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The Changing Face of Southeast Asia

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BOOKS

Vandenbosch, Amry and Butwell, Richard. *The Changing Face of Southeast Asia*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966. 438 p. (DS 518.1 .V33)

Professors Vandenbosch and Butwell say much that needs to be said not only about the immediate problem of Vietnam, but about the future impact of Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. The discussion of American policy in Vietnam is reflective of the complications and confusions which abound in this area. If one reads the book with an open mind, he could find support for being either a hawk or a dove. However, the authors take a middle-of-the-road approach and offer no really acceptable solutions. With the present-day rush to know more about our immediate situation in Vietnam, it is rewarding to find authors dealing with the problem as a whole; throughout the eight "country" chapters is heard the "domino theory" louder and louder in the background. The authors contend that what happens to one clearly and strongly influences the others, since "the region is a distinct and interrelated geographical whole, making it virtually impossible for any country within the area to isolate itself from the other parts politically." Each professes to be in sympathy with his other Asian brothers but plans differently his approach to government. The "guided democracy" of Indonesia and the benevolent dictatorship of Cambodia are only two. The eight countries present vivid examples of the different self-images they possess and of their views on this turbulent area in which they must function. But, say the authors--oddly enough--they find unity through this very diversity.

Professors Vandenbosch and Butwell predict that Communist China will eventually be the dominating factor in the Southeast Asian scene. However, this reader feels that recent events on the borders of India and Laos, and in Vietnam itself, have thoroughly exposed the widely shared Asian myth that only Western powers start wars; and further, that mainland China's influence is an influence through fear and will be overcome by a steadfast resolve to support those peoples who have allied themselves with the United States against the Communists. The problems facing the West in Vietnam, as elsewhere in Asia, continue to be, according to the authors, "the difficulty in determining where nationalism ends and communism begins." They repeat often that the ways of the East are not

our ways and that we judge Asians by our standards at our peril. In this study there is much that should help greatly in relations with the generally charming, intelligent, if sometimes aggravating, people of Southeast Asia, and one can agree with the authors' conclusion about American policy in Southeast Asia:

We have probably more than held our own to date in the area, and we probably will be able to continue to do so in the future. The diplomatic problems facing the United States in Southeast Asia are admittedly difficult, but they are not hopeless.

This is a well-researched but poorly assembled book. As a research manual, it would provide worthy reference material. However, considerable repetition and a tortuous, academic style combine to make the reading a laborious process.

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Lawrence, Samuel A., *United States Merchant Shipping Policies and Politics*. Washington: Brookings Institution, 1966. 405 p. (HE 745 .L29)

United States merchant shipping has been a sick industry throughout most of the history of this country with, of course, the notable exceptions of the great clipper era and the period immediately following World War II. During the latest decline of the industry has come a rash of studies--public and private--to determine what's wrong with the U.S. merchant marine. In spite of the quality and thoroughness of many of these studies, however, little or no effective action has been taken either by the Congress or the Administration to halt the deterioration of U.S. merchant shipping.

In this book, which the author describes as "a study of U.S. Government programs to develop and maintain American merchant shipping," Mr. Lawrence specifically addresses the problems of defining, synthesizing, and updating policies to keep pace with the industry's political and economic environment. Further, he examines the techniques for the implementation of policies and analyzes the politics involved in getting a program to the fore of government consciousness so that action will be taken. The book, of course, includes a study of the government programs,