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Introduction

This special focus issue is devoted to various political and military developments in the Asia–Pacific which are of strategic significance for the security and stability of the region. Several of the articles appearing in this issue are products of the research project on “Major Asian Powers and the Security of Southeast Asia” under the Regional Strategic Studies Programme (RSSP) of the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. The project was launched in 1989 and some of its earlier results have appeared in a previous issue of this journal (Vol. 12, No. 3, December 1990). This project seeks to promote a better understanding of the changes in regional and global power structures and the resulting shifts in strategic relationships. Of particular interest is the emerging role of China, India and Japan — the three Asian giants. This special focus issue also includes three articles which have been written by scholars from South Asia who were Research Fellows at the Institute under the South Asian–Southeast Asian Fellowships programme. Two of these articles are concerned with the growth of the Indian navy and its implications for Southeast Asia, while the third deals with the course of bilateral relations between India and China, the two largest Asian states.

The project on “Major Asian Powers and the Security of Southeast Asia” has benefited greatly from a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, while the work of the three South Asian scholars was supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation. The Institute would like to thank both the MacArthur Foundation and the Ford Foundation for their valuable and timely assistance. However, the views expressed in this special focus issue remain the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute or the funding agencies.

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