BOOK REVIEWS

Arms Control in Asia. **Edited by Gerald Segal.** London: Macmillan, 1987. 182 pp. ISBN 0-333-42400-X.

The volume under review is a collection of nine articles presented at the annual convention of the British International Studies Association (Briston 1985). Under the analytical lead of Segal's introductory chapter, the articles in the volume are organized around three levels of conflict in Asia: superpower ("U.S. vs. Soviet Union", by Drifte), regional ("Southeast Asia", by Gilks, and "Indian Ocean", by Towle), and bilateral ("Sino-Soviet", by Segal, "North-South Korea", by Bok, "Sino-Indian", by Foot, and "Indo-Pakistan", by Rizvi). Each chapter attempts to trace the causes of the conflicts, explore the historical backgrounds and dynamic processes of arms control, and examine future prospects for arms control in Asia through a diagnosis of constraints and opportunities. The concluding chapter by Stuart examines how international system dynamics influences the security perceptions and arms control policies in Asia.

The articles in the volume provide several interesting observations about the practice of arms control in Asia. Unlike arms control experiences in the European and superpower context, which are formal, legalistic and technical, Asian arms control is informal, flexible, ambiguous and based on "unstated self-restraint" (p. 16). Moreover, the contributors offer a mixed assessment of arms control in Asia. While arms control processes at the levels of the superpower and regional conflicts show promise (as manifested in recent Soviet peace initiatives as well as proposals for the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality in Southeast Asia and the Indian

Ocean Zone of Peace), those for bilateral conflicts are likely to remain precarious and uncertain.

Given the current state of Asian conflict study, which can be characterized as fragmented and diffused, the volume is a rare and welcome addition to the existing body of literature. The strength of the volume lies not only in the comprehensive treatment of major conflicts in Asia, but also in the focused analysis of an increasingly important functional topic, Asian arms control, which has been previously neglected. By both disaggregating Asian conflicts in terms of levels of analysis and refuting the key assertions of systemic determinism which treats conflicts in Asia as a mere subset of superpower rivalry, the volume makes a valuable analytical contribution to the systematic study of Asian conflicts. The contributors also offer lucid and informative historical accounts of major conflicts and arms control experiences.

The volume is not without its problems, however. Despite the editor's explicit intentions, most articles in the volume pay more attention to the historical descriptions of the conflicts than to the dynamic analysis of arms control processes, leaving readers with the impression that the book is about the history of major conflicts in Asia. Furthermore, with the exception of a few (for example, that of Drifte), the discussions of individual arms control experience are either superficial or tangential, often confusing the analytical distinction between arms control and conflict management which comprises conflict prevention, avoidance, settlement, and resolution. Since arms control involves technical aspects of conflict management processes, broadly defined, it is not easy for the contributors, who are mostly area specialists, to handle the topic competently. Nevertheless, a tighter elaboration of the concept of arms control by the editor could have helped avoid such weakness. In addition, the editor's claim is not convincing that Europe and the superpowers have much to learn from Asia not only in economic issues such as development strategies and trade policies, but also in the areas of strategic studies such as arms control. Individual case studies in the volume do not support Segal's assertion. On the contrary, it appears that Asia has much to learn from the recent arms control experiences of the superpowers and Europe. Given the pervasive intellectual fad in the West, riding on the tide of the Asia-Pacific fever (or learning from the Asia-Pacific) is quite understandable. However, Segal appears to overstate Asian accomplishments in arms control, which not only undermines the thematic match between the lead article and case studies, but also weakens the overall thrust of the volume.

Despite these drawbacks, the volume is a valuable contribution to the understanding of Asian conflicts in general, and arms control in particular. Being a useful and informative survey, it is a good reference source for

scholars and policy-makers and an ideal textbook candidate for courses on the international politics of Asia and conflict studies.

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Malay Society in the late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change.
By J.M. Gullick. Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987.

The book by J.M. Gullick is significant in more ways than one. It offers a good panoramic view of Malay society at the end of the nineteenth century, a point of time greatly significant in itself. As aptly titled, it is the "the beginnings of change" in a massive way. It was from this time that Malay society was widely exposed to European influence, and it began to affect the society as a whole. Gullick's account, collated mainly from contemporary sources, show how certain sections of the society were already responding to the new situation. As admitted by the author, the change had actually begun much earlier with the English colonization of Penang and Singapore and the take-over of Malacca from the Dutch, but he is right in maintaining that the ". . . change towards the pattern of the twentieth century began to make way, hesistantly at first, about 1820" (p.2). Social change is a continuing process, either stimulated by contact with the outside world, or effected from within through inventions and rearrangement of known patterns. That is why scholars usually refer to socio-cultural change occurring all over the world at about this time as "modernization".

Gullick does not deal with change *per se*, but he provides the baseline picture of the society on the threshold of that change and what happened when new and foreign elements (this time the British colonial government) began to intrude into the society. And that picture is a result of collating a vast amount of literature contemporary to the period, as the European form of administration began to take hold of the indigenous polity. However, the material was mainly from "European" and "official" sources, that is, the reports and records of the European travellers and civil servants serving the various Malay states at the time. In short, with the exception of translated works such as *Hikayat Pelayaran Abdullah*, the data are mainly observations from outside the culture. One may argue that such observation