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THE RISE OF CHINA AND THE CHINESE OVERSEAS

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THE RISE OF CHINA AND THE CHINESE OVERSEAS

*A Study of Beijing's
Changing Policy
in Southeast Asia
and Beyond*

Leo Suryadinata

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PREFACE

I have been studying Beijing's policy towards the Chinese overseas in Southeast Asia for many years. In 1978 I published an occasional paper on the topic, which was subsequently expanded into a book entitled *China and the ASEAN States: The Ethnic Chinese Dimension* (1985). In the past thirty years since that study, many new developments have taken place. When I first conducted my study, China was still weak. But, since the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries we have witnessed a rising China, the growing overseas presence of China's state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and a new wave of Chinese migration. China has also fine-tuned its foreign policy. Within this changed context, it would be interesting to re-examine Beijing's policy towards the Chinese overseas.

Beijing's policy today shows elements of both continuity and change. But, is change more significant than continuity? Is the new policy a form of Chinese transnationalism used by Beijing to serve its own core national interest? Is the policy more effective than before as a rising China is more appealing to the

Chinese overseas? What will be the likely impact on Southeast Asia and beyond?

When I was director of the Chinese Heritage Centre at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University (CHC-NTU) from January 2006 to October 2013, I wrote a few brief articles commenting on Beijing's policy towards the Chinese overseas. However, there were then few examples to support a discussion of continuity and change. I was also busy with other responsibilities and could not do a more detailed study of Beijing's policy.

I am glad that ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute has given me the opportunity finally to embark on this long intended study. Nevertheless, this is a brief study, limited to Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, Africa, and the Middle East. The emphasis is still on the Southeast Asian region, which is my major area of interest. A comprehensive study that covers other regions should be conducted to obtain a more thorough understanding of Beijing's relationship with the Chinese overseas.

I would like to thank Mr Tan Chin Tiong, director of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, for giving me the opportunity to conduct this study. I have benefitted from the comments of some of my colleagues at the Institute as well as those of three anonymous reviewers. Nevertheless, the views expressed in this study are my own.

Leo Suryadinata

10 June 2016

GLOSSARY

ACFROCA	All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese Association
CPC (not CCP)	Communist Party of China
<i>Da Qiaowu Zhengce</i> 大侨务政策	The Great Overseas Chinese Affairs Policy
<i>Daguo waijiao</i> 大国外交	Diplomacy of a Big Country
<i>Haiwai huaren</i> 海外华人	Chinese overseas (i.e., regardless of nationality)
<i>Han Ban</i> 汉办	Executive Body of the Chinese Language Council International
<i>Huagong</i> 华工	Chinese coolie
<i>Huaqiao</i> 华侨	Overseas Chinese (i.e., Chinese nationals overseas)
<i>Huaqiao shangren</i> 华侨商人	Chinese businessmen overseas who are citizens of China

<i>Huaren</i> 华人	Ethnic Chinese (Chinese overseas, mainly foreign nationals); in PRC, it refers to only those Chinese who have become citizens of foreign countries, even though in Southeast Asia it includes some <i>huaqiao</i> who have been in the region for a long time.
<i>Huashang</i> 华商	Ethnic Chinese businessmen
<i>Huayi</i> 华裔	Descendants of Chinese, referring to foreign citizens of Chinese origin, but in China, it often refers to those Chinese who have lost their Chinese culture.
<i>Huayi Ka</i> 华裔卡	Green Card for those of Chinese origin
<i>Laogong Yimin</i> 劳工移民	Labour migration
Nay Pyi Taw (Naypyitaw)	New capital city of Myanmar
OCAO	Overseas Chinese Affairs Office (see <i>Qiaoban</i> 侨办)
“One Belt One Road” (OBOR) 一带一路 Strategy/Initiative	The economic belt of overland silk road and the twenty-first century maritime silk road, proposed by President Xi Jinping in 2013.
<i>Qiao Ai</i> 侨爱	Love of Chinese compatriots overseas
<i>Qiaoban</i> 侨办	Shortened form of <i>Qiaowu bangongshi</i> 侨务办公室 (OCAO)
<i>Qiaobao</i> 侨胞	Chinese compatriots overseas
<i>Qiaolian</i> 侨联; see ACFROCA	Abbreviated form of <i>Zhonghua quan guo guiguo huaqiao lianhehui</i> 中华全国归国华侨联合会

<i>Qiaoshang</i> 侨商	Chinese businessmen overseas who are citizens of China
<i>Qiaowu gonggong waijiao</i> 侨务公共外交	Diaspora Affairs Public Diplomacy
<i>Shijie Huaqiao Huaren Gongshang Dahui</i> 世界华侨华人工商大会	World Overseas Chinese Entrepreneurs Conference, established in 2015 by Beijing.
<i>Shijie Huashang Dahui</i> 世界华商大会	World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention (WCEC), established in 1991 by Chinese overseas.
<i>Xin Yimin</i> 新移民	New migrants
<i>Yidai Yilu</i> 一带一路	See “One Belt One Road”
<i>Zhong Guan Cun</i> 中关村	An area known as Chinese Silicon Valley, located in Beijing
<i>Zhongguo Qiaoshang Touzi Qiye Xiehui</i> 中国侨商投资企业协会	China’s Overseas Chinese Entrepreneurs/Investors Association
<i>Zhonghua Minzu</i> 中华民族	Chinese nation