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SOUTHEAST ASIAN AFFAIRS 1979

Southeast Asian Affairs 1979
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INSTITUTE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
HEINEMANN EDUCATIONAL BOOKS (ASIA) LTD.

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41 Jalan Pemimpin, Singapore 20
2 Jalan 20/16A Paramount Garden,
Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia
P O Box 96086, Tsim Sha Tsui Post Office,
Kowloon, Hong Kong

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© 1979 Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore
First published 1979

Typeset by Collie's International, Singapore
Printed in the Republic of Singapore by Toppan Printing Company

Established as an autonomous organization by an act of the Parliament of the Republic of Singapore in May 1968, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies is a regional research centre for scholars and other specialists concerned with modern Southeast Asia. The Institute's research interest is focused on the many-faceted problems of development and social change in Southeast Asia.

The Institute is governed by a twenty-four-member Board of Trustees comprising representatives from the University of Singapore and Nanyang University, appointees from the Government, as well as representatives from a broad range of professional and civic organizations and groups. A ten-man Executive Committee oversees day-to-day operations; it is chaired by the Director, the Institute's chief academic and administrative officer.

FOREWORD

Southeast Asian Affairs 1979, like its five predecessors, is a review of significant developments and trends in Southeast Asia, with special emphasis on the ASEAN countries. Readable and easily understood, the publication aims at giving the enquiring reader a broad grasp of major political, economic, social and strategic developments within the region.

The contents of *Southeast Asian Affairs 1979* fall into two broad categories. There are those of a background nature, which attempt to review and where necessary comment upon and explain significant developments during 1978 in the individual countries of Southeast Asia and in the region generally. Then there are the articles of more specialized current interest. These are not necessarily focused on events in 1978 alone. They deal with topical problems of concern to those who desire to know more about the region and its affairs than is possible from the background articles.

To the best of our knowledge, *Southeast Asian Affairs* is the only publication of its kind wholly devoted to Southeast Asia. It is, perhaps, also unique in that, unlike many other annuals, its discussion of issues is from the vantage point of the area, most of the contributors being in and of the region. Moreover, though scholarly in their approach and analyses, the authors have been encouraged to aim at accuracy and readability, and to handle their subjects in a direct manner. Footnotes and bibliographical and other references have been generally dispensed with and a conscious effort made to avoid too ponderous a style. If *Southeast Asian Affairs 1979* helps to generate and enliven interest in, and a better understanding of, the affairs of the region, then its purpose would have been well served.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the authors and the members of the Editorial Committee, as well as all others who have, in one way or another, helped to make this publication possible. While encouraging all points of view, needless to say, the individual authors are exclusively responsible for the facts and opinions expressed in their respective contributions, and their interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Institute itself or its supporters.

Kernal S. Sandhu
Director
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

15 January 1979

ERRATA

The text has been transposed on these pages: page 47 should be page 48 and vice versa; page 248 should be page 249 and vice versa.

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INTRODUCTION

The present volume contains twenty-seven articles on Southeast Asia dealing with a number of major themes: international conflict and co-operation, political stability, economic growth and development.

The conflict in Indochina tended to overshadow the region in 1978. A group of papers in this volume discusses the nature and dimensions of this conflict. Understandably, the regional political overview by J.L.S. Girling tends to emphasize the situation in Indochina and its ramifications for Southeast Asia. Chin Kin Wah's paper also pays attention to the Indochinese situation although his focus is on the rivalry of major powers in the region. He sees the emergence of an American-China-Kampuchean group vis-à-vis the Soviet-Vietnamese group, resulting in the intensification of the regional conflict. Each group, concerned with extending its influence in Southeast Asia, attempts to win member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to its respective side. Still on the issue of major power rivalry but concentrating on ASEAN countries, Khaw Guat Hoon documents the developments of China's policy towards these member states in recent years and the latter's responses to Peking's policy. It is apparent that international conflict characterizes the relations between the Indochinese states while international co-operation characterizes the relations of ASEAN states.

Responding to the situation in Indochina, ASEAN states try to show their neutrality while emphasizing their insistence on the nonintervention principle in other states' internal affairs. There was conspicuous co-ordination among ASEAN states in foreign affairs. Such co-operation was also reflected in the economic field. Ker Sin Tze's regional economic overview also shows this co-operation between ASEAN states. In addition, there were co-ordinated efforts to improve the economic status of ASEAN countries as a group vis-à-vis industrialized nations. Augustine Tan's paper, for instance, discusses and examines protectionism as practised in industrialized countries and the responses of the developing countries, including ASEAN states. Clive Edwards touches on Australia's "protectionism" and its implications for the ASEAN economy.

Although there was no doubt that a marked co-operation exists between ASEAN states, such co-operation was not without problems. Phiphat Tangsubkul's paper scrutinizes potential conflict areas among ASEAN states, regarding their attitudes towards the law of the sea, due to different geo-political positions and national interests.

The question of political stability is another major theme in this volume. While dealing with factors/forces contributing to political stability or instability in the region, many articles concentrate on domestic aspects. This writer's overview on Indonesia, Mansoor Marican's background paper on Malaysia, Benjamin Muego's survey of the Philippines, Khien Theeravit's political overview on Thailand, and Huynh Kim Khanh's background paper on Vietnam — all examine and analyse major events and developments of each country in great depth. Most of these authors point out political and economic challenges facing these countries in 1978, ranging from distribution of economic growth to various degrees of political opposition.

However, each Southeast Asian state often has its own problems related to development. Anne Booth addresses herself to the Second Five-Year Plan in Indonesia

and discusses the problems and prospects of the forthcoming Third Five-Year Plan, based on Indonesia's previous economic performance. Ward Heneveld looks into recent developments in Indonesian education, showing the government's efforts in improving both the quality and quantity of Indonesian educational institutions. Boen Oemarjati surveys social issues as reflected in recent Indonesian literature, providing a socio-cultural background to contemporary Indonesia.

Centring on the Malaysian economy, Lim Kok Cheong observes subnational economic planning, making suggestions to overcome the existing uneven developmental problem in West Malaysia. Kamarudin Jaffar provides his interpretation of the role of Malay parties in Malaysian politics, stressing competition between the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Parti Islam Se Malaysia (PAS) for the Malay votes. He argues that, as a result, UMNO has become more similar to PAS in appearance. As Jaffar's paper looks at the conflict primarily at the élite level, so does David Wurfel's article. Nevertheless, Wurfel studies various kinds of Philippine élites over a long period of years, showing the changing patterns of intraélite conflict in the country. Also on the Philippines, Dennis Shoesmith scrutinizes the role of churches during martial law, giving a different dimension to the political development in that country.

Unlike those on the Philippines, writers on Singapore tend to pay more attention to the economic and educational aspects. Saw Swee-Hock's overview describes and discusses Singapore's development strategy for further growth, pointing out the importance of political and regional stability. He also maintains that the bilingual policy with special emphasis on the use of English is linked to the need for skilled manpower in the republic. S. Gopinathan, however, focuses on Singapore's recent educational policy and its emphasis on bilingualism. Arguing for the continuing importance of the English language in Singapore's educational system, he sees both advantages and disadvantages in advocating bilingualism in a plural society. Lee Soo Ann analyses recent changes in the manufacturing sector aimed at increasing productivity but maintains that the overseas market, supply of raw materials, and labour would continue to remain potential areas of major problems for the further development of this sector.

The economic factor is crucial for political stabilization. Dealing with Thailand, Vichitvong na Pombhejara surveys the economic policy and performance of the Kriangsak Government after the fall of Tanin in October 1977. Analysing various difficulties faced by the new government, he gives credit to the Kriangsak administration in revitalizing the Thai economy through positive measures. Minority ethnic groups are also a factor in Thai political stability. Robert Cooper analyses the ethnic minorities in Northern Thailand, pointing out the problems faced by the Thai Government and suggesting possible solutions to these.

While most parts of the world are facing a population explosion, Burma is adopting a liberal population policy aimed at increasing its population. Ismael Khin Maung's paper briefly examines the population situation in Burma and its prospects in terms of Burma's national development. However, the world's attention in 1978 was on Kampuchea rather than on Burma. The Kampuchean-Vietnamese conflict intensified towards the end of last year. In a long article, Stephen Heder discusses, analyses, and documents the origins and development of the conflict in detail, maintaining that the intensification of such a conflict was a result of historical antagonism between the two states, originating from the attempt of Vietnam in dominating Kampuchea, as well as on major power politics. The article, written in early November 1978, two months before the fall of Phnom Penh to the hands of the Vietnamese backed government, presents most of the arguments which shed light on the events which took place in early 1979. David Elliott's paper, on institutional developments in a United Vietnam,

Introduction

concentrates on the building of social and political institutions which play a significant role but are little known by outsiders.

Generally speaking, observers of the Southeast Asian scene in 1978 can identify two kinds of political situation in the region: the fluidity of Indochina and the relative stability of ASEAN states. With the fall of Phnom Penh in January 1979 and the seeming domination of Hanoi in the Indochinese peninsula, it is not clear whether or not that area will become stable again. The stability of Indochina will depend on the degree of the domestic and foreign opposition to the new régime in the months to come. Among ASEAN states, it seems that the pattern of co-operation will continue and the domestic situation is still under control.

Before concluding, I would like, on behalf of the Editorial Committee, to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the contributors who have given us their full co-operation without any financial reward. Their dedication to scholarly endeavour should be commended. Our thanks are also due to friends and fellow academics who helped us in one way or another.

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Southeast Asian Affairs 1979
Editorial Committee

15 January 1979