



**SEMINAR ON THE EARLY YEARS OF ASEAN:
FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF ASEAN FOUNDING FATHERS**

Friday, 26 March 2010
2.30 pm – 4.00 pm
ISEAS Seminar Room II

About the Speaker

Dr Sompong Sucharitkul
Distinguished Professor Emeritus
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Dr Sompong Sucharitkul is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International and Comparative Law at Golden Gate University, USA, and currently Dean of the Faculty of Law at Rangsit University, Thailand. He received his BA (Honours), BCL, MA, DPhil, and DCL from Oxford University, his Docteur en Droit, University of Paris, France, and his LLM from Harvard University. Dr Sompong served as Thailand's Ambassador to Japan, Italy, Greece, Israel, France, Portugal, and the Benelux countries, as well as the European Union and UNESCO. He represented Thailand in the UN General Assembly for nearly three decades. He is currently a member of the Commercial Arbitration Centre at Cairo and the Regional Centre for Arbitration at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; member of the Panels of Arbitrators and of Conciliators of the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes, World Bank, Washington, DC; elected member of the Institute of International Law (Geneva) and; Vice President of the International Academy of Human Rights (Paris). Dr Sompong taught international law at universities throughout the world, and also served on the UN Compensation Commission, formed to process claims against Iraq for actions during the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Dr Sompong is known to have been one of the closest aides to Dr Thanat Khoman, Thailand's Foreign Minister (1958-1971), who was considered as one of the founding fathers of ASEAN.



About the Seminar

This seminar is about the events leading to ASEAN's founding and regional cooperation for economic development, depicting the difficulties facing the founding countries of ASEAN and the urgent need for collective survival and stability, outlining the aims and purposes of regional cooperation for Southeast Asia as a geographical concept. These were primary preoccupations of the leaders of Southeast Asian nations. It was for them to make the choice regarding the type of regional association to be established that would endure the storms brewing over the Pacific and the Indian Oceans at the time. Peace, progress and prosperity were the key words that inspired the ASEAN countries to come together setting aside their bitter experiences and searching for better ways to survive in peace and harmony, each member making valuable contributions to the collectivity of the ASEAN community.

The formation of ASEAN itself was of historic significance, preceded by an official visit of the Foreign Minister of Thailand to Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, to discuss and consult on a draft constitutive instrument that was to launch the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Bangkok on 8th August 1967, following a two-day meeting of the drafting committee at Laem Than, Bang Saen, to adopt the draft joint communique, to be formally known as the ASEAN Declaration for the Bangkok Declaration. This simple joint communique was to become the constitution of ASEAN until the adoption of a more comprehensive instrument, the ASEAN Charter, after four decades of vibrant existence. ASEAN has grown from the original five members, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, to today's ASEAN of ten with the successive addition of Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia.

Many historic events have taken place in the past forty three years of ASEAN life, but the talk will be limited to the early years of ASEAN as it struggles to earn recognition as a viable regional grouping of like-minded Southeast Asian peoples, mentioning but a few of ASEAN's early achievements to strengthen ASEAN solidarity and reinforce ASEAN resilience.

You are cordially invited to this seminar.

Organised by:

