

The Political Changes of Indonesia (1965–1966) as Reported by *The Manila Times*: Its Impact on Southeast Asia as a Region

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This paper looks at how a defining moment in Indonesian history—30 September Incident (1965) and the 11 March Supersemar (1966)—were reported in the Philippines, what it means for Filipino politicians then, and how these events affected, and were caught up in Cold War geopolitics, anti-US sentiment, questions of regional integration and cooperation before ASEAN, territorial disputes, and the travails of the newly or recently independent states of Southeast Asia, such as Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. It offers a short but unique and crucial period in the relationships among Southeast Asian nations.

Keywords: September 30 Incident, Manila Times, Indonesia-Philippines relations

Introduction

On 2 October 1965, *The Manila Times* (MT hereafter)—one of the leading newspapers in the Philippines—first reported on the incident that had occurred in Indonesia from midnight of 30 September to daybreak of the following day. Its front page headline, “ANTI-SUKARNO COUP FAILS!,” was followed by daily reports on related topics for the next three weeks.

On 11 March 1966 the following year, power was transferred from Sukarno (1901–1970; 1945–1967 in office) to Suharto (1921–2008; 1968–1998 in office), which was called the *Supersemar* (Letter of Transfer of Authority) in Indonesia or the March 11 Coup d’Etat. *The Manila Times* featured daily reports on the front page for a month before and after the *Supersemar*. The very first report on the *Supersemar* read, “Sukarno had turned over full political powers to Suharto.” This was accompanied by a photo of Sukarno and Suharto standing side by side (MT, 13 March 1966, 1).

This paper focuses on how the 30 September Incident and the 11 March *Supersemar* were reported in the Philippines and how these events affected Southeast Asia. These aspects have not previously been explored. By analyzing them from the Philippine perspective, we may be able to reflect upon their effect not only on the Philippines but also on Southeast Asia.

The Manila Times used in this study first saw its publication on 11 October 1898, two months earlier than the conclusion of the Paris Treaty (10 December 1898), which ceded the Philippine Islands to the United States. The paper initially used Spanish and Filipino languages; however, as the number of American residents and the Filipinos who received English education increased, the paper eventually used English. It had been staffed initially by Americans, but some Filipinos were employed after 1918. Even after the Asia-Pacific War, it continued publication until the declaration of martial law by President Ferdinand E. Marcos (1917–1989; 1965–1986 in office) in 1972. *The Manila Times* had been one of the most well-read dailies in the Philippines.¹

***The Manila Times* Reports on The 30 September Incident (From October 1965 to December 1965)**

As mentioned, above, the very first report on the 30 September Incident came out on 2 October. Below the report, another headline—in even bigger letters—read, “TAAL QUIET; AID WORK ON.” In the early morning of 28 September, a volcanic mountain in Batangas province, south of Manila, erupted and forced the residents to evacuate. The mountain was in the middle of the Taal Lake and had been erupting often since 1572, producing many casualties. In Philippine history, this particular eruption was treated as a symbol of the social upheavals that took place in the 1960s.²

Around this time, the Philippines was about to hold a general election on 9 November. The election occurred every four years to select the president, vice president, half of the senators (8), and the representatives (104). The presidential election had been fought fiercely between the incumbent Diosdado P. Macapagal (1910–1997; 1961–1965 in office) of the Liberal Party and Ferdinand E. Marcos of the Nationalist Party. Therefore, the Macapagal administration hardly had any time to pay attention to the power change occurring in neighboring Indonesia.

The very first report on the Indonesian coup d’etat—dispatched by the Associated Press (AP)—was from Kuala Lumpur dated 1 October. The AP’s news came from Radio Malaysia. The subheadings read, “Leaders arrested,” “Fighting,” and “Mopping up.” The AP is one of the two biggest news agencies in the United States, along with the United Press International (UPI).³ The UPI absorbed the International News Service (INS) in 1958. The AP’s article sent from Tokyo dated 1 October had the following subheadings: “Sudden action,” “Generals arrested,” “CIA role,” “Unung [Untung] is head,” “Indonesian background,” “Neo-colonialism,” “Communist party,” and “Military chiefs.” Behind these subheadings were the following facts: In August of the previous year, Sukarno announced that Indonesia was joining “Communist China, North Vietnam, Cambodia, and North Korea in building an ‘anti-imperialist axis.’” Sukarno also claimed that Malaysia was a creation of British neocolonialism.

The news from *The Manila Times* that followed was based on information provided by the AP and the UPI in Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, and Jakarta, obtained by Radio Jakarta, etc. The AP interviewed Mrs. Kasuya Yoshio, who returned to Bangkok after vacationing in Jakarta. Her husband was the Japanese Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Thailand. It also interviewed Mrs. Hans Ulrich von Schweinitz, the wife of the German Ambassador. The AP tried to find out from Mrs. Kasuya the whereabouts of Dewi Sukarno (Nemoto Naoko 1940), the third wife of Sukarno who was Japanese (*MT* 3 October 1965, 10-A). *The Manila Times* also interviewed those who visited Manila from Indonesia. One of them was a Jesuit priest, Fr. Jose Blanco, who had been living in Indonesia for six years and who came to Manila to attend a religious conference. He reported on the movements and safety of military generals targeted by the coup d'état (*MT* 4 October 1965, 11-A). The well-known journalist, Maximo V. Soliven,⁴ lamented that the information on Indonesia could not be obtained directly and said in his column, "POOREST INFORMED" (*MT* 9 October 1965, 5-A).

The Philippine government officially expressed its opinion on 8 October when the photo of Sukarno was printed on the first page. It was his first appearance at an official function since the incident. The Indonesian Embassy in Manila announced the following telegram message sent from President Macapagal to Sukarno on 7 October, "I am happy to know that you are all right. Assuring you of my concern and my good wishes for your continued leadership of a United Indonesia bound in warm fraternal ties with [the] Philippines. Your friend Dadong" (*MT* 8 October 1965, 2-A). It is hard to speculate about the real attitude of the Philippines from this message. The Indonesian side thought that the Philippines was trying to keep a distance from Sukarno. The *Antara*, an official Indonesian news agency, announced that "the Philippine department of foreign affairs had "hailed" the reported banning in Indonesia of the Partai Kommunis [Communist Party] Indonesia (PKI) as a triumph of good over evil" (*MT* 25 October 1965, 5-A).

In the Philippines, the rise of communist influence and the anti-US movement of students resulting from opposition to the Vietnam War were the two most important factors in relation to Indonesia's upheaval.⁵ *The Manila Times* reported on 9 October that thousands of Muslim youth set fire to the Communist Party headquarters in Jakarta and that the demonstrators shouted "long live America," when they passed in front of the American Embassy. It was a totally unusual scene; previously, the anti-US demonstrations led by the Communist Party of Indonesia were widespread (*MT* 9 October 1965, 1, 9-A). The Philippines had been reporting that the Communist Party of Indonesia had a membership of three million. Considering the population of the Philippines was 27 million (based on a 1960 census), this number was threatening to the Philippines; it seemed that Indonesia was fast becoming a communist country. At the same time, perhaps because of this, some Filipino policy makers opined that the Philippines should continue a dialogue with Indonesia. The CIA involvement in the incident had been reported early on, which made the Philippines more cautious (*MT* 15 October 1965, 5-A).

The death toll in each country was used to compare the political situation in the Philippines and Indonesia. On the front page, the "Djakarta Daily Mail" reported the number of deaths during the election campaign, "Pre-Election Death Toll in the Philippines." Then a foreign correspondent wrote, "It is 'safer' in Indonesia than in the Philippines" (*MT* 27 October 1965, 5-A).

There was no direct communication between the Philippines and Indonesia at that time. On 17 October, however, the Indonesian government allowed installing a telex machine in the Philippine Embassy in Jakarta (*MT* 19 October 1965, 9-A). The first field report from Indonesia by a Filipino journalist—Max Soliven—appeared as a four-day series of articles under the heading, "Inside Story in Indonesia." The headlines included "Sukarno still popular," "Nasution escapes arrest," "Bung plans trip? Not surprising," and "Who will succeed Sukarno?" (*MT* 30 October – 2 November 1965). Sukarno was called "Bung Karno."

As far as the 30 September Incident was concerned, there was hardly any report in the Philippines that was based on Filipinos' own investigation. This contrasts with the Japanese newspaper companies that had obtained their own information sources. The Philippine government was totally dysfunctional because of the presidential election of 9 November. The government focused on internal domestic affairs, especially on economic problems which would be hotly debated in the election campaign. Their interest in diplomatic affairs was almost nil.

Marcos was elected President and announced a policy manifesto on 11 November, "First of all, I would give great importance to economic and cultural aspects of the SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization); therefore, I agree with the principles of the Asian Development Bank and Asian cooperative market and strive for active participation in them."⁶ He showed a forward-looking attitude toward regional cooperation. However, he prioritized diplomatic relations with the United States and gave less importance to neighboring countries until his inauguration on 30 December. The SEATO (dissolved in 1977) was an anti-communist military alliance organized under the leadership of the United States. The member countries were the Philippines, Thailand, the United States, England, France, Australia, New Zealand, and Pakistan.

The *Manila Times* Reports on the 11 March *Supersemar* (January 1966 to April 1966)

Three months after the 30 September Incident, Indonesia seemed to have returned to normalcy, and Marcos assumed presidency of the Philippines on 30 December 1965. Diplomatic relations of between the two countries seemed to have no change, with Sukarno still seemingly having a strong influence. According to *The Manila Times*, Sukarno broadcast through Radio Jakarta, "Jakarta-Phnom Penh-Hanoi-Peking-Pyongyang axis will continue as ever before" and he emphasized, "Indonesia will at the same time maintain her 'very close friendship' with the

Philippines, Japan and Pakistan” (*MT* 2 January 1965, 3-A). On the same day, *The Manila Times* reported a response from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Subandrio. He said in an interview, “President Ferdinand Marcos will preserve neighborly relations with Indonesia” (*MT* 2 January 1966, 14-A).

In the midst of the rumor of Sukarno’s declining and the CIA (US Central Intelligence Agency) involvement in the incidents, Gen. Abdul Haris Nasution, Defense Minister and Chief of Staff of Indonesia’s Armed Forces, was reported to have said the following, “we have not become lenient towards Necolim (the local abbreviation of neocolonialism, colonialism, and imperialism)” and the “dissolution of Malaysia, the elimination of foreign domination and military bases, particularly in Southeast Asia, are Indonesia’s aims that cannot be bargained” (*MT* 3 January 1966, 3-A). Sukarno ordered Subandrio to expel all the American correspondents from Indonesia (*MT* 12 January 1966, 3-A). Accordingly, the AP and the UPI closed their offices on 19 January (*MT* 20 January 1966, 3-A). The expelled UPI correspondent, R. E. Standard, contributed articles to *The Manila Times*, “Coup’s Aftermath,” in three installments (*MT* 29 January, 5-A; 31 January, 5-A; 2 February 1966, 3-A).

In Indonesia, students were shifting their target of protest from communist ideology to recent government measures that had led to the further skyrocketing costs of essential commodities (*MT* 12 January 1966, 3-A). The following day, the newspaper reported the various slogans carried by the students, “To hell with incompetent ministers,” “Don’t just make empty speeches. No more empty theorizing,” “The people demand lower prices. We are hungry. We can’t study because we are hungry,” “Hey, ministers don’t strangle the people. Don’t just go out dancing,” and “Long live the armed forces. The armed forces is behind the people” (*MT* 13 January 1966, 3-A).

The Manila Times published an exclusive article on 21 January 1966 by Teodoro F. Valencia (Ka Doroy) based on a fifty-minute interview with Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman (1903–1990; 1957–

1970 in office). Valencia was to be known as a pro-Marcos journalist during the president's administration. In this interview, Rhaman showed a strong desire to restore the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA). The ASA was established on 31 July 1961 by three countries, the Federation of Malaya, the Philippines, and Thailand. It was the first regional organization to promote cultural and technical cooperation among Southeast Asian countries. In June of the following year, President Macapagal officially insisted on the dominion of Sabah State, which caused the ASA's activities to come to a standstill.⁷ Rhaman tried to revive the association by solving the Sabah dominion issue. In May 1963, Sukarno and Rhaman reached an agreement to establish another association for regional cooperation, the Maphilindo (the Great Malaysian Federation), which consisted Malaya, the Philippines, and Indonesia and was originally proposed by President Macapagal. However, Rhaman said that this plan would not succeed as long as Sukarno was in power. He claimed that Sukarno treated him and Macapagal rather "shabbily" at the meeting held in Tokyo at the end of May 1963, and he felt insulted. Rhaman also said in the interview that he had no room to dispatch soldiers to Vietnam because he had to deal with the conflict with Indonesia first (*MT* 21 January, 1, 20-A; 22 January 1966, 4-A).

Sukarno said if the Philippines had recognized Malaysia, it would have been a "betrayal" of the concept of the Maphilindo and warned Foreign Minister Subandrio regarding this matter (*MT* 10 February, 5-A; 13 February 1966, 7-A). Indonesia and the Philippines had broken diplomatic relations with Malaysia since its establishment in 1963 because they considered the country the product of British neocolonialism.⁸ In the Philippines, the North Borneo National Volunteers League, which insisted on the dominion of northern Borneo, was planning a demonstration march to Malacañang Palace, the official presidential residence (*MT* 4 February 1966, 20-A).

The governments of Indonesia and the Philippines commenced a dialogue regarding the Association of Southeast Asia. Indonesia dispatched

Madame Supeni, deputy Foreign Minister, to Manila on 14 February. She stayed until 18 February and left for Cambodia via Hong Kong (*MT* 14 February, 1; 18 February 1966, 6-A, 15-A). At the same time, President Marcos sent Ambassador Modesto Farolan to Indonesia on a special mission at the end of February (*MT* 28 February, 1, 12-A; 1 March 1966, 1, 5-A). Afterwards, Farolan met with Prime Minister Rhaman in Kuala Lumpur on 2 March and flew to Bangkok to attend the meeting to revive the ASA (*MT* 2 March 1966, 1). Farolan announced that his special mission to Malaysia was successful, and that President Marcos had proposed to hold a summit meeting in Manila in order to establish the Maphilindo (*MT* 5 March, 1, 2-A; 7 March 1966, 1, 6-A). However, Sukarno sent a vague response, perhaps afraid of another coup d'état (*MT* 9 March 1966, 13-A).

In the meantime, anti-communist demonstrations by university and high school students spread not only in Jakarta but also across Indonesia. Five students who marched to the Presidential Palace were killed, and the University of Indonesia was closed (*MT* 27 February, 3-A; 7 March 1966, 16-A). In response to this, Filipino students planned to march to the Indonesian Embassy to protest; however, Mayor Antonio Villegas did not issue the permit. Instead, they went to Luneta (the old name for Rizal Park in Manila), shouting the slogan; “Flagrant suppression of basic human rights in Indonesia.” They carried a coffin draped in black cloth and flowers in their hands in tribute to the five students killed. They also protested against censorship of the press, imprisonment of a newspaper editor and the ouster of Defense Minister Haris Nasution (*MT* 7 March, 15-A; 9 March 1966, 18-A).

As the voice of protesting Indonesian students mounted, the office of the Foreign Ministry, headed by Minister Subandrio, and of the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, headed by Professor Sumardio, had been occupied by the students. Subandrio and Sumardio were considered to be pro-communists (*MT* 10 March 1966, 1, 20-A). The Philippine Embassy in Jakarta began preparing for evacuation because of the possibility of

severance of diplomatic relations over the issue of the recognition of Malaysia, as well as owing to the unstable political conditions (*MT* 11 March 1966, 1, 2-A).

On 13 March, the front page of the *Manila Times* reported the transfer of political power from Sukarno to Suharto; a number of ministers, including Foreign Minister Subandrio, were arrested: The Communist Party of Indonesia was outlawed on the first order of Suharto; the students, teachers, laborers, and many political parties would support Suharto. The following day, it reported that twenty of “the hundred ministerial cabinet members” appointed on 24 February 1965 had been arrested and that stores had been opened for the first time in two weeks. The new military regime announced that its diplomatic policy would be anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and generally anti-West, and that it would follow the “Crush Malaysia” campaign of the Sukarno regime (*MT* 13 March 1966, 1; 14 March, 1, 14-A). At that time, contact between the Philippines and its Embassy in Indonesia was difficult (*MT* 16 March 1966, 1). The Indonesian Foreign Ministry requested that the Philippines wait for a while before it recognized the establishment of Malaysia. On the other hand, President Marcos wanted to normalize diplomatic relations with Malaysia before the visit of Prime Minister Rhaman, who was planning to attend the Asian Youth Football Tournament held in Manila in April (*MT* 24 March 1966, 1, 10-A).

The Philippines’ recognition of Malaysia was against the Manila Proclamation of 1963, and would potentially bring conflict with Indonesia. The Proclamation agreed to promote economic, social, and cultural cooperation based on the Maphilindo concept advocated by President Macapagal. The Manila Proclamation was a joint statement announced in July after a summit meeting attended by the leaders, Macapagal, Sukarno, and Rhaman. Now that Indonesia had been suppressing the communists and expelled Sukarno, who had been closely cooperating with the communist regime, it was the opportunity for the Philippines to unite the three countries for regional cooperation.

Demonstrations in Indonesia did not diminish even under the new regime. The demonstrators demanded not only the suppression of communism but also the lowering of prices of daily necessities which had kept rising (*MT* 13 March 1966, 1). The demonstrators connected the expense of daily necessities such as soap and oil to the pro-communist Sukarno regime; however, nothing seemed to have changed under Suharto. Then, the student demonstrators began attacking the new regime (*MT* 21 March 1966, 1). To help address this situation, the Japanese government was reported to have offered to extend economic assistance (*MT* 16 March 1966, 18). Furthermore, the Philippines was thinking of dispatching a medical team to Indonesia because it was facing not only economic crisis but also a serious “health” crisis (*MT* 17 March 1966, 18).

As expected, reports on the 30 September Incident and its aftermath mainly came from dispatches from foreign news agencies, including the Agence France Presse. However, the Philippines’ effort to publish news from its own sources was noted because Marcos was keenly interested in Indonesian affairs. Why did Marcos consider the relations with neighboring countries, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, so important? Let us look into his reasons by analyzing articles in *The Manila Times* as well as the international situation at the time.

The Effects as Viewed by the Philippines

The Manila Times and other newspapers in the Philippines reported daily on the 30 September Incident; however, the interest of the people in general seemed rather low. Valencia commented in his column “Over a Cup of Coffee” that Filipinos hardly talked about “konfrontasi;” life went on without traces of the crisis and that the only reference to Indonesia was speculation about the fate of President Sukarno (*MT* 21 January 1966, 4-A).

If Indonesia had become a communist-led country and formed close ties with People’s Republic of China, it would have been a threat to the

Philippines, being geographically in the middle of the two countries. Although Jesus Lava, the chairman of the Philippine Communist Party, was arrested in 1964 and the Huks (Hukbong Mapagpalaya ng Bayan) was on the decline, communist supporters in central Luzon still counted 25,600.⁹

The Philippines was also on its guard against not only the Chinese communists but also Indonesian communists who infiltrated Mindanao Island agitating the people (*MT* 1 March, 1, 22-A; 19 March 1966, 5-A). On 7 February 1965, an Indonesian spy, an Air Force officer, was arrested for illegal entry to Mindanao. Furthermore, the government discussed deporting 12,000 Indonesians who had come to the Philippines illegally. On 18 April, an Indonesian sailboat which had entered Philippine waters illicitly, was captured. On 30 April, an Indonesian student who participated in an anti-US demonstration was arrested and deported. On 12 June, the deportation of the first batch of 105 Indonesian illegal immigrants started. There were rumors circulating that the Indonesian army had assembled on islands near the border and that the missile bases had been completed there. On the other hand, a Filipino was arrested in Indonesia as a CIA spy.¹⁰

In the Philippines, the anti-US student movement was intensifying and protesting against the sending of Filipino soldiers to Vietnam. The newspapers did pay attention to student movements in Indonesia; however, coverage was mainly on anti-communist demonstrations. It was rare for a Filipino journalist to visit Indonesia and write about it. On 14 March 1966, Amando Doronila arrived in Jakarta and reported the pro-communist demonstration of the youth whose number was less than that of the anti-communist counterparts. He described demonstrators protesting in front of the US Embassy, burning several cars, and writing slogans opposing the anti-communist camp on the walls and fences (*MT* 20 March 1966, 14-A).

Hardly any report was written on Sukarno's view of the Philippines. In his first public appearance after the 11 March *Supersemar*, he said, "Abroad they said that I have been toppled, that have been ousted, that I am a sick man, that I am ailing, that I am nearly dying, that I nearly

committed suicide and that I have asked the Manila government for asylum.” Sukarno continued, saying that he called Ambassador Narciso G. Reyes, who was standing some 20 yards away and said, “Hey, Reyes, did I ask your government for asylum?”¹¹ Reyes cracked back laughing out loud and said, “Correct.” Then Sukarno in a serious tone denied the rumors: “I never tried to commit suicide, because I love life” (*MT* 25 March 1966, 20-A). This episode was also published on 29 March. Another report conveyed by Indonesia’s Foreign Minister and Deputy Premier, Adam Malik, was that Sukarno wished to have a top-level meeting with Marcos. However, it would not materialize because neither of them, Sukarno nor Marcos, could leave his country facing so many internal problems (*MT* 31 March 1966, 1, 6-A).

Marcos had been worried about diplomatic relations with the United States ever since he was elected President. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Japan would adhere to the basic guideline; cooperation with the free camp, especially with the United States and anti-communist policy.¹² However, Marcos had a different view. This can be gleaned in the following press conference held before his inauguration, as reported in *The Washington Post* on 27 December, as well as in his inaugural speech on the 30th.

Previously I was not confident about the US policy on Vietnam; therefore, I opposed dispatching Filipino soldiers there. Now that the US has committed to intervention in the Vietnam War, I will recommend to the Congress sending 2,000 Filipinos after my inauguration. The recent conflict between the US and the Philippines is stimulating rather than an obstacle. There is no problem we could not solve between us. I have no plan of visiting the US in order to request urgent assistance. We must solve our problems by our own ability. (UPI-MB)¹³

Marcos’s policy can be summarized in the following five points: financial austerity; crackdown on smuggling; social and economic development; solidarity with Asian countries; and cooperation with the

free camp (however, national interest remaining a priority).¹⁴ Point four, Asian solidarity with Asia, can be elaborated below.

The Filipino today lives in a world that is increasingly Asian as well as African. — Recent events have shown the willingness of our Asian friends to build a bridge to us. We can do less than to build strong foundations at our end.

Today, as never before, we need a new orientation toward Asian; we must intensify the cultural identity with ancient kin, and make common cause with them in our drive toward prosperity and peace. For this we shall require the understanding of ourselves and of Asia that exceeds acquaintance; we require the kind of knowledge that can only be gained through unabating scholarship on our histories, cultures, social forces and aspirations, and through more active interaction with our friends and neighbors.¹⁵

As part of his anti-smuggling efforts, Marcos restored diplomatic relations with Malaysia because tobacco had been smuggled through north Borneo. On 1 December 1965 before the inauguration, Marcos unofficially met with Malaysian Finance Minister Tan Shiew, promised to try to restore diplomatic relations with Malaysia, and sounded out his cooperation with the Philippines' effort to prevent smuggling. As a result, on 8 December, the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered its full cooperation with the Philippines' anti-smuggling initiatives. Therefore, the policy of the Marcos administration was to postpone the Sabah claim issue until after formally reopening diplomatic relations with Malaysia and requesting cooperation to crack down on smuggling; eventually Sabah's dominion by the Philippines would be recognized. At the same time, the Marcos administration was to recognize the Republic of Singapore which became independent from Malaysia on 9 August 1965. Marcos also intended to expand the SEATO, revive Maphilindo and the ASA, and strengthen regional cooperation.¹⁶

However, on the occasion of the inauguration of President Marcos on 30 December 1965, it became apparent that renewing diplomatic relations with Malaysia would be difficult because there were differences between Malaysia's Minister of Home Affairs, Dato Ismail bin Abdul Rhaman, and Indonesia's Minister of Budget, Sujadi, regarding the interpretation of the Manila Declaration of 1963.

On the other hand, the inauguration brought stronger ties between the Philippines and Thailand. Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thanat Khoman, stated that the ASA was an economic and cultural organization, not a political one, and that the members had lost interest in the SEATO because they could not agree on the China issue; therefore, the ASA could be revived if the Philippines agreed (*MT* 1 January 1966, 10-A). Thanat Khoman further stressed that Southeast Asia was comprised of at least five ethnic groups, including Malay, Burman, Thai, and Mon; however, the Maphilindo was dominated by the Malay. Therefore, he insisted that the ASA contribute more to regional stability because it did not concern ethnicity or politics (*MT* 3 January 1966, 1, 14-A). Thanat Khoman brought a letter of greetings from King Bhumibol Adulyadej (1927-2016, r. 1946-2016) as well as an invitation from the Prime Minister to visit Thailand.¹⁷ When the Asian Development Bank was established, Thailand voted for the Philippines (Manila) as its headquarters, instead of Japan or Iran (*MT* 4 January 1966, 16-A). The revival of the ASA was supported by an editorial that said it was expected to contribute to regional development without involving politics or political ideology (*MT* 16 January 1966, 4-A).

The Thai Prime Minister, Thanom Kittikachon (1911-2004; 1958 and 1963-73 in office), made a three-day visit to the Philippines starting 2 March 1966 (*MT* 2 March 1966, 1, 14-A). Thanom stated that the SEATO had to be reformed and that the ASA would become the nucleus for expanding regional cooperation. In a joint communique, the following was announced, "We have agreed that both countries should further strengthen the group effort for regional development. This can be done by economic and cultural cooperation through an organization like the ASA."¹⁸

The main reason Marcos wished to strengthen regional cooperation was the issue of dispatching soldiers to Vietnam. In June 1964, the South Vietnamese mission visited the Philippines and requested military assistance. In July, the Philippine Congress approved one million pesos in economic and technical aid and decided to send thirty-four personnel in medical and psychological maneuvering fields, as well as a civic action force. In October, President Macapagal visited the United States and announced in a joint communique with President Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908–1973; 1963–1969 in office), “The Philippines, along with the United States, would support Vietnam in accordance with the SEATO agreement.” In response to this, anti-US student demonstrations were held frequently. The bill which responded to the Vietnamese request for personnel (expenditure of P25 million for dispatching 2,000 combat engineers) was submitted to the Philippine Congress at the end of April 1965. It passed Congress on 12 May; however, it did not pass the Senate.¹⁹ When the administration changed, the United States exerted pressure on Marcos. As the anti-US movement became active, *The Manila Times*, in its columns and editorials, insisted that the Philippines avoid becoming America’s mercenary and that if military aid was to be given, it should come from the Filipinos’ own pockets to send the best soldiers. It was reported that the United States had given arms, equipment, and salaries to the Filipino personnel sent to Vietnam and had further offered to increase economic aid to the Philippines.²⁰

On 17 February 1966, Marcos submitted a bill of P35 million to facilitate the dispatching of Filipino combat engineers to South Vietnam. At the same time, he vehemently denied the rumor by saying that the aid to Vietnam had nothing to do with US aid to the Philippines; he insisted it was for the national benefit because he had obtained the following agreements from the United States: a huge loan of steady capital to the Philippines, and a number of gunboats to be used by the Philippine Navy for anti-smuggling operations. Yet the students and laborers, which were opposed the dispatching of Filipino combat engineers to Vietnam, continued anti-US demonstrations. Congress yielded to their demand;

therefore, the discussions in both houses stalled. Finally, on 14 July, the revised bill had passed. Accordingly, on 16 August, an initial civic action force of one hundred Filipinos departed for Vietnam on board ship, followed by the first 730 of the main troops on 11 September. By 19 October, a total of 2,000 had been deployed.²¹

The Philippines did not have the power to withstand US pressure. One of the ways to resist it was to establish a regional cooperation system by actively creating strong ties with neighboring countries; that was what the Marcos administration set out to do. At the first press conference on 4 January 1966, after he assumed office, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Narciso Ramos stated the following diplomatic policy:

1. Vietnam — Any effort to have the Hanoi government come to the table for discussion would be to our benefit. Therefore, we would cooperate toward this goal. If the problems could be solved by military and political means, we would agree to send soldiers to Vietnam. However, the congress has to make a final decision.

2. Malaysia and Indonesia — It is necessary to normalize relations with Malaysia before insisting on the dominion of Sabah. In his letter to President Marcos, Prime Minister Rhaman promised to accept the Sabah negotiation and to cooperate with the Philippines on the smuggling issue. Re-establishing diplomatic relations with Malaysia should not harm our relations with Indonesia. Recent developments in Indonesia have placed Philippines-Indonesia relations in a new phase, broadening the scope of our cooperation. The new government will re-examine the Maphilindo concept and, if necessary, offer mediation in the Malaysian conflict.

3. Regional cooperation in Asia — The Philippines would like to emphasize the SEATO's aim of economic, cultural and educational

assistance. We are also ready to accept the suggestion of reviving the ASA because its aim is not political but economic, cultural, and technical assistance. The ASA could play a role in strengthening cooperation among the free countries in Asia, which could be the means to achieve our policies. The aims of reviving the ASA and re-examining the Maphilindo concept are complimentary, and could develop a harmonious unity of mutual security, economic cooperation and cultural interchange among the Asian countries that share the same aspirations.

4. Philippines-US relations – We intend to maintain close ties with the United States and aspire to build a more solid foundation by removing any inequalities that harm our relationship.²²

As stated, one of the reasons the Philippines wished to normalize diplomatic relations with Malaysia was smuggling from north Borneo, which amounted to around 500 million pesos a year.²³ Marcos' intention was to improve relations with Malaysia and activate the ASA by adding Thailand. It was a 180-degree change from the Macapagal administration. This regional organization was not only to prevent the expansion of Chinese communism but also to avoid price controls by European powers on agricultural products and mineral resources. Therefore, Marcos' intention was to develop the Maphilindo concept that united the Malay people, and eventually to have India and Japan involved as well (*MT* 2 April 1966, 10-A).

On 2 April 1966, when Ambassador Reyes returned from Indonesia, he reported to the president regarding Indonesian economic problems such as inflation, lagging production, and the channeling of production towards external trade (*MT* 3 April 1966, 1). Reyes recommended that Marcos send material aid to Java to relieve the suffering from the recent flooding because these problems might affect the Philippines (*MT* 4 April

1966, 1, 21-A). His reason was that the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Malik stated that Indonesia would welcome “friendship and unconditional aid” from the United States and any other country (*MT* 4 April 1966, 5-A). The columnist, Valencia, said the Philippines should try to help neighboring Indonesia now that she was in need and that the Philippines had better reasons to help Indonesia than South Vietnam. The Philippines also intended to assist Indonesia return to the United Nations from which she had withdrawn in January 1965. Malik announced the acceptance of Philippine aid and said that the Philippines was one of the remaining sincere friends of Indonesia (*MT* 5 April 1966, 18-A). Representative Jose Cojuangco, Jr. was reported to have said, “If we are willing to aid South Vietnam,” “the more reason we should be willing to assist Indonesia which is just back of our backdoor” (*MT* 7 April 1966, 16-A).

The Indonesian economy was said to be in a state of bankruptcy with an enormous amount of foreign debt; the price of commodities would rise 1,000 percent in 1966, and the price of a pair of shoes was the average citizen’s month’s salary. It was obvious that military expenditures for the Malaysian conflict were a financial burden. The government announced on 9 April a recognition of the establishment of Singapore because 90 percent of Indonesian exports went through the port of Singapore. Indonesia also wanted to improve relations with Malaysia through the intercession of the Philippines without losing face; however, this time Malaysia refused. In the meantime, the headquarters of the Asian Development Bank was to be established in Manila in December 1966; therefore, Japan organized a conference in Tokyo inviting the ministers from five countries: the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Laos. Indonesia and Cambodia attended as observers (*MT* 13 April, 3-A; 14 April 1966, 5-A). Indonesia expected to receive economic aid from European countries and the United States through Japan’s mediation (*MT* 17 April 1966, 3-A). For its part, Japan formally supported the newly organized cabinet on 28 March and decided to extend emergency aid of US\$2.5 million the following day for food and clothing.²⁴

In the meantime, conferences were held to revive the ASA, which had been defunct for three years; one in Bangkok on 2 March 1966 and the other in Kuala Lumpur from 27 to 30 April 1966. The Philippines was to send fourteen representatives. The newspaper reported, “the ASA is a cultural-economic association among Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines” (*MT* 19 April 1966, 1, 8-A). On the day of their departure, it reported that “The ASA is a social, economic and cultural association” (*MT* 25 April 1966, 23-A).

To establish regional cooperative organizations, Indonesian political stability and international cooperation were indispensable. Indonesia came to accept the Philippines’ recognition of Malaysia when Ministers of Foreign Affairs Ramos and Malik had met for a conference in Bangkok on 1 May 1966. As a result, the Philippines revived diplomatic relations with Malaysia on 3 June, and the consulates of both countries were elevated to embassies. Furthermore, a memorandum referring to a peaceful solution of the Sabah and smuggling issues was exchanged. On 25 June, the Philippines officially recognized Singapore. The Philippines hoped to strengthen economic and trade relations with Indonesia by signing a commercial agreement on 23 June. Another similar negotiation was held in Jakarta from 22 to 27 August, and the joint communique was announced.²⁵

The ASA conference attended by the ministers of foreign affairs was held in Bangkok from 3 to 5 August 1966. They discussed the Asian cooperative market concept which included Indonesia, Burma, India, Singapore, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Pakistan, Ceylon, and even Japan and Australia.²⁶ In the meantime, Indonesia normalized its diplomatic relations with Malaysia on 11 August and was re-admitted to the United Nations on 28 September. At the Special Session of the Provisional People’s Consultative Assembly from 7 to 12 March 1967, Sukarno was stripped of his presidency and Suharto became acting president. On 31 August, shortly after the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August, Indonesia restored overall relations with Malaysia and with Singapore on 7 September. In contrast, on 9 October, diplomatic relations with China were frozen. On 27 March 1968, Suharto was appointed president.²⁷

On 19 December 1966, the Asian Development Bank (the headquarters in Manila) was established. The purpose of the bank was to foster economic growth and cooperation in Asia and the Pacific by financing development capital.²⁸ The Southeast Asian nations began economic development by importing foreign capital from relatively stable countries.

President Marcos assumed office on 30 December 1965. His diplomatic accomplishments of the early period can be seen in the following joint communique announced after the Johnson-Marcos talk held on 15 September 1966 in Washington DC, particularly in Nos. 18, 23, and 25.

18. The two Presidents noted the benefits to be gained if countries can share and profit from their common experiences in meeting Communist infiltration and subversion in all its forms in Southeast Asia. In this connection, the accomplishments of SEATO and of individual countries were discussed as well as means by which the Philippines and the United States might make an added contribution to this significant work. The two Presidents concluded that the usefulness of a center in the Philippines which might serve as a focal point for this work should be explored and proper actions pursued.

23. Developments in Asia. President Marcos discussed his efforts in concert with other Asian countries to bring about an all Asian political forum to which can be referred any crisis in Asia like the Viet-Nam conflict for settlement by conciliation or other peaceful means. President Marcos also stressed his country's recognition of Malaysia and Singapore and the acknowledgment by Asian countries of the Philippine role in helping pave the way toward solution of the Indonesian and Malaysian question. President Johnson reiterated his support for an Asian conference to settle the Viet-Nam war and reaffirmed to President Marcos that so far as the United States is concerned it is prepared for unconditional discussions or negotiations in any appropriate forum in an effort to bring peace to Southeast Asia. President Johnson reaffirmed that the basic U.S. purpose in Asia is to support the national aspirations of Asian peoples; the

United States is ready to continue helping other nations which seek its assistance in improving the welfare of their peoples and in strengthening themselves against aggression.

25. The two Presidents reviewed events of the past few years which demonstrated the substantial progress being made in Asia toward regional cooperation. President Marcos noted, in particular, the recent meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Asia and the Pacific in Seoul, and the meeting of the Foreign Ministers from the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia in Bangkok within the framework of the Association of Southeast Asia. The two Presidents noted that the establishment of the Asian Development Bank, with its headquarters in Manila, was a specific example of which imaginative statesmanship by Asian countries working together could accomplish. President Johnson welcomed the evidence of expanding cooperation in Asia and reiterated the willingness of the United States to assist and support cooperative programs for the economic and social developments of the region.²⁹

Concluding Remarks

Since the establishment of the Marcos administration, the Philippines had actively participated in discussions regarding the SEATO, the ASA, and the Maphilindo. Although the result was not what these concerned Southeast Asian countries expected, it did bring about the establishment of the ASEAN on 8 August 1967.

According to a dictionary, "it is generally recognized that ASEAN has achieved more in terms of cooperation in the political and security fields than in the economic field."³⁰ However, we could see the ASEAN's basic aim was "mutual trust and a good neighbor policy," as emphasized in the Southeast Asia Friendship Treaty signed in 1976. This can be gleaned in the discussions centered on the ASA and other organizations among

the concerned countries between 1965 and 1966, the time frame of my research. The emphasis of the ASEAN was to be an anti-communist organization, as was expected by the United States under the Cold War system; however, a move to diminish interference by the great powers (like the United States) could be seen among the participating countries through efforts to strengthen their unity. Two examples can be cited: first, Prime Minister Rahman’s claim, the ASA “was not aimed *against* anyone [his emphasis]”; and second, the “declaration against the Vietnam War,” adopted at the Bangkok Peace Appeal on 3 August 1966.³¹

Thailand also sent soldiers to South Vietnam at a request of the United States which paid all expenses for the Thai troops. Her best combat units were sent to the front lines as “volunteer” soldiers. Thailand received US\$936 million and more in military assistance from the United States between 1951 and 1971. The following table shows the numbers of soldiers sent by member countries of SEATO and South Korea.

Table 1: The Numbers of Soldiers Sent to Vietnam, 1964–72

	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972
Australia	200	1,560	4,530	6,820	7,660	7,670	6,800	2,000	130
New Zealand	30	120	160	530	520	550	440	100	50
South Korea	200	20,620	25,570	47,830	50,000	48,870	48,540	45,700	36,790
Thailand		20	240	2,200	6,000	11,570	11,570	6,000	40
Philippines	20	70	2,060	2,020	1,580	190	70	50	50

Source: *Betonamu Senso no Kioku Henshu linkai* [The Editorial Committee of Records of Vietnam War]. 1988. *Betonamu Senso no Kioku* [Records of Vietnam War], 256. Tokyo: Ootsuki Shoten.

The Philippines had been a U.S. colony in 1898. Even after independence in 1946, she needed U.S. aid for post-war rehabilitation; therefore, the Philippines had been viewed as a country which followed U.S. policy without her own independent diplomacy. Dispatching soldiers and aid to South Vietnam were done under pressure from the United States; however, the Philippines tried to avoid military aid to South Vietnam as much as she could. When she had to yield to the pressure and

dispatch the soldiers, she insisted she was sending them not as American “mercenaries.” She did so on her own discretion because it was deemed beneficial to the national interest of a sovereign nation. By using a system of cooperation with neighboring nations, the Philippines tried to resist the pressure of the superpower. This aspect of Marcos’ policy resonates with Sukarno’s anti-Nekolim (Neocolonialism, Colonialism, Imperialism).

The Philippines became independent as a second republic on 14 October 1943 under the Japanese occupation (1942–1945). The wartime administration led by President Jose P. Laurel (1891–1959; 1943–1945 in office) was considered a puppet government. When Laurel was pressured by the Japanese military to declare war against the United States and Britain, he maintained the Philippines’ “sovereignty” and tried to save his people by declaring a ‘state’ of war instead of actually declaring the war itself. Laurel maintained the policy of cooperation with Japan in every possible way to soften the suffering of the people, “with the exception of such an oath of allegiance” to Japan.

When the United States pressured the Philippines to assist South Vietnam, the same policy seems to have been followed by the Macapagal and Marcos administrations. When the conflict with the People’s Republic of China arose over the sovereignty of the Spratly Islands arose, the Philippines tried to solve the problem with the cooperation of the ASEAN. Until now, Southeast Asian history has been written from the perspective of the United States under the Cold War system. Now is the time to view Southeast Asian history autonomously, from the point of view of the Southeast Asian peoples. New facts may come to the surface by viewing the changes in political power that occurred in Indonesia between 1965 and 1966 by paying close attention to the perspectives of the neighboring countries as well as by placing that perspective in the context of the entire region of Southeast Asia.

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End Notes

- ¹ *The Manila Times* home page; <http://www.manilatimes.net/manila-times-116th-anniversary/133522/> (18 June 2015).
- ² For instance, “The Turbulent Years,” in *Kasaysayan The Story of the Filipino People, Volume Nine: A Nation Reborn*, n.p., Asia Publishing Company Limited, 1998, p. 7.
- ³ They are called “Four Big International Agencies” in the Western World, including the French news agency, Agence France Presse (AFP) and the British news agency, Reuters.
- ⁴ There is a photo in a biography of Soliven with the following caption, “Before the fall: Indonesia’s President Sukarno, flanked by Napoleon Rama (to his left) and Max Soliven (right) on the steps of Merdeka Palace, Jakarta.” See Navarro, Nelson A. 2011. *Maximo V. Soliven: The Man and the Journalist*, Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House.
- ⁵ In the Philippines, student and labor movements had been on the rise since 1964. In January 1965, for instance, the demonstrators demanded the “immediate removal of the parity clause, military base agreement, and other military-related agreements; implementation of the retail trade nationalization law and land reform law; an increase in minimum wage; relaxation of tightening credit; and prohibition of the Filipino ‘mercenary’ from fighting in South Vietnam.” See Ajia Keizai Kenkyu-jo (Institute of Developing Economies (IDE)). *Ajia no Doko 1965-nen, Firipin* [Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1965], 5.
- ⁶ IDE. *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1965*, 147.
- ⁷ A mutual agreement between British merchants and the Sultan of Sulu (Muslim King) in 1878 was written in Malay. The particular word used in this document can be interpreted as either “cession” or “lend.” Furthermore, it is not certain whether the kingdom of Sulu was a part of the Spanish colony at the signing of the agreement. In either case, Malaysia had been paying lease fees to the descendant of the king, just like their British predecessors had. President

Marcos declared the renunciation of the Sabah claim in 1977; however, the dominion issue has been coming up on and off over the interpretation of the word. The residents of both areas had been going back and forth across the border.

⁸ When Prime Minister Rahman announced the “Federation of Malaysia” that would unify Singapore, Sabah, Sarawak, and Brunei, Indonesia did not oppose it. When the annexation of the West Irian issue was resolved in August 1962, Minister of Foreign Affairs Subandrio used the word, “Konfrontasi” and advocated to “crush” the “Federation of Malaysia.” He did so in order to divert people’s attention from economic dissatisfaction to other issues such as this. When the “Federation of Malaysia” was inaugurated without Brunei, Indonesia deployed military operations in Sarawak and the Malay Peninsula. For more details on why Brunei did not participate in the Federation of Malaysia, see Suzuki, Yoichi, 2015, “Surutan Omaru Ari Saifudin 3-sei to Shin-Renpo Koso: Burunei no Mareshia Hen’nyu Mondai 1959-63 [Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III and the New Federation Plan: The Problem of Brunei’s Incorporation into Malaysia, 1959-1963],” *Ajia Afurika Gengo Bunka Kenkyu* [Journal of Asian and African Studies] 89 (March). The Sukarno regime had been taking the self-rehabilitation line of not depending on foreign aid. This policy caused a financial deficit for years, and by the early 1960s, the country’s finances were almost bankrupt and worsened further by the military expenditure to confront Malaysia.

⁹ IDE. *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1966*, i. The Huk movement became active again around May 1966. Jose Maria Sison (1939–) formed and led the Philippine Communist Party following the Mao Zedong line of thought. He had visited Indonesia often since 1961 to study the Communist Party of Indonesia. He sought refuge in Holland, and has been living there since 1987. He was invited by the 1965 Commemoration Committee to make a speech there on 18 December 2005. He stated that the Communist Party of Indonesia had nothing to do with the 30 September Incident, and he accused Suharto of being an American imperialist agent and of killing many people, including the communists (Sison, Jose Maria. 2005, “Reflections on the 1965 Massacre in Indonesia,” 18 December. 1965 Commemoration Committee, Amsterdam. <http://www.contradictie.nl/1965cc/archive/2005/12/051218JomaEngl.html>). For his relationship with the Malayan Communist Party, see Hara Fujio. 2009. *Mikan ni Owatta Kokusai Kyoryoku: Maraya Kyosanto to Kyodai-to* [Unfinished International Cooperation: Malayan Communist Party and the Sister Parties]. Tokyo: Fukyosha.

¹⁰ IDE. *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1965*.

¹¹ On 4 August 1965, Sukarno was rumored to have suffered a seizure and collapsed. It was also rumored that Japan was his choice of place for exile. See *MT* 6 January, 3-A.

¹² Gaimu-sho (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (JMFA)). *Waga-Gaiko no Kinkyō* [Diplomatic Bluebook] 8 (August 1964), 9 (July 1965), 10 (August 1966), 6.

¹³ IDE. *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1965*, 150.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹⁵ Marcos, Ferdinand E., 1965. “Inaugural Address of President Marcos, December 30, 1965.” <http://www.gov.ph/1965/12/30/inaugural-address-of-president-marcos-december-30-1965/>.

¹⁶ IDE. *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1965*. December, 154-55; IDE. *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1966*, 5-6.

- ¹⁷ Sasrit Thanrat (1908–1963; 1959–1963 in office) was named as Prime Minister but he died in 1963, so Thanom Kittikachorn (1911–2004; 1958 and 1963–1973 in office) should have been the one.
- ¹⁸ IDE, *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1966*, 45.
- ¹⁹ IDE, *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1965*, 71–2.
- ²⁰ IDE, *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1966*, 6, 17–20, 61.
- ²¹ IDE, *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1966*.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- ²³ The exchange rate of USD to Philippine Peso had been \$1.00 to P2.00 since 1946. In 1962, due to liberalization, the Peso was devaluated to P3.90 on 6 November 1965.
- ²⁴ Ajia Keizai Kenkyu-jo (Institute of Developing Economies (IDE)). 1973. *Nippon-Indonesia Kankei-shi Sho-Nenpyo 1958-1972* [Brief Chronological Table of the Relations between Japan and Indonesia, 1958-72], 34. IDE.
- ²⁵ IDE, *Asian Affairs, the Philippines in 1966*, 139–42, 168–69.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151.
- ²⁷ IDE, 1973. *Brief Chronological Table of the Relations between Japan and Indonesia, 1958-72*. IDE.
- ²⁸ “Agreement Establishing the Asian Development Bank.” <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/32120/charter.pdf>
- ²⁹ Lyndon B. Johnson. 1966. “Joint Statement Following Discussions With President Marcos of the Philippines,” September 15. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27861>.
- ³⁰ Levinson, David and Karen Christensen, eds. 2002. *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*. New York: Scribner.
- ³¹ Pollard, Vincent K. 1970. “ASA and ASEAN, 1961-1967: Southeast Asian Regionalism,” *Asian Survey* 10 (3): 252.
- ³² “Thailand” in Kutler, Stanley I., ed. 1996. *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.
- ³³ Nihon no Firipin Senryo-ki ni Kansuru Shiryo Chosa Foramu 1994, 102–06.
- ³⁴ Nakano 1999, 38–39.
- ³⁵ Anthony Reid wrote about the process establishing ASEAN in the last chapter, “The Southeast Asian Region in the World” of his new general history book (Reid, Anthony. 2015. *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads*. UK: Wiley Blackwell). “Already in 1959, the then Malayan Prime Minister sought to persuade a lukewarm Thailand and the Philippines to join an Association of South-East Asia (ASA), realized in 1961. Negotiations to forestall Indonesian and Philippine opposition to Malaysia in 1963 produced a very short-lived tripartite “Maphilindo,” evoking an old dream of some Filipino nationalists for “Malay” racial unity. Hostilities peaked during Indonesia’s Confrontation of Malaysia (1963-6), and it was negotiations to end this, brokered by Thailand, which produced the ASEAN idea. Suharto’s military regime now shared the fear of its neighbors about rising communist power, though rejecting external military alliances, and therefore Indonesia became a crucial convert to regionalism. Newly independent Singapore pressed its case to join what was first envisaged as the three ASA members plus Indonesia, allowing five countries to hammer out the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in August 1967,” pp. 416–417.

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