

contemporary Thailand, and about whom many other Thai observers will no doubt write.

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***Researching Indonesia: A Guide to Political Analysis.* By Gerald L. Houseman.** Lewiston, New York, USA: The Edward Mellen Press, 2004. Hardcover: 186pp.

If the current U.S. malaise in the Middle East represents in one sense the inability of policymakers to go beyond their ethnocentric worldview since September 11, 2001 then in another sense another abiding concern is whether U.S. foreign policy prescriptions in the future will be imaginative enough to secure its interests as well make the world a safer place. With U.S. interests so wide in scope and its interactions in an ever changing world so complex, will the next generation of foreign policy advisors be equipped adequately to provide sound advice to future administrations? The empirical evidence is worrying. Area studies pre-September 11 had collapsed significantly since the 1980s and these worrying trends have accelerated since the end of the Cold War. Indeed, in view of the apparent inability of U.S. policymakers to comprehend the complex world around them, if ever a Senate inquiry was convened to assess the U.S. responses post-September 11, an urgent recommendation should be that Area Studies be designated a strategic national priority.

Take for example Indonesian studies. Would a current academic audit discover that Indonesian language courses at U.S. universities are gravely endangered because of plummeting enrolments? Could America's advanced linguistic skills base in Bahasa Indonesia be lost within the next 10 years? Is there a possibility that the U.S., once a world leader in the teaching of Indonesian language and studies, producing many of the key scholars in the field, allow the progressive decline of a field once so rich in diverse scholarly perspectives? Such diverse research ranged from the policy-related work of Pauker at Rand and Glassburner at Berkeley, the powerful historical analysis of Benda at Yale, Geertz's remarkable contributions to anthropology at Princeton, and of course the eclectic group of mavericks led by Kahin at Cornell. It takes close to 10 years for a scholar to build the advanced linguistic capability and

the networks necessary to lay the groundwork for serious academic research. More importantly, there remains the critical need to train the next generation of young Americans in order to lay the foundation of skills necessary for students to be equipped to succeed in the fields of diplomacy and commerce relating to Indonesia.

A cursory glance of the annotated bibliography in Houseman's book will indicate that with one or two exceptions, the bulk of the American scholars whose works are cited either are retired, close to retirement or, like one of the early leading lights (George McT. Kahin), sadly no longer with us. Where are their replacements? If Southeast Asia is as Colin Powell describes "the second front in the war on terror", and Indonesia is the focal point of the *Jemaah Islamiyah* movement, the great imponderable remains: where does the Bush administration seek advice on Indonesia outside the narrow confines of the policy community? These are troubling questions too complex to grapple with in a mere book review. This is not to sound too pessimistic, but empirical record so far makes for grim reading.

In this regard, Gerald Houseman's volume fills a significant void, although it is rather American-centric from the viewpoint of a Southeast Asian academic, such as this reviewer. There is a plethora of excellent books in English written by Indonesian scholars that sadly do not rate a mention in the author's annotated bibliography. Likewise a discussion on international relations in the book makes no mention of the outstanding work on Indonesian foreign policy by Franklin Weinstein or Michael Leifer. Australian scholarship on Indonesia is dismissed as "long on factual detail while providing little in way of theoretical underpinning" which, in the reviewer's opinion, is somewhat unfair considering that most independent observers would conclude that Australia in the 1990s led the world in the teaching of Indonesian language and studies. However, for how long this lead will be maintained remains an open question as the University of Sydney and the University of Western Sydney ponder their options as to whether they should close down their Indonesian language courses next year in the wake of funding cuts and decreasing student enrolments. This contrasts with the situation in the 1960s when there was standing-room only in the University of Sydney's lecture theatres for new Indonesian language courses.

Yet maintaining not just Australian but specifically in this context U.S. expertise on Indonesia and expanding the level of understanding through research and education is crucial to the quality of engagement with Indonesia. Hopefully, the Houseman volume will help stimulate interest in Indonesian studies particularly among American students —

which is essentially the audience this book addresses and remains the strong underlying theme of the book. Houseman's book begins with a useful analysis of the current government system with an assessment of the problems facing the post-Soeharto state. This is followed by a fascinating study of how classical political science theories can assist in an understanding of Indonesia that would be particularly valuable to both graduate and undergraduate students studying comparative politics. Also useful is a section on suggestions regarding where to find information on contemporary events in Indonesia as well as important tips on doing field research in Indonesia. For the United States, if preventing Indonesia from becoming communist was a critical objective in the 1960s, then just as important now in an era where transnational terrorism has become a global threat, is the need to engage what now significantly is the largest democracy in the Islamic world. Crucial in that regard is the development of a new generation of Indonesianists in the United States who can facilitate such engagement, and Houseman's book would undoubtedly play its role in this quest.

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Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation: National Interests and Regional Order. Edited by See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya. Armonk, New York & London: M.E. Sharpe, 2004. 264pp.

This well-crafted book, presented in two parts, deals with the tension between bilateral and multilateral approaches to security in the Asia-Pacific region. It is competently edited in uncomplicated prose and its chief value lies in the manner in which the editors have melded three conceptual and nine country case studies, while drawing important insights of their own. As in any edited volume, there will tend to an unevenness of quality and divergent viewpoints and analysis, and the job of editors to attain overall coherence is often an elusive task. To the great credit of the editors such unevenness has been kept at a minimum and the divergences and convergences of the various authors have provided fodder for Tan and Acharya's interesting problematizing of security issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

It is also to the credit of the editors to have honestly admitted in footnote 18 of the Introduction that: "Owing to a lengthy production