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The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History

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substantial defense of the canal's strategic use by the United States, measured against present-day military scenarios. It would be an examination worthy of a naval war college. The canal represents an obvious, incontestable, and enduring fact: the saving of fifteen to twenty days' sailing time between the Atlantic and the Pacific. No thinking politician or military strategist can deny the vital importance of *time* as a factor in any crisis, large or small.

It is probably safe to say that neither military utility nor the canal's so-called vulnerability are dominant considerations in a peacetime environment where the United States is seen as the superpower. International relations and even domestic political issues weigh more heavily today in considering what the United States should do in the short time before the treaty is enacted. Unfortunately, the Evans book fails to consider what impact, if any, a reconsideration of the canal treaty might have on the U.S. position in Latin America or elsewhere. Recent interest by China and Japan in the canal is, however, noted and commented on.

As it now stands, the book offers only an accusation against the many who negotiated and approved an "illegal" treaty in 1977. The plea for a U.S. review that would salvage a position of partnership for the United States is buttressed only by complaints concerning the prospects of inadequate maintenance, and loss of drug-monitoring sites and physical property. A measure of partnership based on sound military interest is a good cause. Unfortunately, the game is already in play, and the voice of diplomacy seems to be muttering "going . . . going . . ." Can this

book's impact thwart the last word? Gone?

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Lowry, Robert. *The Armed Forces of Indonesia*. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1996. 282pp. \$29.95

Robert Lowry is an Australian graduate of Indonesia's Army Staff and Command College, and his book is one of a series produced by the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University. The Centre has a distinguished array of volumes on the region and its problems. Although published in 1996, this book is still relevant to the present situation in Indonesia, even after the transfer of power from the hands of Suharto to his protégé Dr. B. J. Habibie. Many of the players, institutions, and philosophical, political, and cultural beliefs are still in place. Lowry's views are endorsed in the book's foreword by General L. B. ("Bernie") Murdani, who, according to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, is the former head of Kopkamtib (an intelligence and coordinating arm) and the officer in charge of the invasion of East Timor. Presently, Murdani is director of a Jakarta international relations "think tank."

Basically, Indonesia sees threats from several sources. First, it views many areas as potential internal threats—that is, areas that may seek possible separation, at the extreme, or readjustment of terms between the central government and local control, at the minimum. The

chief areas posing such threats are Aceh, Timor, and West Irian. Next, China is perceived as a future problem. Recent riots and revelations of sexual assaults against the Chinese during those riots have once again shown that the Chinese have never been accepted in the Indonesian midst. The possibility of China acting as a "big brother" and intervening worries the military. Lastly, there is a myriad of maritime problems facing the nation. A short list would include piracy, smuggling, and illegal fishing. Lowry examines them all.

This book lays out the command and control structure of the Indonesian armed forces, called the ABRI. The descriptions address strategical and geographical needs, as the Indonesians perceive them. Good use of Indonesia's history is interwoven in the telling, and examples are frequently used to illustrate key points.

The descriptions of the Navy are outweighed by those of the Army. It becomes obvious that Lowry feels compelled to be circumspect. He provides some examination of just what works and what is in bad need of overhaul, but without being too specific. To the author's credit, he points out the shortcomings of many units of the Army. However, the same cannot be said about the descriptions of the police, a vital component of the ABRI and partner in providing internal security. In examining the Navy, Lowry is not as critical of Habibie's past role in the purchase of the bulk of the former East German navy as the Asian press has been. While these are criticisms of the book, they are minimal in light of its general value.

Recent revelations about the ABRI, the Chinese role in the Indonesian

economy, and transfers of money to the United States for political contributions makes Lowry's section on the ABRI and business very important to understanding tensions that could develop if U.S. congressional and journalistic investigations are pursued. As Lowry correctly points out, the Indonesian officer corps is allowed, maybe even expected, to augment its income by associating with the Chinese business interests; the encouragement continues into retirement. In this way not only do individuals receive income but the ABRI profits. So one sees the Indonesian Navy receiving, like any stockholder, its share of the profits of such entities as the Admiral Lines (shipping, what else!) and Bank Bahari. While this reduces the dependence on the treasury for funding (Indonesia requires less public money for its armed forces than others in the region), it can be problematic. The ABRI is close to the business community, many of whose members are overseas Chinese. Because it was felt that closeness would reduce dislike or even hatred, key Indonesians were brought into the Chinese business groupings. One of these entities, the Lippo Group, has been making political donations in the United States.

These revelations have not helped the ABRI image. They are too recent for Lowry's work, but the book is nevertheless a good foundation for understanding the monied overseas Chinese in Indonesia and the ABRI connection.

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