

U.S. Southeast Asia Relations

national identities after independence

REMEMBER:

• self-determination is the people's right to be independent and govern themselves

1950-1975: Idealism Gives Way to Reality

↳ challenges following independence:

- assertion of autonomy (never one version of the nationalists vision. In Indonesia, multiple "currents": secular, Islamic)
- economic underdevelopment (stagnation; no training or handoff)
- competing ideologies + poor econ. conditions
- unrest & insurgencies
- regime change

CONTEXT

throwback to Bandung Conference (decolonization, self-determination)

Today (what led to decolonization?)

Country	Colonial power	Year of national independence	Method of achieving independence	Formation of national armed forces
Brunei	Great Britain	1984	Peaceful	1961
Burma/ Myanmar	Great Britain	1948	Peaceful	1941
Cambodia	France	1953	Peaceful	1946
Indonesia	Netherlands	1949	Revolutionary	1945
Laos	France	1953	Peaceful	1949
Malaysia	Great Britain	1957	Peaceful	1957
North Vietnam	France	1955	Revolutionary	1944
Philippines	Spain/USA	1946	Peaceful	1935
South Vietnam	France	1955	Revolutionary	1955
Siam/ Thailand	-	-	-	1852
Singapore	Great Britain	1965	Peaceful	1965
Timor-Leste	Portugal*	2002	Violent	2001



↳ an era of independence; note how some countries obtained independence peacefully while others were revolutionary or violent

regime change

1965: Philippines
1967: Indonesia
1970: Cambodia

philippines ⇒

- Macapagal wasn't anti-US but relations were starting to sour under him (i.e. he changed Phil. Independence Day from July 4 to June 12 [in line w/ the 1898 Declaration of Independence of the Malolos Republic])
- Under Marcos, U.S. military spending + economic investment boomed

Indonesia ⇒

- By the 1960s Sukarno, one of the hosts of the Bandung Conference, was a major antagonist of the U.S.
- General Suharto was very pro-U.S. (similar patterns as Marcos once he took power)

Cambodia ⇒

- Sihanouk had declared the Kingdom of Cambodia neutral during the CW
- Lon Nol drew close to the U.S. + S. Vietnam

↳ The Khmer Rouge then overthrew Lon Nol and in 1976, established Democratic Kampuchea - a socialist agrarian utopian state
↳ Pro-U.S., anti-communist, authoritarian

U.S. Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia timeline

- The Eisenhower Administration: War Subversion + Instilling the American Way
- 1953: President Eisenhower establishes the United States Info. Agency (USIA)
- 1954: U.S. supports French in First Indochinese War
- 1955: CIA begins its "Secret War" operations in Laos

1957: Eisenhower admin. attempts to overthrow Indonesian gov't

- The Kennedy + Johnson Administrations: New Challenges, Deepened Hostilities

1961-1963: U.S. special forces troops and military advisors sent to train Vietnamese Army

Nov 22, 1963: President Kennedy is assassinated

1944: Sukarno declares "go to hell with your aid"

1945: Anti-communist policide carried out w/ knowledge & support of U.S. officials in Washington & Indonesia

1965: "Operation Rolling Thunder"; "Americanization" of the Second Indochinese War

1968: "ORT" ends

- The Nixon + Ford Administrations: Combating Communism @ all Costs

1969: Richard Nixon takes office & vows to achieve "peace w/ honor" in Vietnam.

Mar 1969 - May 1970: U.S. conducts covert "Operation Menu" bombings in Laos & Cambodia

1970-1974: President Nixon pursues a policy of Vietnamization

April 30, 1975: The Fall of Saigon

Dec. 7, 1975: U.S. greenlights T'sian invasion of E. Timor

An Uneasy Balance of Power



Sukarno



The PKI

The Army



Sukarno:

- guided democracy
- 1960: declared himself president for life
- argued to acquiesce to him in order to survive
- PKI + the Army \Rightarrow anti-communism, pro-U.S. b/c trained by the U.S.
- Sukarno: "puppetmaster" - manipulates both, but not tenable \rightarrow declares NASAKOM: Nationalism, Islam, Communists

The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI)

- By the early 1960s, the PKI was the world's largest non-ruling communist party
- The party had a:
 - youth wing
 - women's wing
 - labor union
- PKI campaigns included:
 - unilateral land seizures (aksi sepihak)
 - anti-imperialist rallies & campaigns
 - proposal of a "fifth force"

FOCUS ON:

- why did the U.S. become concerned about Indonesia & PKI?
- PKI was highly organized
- politics on the street, not the ballot box
- PKI could tap into so many people which meant Sukarno was interested in them
- "Fifth force" alternative to the Army -

"A Pretext for Mass Murder"

Oct. 1, 1965 - a group calling itself the "September 30th Movement" (or G30S) kidnapped + killed 6 generals, who allegedly were plotting a coup against Sukarno. The movement marked the end of Sukarno's presidency + Suharto's rise to power.

aming the people

* many aspects of G30S remain a mystery to historians: who was behind it? To what extent was the Communist Party involved? Did Suharto know about it? Did Sukarno know anything about it?

U.S. - Indonesia Relations

- U.S. support for Indonesian Independence in 1940s turned to subversion in late-1950s
- 1957: CIA attempted to overthrow Sukarno; sent a pilot who crashed; jailed by Indonesia
- Relationship worsened around 1963 as Sukarno became disillusioned w/ the U.S.
- Anti-Americanism increased in the mid-1960s
 - ↳ Anti-Americanism: Sukarno develops closer relations w/ USSR, China, Ho Chi Minh
- By September 1965, U.S. officials prepared to pull out of Indonesia

The Logistics of Mass Violence

- 500k - 1 Mil dead
- how victims were killed:
 - raids
 - secret executions
 - disease
 - torture
 - malnourishment
- > 100k political prisoners were held w/o charge or trial
- rape + sexual violence



U.S. Involvement in the 1965-66 Anti-Communist Mass Violence

- political intervention before the coup; support for Suharto following it
 - ↳ propping up opposition - just like Castillo Armas in Guatemala
- Support + funding to militias and the army
 - ↳ U.S. helped finance opposition, provided them "vitamins" (enhancing drugs? bullets?)
- Policy of silence, denial, blurring the truth about the violence

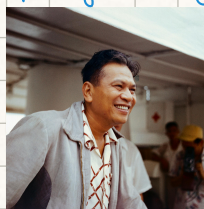
NB: Prisoners were kept in secret prisons, military prisons, + prison camps.

BIG QUESTION:

what was the role of the U.S. in all of this?

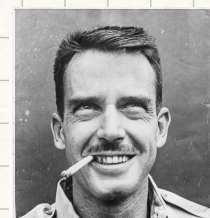
Magsaysay + Lansdale

- 1950-53: Operative Col. Edward Lansdale helps Defense Minister Ramon Magsaysay defeat the Hukbalahap (Huk) communist insurgency
- 1953: Lansdale helps engineer Magsaysay's ascendancy to become President of the Philippines



← Ramon Magsaysay

Edward Lansdale →



- Magsaysay supported U.S. forces in the fight against the Japanese; his unit helped clear land for American forces to arrive
- Lansdale used overt + covert American money and material both to help crush the Huks and bring Magsaysay to the presidency. In Magsaysay, the U.S. saw a person who would advance American capitalist(s) + diplomatic objectives in SEA.

Ferdinand Marcos

- 1965: Marcos replaces Diosado Macapagal as president
- 1969: Then-Gov. Ronald Reagan calls Marcos a "freedom fighter" against communism
- 1983: Philippine opposition leader Benigno Aquino assassinated; U.S. officials start exploring how to remove Marcos from office
- 1986: U.S. withdraws support for Marcos amid election fraud