



Singapore's Foreign Policy: The Search For Regional Order

By Amitav Acharya



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The conventional understanding of Singapore's foreign policy can be summarized in three main propositions: first, it is dictated by the imperatives of being a small state; second, its primary purpose is to ensure Singapore's survival, given its small size; and third, this logic of survival dictates a realpolitik approach to foreign policy and national security. This book argues that an exclusively realist view of Singapore's foreign policy is inadequate. Singapore's foreign policy is also shaped by the positive effects of economic interdependence and regional institution-building instruments that realists tend to dismiss, but which Singapore has self-consciously tried to promote as instruments of regional order. The book first looks at the evolution of Singapore's foreign policy, before analyzing Singapore's international relations and national security in the context of economic growth and terrorism. It concludes with an interesting chapter on the impact of the rise of China and India on the regional landscape.

Contents: Introduction: Rethinking Singapore's Foreign Policy; Part I: Foundations: The Evolution of Singapore's Foreign Policy: Challenges of Change; The Economic Foundations of Singapore's Security: From Globalism to Regionalism?; Part II: Adaptations: Diplomacy in Hard Times: Singapore Confronts Global Terrorism and Regional Regression; Waging the War on Terror: Singapore's Responses and Dilemmas; Singapore and Southeast Asia in a Fast-changing Landscape: Coping with the Rise of China and India.

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Singapore's Foreign Policy: The Search For Regional Order By Amitav Acharya Bibliography

- Rank: #6697541 in Books
- Published on: 2007-11-26
- Released on: 2007-11-26
- Original language: English
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .49" w x 6.00" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 214 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

This is an insightful book. By highlighting Singapore's emphasis on ideas and cooperation rather than confrontation and conflict, Acharya sheds new light on the city-state's emerging key role in the region and its leaders' continuing influence in world affairs. Singapore's Foreign Policy: The Search for Regional Order reaffirms that Acharya is always worth reading --Richard Stubbs, McMaster University, Canada

This book of original essays challenges dominant explanations of Singapore's foreign policy, offering a nuanced portrait of the core ideas underpinning its policy strategies. I recommend it as required reading for all those interested in both Singapore as well as the wider Southeast Asian region --Rosemary Foot, University of Oxford, UK

Acharya systematically exposes the limitations of the dominant realist approach for understanding Singapore's foreign policy, challenging some influential foundational myths in the process. In rendering historical conjuncture, international structures and regional institutions integral to the analysis, Acharya sheds new light on the forces and dynamics behind Singapore's foreign policy --Garry Rodan, Murdoch University, Australia

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