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## The Armed Forces in Contemporary Asian Societies

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shared interests and concerns into political and institutional mechanisms for defense cooperation, not to mention an operational military relationship. Americans need to be reminded that China has historically rejected a purely military interpretation of security. Instead, it has used a combination of psychological and political means in pursuit of its strategic goals. The current leadership in Beijing seems to recognize this and has made good use of the tactic of ambiguity to enhance China's position and not stretch the boundaries of change beyond their elastic limit.

Gregor's conclusions challenge many of our more warm and comfy notions of the importance of China. He cautions that Beijing's interests may diverge with ours as we move away from China's periphery. He argues that the PRC has the potential to work considerable mischief among our allies in East Asia. He contends that neither nation will be vital to the other's economy for the remainder of this century. Finally, he warns that maintaining the "China connection" may ultimately prove to be of secondary importance to the future policy of the United States toward the Pacific and Asia. Gregor thereby makes a strong, albeit implicit, case for the United States to avoid thinking about China as it has in the past, a past that has been marked perhaps more by myth than reality. China is a friend, not an ally. We need to recognize that as well as the fact that it probably does both of us some good to keep some daylight

between us. One final note for the reader who is not a "China hand": read this and any other book like it with the understanding that our knowledge of China, though growing day-by-day because of such work as Professor Gregor's, is still cramped by the formal, rather restricted nature of our access to its institutions.

JAMES F. GIBLIN  
Captain, U.S. Navy

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Olsen, Edward A. and Jurika, Stephen Jr., eds. *The Armed Forces in Contemporary Asian Societies*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986. 368pp. \$39.50

This collection of papers was originally presented at a conference on "The Role of the Armed Forces in Contemporary Asia" held at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, in 1982. As the title suggests, the various authors focus on the domestic role of Asian armed forces in their societies.

In revising and updating the 16 papers for inclusion as book chapters, the editors sought to establish unity by having each chapter address the origin of the armed forces' status in their host society and then assess what the military is doing with the power it has accrued by virtue of that status. An extended introductory chapter by editors Olsen and Jurika establishes the framework of the book and provides a short sketch of the subsequent chapters. Those chapters are then divided geographically into East Asia, Southeast Asia,

and South Asia. In place of a conclusion, a cross-regional analysis by Sheldon Simon aggregates the specific conditions in the various Asian countries by assessing prospects for regional cooperation instead of conflict.

As might be expected in a collection that covers countries ranging from China to Afghanistan, the quality is at times uneven and the updating since 1982 has not always been thorough. Nevertheless, the book provides valuable insight into the military's role in the domestic affairs of countries which are of increasing strategic importance to the United States.

Besides Olsen, Jurika, and Simon, contributors include Douglas Pike on Vietnam, James Buck on Japan, and June Teutel Dreyer on China.

*The Armed Forces in Contemporary Asian Societies* would be a valuable addition to the libraries of students of Asian affairs. It also provides good background for those wishing to learn how the military influences Asian society. But, as the editors caution, leave your cultural relativism at home when you examine these disparate military structures, and the good and bad they have brought upon their nations.

R.S. CLOWARD  
Captain, U.S. Navy

This compact volume by British specialists in Asian affairs does a good job as far as it goes. The trouble is, it does not go far enough. The topics included in its brief survey of major powers, medium powers, and regional issues in East and Southeast Asia are perfectly adequate, but the coverage is not. Though the book was published in 1986, the scope of data seems to terminate in 1983-84. Consequently, some of the chapters are able to withstand such evident delays in publication, while others do not fare as well. The chapters that are most seriously overtaken by events are those dealing with Korea, Australia, ASEAN, and Soviet policy. In neither the Soviet nor the Korean chapters is the 1984-86 improvement in U.S.S.R.-DPRK military ties covered. Both suffer accordingly. The Australian and ASEAN chapters are hurt by the nonexistent coverage of New Zealand's shift in nuclear policy and its consequent damage to the ANZUS Pact. The ASEAN chapter also has no coverage of the transfer of power from Marcos to Aquino and the subsequent implications for regional security. Other chapters also are weakened because of the relevance of these events to all the major powers' policies in Asia. Though leaving out the Philippine events may be understandable, depending on the actual date of publication within 1986, the absence of coverage on the other topics is a serious flaw.

As a result, what would otherwise have been a useful survey of evolving strategic affairs in the Western

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Leifer, Michael, ed. *The Balance of Power in East Asia*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986. 157pp. \$27.50