

How far do Sources A to E show that ASEAN's role in the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978 was irrelevant?

Sources	L2/3 (Analysis)	L4/5 (CK/CR)	L4/5 (Tone/Provenance/Purpose/usefulness)
A	<p>S- Thailand, the ASEAN state most directly threatened by the Vietnamese invasion, preferred to rely on the great powers rather than ASEAN because it lacked the strength to roll back the invasion and was only useful as a diplomatic channel</p>	<p>B: supported the claim that ASEAN played a diplomatic role during the invasion, but it argued that the diplomatic role was much more significant as compared to what was claimed in A. It not only mobilized international opinion against Vietnam in the UN General Assembly, ASEAN also prevented the Vietnam-sponsored Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh from taking over Cambodia's UN seat and persuaded the Cambodian resistance elements to merge into a coalition resistance government.</p> <p>E: supports Thai's perspective that the great powers were the main determinant in the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia</p>	<p>Historian who specialise in ASEAN- likely to have the relevant expertise to assess the situation</p> <p>Source was looking at the invasion from the perspective of Thailand</p> <p>As a Canadian, the historian is likely to be neutral during the conflict and has no vested interest to be biased, thus likely to be able to pass an impartial judgment</p> <p>Academic book: likely to have had many rounds of rigorous fact checking and given that it was published for an academic audience, it is likely to be accurate in its facts</p>
B	<p>C- ASEAN played an active role during the invasion. It not only mobilized international opinion against Vietnam in the UN General Assembly, ASEAN also prevented the Vietnam-sponsored Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh from taking over Cambodia's UN seat and persuaded the Cambodian resistance elements to merge into a coalition resistance government.</p>	<p>A: supports B's claim that ASEAN played a diplomatic role during the invasion, though from Thailand's perspective, the diplomatic role was not as important as a military role</p>	<p>Academic book: likely to have had many rounds of rigorous fact checking and given that it was published for an academic audience, it is likely to be accurate in its facts</p> <p>Prepared by the US Library of Congress: reputable organization, vested interest to tell the truth to uphold its reputation</p>

C	C- ASEAN made clear their stand towards the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and condemned Vietnam for breaking the UN Charter and Bandung Declaration, thus putting pressure on Vietnam to comply with the rules of the international system	B: Other than making a statement to condemn the invasion, B shows that ASEAN also took concrete actions to condemn the invasion.	As a statement of ASEAN's stand towards the invasion, it is not useful in judging the relevance of ASEAN because it does not state the concrete actions taken by ASEAN or the outcomes achieved 1979: shows that ASEAN was very responsive to the invasion, though the timespan might be too close to the event at hand to evaluate the relevance
D	C- Strong role of ASEAN during the conflict is depicted. Reagan claimed that ASEAN's leadership mounded international response to the invasion and the International Conference on Kampuchea organized by ASEAN was also crucial during the conflict	C- supports D's claim that ASEAN responded promptly and quickly to the invasion A: shows that Reagan's claims were exaggerated B: supports active role played by ASEAN	Exaggerated the role played by ASEAN: "nowhere has your leadership been more inspiring", "strength of your commitment", "admired by the US" Given the strong relations that ASEAN have with US and that it was an address by Ronald Reagan to the Ministerial Meeting of the ASEAN, Reagan has vested interest to exaggerate the role of ASEAN in order to strengthen US relations with ASEAN states.
E	S- Rather than ASEAN, it was the Great Powers and the Cold war that determined the development and resolution of the conflict. ASEAN's strategy of coercive diplomacy only worked because of the interest and power patterns of the external players	A- supports E's perspective that Great Powers were primary agents in the conflict	Academic writing: likely to have had many rounds of rigorous fact checking and given that it was published for an academic audience, it is likely to be accurate in its facts Renowned political scientist: reputable expert, vested interest to tell the truth to uphold its reputation Political scientist: likely to have the relevant expertise to assess the situation

2. Assess the view that the development of Southeast Asian nationalism before World War Two was influenced more by western ideologies than religion.

Students are expected to make a comparison between local religion and western ideology in the development of nationalism. Students should go beyond listing and explaining the roles of culture and religion and the role of ideology. A strong analytical essay would examine the significance that each factor plays during the different phases of nationalism; for instance religion and culture tended to be more influential in moulding the aims and ideas of nationalist movements in the early phase whereas ideology such as communism, liberal democracy and republicanism took hold with the rise of the intelligentsia and increasing influence from external forces.

Define

development – process, growth and maturing of

religion and culture – aims to restore monarchy, to preserve religious institutions

ideology – set of ideals, mostly political, that form the blueprint of movements' aims

Religion as the driver of development of nationalism: For countries such as Burma and Indonesia where there was a dominant religion, students could argue that the disruption to the traditional order caused by the imposition of colonial rule and colonial disregard and disrespect for religion drove the rise of nationalism, more than that of ideology. While the role of Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia, or of Buddhism in Burma was something consciously developed in opposition to the challenge of Communism, the existence of Islamic and Buddhist movements in these countries meant that there were already important rallying points about which nationalist thought could develop, before consideration was ever given to the adoption of Communism as a guide for both theory and action. This can be seen from the fact that most of the early nationalist movements in these countries were religious in nature, such as YMBA and Sarekat Dagang Islam, and the issues that stirred anti-colonial and nationalistic sentiments were based on religion, such as the Shoe Question in Burma. What Great Depression did for these countries was to stimulate greater mass support for the religious movements, as can be seen in the Saya San Rebellion and Sarekat Islam, which became the 1st mass political party in Southeast Asia. Ideology, particularly communism, played a less important role in Burma not only because of the existence of Buddhism as an alternative belief system, but also because of the more liberal colonial rule of the British, which allowed for indigenous participation on governance. In the case of Malaya, ideology was less important to the Malay community than Islam, as can be seen from the fact that communist organizers were only active in the Chinese community, while Malay nationalist parties such as KMM and KMS were largely organized along religious lines.

Ideology as the driver of development of nationalism: Students could also note that the introduction of western ideologies marked the shift from traditional nationalism to modern nationalism. For example, one of the first few political parties in Burma that was based on western constitutionalism, rather than religion and culture was the 21 Party, which sought self-government through peaceful constitutional means. Parties organized along similar lines in Vietnam includes the Constitutional Party and the Tonkingese Party. Students could also note that more revolutionary ideologies such as communism affected the nature of nationalist movements. For example, after a period of moderate nationalism in Vietnam (1917-1926), communism radicalised the nationalist movement. Similarly, in the case of Indonesia, after the rise of political nationalism led by Sarekat Islam in 1912, nationalism shifted into a more militant phase after communism and communist parties such as PKI came into the scene.

Limitations and strengths of ideology: Compared to religion, ideology was not really embraced by the main populace as it was not understood by the uneducated masses. Local peasants identified more with religious figures or movements that advocated the return to traditional order rather than movements that promoted alien ideologies. On the other hand, it can be said that ideology did take root gradually with the rise of the intelligentsia in the later development of nationalism. The influence of Western ideas saw these movements able to form concrete aims that went beyond merely getting rid of the colonial masters. Progress and maturity is seen in their aims to create a nation-state and seeing the importance of unifying the different sections of society

Limitations and strengths of religion: Religion on the other hand, gradually became less relevant due to its backward aims and ideas, as nationalists progressively became more politically aware and anxious for the creation of their own nation state.

3. Evaluate the impact of the Japanese Occupation on the process of decolonisation in Southeast Asia from 1945 to 1957.

Students are expected to assess the contributions of the Japanese Occupation to the process of decolonization by explaining how the nationalists were strengthened during the period. To balance the arguments, students could point out the revisionist perspective and highlight how the significance of Japanese Occupation to decolonization was overstated, as well as point out the contributions of other factors, such as the Cold War.

Armed the nationalists and shattered the myth of invincibility: Students could argue that the quick defeat of the Western powers by the Japanese shattered Western myth of invincibility. The torture and abuse suffered by the Europeans, often in public, served to create a psychological impact in the local Southeast Asians that, given the right tools, they can also gain their freedom and become equals of the Europeans. Thus, nationalists, under the leadership of the Thakins in Burma, the Vietminh in Vietnam and Sukarno's government in Indonesia, were determined more than ever that foreign rule should not continue in their countries. The Japanese had proven that Westerners can be equally weak as Asians. In addition, the Japanese also helped Burma and Indonesia develop military strength by supporting the formation of an army: Burma Independence Army (BIA), which became the nucleus of the AFPFL. BIA turned against Japan once they realized that Japan was not going to grant real independence. It was this military dimension that helped quicken the pace of decolonization in Burma and forced the British to concede to independence or risk a war. In the case of Vietnam, the communist Viet Minh was strengthened militarily through the assistance they received from the British and the American intelligence organizations. This allowed the Viet Minh to have the confidence and capacity to fight the war against the French and the Americans in order to retain their independence.

Marked the start of mass politics: Students could argue that mass politics, which was a key instrument in gaining political freedom, was only truly started during the Japanese Occupation. Mass and popular political movements were a key factor in fighting against the British and Dutch when they returned after WWII. During the First and Second Police Action, 1947-1948 (Dutch military campaign to reclaim control over the Indonesian archipelago) the Indonesian youth groups played a crucial part under the leadership of Sukarno in defeating the Dutch. In Vietnam, during the First Indochinese War (French military campaign to reclaim control over northern Vietnam, 1945-54) the Vietminh played the crucial role in mobilising the peasants and other local groups against the French. Mass politics was the crucial 'missing ingredient' in pre-1942 nationalist movements in Southeast Asia. With varied goals and differing target audiences, the pre-war nationalist movements seemed politically disunited. However, the Japanese haste to create anti-colonial and pro-Japanese support for their war efforts indirectly helped to gel Southeast Asian nations together as can be seen in the cases of Indonesia and Vietnam.

Limitations of Japanese Occupation in contributing to decolonization: JO bureaucracy in Southeast Asia was a “machinery of war”, and was unlikely to have the ability to have a positive impact on the development of nationalism: Students should note that Japanese made no conscious attempt to provide the necessary conditions for independence, rather these were strategic moves to further Japanese imperialism and harden resistance against returning Western powers, and a sign of their inability to maintain presence in the region. For example, the Japanese used Putera to organize support for their war programme and partly to arouse anti-western sentiment. Towards the end of 1943, the Japanese, convinced that Putera was much more nationalistic than pro-Japanese, dissolved the organization. It was replaced by a Peoples’ Loyalty Organization which retained Sukarno and Hatta as a convenient facade, but rigidly under Japanese control. In addition, the relationship of the collaborators with the Japanese had in fact weakened many of the nationalist movements, with the partnership a largely unequal one. PETA was officially established under the nominal leadership of the nationalist politician Gatot Mangkupradja, but was in fact under Japanese command. There were many volunteers and the battalions were placed under Indonesian officers, but they were trained by the Japanese who were reluctant to distribute arms. In addition, the economic hardship created from Japanese exploitation of local resources and the different treatment towards different races damaged the nationalist credentials of collaborators. For example, Ba Maw himself supported the Japanese demands to assemble forced labourers for Japanese military needs, including the building of the Thailand-Burma railway in which thousands perished. In addition, the Japanese were courted actively by nationalist groups in competition with each other, attempting to achieve their objectives and an independent state in their own image. For example, Ba Maw angered the Burmese nationalists by taking the title of Mingyi (great prince or king) and reviving some of the traditional rituals of the Burmese court.

Role of other factors: Students could argue that while Japanese occupation strengthened the nationalists, it was the Cold War, which really determined the pace of decolonization in Southeast Asia. Despite the gains in military strength during the Japanese Occupation, nationalists were still not strong enough to fight against the colonial masters on their own. During Japanese rule in Indonesia, Sukarno had to share power with the Japanese administration. This continued till 2 days after Japan surrendered, before nationalists declared independence with the blessings of the Japanese. This showed the limited strength of the nationalists, who were unable to overthrow Japanese rule on their own. It was thus the Cold War that made decolonization inevitable by creating an international context that made continued colonialism unacceptable to both superpowers. Pressures from the anti-imperialist camps and particularly from the USA forced the British Foreign and Colonial Offices to accept the principle that after recovering the dependent territories at the end of the war, Britain would let go of its colonies. In Indonesia for instance, the independence was made possible due to the role of US pressure on the Dutch. This can be seen in the fact that the Indonesian nationalists were at the losing end in their struggle for independence. The Dutch were well on their way to gaining more territories

during the police actions had the United States not stepped in and pressurized them to make concessions to the Indonesians by threatening to withhold Marshall Aid. As chaos would mean an Indonesia susceptible to communists, the US sided with the nationalists instead. Other factors that students could discuss include colonial attitudes towards decolonization and the choices made by the nationalists.

4. To what extent do you agree that the failure of democracy was the most important factor for the rise of authoritarian governments in post-independent Southeast Asia?

Students are expected to discuss reasons for the rise of authoritarian governments in independent Southeast Asia and to demonstrate an understanding of the local and international circumstances that facilitated the rise of authoritarianism in Southeast Asia.

Failure of democracy: Students could argue that democracy failed to work in Southeast Asia, because instead of power sharing and unity, democracy created factionalism and divisions. Soon after the Dutch recognised the independence of Indonesia in 1949 (independence declared by Sukarno in 1945), there were regular changes within the government. Between 1950 and 1957, Indonesia had 6 Prime Ministers and 6 cabinets. There was hardly any political continuity as there were many initiatives but few were followed through. Regular changes and factionalism resulted in instability and confusion. Thus, Sukarno decided to proclaim a Guided Democracy in 1959 as he saw the need for a strong leader. Similarly, U Nu was unable to unite the AFPFL due to severe factionalism and divisions in ideologies. The volatile situation in Burma culminated in a military caretaker government under General Ne Win that was able to restore stability and security in the state.

Political ambitions of democratically elected leaders: Students could argue that democracy failed to satisfy the political ambitions of democratically elected leaders, who distorted democratic procedures and established patron-client relations with the military to guarantee their political longevity. Students could cite Marcos' imposition of martial law and Sukarno's imposition of Guided Democracy as evidence. Marcos imposed martial law in 1972 and the military was given the task of eliminating opposition and rival families that may challenge Marcos' rule. The military gave Marcos its full support as the chief of staff of the armed forces was Marcos' cousin, Fabian C Ver., whom Marcos appointed to ensure the military's loyalty. The military was extremely potent as a tool for Sukarno's Guided Democracy. It was used to rid of opposition. Strong support from the military enabled Sukarno to ban Masjumi on the grounds that it supported the regional revolts.

Unsuitability of democracy: Students could argue that the rise of authoritarian governments was not because democracy has failed, but because it was unsuited for the political culture and needs of newly independent Southeast Asia. Democracy proved to be foreign to the traditions, experiences and needs of most of the SEA, or where they were not irrelevant, they turned out not to be sufficiently entrenched to withstand the assault of autocrats. With the exception of the Philippines, few colonies had the experience of self-rule. Also, there was continuity of elites as power was handed over to the same group of people, such as Sukarno in Indonesia, UMNO in Malaysia and PAP in Singapore. These elites continued to consolidate power in the new states.

Appeals of authoritarian political alternatives, such as military: Students could argue that given the role of the military during the Japanese Occupation and

decolonization, the military leaders proved to be appealing alternatives to the chaotic and incapable civilian leaders. During the Japanese Occupation, the BIA helped the Japanese defeated the British. When Japanese rule proved to be detrimental to the interest of Burma, AFPFL and BIA fought a guerrilla war against the Japanese and helped the British return to Burma. Led by Aung San, the AFPFL negotiated for Burmese independence from Britain. The military was, therefore, a respected group in Burma as it was seen to work in the best interests of Burma. It was also seen as a leadership that was untainted by the Japanese or the colonial masters. The military emerged at the end of colonial rule as heroes who resisted the harsh Japanese and as independence fighters. Similarly, in the case of Indonesia, the armed groups and the Indonesian army played a decisive role in the achievement of national independence as they fought a long war against the Dutch. The military thus served as a new focus of solidarity and national pride and as a personification of honoured and sacred symbols.

In addition, another appeal of the military was their ability to enforce peace, order and stability. The military generally had the power to enforce law and order and created a general feeling of security, thus providing the basis for social activity on all levels. With the monopoly of the use of force, the military was the only organisation to provide stability in chaotic states. In 1958, the AFPFL was split and Burma was marked by instability. The communists were working within in the National Union Front (NUF), using it as a cover for their activities. The communists took opportunities to stage violent outbreaks in several parts of Burma. They even helped to increase separatist sentiments among the Kachins and Shans. U Nu was forced to grant the army temporary control of the country in hope of restoring law and order, but he laid the foundations for seizure of political power by the military in the process. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was an increase in insurgencies in central Luzon under the leadership of the Marxist New People's Army (NPA). The sense of insecurity was accentuated by the fomentation of ethnic rebellion in the south, especially with the rise of separatist sentiments amongst the Muslim Filipinos. The chaotic situation provided the opportunity for Marcos to declare martial law and to strengthen the role of the military in politics.

Role of US: Students could argue that as the US became increasingly concerned with the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia; it also started to intervene more actively in Southeast Asian politics. The support of the US for stable regimes legitimised authoritarian governments. During the Cold War, the US saw Thailand as an independent state to be defended against communism and as a regional power to be wooed to help contain communism. Between 1951 and 1957, Phibun's close relation with the US helped Thailand receive \$149 million and \$222 million in economic and military aid respectively. This helped tip the political balance in favour of the military by making them independent of the political process and strengthening their ability to coerce the civilian population. The establishment of Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky's military regime which took over Ngo Dinh Diem's government was supported actively by the US which provided military and financial aid to ensure a stable government so that the country was not vulnerable to communist influences.

5. "Southeast Asian governments have failed to foster a sense of nationhood in its minorities." To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Students are expected to discuss policies adopted by the SEA governments to develop allegiance to the newly independent state and to assess the effectiveness of the policies. Students should note that policies that were inclusive and benevolent in nature would tend to be more successful than policies that were domineering, discriminatory and exclusive. While attempts at minority integration may at times lead to short term success, it is important to note that such an issue usually leads to long term problems still due to the heterogenous nature of Southeast Asian societies. More often than not, these minorities were seen as rivals to the majority anyway, and thus would be difficult for the government to implement benevolent minority policies. Usually the countries that were not successful in their policies towards the minorities were such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines and Thailand as those countries were still wrought with separatist movements or dissent from minorities. Countries such Singapore however, have so far observed successes due to implementation of economic and social mobility.

Define:

Sense of nationhood: national unity is created and cohesiveness is forged so that an allegiance to the newly independent state can be fostered among the people

Use of coercion to foster nationhood: Minority policies that use coercion tended to not be successful as they only served to lead to further separatism and dissent in the minorities. This can be seen in Indonesia under the Suharto regime which adopted a zero-tolerance approach to minority separatism in East Timor, Aceh and West Papua, the three most troublesome provinces. In Aceh, presence of separatist movements can be seen in the form of the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh, 1976). The military did not hesitate to use force against the GAM and from 1990-98, military operations resulted in the deaths of over 3000 Acehnese, exacerbating separatist tendencies. Thailand under Sarit and Thanom, saw minority unrest in Southern Thailand escalating. The persistence of separatist tendencies, particularly in the South, again, shows that the use of force frequently stimulated, rather than dissipated separatist tendencies and hindered, rather than helped, assimilation.

Forceful assimilation: Forceful assimilation was sometimes used to foster a sense of nationhood, largely through forced migration. Forced migration displaced the social structure of the minority groups and imposed majority communities into their homelands, leading to dissent. From 1969 – 1999, the Indonesian government's Transmigration Programme relocated some 730,000 families from overpopulated Java, Madura and Bali to outlying areas. Besides easing demographic pressure, transmigration was also a form of social engineering that would bring about a mixing of ethnic groups and thus help to weaken minority identities, in line with the New Order's state-imposed,

mono-ethnic concept of national unity. However, transmigration worsened minority discontent. For example, the native Dayak population resented majority encroachment on their territory and clashed frequently with them. Similarly in the Philippines, in the 1950s, the Marcos administration sponsored migration of Filipino Catholics to the Muslim South. This was to promote national unity by spreading the ethnic majority into peripheral areas in order to create a more even distribution of the Catholic Filipinos. This caused the Muslims in the region to be economically displaced and disgruntled.

Political concessions: SEA governments sometimes tried to foster a sense of nationhood by creating a more inclusive national identity through granting political concessions, such as guaranteed preservation of minorities' rights, granting basic political representation or autonomous status. For instance, the Vietnamese Constitution granted equal rights and duties to all citizens, regardless of ethnic affiliation, and prohibited ethnic discrimination. Minorities were guaranteed the right to speak their own languages and to preserve and develop the 'positive' elements of their cultures, although 'negative' cultural traits must be eradicated. Minorities were represented at every government level from hamlet leader to the General Secretary of the Communist Party. In fact, individuals of minority origin hold over 17 per cent of seats in the National Assembly, although they make up only 14 per cent of the national population. In Myanmar under the leadership of SLORC, ex-rebel groups were allowed to retain their arms and to continue their leaders' authority over the base area. The government provided monetary and logistics assistance once the agreement to cease hostilities was reached. The leaders of these organizations were officially recognized by the government as "leaders of ethnic groups" and were allowed to have a say in the development of their respective regions and could also take part in the ongoing constitutional process. These incentives offered by the junta prodded many of the rebel groups to accept the government's terms for peace.

Language: Governments also adopted language policies to create opportunities for citizens of different ethnicities to communicate with each other, thus fostering a sense of nationhood. Indonesia is perhaps the most successful plural society in using a national language to weld together over 130 million people in 3000 scattered islands into a nation. Bahasa Indonesia was proclaimed as the national language by Sukarno in 1928 as part of a proclamation calling for "one country, one nation, one language". He recognized that common symbols were needed to counteract the effects of extreme ethnic diversity in Indonesia's struggle against Dutch colonial rule. However, language policies were not always successful in fostering national unity. In Malaysia, although Malay has been declared the national language, there is a large minority Chinese group (37 per cent) who insists on using and studying in its own language. The Malaysian Government tried to push the language issue by changing over schools and universities to the Malay language. This decision was resented by the Chinese.

6. How far do you agree that achieving regional cooperation in post-independent Southeast Asia was difficult and futile?

Students are required to evaluate the successes and failures of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, by noting its process (was it difficult?) and outcomes (was it futile?). Students should be able to highlight that regional cooperation did and still does exist in Southeast Asia, but during the early years of independence, were often marred by inter-state disputes, suspicions and Cold War alignments. As such attempts at regional cooperation were very difficult in the initial years. However, with the formation of ASEAN, it can be seen that attempts at regional cooperation were becoming more fruitful. The more analytical students would be able to argue that the presence of ASEAN does not indicate that regional cooperation has truly been sealed. Rather, ASEAN may still be wrought with ineffective mechanisms. Students could however, point out that with the end of Cold War and reduction of tensions, Southeast Asian countries had started to work more towards fostering regional cooperation especially in the economic sector, which more often than not, would be the more successful story of regional cooperation rather than the political or security aspect.

Define:

Regional cooperation – the presence of cohesiveness within the region characterized by cooperative measures and agreements

Futile - incapable of producing any useful result; pointless.

Difficult - needing much effort or skill to accomplish, deal with, or understand.

Achieving regional cooperation was difficult due to mutual suspicions and hostilities: The presence of deep-seated suspicion and tensions made regional cooperation a farce at times as it prevented countries from compromising with each other and made their attempts at regional cooperation fragile. In Thailand and Burma, memories of the past contribute to shaping the attitudes of the governments and peoples in the two countries. In fact, these memories often seek to inform Thai perceptions of the Burmese, particularly when bilateral relations are strained. For the past 300 years, Thailand has had expansionist tendencies whenever it is militarily strong. Thailand has also claimed that despite its current friendly relations with its neighbours, it cannot afford to be complacent and needs to maintain its military preparedness in order to maintain a military balance with its neighbours to ensure even political bargaining. In another example, Singapore's insecurities have created a long and deep-seated suspicion of its Malay neighbours, particularly Malaysia, partly due to the common experience of merger and separation which formed the perception that Singapore was surrounded by 'hostile' Malay neighbours. It was based on this that Singapore undertook to build up its military defence which antagonized Malaysia as well, leading to an arms race between the two. Such issue is not easily resolved as their suspicion towards each other were so entrenched that it also affected their ability to resolve other issues and aggravated them, such as in resolving the Pedra Branca issue.

Achieving regional cooperation was difficult due to interstate tensions: Early organisations prior to ASEAN such as SEATO and ASPAC failed to achieve regional cooperation due to interstate tensions. This is because Southeast Asian countries were from different blocs in the Cold War years, some were allied to the US while others chose to be neutral. Yet others were communist. Thus, it prevented the formation of a truly cohesive and affiliation free organisation. Both these agencies were US-led and western dominated and failed to promote regional cooperation between the SEA states. In addition, ASA cooperation was temporarily suspended when the problem of the creation of Malaysia was challenged by Indonesia and the Philippines in 1963. Maphilindo was dismantled because of Indonesia's policy of Konfrontasi with the newly constituted Malaysia, which they saw as a form of neo-colonialism. Thus, regional cooperation was difficult because the inter-state disputes between Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia which neutralised ASA and MAPHILINDO worked against regional cooperation between SEA states.

Achieving regional cooperation was difficult due to the differences between ASEAN member states: Attempts at regional cooperation in the political areas largely failed because of the huge differences between the ASEAN member states- historical, racial, religious, cultural, political and economic, which translated into interstate disputes. Some of the most obvious ethno religious divisions were between Malay/Islamic Indonesia, Thai/Buddhist Thailand, Chinese/Buddhist-Confucian Singapore, Malay/Christian Philippines and predominantly Malay/Islamic Malaysia. All were politically unstable, under varying degrees of siege from communist and ethnic opponents. All economies were fragile, particularly Indonesia's where annual per capita income of only US\$50 was less than a third that of other ASEAN partners.

Regional cooperation was futile because of the states' preference for bilateralism: SEA states preferred to engage in bilateral exchanges and cooperation in the political security field rather than through the regional mechanisms because bilateral cooperation on security issues produced clearer outcomes than those obtained through ASEAN or the ARF. Examples of recent cooperative security arrangements include: joint Thai and Singaporean air force training in the Philippines; agreement between Malaysia and the Philippines providing for military information exchanges, usage of each other's military facilities for repairs, and joint military exercises; agreements between Singapore and Indonesia enabling Singapore to hold naval exercises in Indonesian waters; extension of Malaysian-Thai joint air exercises to patrol cooperation in maritime areas; and bilateral defense cooperation between Indonesia and Malaysia resulting in joint military exercises and frequent high level military exchanges and visits.

Regional cooperation was not futile: The continued existence and survival of ASEAN in spite of the huge differences between ASEAN states shows that regional cooperation was not futile. All countries in the new organization of ASEAN had bilateral difficulties with their neighbours. Indonesia had just wound up 'konfrontasi' with Singapore and Malaysia, Singapore had been forced to leave Malaysia, and Malaysia and the Philippines were locked in

dispute over ownership of the northern Borneo state of Sabah. Under such circumstances ASEAN never could have survived if member countries had failed to adhere to with a reasonable degree of consistency to the provisions of the Declaration of Concord in attempting to settle intra-ASEAN disputes peacefully. Successes at regional cooperation can be seen in the political cooperation between ASEAN member states and general compliance with the ASEAN Concord. ASEAN Concord- ASEAN Concord called for the strengthening of political solidarity by promoting the harmonization of views, coordinating positions and where possible and desirable, taking common action. Despite the differences between the ASEAN member states and political leaders, government leaders generally refrained from open criticism of their neighbours, except for occasional pronouncements by senior figures such as Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew and Malaysia's Mahathir Mohammad and during times of high bilateral tension. They erred on the side of caution when others government's actions arguably impinged on fundamental human rights. There were, for example, no open criticisms of military coups in Thailand, martial law in the Philippines, Indonesian actions in East Timor, or the use of detention without trial in Malaysia and Singapore. At the most, expressions of concern were conveyed privately.

