

special access, and brute force” (p. 214). Crony capitalism, which effectively plundered the state, precluded economic reforms and contributed to the country’s economic deterioration. The authors also highlighted the social forces that challenged the authority of the state during this period (for example, armed communist and Muslim separatists rebels, the Catholic Church, the Reform AFP Movement, urban middle class, and economic elites), which ultimately led to the collapse of the authoritarian regime in 1986.

The remaining chapters of the book covered the post-Marcos period (1986–2004) and focused primarily on the problems and challenges faced by the Aquino, Ramos, Estrada, and Macapagal-Arroyo administrations in pursuing good governance, political and economic reforms, as well as the emergence of civil society organizations in a restored democratic order. Compared with the previous sections of the book, these chapters highlighted more the power of social forces in the country in constraining the autonomy and capability of the state especially in pushing for economic and political reforms. Current issues (for example, parliamentary versus presidential government, the fiscal crisis, Muslim separatism, and the Filipino diaspora) are presented in the final chapter of the book as themes that need further study in relation to state formation in the Philippines.

Notwithstanding the book’s outstanding scholarship and admirable depth and breadth of discussion and analyses about state formation and the dynamics of state-society relations in the Philippines, a salivating reader of Philippine politics is left *bitin* (Tagalog for hanging) because the authors did not provide their tentative, if not bold, assessment about why the Philippine state to this day remains resilient despite its weaknesses.

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International Relations in Southeast Asia: The Struggle for Autonomy.
By Donald E. Weatherbee et al. Oxford, UK: Rowman and Littlefield
Publishers, 2005. Softcover: 306pp.

In the preface of this volume, the principal author, Donald Weatherbee, offers a disarmingly frank and accurate assessment of the book, its

content, and goals. I can do no better than to quote it in full: “[it] is designed as an introduction to the issues and dynamics of international relations in contemporary Southeast Asia. Its goal is modest. Planned as a textbook, it does not pretend to present new research findings or theoretical insights” (p. xv).

Within these admittedly modest parameters, it succeeds admirably. Students will find it accessibly written, with useful guides to further readings, and boxes highlighting and elaborating on key issues and concepts such as the ASEAN Summits or “Aceh’s struggle”. As an introduction to the international relations of Southeast Asia, its principal institutions, and some of the key issues that currently animate its policymakers, it is excellent and can be recommended. However, readers who are interested in new research findings and theoretical insights might want to look elsewhere.

Despite Weatherbee’s caveat about the absence of new theory, a more substantial introduction to some of the established paradigms might have been useful, even for theory-shy students. Weatherbee actually spends some time talking about the overall significance of the book and the region more generally in the context of theoretical debates in the concluding chapters. Thus it would have been useful if students had been provided with a more extensive sense of what these theoretical debates were about in the context of Southeast Asia, and a clearer sense of the author’s own take on some of these issues.

Nevertheless, this is not the book’s main intention, and it is perhaps unfair to complain about the absence of something it makes no claims to address. Where the book is on undeniably stronger ground is its systematic discussion of international relations issues and/or problems. The organization of the book is fairly conventional, and none the worse for that. After a useful chapter on the origins of “Southeast Asia”, Weatherbee introduces what he considers to be the key “actors” that shape the region’s international relations. Importantly, he pays particular attention to non-state actors, which he considers to be especially important, despite his preoccupation with “national interests” and his scepticism about the capacity of anything to overcome them.

The crucially important impact of the Cold War in Asia rightly merits a separate chapter, as does ASEAN and regionalism in Southeast Asia. Again, it might have been helpful to unpack some of the conceptual issues that underpin the idea of regionalism and institution-building, if only to provide a more convincing explanation for his views about ASEAN and its possible inadequacies. One of the most novel parts of this particular volume is the discussion of conflict and conflict resolution in the region, something which involves an analysis of the so-called

ASEAN Way and the ASEAN Regional Forum, neither of which Weatherbee is entirely convinced by.

Interestingly, two chapters are “outsourced” to other writers. Ralf Emmers and Leonard Sebastian offer an excellent and detailed analysis of the increasingly prominent presence of terrorism and transnational crime in the region. After providing a depressingly long list of security challenges they conclude that ASEAN will need to adopt a “more proactive role” (p. 184) — something that seems highly unlikely given all that Weatherbee has told us about the organization in preceding chapters.

The analysis of Southeast Asia’s “regional and international economic cooperation” is comprehensively provided by Mari Pangestu, who sketches the evolution of economic cooperation within the ASEAN framework, before considering the prospects for an ASEAN Economic Community. Pangestu is also not optimistic about ASEAN’s capacity to deliver on this vision, suggesting that it may be “overtaken by external arrangements”, but that ASEAN will remain important “if only more in name and for geopolitical reasons” (p. 202). Such faint praise may not go down well with ASEAN practitioners, but students will find the arguments plausibly made and supported with much useful empirical detail.

The final two chapters are by Weatherbee and they provide welcome considerations of two important but frequently neglected aspects of Southeast Asia’s contemporary position: human rights and the environment. The discussion of human rights contains a lot of material about the general international situation, not all of which is directly relevant to the Southeast Asian experience. Nevertheless, the specific discussion of the human rights records of places such as Burma, Cambodia, and Indonesia is very useful given the prominence these issues have assumed in relations between Southeast Asia and the rest of the world. Likewise, the environment ultimately has the potential to overshadow other, more conventional security concerns, begging the question of how “security” should actually be thought of in the contemporary era.

In light of these discussions I found it slightly surprising that in his Conclusion Weatherbee was so adamant that “there is no regional interest derived independently of or transcending national interest” (p. 278). Clearly, if some problems are to be addressed (never mind resolved), they actually demand transnational solutions. Indeed, the very definition of “problems” and the best ways of approaching them would seem to be contested and subject to precisely the sorts of non-state and transnational pressures Weatherbee describes so well in earlier

chapters. The normative environment of world politics clearly has changed over the last few decades, and Southeast Asia's leaders are being forced to confront this, even if it is only to reject it and retreat into costly, self-destructive isolation, as Burma has done.

However, by its own admission this is not a book that is necessarily seeking to transform debates about Southeast Asia, but to introduce students to them, and the factors that have underpinned them in this highly distinctive region. Apart from the usual glaring absence of any substantive discussion of the region's underlying economic structures, circumstances, and prospects — “international relations” scholars still seem to think such issues are peripheral despite events like the Asian financial crisis and its implications for intra- and inter-regional relations — this book provides a sound introduction to the region.

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***India Briefing: Takeoff at Last?* Edited by Alyssa Ayres and Philip Oldenburg. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2005. Softcover: 285pp.**

“India Rising” has been the constant refrain in the global academic, policy, and strategic communities. The past decade has been momentous in terms of India's robust economic and industrial growth, its burgeoning knowledge capital and industrial capabilities — a new confidence in its foreign policy and diplomatic initiatives and an assertion of its strategic and military capabilities that had come with the 1998 nuclear tests and an expanding versatile profile of its maritime power.

Globalization has been the pivotal force of India's social and economic transformation that has unshackled its potential. The paradigm shift from its autarkic economic process to a liberalized competitive process has been crucial in the realization of W.W. Rostow's conception of the “takeoff” stage of economic robustness.

India Briefing is a project of the Asia Society, New York. It has been a systematic, coherent, and rigorous commentary on India's promise and performance. Articulated on an annual basis as a review of the country's systemic performance, it comprehensively assesses the rising Asian power's political capacity, social cohesion, economic viability,