



Sheldon W. Simon, ed. *The Many Faces of Asian Security*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001. x + 259 pp. \$29.95 (textbook), ISBN 978-0-7425-1665-6; \$93.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7425-1664-9.

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Asia's Many Faces

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The Many Faces of Asian Security is indeed an ambitious book. Edited by Sheldon W. Simon, the book offers eight chapters divided into two parts, representing a fairly diverse range of topics broadly defined as security issues. These include examinations of select Asian armed forces, economic security, the environment and effects of development, democracy and human rights, and transnational crime. The list of contributors is certainly impressive, including Paul Bracken, Ralph Cossa, William Drennan, Donald Emmerson, John MacFarlane, Clark Neher, Leif Rosenberger, See Seng Tan, Donald Weatherbee, and Simon, all of whom have distinguished careers in government and/or academia with a strong focus on Asian affairs. Adding to the depth of expertise, the conclusion is authored by Richard Solomon, George Bush's Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia from 1989 to 1992, and a former Ambassador to the Philippines. The book stems from a conference held at Arizona State University in April 2000.

Clearly *The Many Faces of Asian Security* is written for the political scientist. Simon's introduction makes this fairly evident, while Tan and Cossa's chapter, "Rescuing Realism from the Realists: A Theoretical Note on East Asian Security," opens the book. The first four chapters deal with classical concerns, such as the balance of power and realist theory. Throughout the text there are additional, numerous references to political science methodology. While this approach may discourage the theory-

challenged, or leave the reader lost amidst the realist-liberal debate, it does not undermine the strengths of individual contributions.

Simon's chapter, "Asian Armed Forces: Internal and External Tasks and Capabilities," is an interesting examination of select Southeast Asian militaries. He points out that defence spending in Southeast Asia was second only to the Middle East prior to the economic collapse of 1997-98, and then deals with the dramatic effects thereafter in the region. Combined with massive currency devaluation, the economic downturn effectively doubled the cost of arms procurement for countries like Malaysia and Thailand. In Singapore, however, the effects were far less severe, allowing for the continued purchase of modern weaponry from the West, and thus creating a possible regional imbalance. Simon also points out that in the long term the economic collapse may lead to a widening disparity between the United States and its Southeast Asian allies. This would undermine inter-force compatibility, and thereby decrease the viability of self-defense for some countries, putting more demand on American military assistance. Importantly, Simon acknowledges that Southeast Asian priorities with respect to the military have significantly shifted over the past decade. No longer focused exclusively on regional enemies or internal dissent, now states need to address resource protection, illegal migration, and the enforcement of maritime claims. Simon also argues that with the second largest defense budget in the world, virtually no internal role and no viable external threat, Japan is poised to be a benevo-

lent partner in Southeast Asian regional defence; as evidenced with its 1999 offer to send a fleet to help police the area. He notes that the memories of Japan's invasion and brutal occupation of Southeast Asia during World War Two have now faded, but, unfortunately, does not delve further into the matter.

Another strong chapter is offered by Paul Bracken, with many arguments drawn from his book *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999). Bracken shows the illogic behind the "cottage industry" that has been created by observers speculating on who could win a war between Taiwan and China, and whether the United States would be involved. Arguing that economic and technical calculations do not necessarily lead to sound political conclusions, Bracken points out that organizational and psychological changes, particularly within China, are far more important determinants. Contrary to the view that China is a "Maoist autarky," Bracken presents a complex and often misunderstood China that is reluctant to use force. In fact, he argues that militarism—as represented in China—is on the decline everywhere in Asia (with the exception of Pakistan), and that despite the bloody history of many of Asian countries there has been a gradual "triumph" of civilian control. However, cautions Bracken, all is not well. While the threat of real war in Asia may have decreased with the ascendancy of civilian government, the opportunity for political uses of the military has increased; what Bracken describes as "nibbling, cat-and-mouse games ... coercion, intimidation, and implicit blackmail" (p. 76). Turning to a comparative analysis of American and Chinese military capabilities, Bracken shows that despite an overwhelming superiority in almost all respects, the United States is now confronted with a fundamental shift in the Asian balance of power. Chinese short-and medium-range missiles threaten American allies, such as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Although Beijing would be unlikely to use them militarily, the political weight of such weapons is great, forcing Washington to re-consider its strategic priorities in Asia. While the United States remains the only global superpower, Bracken makes it clear that maintaining such pre-eminence in the coming years will require enormous expenditures, and a concerted political will. Otherwise, the West's long "military shadow" over Asia will come to an uncertain end.

Donald Weatherbee's chapter on the environment and development in Southeast Asia effectively presents a gloomy picture. Using Thailand as the "poster country" for environmental mismanagement, Weatherbee details a

litany of ills including deforestation, over fishing, and depleted energy resources. Moreover, he shows how comparatively voracious economic growth in Thailand has threatened its less fortunate neighbors in Burma, Laos, and Cambodia. Cross-border plundering has devastated forest and mining resources in those countries, exacerbating their economic and political problems. Weatherbee also discusses the problems of developmental regionalism in Indonesia, and the superficial role regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have played in protecting environmental interests.

While the economic collapse of the late 1990s may have accelerated environmental degradation in Asia, Clark Neher argues that it may have actually improved the state of human rights. In his chapter, "Democracy, Human Rights and Security in Asia," Neher contends that economic catastrophe in Indonesia provided the impetus for fundamental political change, as seen with the overthrow of Suharto and the implementation of "democratic" reforms in 1999. In Thailand the economic collapse shattered the coalition governments of both Chuan Leekpai and Chavalit Yonchaiudh, but did not induce the Thai military to seize power, as it has many times past. Instead, political reforms continued virtually unabated, leading to further democratization. By examining human rights in countries like Vietnam, Burma and Malaysia as well, Neher makes it clear that the conceptualisation of security with respect to human rights in Asia has changed dramatically in the past decade. During the Cold War, authoritarian regimes in Asia were tolerated, if not encouraged, by the United States and the West; so long as they remained ideological allies. Given the vast intra-societal diversity of Asian states, authoritarianism was often justified as a precondition for economic development and gradual democratization. Neher convincingly shows how flawed this rationalization was. At the same time, he acknowledges that human rights in Asia remain a secondary consideration, and that economic growth and political stability are the primary sources of any government's legitimacy.

Of particular interest in this book is the chapter by John MacFarlane on transnational crime and Asia-Pacific security. Formerly a Director of Intelligence for the Australian Federal Police, MacFarlane brings to bear an in-depth understanding of organized crime in all its complexity. He discusses the effects of globalization on the criminal underworld, arguing that organisations such as the Chinese triads, Japanese yakuza, and Russian mafia are becoming increasingly sophisticated and diverse in

their operations. MacFarlane argues that such syndicates flourish in Asia because they face weak, often corrupt governments. He lists growing materialism, the economic uncertainty caused by the financial collapse, and a close proximity to narcotics production as determinants in these groups' success. MacFarlane contends many criminal syndicates are so developed that by all definitions of security—military, political, or economic—they represent a serious threat to Asian nations. He concludes that only long term, multinational co-operation and planning will help combat the problem, which is likely to get much worse as the effects of economic development and globalization are realized.

Other academics, notably historians, may have a difficult time with the theoretical foundations of this book and the abundance of political science jargon. The collection of chapters would certainly profit if put in a more deliberate and focused historical context, or if expanded to include more detailed examinations of the intra-societal diversity Neher discusses. On the whole, however, *The Many Faces of Asian Security* succeeds in presenting the wide range of security issues and concerns confronting Asian nations. Anyone with an interest in Asia, and the projection of American power there, will find this book thought-provoking.

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