

BOOK REVIEWS

***Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia.* By Leszek Buszynski.** London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986. 303pp. ISBN 0-70993221-9. £25.

The field of Soviet-Southeast Asian relations has been a relatively neglected and understudied one. There are more writings on China and Southeast Asia than on the Soviet Union and the region. The obvious explanation could be China's physical proximity, the presence of ethnic interest between the two areas and the abundance of scholars, both regional and foreign, in the field. The Soviet Union, however, lies at the extreme of the above-mentioned characteristics and has, therefore, suffered a lack of academic research. Thus, in interested academic circles, any study that relates the two areas is bound to receive an enthusiastic reception.

Being one of the few titles on the topic, Leszek Buszynski's *Soviet Foreign Policy and Southeast Asia* is a welcome contribution to the understanding of Southeast Asian countries' external relations with one of the major actors in world politics. Until recently, a senior lecturer in Political Science at the National University of Singapore, Buszynski joined the department with a background of Soviet studies, in addition to his interests in and publications on Southeast Asia (for example, on SEATO, and ASEAN). As one amongst the rare breed who have followed events in the Soviet Union and Southeast Asia closely and who also has a fluent command of the Russian language, the author has mastered the important topic of contemporary Southeast Asian international relations and filled the gap which has been caused by a "scattered" treatment of the subject. The main emphasis in this work is Soviet policy towards the region and it thus provides the perspective that Southeast Asian scholars usually miss.

The book is a detailed study not only of Soviet-Southeast Asian relations but also of larger Soviet interests. Although the author attempts to "assess the aims of and the underlying motives behind Soviet policy towards Southeast Asia since 1969 . . .", he also "seeks to identify regional reactions to Soviet policy in the context of enhanced great power interest in Southeast Asia since 1978". Evidently, Soviet interests and interactions with the area increased after those two dates, largely as a result of Soviet association with Vietnam, first as a challenge to the United States policy in Indochina and, secondly, by signing a treaty with Vietnam after the war, enabling it to use military facilities there, and aiding in Vietnam's expansionary activities in Kampuchea. One should not also forget that, by then, ASEAN as an organization had taken on a more prominent and "loud" character, a voice not to be ignored by the Soviet Union nor other international actors.

Buszynski first offers an introductory chapter on the framework in which he discusses some of the priorities and interests in Soviet Third World policy, looking at historical interests with some countries in the region, such as Burma and Indonesia. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the Soviet Collective Security Proposal and ASEAN's reaction to it, though one could argue that ASEAN was not much of a collective entity then to present a strong and unified reaction. The following five chapters deal with Soviet policy towards ASEAN, Soviet relations with Vietnam and the strengthening of their ties, and finally a survey of the Soviet Union in the regional balance of power. The major treatment of Soviet-ASEAN interests in this book is essentially in relation to Vietnam and Kampuchea and not on bilateral relations with the member countries *per se*. As the author has repeatedly emphasized, Soviet interests in the region are facilitated by its relations with Vietnam and that is where the regional interests of the Soviet Union and ASEAN overlap.

The chapter on Collective Security is an interesting and exhaustively analysed piece of work linking the preceding chapter on Soviet priorities to the more important issues on Soviet security interests in the region, and discussing various related actors and issues. Subsequent chapters, though well documented, are thematic rather than chronological and, therefore, tend to be repetitive on a number of points, thus taxing the reader's concentration. However, each chapter is complete on its own, almost as if written for separate publications.

Despite the small shortcomings of the book and the disagreements its views may generate, I find it a source of valuable information, especially on Russian sources and Soviet policies. Buszynski has included statements of Soviet leaders, party ideologues, high ranking officials/bureaucrats, Soviet scholars as well as commentaries in *Pravda* and *Isvestiya*. Being a

meticulous researcher, he has consulted various sources, both in Russian and English, and the notes and bibliography are an immense contribution to other scholars.

Having written several research articles on the Soviet Union and Southeast Asia, culminating in this volume, I am confident Buszynski will not stop here. More interesting events have unfurled since the mid-1980s and since Gorbachev's Asian initiatives. From his vantage point in Australia, Buszynski will perhaps attempt yet another follow-up in contemporary Soviet policy towards Southeast Asia.

PUSHPA THAMBIPILLAI
East-West Center, Hawaii

ASEAN in Regional and Global Context. Edited by Karl D. Jackson, Sukhumbhand Paribatra and J. Soedjati Djwandono. Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1986. 357pp. ISBN 0-912966-87-4. US\$20.

This volume is an important collection of 23 papers that grew out of the Third U.S.-ASEAN Conference on "ASEAN in the Regional and International Context", held in Chiangmai, Thailand, in January 1985. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the Institute of East Asian Studies of the University of California, Berkeley, the Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, and the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia. The editors, Karl Jackson of the University of California, Sukhumbhand Paribatra of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, and Soedjati Djwandono of the Centre of Strategic and International Studies, have brought together the works of eminent scholars from eight countries representing a broad spectrum of specialists concerned with domestic, defence and foreign policies of the region.

The theme of the volume centres on the domestic and foreign policies of the ASEAN countries, emphasizing the relationship of domestic politics to foreign policy-making in each of the ASEAN states. In addition to the Introduction by Karl Jackson, the volume is divided into four sections: an Overview consisting of three papers; Politics and Foreign Policy of the ASEAN States, consisting of nine papers; Regional Relations, consisting of four papers, and ASEAN and the Major Powers, consisting of six papers.