

*Europe*  
*and the*  
*Asia Pacific*



edited by Hanns Maull,  
Gerald Segal and Jusuf Wanandi

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## Europe and the Asia Pacific

Both Europe and the Asia Pacific agree their relationship is increasingly important. For many years it has been considered the weakest leg of the trilateral international system with US/Europe relations at the forefront. In the last few years, however, real efforts have been made to broaden and enhance the ties that bind Europe and Asia.

This book is organised into five sections that examine the basic aspects of Europe/Asia relations. The first covers the historical background, the second is concerned with the contemporary political setting and the third with vitally important economic issues. The last two parts deal with security considerations and policy initiatives. All have been compiled by leading experts from both regions.

*Europe and the Asia Pacific* is the most wide ranging and accessible study currently available of this increasingly important relationship. Out of the work on this study grew the Council for Asia-Europe cooperation (CAEC), a body of think tanks that supports the Asia-Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM) process.

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and Jusuf Wanandi



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# Preface

In what sense can it be meaningful to talk about the relations between Europe and Asia? Both parts of the Eurasian land mass are so large and diverse that it is hard enough to understand each individual region, let alone the relations between their disparate parts. As a result, this topic might well have remained relatively dormant if it had not been energised by the realities of modern international affairs. As part of the myriad changes after the end of the Cold War, companies and governments have begun to think and act as if there are meaningful relationships between Europe and Asia. Those of us who have studied the subject for decades, and have vainly suggested that companies and governments in Europe and Asia need to take each other more seriously, are delighted with the new attention given to Euro-Asian relations by the public policy community. The first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Bangkok in March 1996 was only the most dramatic evidence of the new trend. There is clearly a new and major challenge to understand the nature of, and prospects for, the relationships between Europe and Asia. This is the task of the book that you are holding.

Despite being ASEM enthusiasts, we are the first to admit the complexity of the subject. Careful readers will have already noted that the previous paragraph talks of relationships in the plural. We are well aware that Europe and Asia are hard to define. In fact, Asians did not have a conception of Asia' until it was brought to them from the outside. The names of Asia and Europe are said to have derived from the Assyrian words for 'sunrise, east' (Asu) and 'sunset, west' (Ereb). The notion of Asia was carried by Arab and then European traders to the east.

For the purposes of our analysis, there are two concepts of political geography of importance—'Pacific Asia' and Asia Pacific'. We are mostly focusing on Pacific Asia—the part of Asia that is close to the waters of the Pacific Ocean. More or less in keeping with the ASEM process, in Pacific Asia we include all countries in Southeast Asia (including Burma) around the rim (including Taiwan) up to and including Japan. Russia, as a nonAsian Asian (and non-APEC, and non-ASEM member) tends to be left out of our analysis. Pacific Asia is, in the German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel's phrase, 'where the music plays', where there is dynamic growth and deep uncertainty about sustained stability and even prosperity. We omit those parts of Asia that are not near the

Pacific. If Asia is understood to start to the east of a line drawn through and below the Ural mountains, then we should have included South and Central Asia. We did not, although India may well be asked to join ASEM in due course, just as it has joined the ASEAN Regional Forum.

The second concept of political geography which we consider important is Asia Pacific'. It includes the Americas, Russia, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific—hence, most importantly from the point of view of regional stability, also the United States. 'Asia Pacific' may in fact be able to provide some of the answers to the challenges of a rising 'Pacific Asia'. 'Europe and Asia Pacific', the title of this book, implies that Europe, too, may be able to make a contribution.

Our definition of Pacific Asia as a focus has a great deal to do with a pragmatic acceptance of the public policy agenda. It is worth reflecting how ASEM's Asian membership evolved. To make a long story short (but we hope not incorrect), the notion of holding an Asia-Europe summit was derived from the twin motives of Europeans wishing to take a greater part in the Asian success story, and the Asian sense that it would be useful to open a dialogue with Europeans, just as they have with the Americas through APEC. The specific formulation of ASEM came from ASEAN, and specifically Singapore. Following Singapore Prime Minister Goh's trip to France in 1994, and the subsequent World Economic Forum's inaugural 'Europe-East Asia Summit' in Singapore in 1995, a draft structure for ASEM was devised. ASEAN had recently been successful in establishing the ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) and saw itself as more capable than any other regional actor of being able to formulate an inter-regional agenda. ASEAN, and Singapore in particular, knew that they would only be credible in a dialogue with Europe if they involved the three countries that had extensive experience in dealing with Europeans and also had major economic and political relations across Eurasia. Hence the inclusion of China, Japan and South Korea to make up the ten countries on the Asian side.

Although observers were slow to recognise it at the time, these ten Pacific Asian states were also the components of what had become known as the East Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC), a grouping called for by Malaysia as a way to restrict the influence of the 'Caucasian' powers in APEC. The EAEC was opposed by the Americans and Australians and received a cool response from the United States' closest allies in Pacific Asia (Japan and South Korea). But because of its similarity in membership, in some circles ASEM was thought to have 'empowered' the EAEC. Leaving aside the emotive comparison to the EAEC, it remained true that one of the major achievements of ASEM, even as it just began, was that for the first time the states of Pacific Asia tried to function as a coherent group. The irony was enormous, but it was nevertheless true that it was the Europeans of all people who both gave Asians their common name, and gave life to their common purpose as an East Asian caucus.

Perhaps the irony is not so enormous if one considers that Europeans have more experience than most in thinking in effective regional terms. The great

experiment of creating a European Union out of disparate and proud states has sensitised Europeans to the problems and possibilities of building unity out of diversity, and finding the best way to govern such a complex, multi-layered system. But the fact that Europeans had already been thinking about such regionalism for some time made it easier for them to find a format for meeting with Asians. The European representation at ASEM was relatively simple—it was the states of the European Union. If new states should join the Union (e.g. Poland), then they will join ASEM. If some Europeans stay out of the Union (e.g. Switzerland) or withdraw from the Union (perhaps the UK), then they cannot be members of ASEM. For that reason, the quintessential Eurasian state—Russia—is not part of ASEM, even though its population is mainly European and its territory is mainly Asian.

Despite this neatness of definition, all is not so straightforward about European representation. Europeans, much more than Asians, are confused about whether they take part in ASEM as a single unit called ‘Europe’, or as fifteen individual sovereign states. The EU, as an entity, is represented at ASEM and seeks to co-ordinate European positions regarding ASEM issues. Asians are generally wary of such an EU-led arrangement, for they know only too well the problems of EU representation in the ARF where the ‘troika’ (past, current and the next Presidents of the EU—a six-monthly rotating position) represent Europe. Because the EU is still sorting out how common its foreign and security policy might be, it still has no effective way to represent itself abroad apart from on trade issues. Because ASEM is concerned with economic, political and security matters, the EU can only be part of the European role in the Asia-Europe dialogue.

Just as the ASEM deals with the three issues of economic, political and security affairs, so our analysis ranges broadly over these areas. We thought it vital to begin with a sense of the historical setting of the Asia-Europe relationship. Unlike the transPacific relationship, where there is relatively little history to be considered, Europe and Asia have been dealing with each other for thousands of years. The most intense phase of interaction until recently was the period of European imperialism and colonialism in Pacific Asia. Europe’s intrusion began in the early sixteenth century and the major colonial phase can be said to begin with the first opium war against China from 1839 to 1842 and the opening of Japan in 1853. Imperialism and colonialism left deep scars in Pacific Asia’s landscape and psyche, but overall the impact was multi-faceted, as [chapter 1](#) argues.

In this sense it perhaps does make sense to talk of relations among civilisations, although the cultures and traditions of Europe and Pacific Asia are so diverse as to make such analysis of very limited value. But the very fact that there is a civilisational dimension to the relationship makes it all the more necessary to discuss values and habits of thinking. We are very aware that there is a special sense of grudge in the way Asians and Europeans talk about conflicts of values and the persistence of hubris. Much of this tension, creative and otherwise, is derived from the complex history of interaction between Europeans

and Asians. The fact that a number of European states were, in living memory, colonial powers in Pacific Asia goes some way to explain current neuralgia. It also goes some way to explain differences in the way individual European countries react to Pacific Asia and the different starting points of Asian countries. These matters are discussed in the first section of [chapter 1](#), and then in scattered references throughout many of the contributions.

The second section of [chapter 1](#) is concerned with how some of these values are woven into contemporary political systems and debates. We do not shy away from robust debates about human rights and forms of democratic representation. In this lively section there is a clear sense of the diversity of views both within Europe and Asia, as well as between the two areas. What is perhaps most striking is the emergence of increasingly complex identities and the ways in which civil societies are transformed as a result. At a time of rapid economic change in Pacific Asia, it would be odd if societies and political systems did not also undergo rapid and far-reaching change.

[Chapter 3](#) is concerned with economic relations between Europe and Asia. Conventional wisdom suggests that this is the main focus of the ASEM process and, as we have already noted, this is the area in which the EU finds it easiest to operate as a coherent group. For the states of Pacific Asia, economics are also seen as the main focus of attention and by and large they would prefer not to deal with political and security matters. It was the Europeans who insisted, with scattered support in Asia, on a wider agenda.

A great deal of the economic agenda concerns the actions of individuals and corporations. The role of government is analysed with a view to understanding the best role it can play in enhancing economic relations. Because most economies in ASEM are essentially capitalist, it would be strange if the primary feature of economic activity was state directed. But the role of the state is vital both in terms of how to create the best economic climate for prosperity, and how to ensure that thinking about regionalism is most conducive to an open market economy that complies with international norms. One of the key concerns is in effect whether the much discussed ‘open regionalism’ is an oxymoron, or whether regionalism is in fact a useful way to enhance greater openness in the global market economy. We also return to these subjects in [chapter 5](#) when we discuss the specific policies of states and regions.

[Chapter 4](#) takes us into the realm of security relations. In the context of Pacific Asia, most thinking about security is ‘comprehensive’, taking into account a wide variety of factors already discussed in earlier parts of the book. Several of the authors discuss political and economic factors which must underpin any sensible analysis of the prospects for stability in Pacific Asia. Perhaps because of such a broad analysis, this chapter contains the most obvious and robust debates about the prospects for stability and the reasons for possible insecurity. These debates are not just between Europeans and Asians, for there are significant differences of emphasis between Asians and between Europeans. This chapter also includes markedly diverse analysis of the key Sino-American relationship.

As is evident elsewhere in the book, the American factor looms large in any discussion of Asia-Europe relations, but nowhere more so than in security affairs. As is also evident, the discussion is about security issues in Pacific Asia, but not in Europe. To the extent that this discussion is unbalanced as a result, it is indicative of the need for further work by Asians on European security.

**Chapter 5** attempts to integrate an analysis of the policies of different parts of Asia and Europe. The focus is on the major sets of relations between Europe and Northeast Asia, China and Southeast Asia. As in the previous chapter, this selection suggests a particular focus on a Eurocentric agenda. What is still needed is work on Asia's different relations with specific parts of Europe. Such an analysis is implicit in many of the contributions, and could be usefully made more explicit. But even with such limitations, it is clear that there is great diversity in the Euro-Asian dialogue. Regions and countries have very specific priorities, and for that reason alone, it is very hard to generalise about relations between Europe and Asia as coherent units. The conclusion seems to be that ASEM in practice should be seen as twenty-six actors (including the EU), rather than two effective teams. This conclusion, in all its subtleties, is also evident in the detailed discussion in this chapter about the ASEM process itself and the basis for common approaches by Europe and Asia to other international organisations and associations.

Given the vastness of the analytical canvas, there could not be a concluding chapter that identifies agreed arguments, let alone suggests policy recommendations. But it is useful to identify mostly shared perceptions about how we should think about Euro-Asian relations. The starting point is that this is a serious and viable relationship deserving of much closer analysis. But the second, and related point is that Euro-Asian relations are best seen as a cluster of relationships that will remain diverse for some time. There are natural, what might be called 'ASEMtries' in the Europe-Asia relationship, both within and between regions. Therefore, and in the jargon of European Union affairs, there is a need to think in terms of 'variable geometry'—the notion that different states will work together on specific issues. There is no need for everyone to co-operate on all issues. ASEM should not be judged on whether it can reach coherent agreement among twenty-six actors on specific policy issues, but rather whether it is conducive to the creation of a series of closer Euro-Asian relations.

Another theme that emerges from the analysis is the uncertainty about the most effective level for handling Euro-Asian relations. ASEM is one answer for what might be called (again in EU speak) the 'subsidiarity' question—at what level are policy issues best handled. As we have suggested, not all issues between Europeans and Asians are best handled at an ASEM level. Some are best left to a cluster of specific states. Many, especially in the economic sphere, are best left to companies and individuals. Others, most notably those concerned with intellectual exchange, are best left to independent academics, thinkers, and think-tanks. At all these different levels, there will be a range of different issues that can be addressed in the ASEM process. The chapters that follow set out a wide

range of lessons from the past and ideas for the future. When reading the analysis in the rest of this book it is worth keeping in mind one central question: What can Europeans and Asians best do together that they cannot do either by themselves or with some other partner? This too is an aspect of the subsidiarity question, and is perhaps the most important question that the ASEM participants need to answer. For some possible answers, read on.

Before we conclude, it is necessary to offer an explanation of the origins of this project, its format, and how it fits with further work in progress. This project, like the ASEM process itself, is the result of a complex, Euro-Asian effort. It has its origins in the individual efforts of a number of scholars and public policy analysts in Europe and Asia who have long urged the creation of a serious Euro-Asian dialogue. Various networks had been created and although they are far too numerous to name here, many of their key players were brought together in the effort to produce this volume. Perhaps the most sensible date to note is a workshop convened by the European University Institute in Florence in March 1995 which included European and Asian scholars and public policy analysts. The conclusion of the meeting was the need to organise a much more extensive and thorough analysis of Euro-Asian relations. In the growing climate of European awareness of the importance of Pacific Asia, Hanns Maull from the German Society for Foreign Affairs and Gerald Segal from the UK's Economic and Social Research Council's newly created Pacific Asia Programme, came together to work with Jusuf Wanandi from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta. Further intellectual and financial support was sought from the Asia Pacific Agenda Project and the Japan Center for International Exchange, both of which are based in Tokyo. Other valuable financial support was provided by the Commission of the European Communities, the Koerber Foundation, the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation, the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, the Nippon Foundation and the Foreign Ministry of Japan. We believe this to be the largest research and conference initiative on Euro-Asian relations ever launched. The project supported research on more than two dozen papers and involved a series of workshops in Europe and Asia leading up to a plenary meeting in the idyllic surrounding of Bali, Indonesia on 28–31 May 1996. The timing of this process thus preceded and followed the first ASEM meeting in Bangkok in March 1996.

The first ASEM, with its call for the creation of networks of specialists and think tanks, was the stimulus for those gathered in Indonesia to establish an effective intellectual network to deepen the discussion of the burgeoning Euro-Asian relationship. Many of the participants had already been involved in similar networks established to support both the APEC and the ARF processes. Therefore they decided to develop a 'track two' network (which brings together specialists and officials acting in their private capacities) for the ASEM process, called the Council for Asia—Europe co-operation (CAEC). The CAEC links six think tanks in Europe (IISS in London (secretariat), DGAP in Bonn, IFRI in Paris, RIIA in London, IAI in Rome, IIS in Stockholm) and six in Asia (JCIE in

Tokyo (secretariat), CSIS in Jakarta, IIRI in Seoul, IPS in Singapore, IAPS in Beijing and SPAS in Canberra). This book is published under the auspices of the CAEC which is also working on various task forces and research projects relevant to the ASEM process. The work of the CAEC is to be reported to the ASEM officials meeting in their regular forums leading up to ASEM 2 in London in April 1998.

Finally, it is necessary to explain the unique structure of this book. This is not an edited book in the normal sense of the phrase. Given the fact that we had enough papers to fill more than two weighty volumes, and had several days of lively discussion among a wider group of specialists and officials, we decided to develop a special style of publication. What follows is heavily edited text connected by substantial prose from the editors. The contributors' text should not be read as stand-alone papers, even though these excerpts are drawn from something that was a more orthodox conference paper. The editors excised large sections of many papers, in many cases because material overlapped. This style of editing allows the reader to get the best of the papers, and also have a sense of the discussions in the wider meeting. The contributors are only responsible for the material labelled as theirs. Those wishing to refer to text should cite the title of the section. The editors take responsibility for the entire product, and in the spirit of a pragmatic and complex ASEM agenda, commend the novel approach to future editors as a flexible way to handle complex and massive material.

Hanns Maull  
Gerald Segal  
Jusuf Wanandi

# 1

## The historical setting

Books such as ours should look back to our history not merely to ‘set the context’, but also because there are real ways in which the past informs the present. It is our belief that a full understanding of European relations with Pacific Asia is not possible without a sense of the diversity of the historical experience. History casts long and different shadows over relations between Europe and East Asia. Marco Polo may or may not have been in China, but Vasco da Gama certainly landed in India in 1498. His voyage opened the maritime spice trade between Asia and Europe and thus undermined the traditional trading routes of the silk road. It also marked the first instalment in a long and painful history of ruthless exploitation and wanton killing. Yet, as the following essay by Kwa Chong Guan, a distinguished Singaporean officer and historian shows, the colonial inheritance is much more complex than a simple revulsion against European colonialism. Although his analysis focuses on only part of Southeast Asia, the issues raised clearly have important implications for the rest of the region.

KWA CHONG GUAN

What remained of the old colonial order at the end of the struggles for independence in the 1950s? How do we in Southeast Asia view the colonial inheritance? The emotional and political response is that little remains of the old colonial order because we consciously, often violently, rejected it in the fight against the re-imposition of colonial rule after World War II and the struggle for independence. But a dispassionate response suggests a more complex answer about Southeast Asian attitudes towards their colonial inheritance.

There are three fairly different categories of issues in any consideration of our colonial inheritance. The first two are historiographical issues of defining the intent and extent of the European inheritance and our perceptions of it. Just as the Romans had dilemmas over what they were inheriting from the Greeks,<sup>1</sup> so too we have dilemmas deciding what to do with what the Europeans who came to explore and conquer our world were leaving to us as their heritage. We in

Southeast Asia do not have the option of ‘rediscovering’ our colonial inheritance. Our colonial past collapsed into a post-colonial present, vastly complicating our attitudes towards that colonial past. Defining that European heritage continues to be an issue. And our perceptions of what the Europeans left us changed with time. How Pangeran (Prince) Dipanagara perceived the Dutch in the early nineteenth century is quite different from how Soekarno perceived them in 1929. The third issue in considering our colonial inheritance is a moral one of deciding whether it is an inheritance we want to receive or consign to ‘the dustbin of history’. It is this third issue that has loomed large in the debate, to the exclusion of the first two historiographical issues. This essay attempts to untangle these three issues.

In 1906, Sir Frank Swettenham, late Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States set out ‘to tell truthfully a story never yet told, though the facts, as far as they concern the Federated States, are no discredit to the British nation’. That story, entitled *British Malaya*, with the revealing sub-title *An account of the origin and progress of British influence in Malaya*<sup>2</sup> aims ‘to set out accurately the important facts which led to the intervention of Great Britain in the domestic affairs of the countries now known as the Federated Malay States, and to record exactly the steps by which they have been led to their present position as Dependencies of the British Crown’.

As Sir Frank recalled, a series of British Governors, from Sir Andrew Clarke in 1874, intervened in the Malay states to end the anarchy threatening trade. A residential system under which a British Adviser was attached to the courts of the Malay Sultans to advise on ‘the maintenance of peace and law, the initiation of a sound system of taxation, with the consequent development of the resources of the country, and the supervision of the collection of the revenue, so as to ensure the receipt of funds necessary to carry out the principal engagements of the Government, and to pay for the cost of the British officers’, was introduced.

In 1895 the four Malay states to which British Advisers were attached were brought into a Federation which Sir Frank had no small hand in bringing about. Sir Frank is clear that the prosperity of the Federated Malay States was due to the efforts of the Chinese, the Europeans, and British officers in the service of the Malay Government. In a passage worth quoting at length, Sir Frank wrote that ‘Chinese enterprise and Chinese industry... supplied the funds with which the country was developed. But without the British officers to secure order and justice, the Chinese would never have entered the country in tens of thousands, without British control of the revenues, there never would have been any money to spend on the construction of road and railways and all the other works of development; and without the exercise of foresight and intelligent direction, the funds available would have been much smaller and might have been spent in vain. European planters and miners only came into the States when the result of Chinese enterprise had already proved the rich resources of the land’. It was the European planters and miners who introduced the technology which raised the productivity of the plantations and mines. But above all else, it was ‘to the

English servants of the Government that the present prosperity of the Malay states is mainly due'.<sup>3</sup>

Sir Frank and his generation would have liked to believe that this was the legacy they left behind, that they 'went into the Malay states for the benefit [of the Malays, "the people of the country"] and we have somehow managed to give them an independence, a happiness and a prosperity which they never knew before'.<sup>4</sup>

This mission to educate and civilise the native is very much shaped by British perceptions of the 'natives'. For India, James Mill (1773–1836), the utilitarian philosopher and economist who worked for the East India Company, established the image of the Indian, his culture and history as backward, superstitious, and barbaric; his government as tyrannical and irrational. Mill's *The History of British India*, first published in 1817,<sup>5</sup> was 'required reading' at Haileybury College, which trained the servants of the East India Company. Mill described Hindu religious rituals as 'grotesque and frivolous ceremonies...an endless succession of observances'. Sir Frank Swettenham's image of the Malay is not too different. He found the Malay an artistic person who can produce the most beautiful objects, but extremely sensitive to slights and insults (and liable to run amok when provoked), conservative and faithful to his religion, Islam. But above all for Swettenham, the Malay 'has no stomach for really hard work, either of the brain or the hands'.<sup>6</sup> Similar narratives of a mission civilisatrice are present in the French and Dutch texts of their colonial record.<sup>7</sup>

It is not surprising that most of us in Asia rejected these colonial images of us and their narratives of educating and civilising us. For many of us, the Europeans came not to civilise, but to dominate Asia, as the historian K.M. Panikkar argued in 1953. For Panikkar, the period 1498–1945 'presents a singular unity in its fundamental aspects'. These are 'the dominance of maritime power over the land masses of Asia; the imposition of a commercial economy over communities whose economic life in the past had been based not on international trade, but mainly on agricultural production and internal trade; and thirdly, the domination of the peoples of Europe, who held the mastery of the sea, over the affairs of Asia'.<sup>8</sup>

Today we recognise that Panikkar may have overstated his case.<sup>9</sup> The Portuguese, concerned primarily with trading and preaching, did not perceive a need to establish a territorial presence in Asia. But the seventeenth-century Dutch, British and French traders perceived the need for a territorial presence. On the Coromandel coast, the English, Dutch and French East India Companies established new European ports. The British built Fort St George on the grounds of the old coastal village of Chennapatnam in 1641 and expanded that fort into the city of Madras. The Dutch transformed the old Indian port of Palecat and Nagapatnam, which they secured from the Portuguese in 1658 while the French established themselves in Pondicherry in 1672.<sup>10</sup>

In Southeast Asia, a new VOC (Dutch East India Company) Governor-General, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, recaptured and fortified in 1619 the old city of

Jayakarta (where the Dutch had had a trading post since 1611), renamed it Batavia, and made it the capital of an expanding trading state. In 1641, the VOC allied with Johor to capture Melaka from the Portuguese, and in 1667, it tied up with the Bugis to defeat the Makassarese kingdom of Gowa and take over Ujung Pandang, which was renamed 'Kasteel Rotterdam'.<sup>11</sup> In the same year, they intervened in support of the Javanese realm of Mataram when it was threatened by a rebellion in 1678.

This transition from trading and preaching to conquest and territorial annexation appears paradoxical.<sup>12</sup> For warfare was expensive, disruptive and reduced profits. The English industrialist and Member of Parliament Richard Cobden was led to complain in Parliament in 1853 about the 'constant wars and constant annexation of territory. In other parts of the world, no Minister of the Crown would take credit for offering to annex territory anywhere.... How is it that this goes on constantly in India to the loss and dilapidation of its finances?... Why do these things happen?'<sup>13</sup> The records indicate that the conquest and annexation of territory, whether by the English, Dutch or French East India Companies went against declared policies. More important, none of the East India Companies were structured to administer the territories they occupied. It was a capability they had to extemporaneously develop<sup>14</sup> and eventually found horrendously expensive. It was to bankrupt all of them in the nineteenth century; the *Nouvelle Compagnie des Indes Orientales*, the final in a series of French East India Companies, was liquidated after the Revolution, when the Assembly threw open the India trade in 1790. The VOC was the second to go under in 1800, and the English East India Company came next in 1856, after the great Mutiny. But the British and Dutch Crowns, which took over the Companies, continued to widen and deepen their presence in Asia, and were joined by the French in the late nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

Was conquest and annexation of territories therefore 'unintentional', 'unpremeditated' and 'unplanned', a consequence of circumstances forced upon the Companies?<sup>16</sup> It may have been, but for us in Asia, statements of 'Civilising Missions' or 'Manifest Destiny' or 'the White Man's Burden' were only lofty rationalisations and justifications for interventionist colonial policies to tax, introduce colonial legal systems and education and construct public works to open up the country for a variety of other more mundane reasons—especially to trade and plunder in the region.

In a rather bizarre demonstration of affinity towards the French, the brilliant if erratic Tipu Sultan of Mysore declared that he be addressed as 'Citoyen Tipu'. But the French failed to rally to Tipu Sultan's support in his struggle against the British, leaving him to be defeated by the new Governor-General Lord Wellesley and his brother Arthur (later the Duke of Wellington) in a campaign that was a dress rehearsal for Waterloo. In deciding to ally with the French<sup>17</sup> against the British, Tipu Sultan, who died defending his capital Seringapatam in 1799, was no different from most other Asian potentates or aspirants who perceived the Europeans as a new power to be allied with or challenged.