Conference included "an increased readiness to undertake development, by self-help and mutual aid, in the economic field."<sup>9</sup> There were calls for collective action to stabilize "prices of, and demand for, primary commodities," and for concerted action "to induce the shipping companies to adopt a more reasonable attitude", "for more raw materials to be processed before export", "for the encouragement of the establishment of national and regional banks and insurance companies," "for the exchange of information on matters relating to oil," and "for consultations between the Bandoeng countries before the international meetings."<sup>10</sup> These proposals, especially for exchange of information on oil prices, might have foreshadowed the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cartel, and the demand for collective bargaining to raise commodity prices, was something ASEAN would pursue later. Moreover, neither India nor the PRC were able to offer the kind of resources to start a regional economic arrangement comparable to the British Commonwealth sponsored Colombo Plan, and Japan, despite taking an active interest on economic issues at Bandung, was not in a political position to provide any leadership at this stage. On the other hand, except the U.S. failure in SEATO, the blueprint for a Southeast Asia Development Association (SEADA) by the Johnson administration from the mid-1960s had revealed the U.S. desire "to dramatize the seriousness of our long-term commitment to Asian development in forms which enlarge the role of Asian leadership and which strengthen Asian unity."<sup>11</sup> Overall, U.S. officials estimated that supporting such a regional grouping would require "a figure of US\$6.4 billion for a 10 year period would represent a 20% increase over present levels." If military aid was

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<sup>8</sup> William Henderson, "The Development of Regionalism in Southeast Asia," *International Organization*, 9(4), (November 1955), pp. 463-76.

<sup>9</sup> J. E. Cable, "Chancery Singapore, to South East Asia Department, Foreign Office, London," *Asian-African Conference*, 7 May 1955, D2231/345, FO 371/116984, TNA, PRO (Set 5); cited in Acharya, "Foundations of Collective Action in Asia," p. 25.

<sup>10</sup> A. G. Gilchrist, "Office of the Commissioner-General for the UK Singapore, to F. S. Tomlinson. Foreign Office, London," *The Economic Recommendations of the Bandung Conference*, 7 June 1955, D2231/370D, FO 371/116986, TNA, PRO; cited in Acharya, "Foundations of Collective Action in Asia," pp. 25-26.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Memorandum from the Counselor of the Department of State and Chairman of the Policy Planning Staff (Rostow) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)," Washington, March 30, 1965, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XXVII, Mainland Southeast Asia; Regional Affairs*, Document 56 (2000) (<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v27/d56>).

included, the figure would have been US\$ 8 billion over 10 years.<sup>12</sup>

#### The Forming of Autonomous Regional Cooperation in Southeast Asia

But the SEADA idea failed to take off, despite the U.S. willingness to commit substantial resources. Part of the reason had to do with the distraction and difficulties caused by the ongoing war in Vietnam, which proved enormously costly for the Johnson administration both in economic and domestic political terms, and made it difficult to mobilize support and resources. But there is little evidence that Southeast Asian countries endorsed the idea with any degree of enthusiasm. Instead, by this time, there had emerged indigenous interest and approaches to regionalism in Southeast Asia, represented by the ASA in 1960 and Maphilindo in 1963. Although both were short-lived, these tentative efforts were subsumed by the creation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967—a formal intergovernmental organization. ASEAN gave Indonesia the legitimacy, based on an implicit normative bargain whereby Indonesia (under the new regime of Suharto) undertook a policy of restraint (nonintervention and nonaggression) towards its smaller neighbors (such as Malaysia and Singapore), while its neighbors accepted Indonesia's legitimacy as a regional elder, if not leader per se. In effect, this put Indonesia into a "golden cage",<sup>13</sup> a normative formula that neither India in relation to South Asia nor the PRC in relation to Southeast Asia, was able to enjoy.

ASEAN reflected a shared concern with regime security against communist insurgencies in all its member states, as well as a rejection of outside influence and meddling in Southeast Asian affairs, a limited attempt to prevent Southeast Asia being dominated by outside powers and insulate it from the effects of the Cold War. As such, ASEAN repudiated the SEATO approach to hegemonic regionalism, and focused on conflict resolution among its members, as well as creating a regional space where great power intervention might be discouraged, if not entirely avoided. Economic cooperation was not seriously considered at the beginning, but the first tentative steps would be taken in the 1970s. Here, we have to talk about the role of Japan.

When ASEAN came into being in August 1967, Japan proposed to use the Ministerial Conference on Economic Development in Southeast Asia (MCEDSEA)—started in 1966—to discuss its relations with ASEAN countries. Economic cooperation in the 1950s and 1960s emphasized aid and assistance, this was consistent with Japan's

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Memorandum from the Counselor of the Department of State and Chairman of the Policy Planning Staff (Rostow) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)."

<sup>13</sup> "Golden cage" is a metaphor to describe Indonesia's predicament in being recognized as the de facto leader of ASEAN in exchange for not accepting a commitment to exercise restraint toward its smaller neighbors and not to threaten or coerce them.

interests, especially those related to development of economic construction. But to assuage the tensions between ASEAN and Indochina, Japan also needed to provide aid to Indochinese countries to sustain good bilateral relations.<sup>14</sup> There appeared a new regional organization—Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), which suggested that the area’s mid-powers—Japan and Australia should play more active roles in promoting regionalism. But it never took off, thanks to lukewarm response from the ASEAN members, some of which, like Indonesia, saw ASPAC (in which Australia and Japan were active members) as a Western enterprise geared to their Cold War agenda. Excessive Australian zeal and Japan’s disproportionate economic power within ASPAC were two important reasons that might produce the “collapse” of the grouping. The atmosphere surrounding ASPAC was “unreal” due to the presence of these two countries which, though professing Asian sympathies and loyalties, are in fact much more closer to the U.S. or to Western Europe in their way of looking at the area’s problems.<sup>15</sup> It is noteworthy that while ASPAC (1966) and ASEAN (1967) were set up within a year of each other, they reflected very different normative settings, and ASEAN was to outlive ASPAC that folded in 1975. Japan’s subsequent emphasis on network-style regionalism might have been the result of its realization that an intergovernmental regional organization led by Japan would not be acceptable to most Asians.

A more promising development with a longer-lasting impact during this period was the emergence of the Pacific Community idea. This coincided with Japan’s reemergence as an economic powerhouse. Much of it was the result of proposals by individual leaders (Japanese prime ministers) and scholars (such as Kiyoshi Kojima) in the 1960s and 1970s. In the beginning these proposals were confined to the advanced industrial countries of the Pacific—Japan, Australia, the U.S., and Canada—but concern about legitimacy and viability saw the gradual extension to include the ASEAN countries, which came to feature more centrally in these frameworks. These Pacific Community movement progressed almost exclusively without formal institution building, through discussions and elaborations within epistemic communities—such as the PECC—and other Track-II fora.<sup>16</sup> They attracted a great deal of academic debate over the merits of open and consultative regionalism, versus closed and integrative type, before settling decisively in favor the former. As economic linkages in Asia and the Pacific grew, there was growing momentum

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<sup>14</sup> Narongchai Akrasanee and Apichart Prasert, “The Evolution of ASEAN-Japan Economic Cooperation,” in Japan Center for International Exchange, ed., *ASEAN-Japan Cooperation: A Foundation for East Asian Community* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2003), p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> British Embassy in Jakarta to Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, *A.S.E.A.N. Membership and A.S.E.A.N. A.S.P.A.C. Relations*, 26 August 1968, FCO 15/23, TNA; cited in Acharya, “Foundations of Collective Action in Asia,” p. 29.

<sup>16</sup> Nonofficial meetings in which government officials may participate in their private capacity.

toward the establishment of a formal regional organization which occurred with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in 1989.

#### The Rise of Regional Powers—Japan and China

Japan's role in Asian regionalism at this stage came to the fore and deserves special notice. Although initially uninterested in ASEAN (it focused more on ASPAC and MCSDSEA) Japan came to value ASEAN as a vehicle initially for regional stability and subsequently for its economic objectives. Not only were ASEAN members a source of raw materials for Japan's industrialization, but also a market for Japanese products and more importantly, as a final link in the Japan-centered regional production network, that rapidly emerged following the 1985 revaluation of the yen. Initially, Japan's economic role in support of ASEAN took the form of official development assistance. Between 1975 and 1987, 65% of Japan's foreign aid went to Asia, with ASEAN's share ranging from 32 to 44.7%.<sup>17</sup> Later, Japan's economic role in support of ASEAN also involved massive foreign direct investment (FDI). As capital-rich Japanese companies headed southwards in the post Plaza Accord period, Japan's FDI in ASEAN from 1988 to 1993 amounted to US\$22 billion (The Plaza Accord of 1985 resulted in an upward valuation of the yen). According to some estimates, from 1990 to 2000, Japan had invested 20% of all net foreign direct investment in Southeast Asia, a figure that was as much as US\$ 52 billion from 1990 to 1998.<sup>18</sup>

The foregoing discussion shows that neither the U.S. nor Japan, despite their strong support for regional collective action in Asia (U.S. in the military and economic arena, Japan mainly in the economic arena), could create and shape a regional institution on their own. Asian regionalism went through some major changes in the post-Cold War period. ASEAN at its first post-Cold War summit in Singapore adopted a new vision and direction, which would mean increasing security cooperation, an ASEAN Free Trade Area, and greater participation in Asia-Pacific multilateral security cooperation. The Asian financial crisis of 1997-1998 was a turning point in Asian regionalism. In response to the crisis, and criticism of the failure of existing Asian regional institutions, including APEC, ARF, and ASEAN to come up with an effective response, pressures grew for redefining the ASEAN way, diluting the principle of non-interference, engaging in new forms of cooperation that had been neglected or avoided in the past (including financial cooperation). As a result, this idea of an East Asian community drew support, as broader Asia Pacific regroupings such as APEC and ARF looked ineffectual. The ASEAN+3 mechanism and eventually the East Asia Summit (EAS) were the outcome of this process of regional redefinition, carried out ostensibly because an East Asia identity seemed more natural and attainable than an

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<sup>17</sup> Narongchai and Apichart, "The Evolution of ASEAN-Japan Economic Cooperation."

<sup>18</sup> Narongchai and Apichart, "The Evolution of ASEAN-Japan Economic Cooperation."



Asia-Pacific identity.

What about the leadership role China, who was highly expected by some in the Bandung Conference, should play? By the late 1990s, the PRC's spectacular rise has created the possibility of Beijing assuming a leadership role in regional institutions, although few expected it to supplant Japan. During the Asian financial crisis, several Japan's crisis-induced proposals (such as the New Miyazawa Initiative) fell through (some due to U.S. pressure), the PRC could be seen as an alternative to Japanese and ASEAN leadership of Asian regionalism. But the PRC was not acceptable as a leader of pan-Asian regional institutions (the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a smaller subregional body, is different), as subsequent events have shown.

The PRC's desire to keep the membership of the East Asia Summit to the ASEAN+3 countries has been frustrated with the inclusion—at the insistence of ASEAN members such as Indonesia and Singapore—first of Australia, New Zealand, and India when the EAS first convened in 2005, and with the admission of the U.S. and the Russian Federation in 2010. In the end East Asia would itself be given a functional as opposed to geographic meaning, as the rise of the PRC created concerns of a PRC takeover of strictly East Asian regional groupings. What is clear is that while Asian regionalism would be meaningless without participation from the PRC, they would not be politically acceptable with PRC dominance. While the participation of these countries gives the EAS more weight in dealing with regional security issues—the presumed focus of EAS—the dream of an East Asian Community, mimicking the European Union (EU), once proposed by Japan as a counter to the idea of a more comprehensive Asia Pacific Community proposed by Australia in 2008 has been displaced. The failure of the Japanese and Australian initiatives also underscores the problems of legitimacy that Japan and Australia face, in regional institution building.

#### Concluding Remarks

We want to add a somewhat frustrating remark. Recently when bilateral trade agreement negotiations are in the upward trend and APEC seems increasingly fade away, the model of Pacific multilateral trade agreement it has actively promoted is now replaced by the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as strongly backed up by the United States. Sixty years after the Bandung Conference, a very important problem needed to be solved in today's Asian regionalism is that of leadership. While the area has experienced quite a few crises and is witnessing rising turmoil in South China Sea, Asian regional institutions driven by ASEAN, such as ARF and EAS, are facing increasingly more suspicions. Nevertheless, it seems that the idea of ASEAN centrality will unshakably be sustained in the near future as other countries, including the U.S., are all willing to abide by it.