

Csaba Barnabás Horváth:

## CHINA'S RISE AND THE GEOPOLITICS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

*ABSTRACT: The following paper attempts to give an overview on how the rise of China, and the geopolitics of Southeast Asia seem to affect each other. The paper will take a one-by-one overview of each and every ASEAN member state and see what China's rise mean regarding their own individual strategic interests, and at the end makes an attempt to draw a conclusion of this overview. The main findings of the paper are that the individual interests of the countries of Southeast Asia are likely to prevent the ASEAN to form a regional security bloc or a united front against China, especially that some of these countries even view the growing influence of China as a positive development. At the same time, several key countries of the group in contrary view China as a threat, and seem to be eager to stand up to it with US assistance, so it is also unlikely that the ASEAN as a whole would become the sphere of influence of China. The conclusion of the paper is that the most likely scenario is that the region, amidst growing economic integration, will end up in strategically separating to a group of pro-China, and to another group of pro-US countries, albeit possibly by no formal arrangements. A certain geographical distinction also seems to coincide with this.*

*KEYWORDS: China, geopolitics, ASEAN*

### INTRODUCTION

Amidst the Sino-USA rivalry becoming the rivalry of the two strongest powers on the planet, the strategic significance of Southeast Asia is ever increasing. On most of its borders China is facing nuclear powers, and countries with great power identity on their own, and buffer states between them and China. This means Japan and nuclear armed North Korea in the northeast, Russia, and its buffer state Mongolia in the north, India, its buffer states Nepal and Bhutan, and nuclear armed Pakistan in the southwest. There are only two regions adjacent to China, that consist of small countries: five former Soviet republics of Central Asia in the west, and Southeast Asia, the ten ASEAN countries in the south. This paper will take a view of the geopolitics of the latter. Southeast Asia, lying between China, India, Japan, Australia and the US-controlled Pacific Ocean, is likely to be one of the major scenes of the US-China strategic rivalry in the upcoming decades.

This paper attempts to give an overview on the ASEAN countries in the scope of their strategic position in the geopolitics of the region, as well as their traditional and present attitude towards the rise of China, that can also be either sympathetic or hostile depending on their strategic position and interests. As we will see, some of the ASEAN member states are in strategic positions where the assertiveness of China can be tolerable, or even welcomed, as it often impairs their traditional regional strategic opponents, as in the case of Cambodia and to some degree Laos, or helps them to ease disadvantages caused by strained relations between the given country and the USA, as in the case of Myanmar and to some degree Malaysia. On the other hand we will see countries that feel their territorial integrity under

threat by the rise of China, such as Vietnam and the Philippines, and to some degree Indonesia. And then, last but not least, we will see countries taking a neutral stand and balancing between the attitudes of these two described groups, such as Thailand (with more pro-China undertones) and Singapore (with more pro-US undertones).

It also has to be taken into consideration that this interaction is taking place in the broader context of the USA-China rivalry. In respect of the strategic position of the countries in question, an important factor about this rivalry is the asymmetry between the military capabilities of the USA and China in the region. While China is slowly but steadily becoming the hegemonic military power of the region, the USA is still maintaining its naval superiority, which makes countries of Mainland Southeast Asia, especially those sharing direct borders with China, more vulnerable to Chinese strategic pressure and less suitable for US military assistance, while island nations of Maritime Southeast Asia are less vulnerable to Chinese strategic pressure, and more suitable for US military assistance.

Another general issue that we must take into consideration is the most controversial issue between ASEAN and China, the South China Sea dispute. The dispute is mainly over the Spratly and Paracel Islands. These two archipelagos mostly consist of mere sandbanks and shoals. Since maritime boundaries were not properly delineated in the previous decades, China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei all claim parts of these islands, with China, Vietnam and the Philippines having the most extensive territorial claims. The islands themselves are mostly tiny, but they lie along strategic sea lanes and also extensive maritime economic zones are adjacent to them. In the past decade an odd competition was going on, with the claimant countries occupying one uninhabited shoal after another, resulting by now in a mosaic of islands controlled by different countries. Recently China is causing controversy by artificially expanding shoals under its control, and setting up airfields and alleged military bases on them. Out of the claimant states, Vietnam and the Philippines show a more assertive stand against China. This caused the issue to become a proxy-theatre for the ongoing great power rivalry between China and the network of US-led alliances, with the USA and some of its major allies granting their support to the Philippines and Vietnam.

## OVERVIEW OF THE TEN INDIVIDUAL ASEAN COUNTRIES

After this brief introduction, we can start our overview of the countries in question: Laos is one of the least populous and least wealthy countries of Southeast Asia, and the only landlocked nation in the region. Why we still start our overview with it, and what gives its strategic significance is its location. It shares long boundaries with China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. Both for Thailand and Vietnam, obtaining influence over Laos in their history meant a safe buffer zone, and Laos in hostile hands meant strategic vulnerability. The most recent example for how important the strategic location of Laos can be from the Vietnam War. The South Vietnamese and their American allies blocked passage through the short border between the two Vietnams. The North Vietnamese however, managed to detour these defence lines by obtaining access to roads in Laos, and building the network of the Ho Chi Minh trail there, enabling them to infiltrate and wage attacks all along the extensive boundary between South Vietnam and Laos. It also enabled them to extend the communist insurgency to Cambodia and wage attacks on South Vietnam from that country as well. The Americans did recognize the strategic importance of Laos after a while, and did extend the

war to Laos and Cambodia, but by the time they did so, it was already too late.<sup>1</sup> Later, after the unification of Vietnam, Vietnamese occupation of both Laos and Cambodia provided a convenient buffer zone for pro-Soviet Vietnam against pro-USA Thailand. Vietnamese forces held Laos under occupation until the early 1990s, and the country had been virtually a satellite of Vietnam until then. Vietnam pulled out its forces in the early 1990s, but maintained a special relationship with Laos for the next two decades.<sup>2</sup> This however, started to change recently. Laos refused to back Vietnam in the South China Sea dispute in 2016, when it rejected the international tribunal ruling that condemned China.<sup>3</sup> Laos also reached an agreement with China over the construction of a rail line linking China and Thailand through its own territory, detouring Vietnam due to strained Sino-Vietnamese relations.<sup>4</sup> These events show Laos moving away from its old big brother, Vietnam, and strengthening relations with China. Should China gain access to Laotian territory would put both Vietnam and Thailand into extremely vulnerable positions facing China. With much of its history for the past 200 years being a battleground between Vietnam and Thailand, an alliance with China raising its positions against both of those would in fact be a rational choice for Laos, and recent events of rapprochement with China seem to show such a consideration on behalf of the Laotian government.

Cambodia, the southern neighbour of Laos, is with little doubt that Southeast Asian country that in fact has the strongest interests to pursue pro-Chinese policies, and even alignment with China. The rump state of the once mighty Khmer Empire gradually decreased to a faction of its former territory through the last millennium under the pressure of its more assertive neighbours, Thailand and Vietnam, both taking territory from it bit by bit, in conflict after conflict. Cambodia has a history of attempting to balance Thai and Vietnamese pressure by aligning itself with more distant powers, in most cases with China, but even the arrival of French colonization in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century meant a halt for Thai and Vietnamese advance, and therefore salvation for Cambodia.<sup>5</sup> A recent, but bizarre example for this otherwise perfectly rational trend was the alliance between the People's Republic of China, and the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime. Cambodia continued its China-leaning foreign policy after the end of the Vietnamese occupation, and under the premiership of Hun Sen. With border clashes occurring with Thailand as recently as the 2010s, and the memory of Vietnamese occupation being still relatively recent, an alliance with China can seem to be a practical guarantee for the sovereignty of Cambodia, especially given the fact that the USA would be highly unwilling to play such a role, since it views both Thailand and increasingly Vietnam as strategic allies too. The present Cambodian administration of Hun Sen is indeed pursuing rather pro-Chinese foreign policy, and Cambodia refused to back Vietnam and

<sup>1</sup> Kissinger, H. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994. 620–702.

<sup>2</sup> Savada, A. M. *Laos, a country study*. Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Krishnamoorthy, N. "Laos backs China over South China Sea dispute, rejects Hague ruling". *International Business Times*. 15 July 2016. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/laos-backs-china-over-south-china-sea-dispute-rejects-hague-ruling-1570737>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>4</sup> Ku, S. "China's Rising Influence in Laos". *The Diplomat*. 3 March 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/chinas-rising-influence-in-laos/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Chandler, D. P. *A history of Cambodia*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983. 20.

the Philippines in the South China Sea dispute, even refusing to join a proposed ASEAN joint statement over the issue.<sup>6</sup>

What makes Vietnam, the eastern neighbour of Laos and Cambodia, and the immediate southern neighbour of China along the South China Sea coast, somewhat odd among the countries of Southeast Asia, is that while on the one hand, it is the one that is culturally the closest to China, sharing the same Confucian civilization, and its old monarchy running a structure of administration that followed the example of the Chinese imperial system, on the other hand, Vietnam is the state most staunchly standing up against China when it comes to the issues of sovereignty. This odd combination, of course, comes from the history of Vietnam. Being annexed by China for centuries in the early period of its history, it did adapt Confucian civilization, but the Vietnamese ethnicity managed to avoid assimilation by the Han Chinese, and reached independence by a successful struggle. Lacking major natural barriers along its northern border, it is geopolitically vulnerable for invasions from China, and did in fact attract a series of them, but managed to fend them off all. Successfully struggling for independence, and later successfully repelling repeated Chinese invasions, Vietnam built up a militaristic tradition of its own, enabling it to maintain one of the strongest armed forces in Southeast Asia up until this day. Ironically, this constant state of existential threat, posed from the north by China, resulted in Vietnam's building up such a unique military structure that enabled it to appear as perhaps the most assertive power in Southeast Asia along its southern borders. It did pursue a dynamic and seemingly unstoppable territorial expansion towards the south on the expense of the fallen Kingdom of Champa at first, once mighty Cambodia after that, and resulting collision with the Thai at the end, and reaching as far as sporadic actions on the Malayan Peninsula in certain historical periods.<sup>7</sup> Although Vietnam was forced to accept the status of a vassal of China a few times, it was always eager to defend its internal sovereignty, and did continue its expansive attitude on its southern border. In fact, the Vietnam War can be interpreted as an organic continuation of this strategic position of Vietnam, with the invasion of Laos and Cambodia as a continuation of its expansion in Southeast Asia, and its successful stand against China in 1979 as the most recent example of similar episodes. Ever since the 1970s, the main orientation of contemporary Vietnamese foreign and security policy has been to secure its sovereignty against China, and seek international alliances that pose a guarantee for it, no matter whether if it means aligning with the Soviet Union (as in the 1980s) with the USA (since the 2010s) or with India (throughout the last decades, but intensifying recently<sup>8</sup>). The location of Vietnam makes it vulnerable for any attack from China, but what gives it a geographical advantage is that south of Hanoi, most of the country forms a narrow strip of land along the coastline between the mountains and the sea. Thus any Chinese army invading Vietnam would soon find itself having to pass through a series of narrow choke points being able to be easily blocked by the otherwise outnumbered Vietnamese. In geography, the weak point of Vietnam is Laos and Cambodia. While regarding any invasion that moves along the north-south corridor

<sup>6</sup> "ASEAN deadlocked on South China Sea, Cambodia blocks statement". Reuters. 26 July 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-ruling-asean-idUSKCN1050F6>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Wong, D. T. K. "Vietnam-Champa Relations and the Malay-Islam Regional Network in the 17th–19th Centuries". *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia* 5. 2004. <https://kyotoreview.org/issue-5/vietnam-champa-relations-and-the-malay-islam-regional-network-in-the-17th-19th-centuries/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Sarma, S. "India-Vietnam relations after Modi's visit". *The Diplomat*. 5 September 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/india-vietnam-relations-after-modis-visit/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

within Vietnam itself, the form of the country as a narrow strip of land along the coast is an advantage, it becomes an extreme weakness if the invader uses Laotian and Cambodian soil as the base of its operations, enabled to reach virtually any given target in Vietnam with a short range attack along the extensive boundary that it shares with these two countries. During the Vietnam War, the North Vietnamese did recognize the strategic significance of Laos and Cambodia when organizing the Ho Chi Minh trail on the soil of these countries to wage attacks on South Vietnam, and the South Vietnamese and their American allies failed to recognize and prevent this until it was way too late.<sup>9</sup> In the present situation what gives the new context for the significance of Laos and Cambodia is that both countries, led by their own best geopolitical interests, are forging increasingly strong ties with China. If this rapprochement reaches a point where they provide access for Chinese troops to their territory in case of a Sino-Vietnamese conflict, that would leave Vietnam utterly defenceless among such circumstances, with no other chance than bringing back the tradition of accepting the status of a vassal of China while securing its internal sovereignty, something that among present circumstances would mean Finlandization. (This expression is referring to the policy of Finland during the Cold War, that based on the combination of while it eagerly defended its internal sovereignty, and maintained a formidable military to defend it as a last resort, at the same time it gave its agreement to not to participate in any strategic alliance that the Soviet union would find hostile, and also agreed – at least in theory – that it would show armed resistance in case any such alliance tried to land troops on its territory.) Therefore Vietnam is likely to be able to fend off the strategic pressure of China as long as China can only use its own soil for any potential military build-up against Vietnam, but becomes defenceless as soon as China gains access to the facilities of Cambodia and Laos.

Thailand, the western neighbour of Laos and Cambodia plays a perplexing role in Southeast Asia regarding the rise of China. On the one hand, it is a declared “major non-NATO ally” of the USA, and has been such throughout the entire Cold War. On the other hand, it is highly reluctant to interpret its alliance with the USA as a commitment to take part in efforts aiming to contain China, and in this aspect pursues a rather non-aligned course when it comes to the Sino-US rivalry, and in fact is among the more China-friendly states of Southeast Asia. How come such a combination can exist? In fact, if we take a look at the specific role of the strategic alliance between Thailand and the USA, we can see that contrary to what we may think, it never really resulted in any major actions or efforts by Thailand against the PRC throughout the entire Cold War. It rather meant USA assistance for Thailand fighting communist guerillas on its own soil, Thai assistance for the USA during the Vietnam War, but hardly ever against China itself. In fact, throughout the 1980s, when the informal Sino-US strategic partnership opened the way for it, Thailand and China extensively cooperated in the containment of Vietnamese influence in Mainland Southeast Asia, and in the assistance for anti-Vietnamese insurgents in Cambodia. The cooperation, and to a certain extent coincidence in geopolitical interests between China and Thailand goes back for centuries. As much as Burma and Vietnam, Thailand was also a vassal of the Qing Empire. Its situation was, however, very much different from that of the other two. Thailand did not really share a direct border with China. They shared a transitional frontier zone of Shan tribal states occupying the impassable mountainous terrain between them (in what is today northern Laos and northeast Myanmar), but this formed a natural frontier

---

<sup>9</sup> Kissinger. *Diplomacy*. 620–702.

strong enough to make sure, China will not pose such an existential threat to Thailand, as it did to Vietnam, with repeated direct invasions. Even the border between China and Burma is more passable, and was in fact passed more often by armies, than the mountainous region between northern Thailand and China. On the other hand, the countries with which Thailand did in fact have major direct conflicts were Burma and Vietnam (with Burma a.k.a. Myanmar being its nemesis for centuries).<sup>10</sup> It was, in fact, beneficial for Thailand when the Chinese strategic pressure somewhat contained Burmese and Vietnamese ambitions. Today, unlike Vietnam or the Philippines, Thailand has no direct territorial disputes with China. So far, Thailand seems to value the economic benefits that cooperation with China provides, and its traditional amity with China more, than it fears a general Chinese hegemony in the region, and then the supposed ASEAN solidarity with Vietnam and the Philippines. In general, Thailand took a neutral stand on the South China Sea Dispute so far.<sup>11</sup> The issue of Cambodia and Laos is also strategically crucial regarding the future of the strategic role of Thailand, albeit not exactly to such a degree as for Vietnam. If the Chinese military ever gets access to the territories of Laos and Cambodia, the strategic position of Thailand also becomes vulnerable from China to such a degree, where it would have hardly any other option than Finlandization. While its geography makes it somewhat less vulnerable in such a scenario, than Vietnam, it also seems to be so far less willing to resist Finlandization than Vietnam. Given the hostile relations and sentiments between Thailand and Myanmar, the only strategic mistake with which China could alienate Thailand would be a one-sided support for Myanmar in a hypothetical major conflict between the two countries. China, however, seems to be absolutely wise enough to avoid such a mistake, and its initiatives in the region, such as the One Belt One Road concept are rather promoting the reconciliation between Myanmar and Thailand.

Myanmar, a.k.a. Burma is the country that has been the main ally of China in Southeast Asia in recent decades. During the Qing period, Burma was a vassal of the Qing Empire likewise the other countries of Mainland Southeast Asia. The country shared a history of mutual hostilities with Thailand for centuries. After the Chinese Civil War, defeated Guomindang troops retreated to Burmese territory being active in the north-eastern frontier of the country for years to come, causing considerable unrest there. The country has also been plagued with conflicts between the Burmese, the core ethnicity of Myanmar, living mainly in the central basin of the country, and the smaller ethnic groups living along the mountainous frontier lands surrounding the central Basin. This resulted in Myanmar's becoming the single country with the largest number of separatist armed groups on its soil in the entire world in certain years. Since the military coup in 1962, Myanmar has pursued a distinct social model, the so called "Burmese way to socialism". This, along with the brutal crackdown on the so called 8888 uprising in 1988, led to increasing international isolation of the country. Amidst this increasing international isolation, China's willingness to give assistance to Myanmar meant relief for the country regarding its economy and foreign policy.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Chutintharanon, S. and Tun, T. *On Both Sides of the Tenasserim Range: History of Siamese Burmese Relations*. Bangkok: Institute of Asian Studies, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> "Thailand Hopes South China Sea dispute ends through joint efforts". *The Nation* (Thailand). 12 July 2016. <http://www.asianews.network/content/thailand-hopes-south-china-sea-dispute-ends-through-joint-efforts-22477>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Ganesan, N. "Myanmar–China relations: interlocking interests but independent output". *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 12/1. 2011. 95–111.

Myanmar's taking a pro-China stand resulted in Chinese investors' playing the main role at the rich natural gas fields of the country. Myanmar also became one of the earliest scenes of Chinese transport infrastructural investment, even before the Belt and Road Initiative had been formally announced, and is about to become a main beneficiary of the Initiative as the route connecting Southwest China to Bangladesh and Northeast India, the Calcutta-Hong Kong line is running through it. Since the beginning of its democratic transition in 2010, Myanmar did somewhat open up towards the western world as well as towards India, but its pro-China stand remains firm.<sup>13</sup>

The Philippines has traditionally been the most pro-USA country in Southeast Asia. The history of the Philippines resulted in a cultural character of the country that is very unusual in the region. The country became a colony of Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and more than three centuries of Spanish rule gave its culture a distinctly Latin-like character with the Roman Catholic Church being the dominant denomination in the country, and Baroque historical architecture and Spanish names being widespread. To make things even more complicated, as a Spanish colony, the Philippines was governed from Mexico, as part of that viceroyalty. During the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Manila was the hub of trading Latin-American silver for precious Chinese handcrafted goods, such as silk, porcelain, and lacquer furniture between Spanish and Chinese merchants. Latin American silver was transported from Acapulco by the Manila Galleons, that took the Chinese luxury goods on their way back to that Mexican port, while Chinese merchants were bringing their goods from, and taking the acquired silver to Canton, and the port cities of Guandong and Fujian provinces.<sup>14</sup> Later, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a result of the Spanish-American War, the Philippines became a possession of the USA, and remained such until 1946. This gave the Philippines a distinct cultural character that has much in common with Latin-America, and gives the sense of a close kinship with the USA. The Philippine-American relations remained close, however, after achieving independence as well. A security pact between the USA and the Philippines was signed in 1951, and has remained in effect up until today. The USA maintained military bases in the Philippines until 1992, and to give new frameworks to the American-Philippine security cooperation, a Visiting Forces Agreement was reached in 1999, and an Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement in 2014, technically still providing access for the USA to use the facilities of the Philippines in its operations in the region. The Philippines also enhanced its embeddedness into the network of US-led alliances by signing a security pact with Australia in 2007, and with Japan (as the first Southeast Asian country to do so) in 2016.<sup>15</sup> This trend of pro-US alignment is supported by two geopolitical factors as well: The Philippines' involvement in the territorial dispute over the Spratly Islands with China, and the location of the country as an island nation. The dispute over the Spratly Islands means a feud that puts the Philippines and China as opponents by default. The location of the Philippines as an island nation makes it a practically ideal partner for security cooperation with the USA against China. Since hundreds of kilometres of open sea separates the Philippines from China, the only way China could carry out a major invasion against the country could be by

<sup>13</sup> Lee, L. "Myanmar's transition to democracy: new opportunities or obstacles for India?". *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 36/2. 2014. 290–316.

<sup>14</sup> Legarda, B. "Two and a half centuries of the galleon trade". *Philippine Studies* 3/4. 1995. 345–372.

<sup>15</sup> Tatsumi Y. "Why Japan's defence deal with the Philippines is unique". *The Diplomat*. 10 March 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/why-japans-defence-deal-with-the-philippines-is-unique/>. Accessed on 26 January 2017.

an amphibious operation, that could most likely be successfully repelled by the naval superiority of the USA, especially considering the fact that the USA could also rely on assistance by Japan and Australia, given the respective security agreements that these countries have with the Philippines. It is important to note, that while the USA does not intervene in the South China Sea, the issue of uninhabited shoals claimed by the Philippines and occupied by China is absolutely different from what a Chinese invasion on the Philippines – one of its key strategic allies – would mean. The fact that the USA is not intervening on the South China Sea islands, does not mean that it would not intervene in case of a Chinese assault on the Philippines. A recent development regarding the country is that in 2016 the election of Rodrigo Duterte brought along an unexpected and sudden change in the decades-long foreign policy orientation. Duterte made statements about switching sides and aligning with Beijing, but as of the date of the submission of this paper, he hasn't withdrawn from the Philippines' security agreements with the USA.<sup>16</sup> This new shift in the Philippines' foreign policy is highly uncertain, since decades, if not centuries of not only political, but also cultural and even social orientation would have to be changed, and it is not yet clear how serious Duterte is on this issue. Crucial details are still to be clarified for this sudden turn: Is Duterte willing to withdraw from the security agreements with the USA? In case of really aligning itself with China, would the Philippines renounce all its claims on the South China Sea? As the Philippines lacks a formidable navy, who will take care of the external maritime security of the country, which the USA did until now? Will the Philippines build up a navy suitable for a regional middle power on its own? Does it have the resources for that? If it does not, will it ask for any Chinese assistance? Wouldn't such a situation endanger the sovereignty of the country? How would the overwhelmingly pro-US Philippine population react to such practical issues? As of now, the outcome and extent of Duterte's new doctrine is still to be seen, and it is still too early to re-categorize the Philippines from the pro-US countries of the region to the pro-China group. It is rather likely that it will follow the example of Myanmar from the opposite side, where the country's opening towards the USA and India after 2010 did not question the country's overall pro-China position, because that position rests on deep structural factors within the country, so the opening merely meant a certain degree of foreign policy diversification.

In the case of Malaysia, the main paradox is the contrast between the country's rather China-friendly foreign policy, and the internal tensions between the ethnic Chinese minority and the ethnic Malays majority. On the one hand, a fragile interethnic peace and balance is maintained in the ethnically divided country between the three most numerous ethnic groups, the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians. The Chinese and the Indians composed close to half of the country's population upon independence, but their proportion has decreased to about one third by today. Besides issues around political representation, tensions also rose due to the fact that upon independence, the Malay population was mostly agrarian, while the business sector was dominated by the Chinese, and the case is still not very far from this today. The Malaysian government implemented policies favouring Malays, interpreted as affirmative action policies by some and as discrimination by others, and practices that lead to the Chinese and Indian communities slowly but steadily losing ground. On the other hand, the country has been pursuing an increasingly non-aligned and rather China-friendly

---

<sup>16</sup> "Duterte aligns Philippines with China, says U.S. has lost". Reuters. 20 October 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-philippines-idUSKCN12K0AS>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.



foreign policy ever since the times of Mahathir Mohamad.<sup>17</sup> As a reason behind this, we can point out the often anti-Western rhetoric and ideological concepts of Mahathir, but what practically made it possible for such an approach to end up in pro-Chinese policies is the geopolitics of Malaysia as well: Malaysia is a participant in the South China Sea dispute, but only regarding a very little number of islands and shoals, and it's policy on the issue is rather trying to avoid confrontation with China, unlike what Vietnam and the Philippines are doing.<sup>18</sup> In the last one hundred or so years Malaysia (or the Malayan states before its formation) had much more issues of conflict with Indonesia, Thailand, and Singapore, than they had with China, and last but not least, China is in a relatively safe distance away from Malaysia, thus not posing such an imminent threat, as it does for Vietnam or the Philippines. So, having issues and neighbours of greater concern than China, it became a practical attitude for Malaysia, to seek Beijing's friendship.

In the case of Singapore, again we can see a seemingly confusing combination. While a solid majority of the city-state's population, and most members of its political elite are ethnic Chinese, relations between Singapore and China were most of the time rather restraint. The simple explanation for this is the strong ties that Singapore maintained, and to a certain degree still maintains, with Taiwan. The political character of the Singaporean leadership was characterized by a hard line anti-communist stand from the very beginning, and a natural consequence of this was to maintain strong ties with Taiwan, where training of the Singaporean army still takes place in part.<sup>19</sup> Since the start of the Chinese reforms in the late 1970s, relations between Singapore and China gradually improved. As of now, Singapore is also following a rather non-aligned line in its foreign policy, aiming to balance between great powers present in the region. So, regarding the Sino-US rivalry, Singapore takes a rather neutral stand, including being neutral over the South China Sea dispute, but with rather more pro-US undertones as the country has a Strategic Framework Agreement<sup>20</sup> with the USA, and a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Australia, the main South-Pacific strategic ally of the USA.<sup>21</sup> This attitude is also supported by the fact that the main security concerns of Singapore since gaining independence have been mainly Malaysia, and to a lesser degree, Indonesia. Singapore became independent from Malaysia in 1965, in an unusual way: Instead of the usual scenario of a former nation achieving independence through a successful struggle against a larger one, in this case, Singapore was virtually expelled from Malaysia. Ever since then, the country's strategic vulnerability as a city state divided from Malaysia by nothing but a narrow and shallow sea inlet, has caused a general sense of looming threat by nearby Malaysia. This resulted in Singapore being right now perhaps the only city-state that built a formidable military, in many ways, one of the strongest in Southeast Asia. The

<sup>17</sup> Saravanamuttu, J. *Malaysia's Foreign Policy – The First Fifty Years*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Jennings, R. "Why Malaysia Stays Quiet About Its Claims In The South China Sea." *Forbes*. 2 June 2016. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ralphjennings/2016/06/02/why-malaysia-stays-quiet-about-its-claims-in-the-disputed-south-china-sea/#1e9c20a81beb>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>19</sup> "Singapore military ties now a 'threat'". *Taipei Times*. 23 April 2002. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2002/04/23/0000133008>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>20</sup> "Factsheet: The Strategic Framework Agreement". Singapore Government, Ministry of Defence. 12 July 2005. [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press\\_room/official\\_releases/nr/2005/jul/12jul05\\_nr/12jul05\\_fs.html](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2005/jul/12jul05_nr/12jul05_fs.html), Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>21</sup> Australia – Singapore Military Training Initiative. <http://www.defence.gov.au/Initiatives/ASMTI/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

agreements and cooperation between Singapore and Taiwan, and between Singapore and Australia in a great part focus on the training of the Singaporean military, as it lacks proper training grounds on its own soil. So as we can summarize the case of Singapore, its Chinese cultural ties combined with its anti-communist commitment resulted in Singapore building close ties with Taiwan during the Cold War, and this factor put a difficult heritage on the present day relations between Singapore and China.

Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia, thus the country in the region that, given its population of more than 250 million inhabitants, its territory of close to 2 million square kilometres with an additional 3 million square kilometres of territorial waters, abundant natural resources, and its strategically advantageous location as an island nation, has theoretically the greatest chance to potentially become a middle power on its own right in the long run. Historically, Indonesian culture had stronger ties with the Indian subcontinent, than with China. Becoming predominantly Muslim during the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, it has a culture characteristically different from that of China or Mainland Southeast Asia.<sup>22</sup> This is somewhat balanced by the presence of an ethnic Chinese community that is small in percentage but influential in the economy of the country, and has been present there ever since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Since achieving independence, the history of Indonesian foreign policy can be divided into three main eras. The first, the hard line anti-colonialist, anti-western foreign policy of President Sukarno meant close cooperation with Cold War China, an attitude of unilateralism in Southeast Asia, and armed conflicts with pro-US Malaysia, Australia, and in Western New Guinea also with the local Dutch colonial authority and local pro-independence forces. After the fall of Sukarno, power was taken over by Suharto, and the establishment of ASEAN, all occurring in 1967, this generated a radical turn. At global level Indonesia switched sides in the Cold War, and became a key ally of the USA. This resulted in hostile relations with China, and at the same time also in taking an active and leading role in ASEAN, as a pro-western and anti-communist regional bloc during the Cold War.<sup>23</sup> The relations with China slightly improved during the 1980s, after the start of the Chinese reforms and that of the informal Sino-US strategic cooperation against the Soviet Union, and at regional level against Vietnam, thus improving relations with China, no longer questioning the pro-US stand of ASEAN in the Cold War context. The third, the present era of Indonesian foreign policy seems to have taken its shape by 2004, after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Suharto regime. With the end of the Cold War, the original purpose of ASEAN as a regional alliance uniting the pro-US countries of the region during the Cold War changed into a framework of regional integration focusing less on ideological and security issues, and more on economic integration, also giving admission to Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. At the same time, from being somewhat of an ally of the USA in the 1980s, China once again became the main opponent of American influence in the region, but at the same time became the economic powerhouse of the area. In this new context, Indonesia is following a foreign policy where it is cautiously balancing in a way that it keeps maintaining its military cooperation with the USA and at the same time is eager to build fruitful economic relations with China, while defending its sovereignty against Chinese assertiveness as we could see during the naval clashes in 2016, at the same time still pursuing its leading role

<sup>22</sup> Reid, A. *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999. 1–37.

<sup>23</sup> Weinstein, F. B. *Indonesian foreign policy and the dilemma of dependence: from Sukarno to Soeharto*. Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2007.

within ASEAN, aiming to mediate between China, Vietnam and the Philippines in the South China Sea Dispute, giving some moral support to these two fellow ASEAN countries. Considering all these characteristics of present day Indonesian foreign policy, we can conclude that in the Sino-US relations Indonesia can be sorted among the more pro-US countries with more willingness to stand up against China. On this scale, Indonesia can be seen as being more assertive to China than Thailand but less than Vietnam and the Philippines. The naval incident that occurred in 2016 between Indonesia and China near the Natuna islands,<sup>24</sup> and the policies of President Jokowi suggests a rather pro-US shift and an attitude of standing up to China in the policies of Indonesia.<sup>25</sup> This is also supported by the strategic factors that are given by the fact that Indonesia, as an island nation, is among those countries where, given the naval superiority of the USA, American assistance would for almost sure be sufficient to fend off a Chinese invasion (not to mention the prospect of further assistance in such a case from Australia and/or Japan).

The smallest among the ASEAN countries is the tiny sultanate of Brunei. The country along the northern coast of Borneo was a much larger state before the European colonization, and included virtually all of what is now Malaysian Borneo, but shrank to a fraction of its former size by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike Singapore, Brunei does not have a population of millions, only slightly more than 400,000 inhabitants, and it also lacks a formidable military. Regarding the South China Sea dispute, Brunei accepted China's offer to joint exploration of oil and gas resources on that part of the sea that Brunei claims as its own, thus Brunei de facto accepted the Chinese claims on the South China Sea, therefore we can also include Brunei among the rather pro-Chinese states of the region, together with Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Myanmar.<sup>26</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Finishing this overview, we can conclude that basically the ASEAN countries seem to lack the sufficient coherence to form a united front against China, with many of them are taking an increasingly pro-China stand, and some of them being more concerned over issues with their fellow ASEAN neighbours, than over those with China. ASEAN did try to make efforts to form a united front against China in the South China Sea debate, but as we could see in the individual descriptions above, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia and Brunei in evaded to take part in such a front in one way or another, and Myanmar is following an openly pro-China policy. It seems the individual interests of the participating countries do not make it possible for ASEAN to form a united front against China. While for the interests of some countries in the region the rise of China can certainly be seen as a strategic peril, such as in the case of Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam, for others, like Malaysia and Myanmar it is rather as an opportunity, and for some, like Laos and Cambodia, even as a blessing.

<sup>24</sup> Supriyanto, R. A. "Breaking the Silence: Indonesia Vs. China in the Natuna Islands". *The Diplomat*. 23 March 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/breaking-the-silence-indonesia-vs-china-in-the-natuna-islands/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Panda, A. "South China Sea: Indonesian Military Stages Massive Natuna Sea Exercise". *The Diplomat*. 8 October 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/10/south-china-sea-indonesian-military-stages-massive-natuna-sea-exercise/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Pereira, C. "Brunei Silenced on South China Sea Claims". *Asia Sentinel*. 30 April 2016. <http://www.asiasentinel.com/politics/brunei-silenced-south-china-sea-claims/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.

As events and policies in Southeast Asia are taking place in the context of the ongoing Sino-US great power rivalry, the difference in the existing military capabilities are making a spontaneous distinction between Mainland and Maritime Southeast Asia. On one hand, the military build-up of China makes it increasingly unlikely for any Southeast Asian army to be able to stop a Chinese ground offensive. On the other hand, in terms of air and sea power, China is still relatively weak when it comes to the prospect of amphibious operations. The USA still maintains a naval superiority, its close ally and regional opponent of China, Japan is also building up a world class navy as part of its remilitarization. This means that the US naval superiority still seems to be able to repel any Chinese amphibious operation against any island nation in East and Southeast Asia, and this case is even stronger with the prospect of Japanese assistance. Thus we are heading towards an asymmetric situation, where on the one hand, countries of Mainland Southeast Asia are becoming increasingly vulnerable to Chinese land power, while the island nations of Maritime Southeast Asia can, with great confidence, potentially still rely on US naval superiority to repel any Chinese invasion on sea.

If we want to categorize the ASEAN countries along the division of being rather pro-China, or rather anti-China, then we can include Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia and Myanmar in the pro-China group, while Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam in the anti-China group, with Thailand and Singapore being in between the two as a sort of non-aligned states. What this means for the future is the likely lack of a united ASEAN security bloc, and the main dividing line a great part seem to coincide with the geopolitical distinction between Mainland Southeast Asia and Maritime Southeast Asia, and the American concept of the First Island Chain. Two of the three rather anti-China states, Indonesia and the Philippines are at the same time the two island-nations of Southeast Asia. Their location makes them suitable to successfully secure their sovereignty against Chinese strategic pressure with US assistance given the continuing naval superiority of the US, and also taking into consideration the fact that Japanese assistance on behalf of the USA is also becoming an increasingly real possibility, that would add another world class navy to the picture thus making the case of Indonesia and the Philippines even stronger. This would mean a pro-US anti-China de facto alliance virtually involving all countries of the First Island Chain from Japan through Taiwan (de facto) and the Philippines to Indonesia, also having the capability to block almost every single choke point between the South and East China Seas, and the Pacific and Indian Oceans, thus practically enclosing the Chinese navy to the littoral seas. Mainland Southeast Asia is a way different story, however. As China's military capabilities keep expanding, it seems less and less likely that the USA would be able and willing to halt a Chinese ground invasion on any Mainland Southeast Asian country. It is plausible of course, that the USA would intervene in a naval conflict between China and Vietnam over the Spratly Islands, but a Chinese ground invasion on Vietnam would be a completely different story. Also even if the USA was willing to assist Vietnam in case of such a Chinese ground invasion where China would only use its own soil as the base of its operations, this would not be a guarantee that the USA would also be willing to help in case China also used Laotian and Cambodian soil for its operations. Here we come to the next issue that makes containment in Mainland Southeast Asia an unlikely option: As we have discussed before, as soon as China gains access to the use of the territory of Laos and Cambodia for its operations, the strategic position of Vietnam becomes utterly defenceless, and standing up to China will no longer be an option. But how could the USA prevent China from gaining such an access? Given the history of its relations both to Thailand and Vietnam, it is in the best interest of Cambodia to build an alliance with China, so as for Cambodia, we can conclude that a military alliance with China is

not a question of if, but a question of when. And Laos is the key country in such a sense that it can provide a possible direct land link between China and Cambodia. So the main question is whether the USA is willing and able to prevent China from getting access to the territory of Laos. China can obtain such an access in two possible ways: courtship or strategic pressure. If the case is courtship, and Laos willingly accepts it, then there is not much that the USA (or for that matter Vietnam) can do. Invading Laos while China stands behind would not really be an option. If the Laotian leadership is unwilling to accept courtship, and China attempts to extort submission of Laos by strategic pressure, then that theoretically leaves more room for manoeuvre for the US, since in this case, it could intervene on behalf of the legitimate government of the country. But would such an intervention be possible in practice? The armed forces of Laos are small and weak to the point of insignificance. The country shares a long, direct land border with China, so theoretically, Chinese ground troops can enter the country simply rolling over the border. The US naval superiority that can defend island nations of the First Island Chain is of no use here. At the same time Laos is also a landlocked country, which means that the USA cannot simply ship supplies and troops directly there, only through Thai, Cambodian or Vietnamese territory, if any of these countries is to give access. We can immediately exclude Cambodia given its pro-China stand, and such involvement by Thailand is also highly unlikely given the fact that it was keen to maintain good relations with China even as a US ally during the Cold War. So the only option for the USA to help Laos repelling Chinese strategic pressure is to aid it in the frames of an alliance with Vietnam. So, what we get as the necessary condition to help Laos in fending off Chinese strategic pressure if it is willing to do so, is an American-Vietnamese alliance, going to war with China on Laotian soil. How is plausible such a scenario? As for Vietnam, such a scenario would mean that it would also have to face a Chinese invasion itself. So this would mean the USA waging a major ground war with China in both Vietnam and Laos. But this happens only if the USA does chose to get engaged in the conflict, because otherwise China would not attack Vietnam, and given the Chinese foreign policy tradition of making high efforts to avoid open violence if possible, even in Laos, China's gaining access by extortion would likely happen through negotiations, without one single gunshot. This means that in such a situation a US military involvement would not mean an intervention into an already ongoing Sino-Laotian war, but would rather mean starting a major Sino-Laotian-Vietnamese ground war in a situation where up until then, whatever is going on, it is likely to happen without one single gunshot. At this point the willingness of the USA to take such a step seems to be highly unlikely, and even the willingness of Vietnam to get involved can be doubtful. And we also have to emphasize that even such a theoretical possibility is only there if both Chinese courtship and diplomatic extortion in Laos fail, and Laos itself is asking for US military assistance and is willing to face a war with China. If, either due to a genuine conviction by courtship or due to a costs-and-benefits consideration of the Chinese diplomatic pressure, Laos is unwilling to go to war with China and refuses US and Vietnamese assistance, not even such a theoretical possibility will exist. It rather seems that the USA and Vietnam in fact lost the capability of preventing Laos from becoming under Chinese influence when Vietnam pulled out its troops from the country in the early 1990s.

So to summarize for Mainland Southeast Asia: We can conclude that Laos is the key to the region. As soon as the Chinese military gains access to the territory of Laos to use it for Chinese operations, then even without any real military attack this would represent such a strategic position for China in the region that from that point military confrontation with China would cease to be an option for both Vietnam and Thailand, and they would have no other

option, than Finlandization. With Myanmar and Cambodia already being pro-Chinese, this as a result would mean Chinese hegemony over the entire of Mainland Southeast Asia. In short, from an American strategic point of view, if Laos falls, entire Mainland Southeast Asia falls. We can also see, however, that if China decides to seriously pursue strategic access to Laotian territory, then it is highly unlikely that the USA will have the sufficient tools and means to prevent this from happening. This means overall, that the question of China bringing Mainland Southeast Asia under its hegemony seems to be not a question of if, but rather of when.

On the other hand, it is important to emphasize that Maritime Southeast Asia and in a broader sense, the countries of the First Island Chain (Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and Indonesia) are a whole different story. Since the USA naval superiority will continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and Japan and Taiwan are maintaining formidable navies likely able to pose a major if not impassable obstacle for any Chinese amphibious operation against them, and with the prospect of Japan's navy assisting the USA in Southeast Asia becoming more likely than ever before, as well as the increasing possibility of Australian and perhaps even Indian assistance to the USA with defending Indonesia or the Philippines against a Chinese amphibious invasion, it seems likely that the USA and its allies may be able to relatively easily secure Maritime Southeast Asia against China as long as these countries are willing to accept such assistance. The expected spread of Anti-Access-Area-Denial systems is a factor that seems to only further confirm this distinction between Maritime Southeast Asia and Mainland Southeast Asia. If China deploys A2AD systems on its territory along the South China Sea, this would further impair the USA's capability to assist the countries of Mainland Southeast Asia, as this could prevent its navy reaching there but it does not make any easier for any Chinese amphibious operation to reach the territory of Indonesia or the Philippines (or Taiwan and Japan for that matter). Once A2AD systems become abundant, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Japan may also deploy such systems on their own territories (or the USA can arm them with such) preventing the Chinese navy from reaching these countries. So while the potential deployment of A2AD systems on Chinese soil can prevent the US navy reaching China and Mainland Southeast Asia, at the same time, the potential deployment of A2AD systems in Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Japan can prevent the Chinese navy from reaching the territories of these countries, and in general to pass through the First Island Chain. Thus, several factors, such as geographic location, cultural affiliation, popular amity and enmity, strategic interests of individual countries, asymmetry between Chinese and US military capabilities, and even the prospect of the advent of A2AD systems point towards the same potential outcome of the present situation: Chinese hegemony over Mainland Southeast Asia sooner or later, but at the same time, a continuing US alignment of Maritime Southeast Asia and countries of the First Island Chain.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- "ASEAN deadlocked on South China Sea, Cambodia blocks statement". Reuters. 26 July 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-southchinasea-ruling-asean-idUSKCN1050F6>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Australia–Singapore Military Training Initiative. <http://www.defence.gov.au/Initiatives/ASMTI/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Chandler, D. P. *A history of Cambodia*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1983.
- Chutintharanon, S. and Tun, T. *On Both Sides of the Tenasserim Range: History of Siamese Burmese Relations*. Bangkok: Institute of Asian Studies, 1995.

- “Duterte aligns Philippines with China, says U.S. has lost”. Reuters. 20 October 2016. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-philippines-idUSKCN12K0AS> , Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- "Factsheet: The Strategic Framework Agreement". Singapore Government, Ministry of Defence. 12 July 2005. [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press\\_room/official\\_releases/nr/2005/jul/12jul05\\_nr/12jul05\\_fs.html](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/press_room/official_releases/nr/2005/jul/12jul05_nr/12jul05_fs.html), Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Ganesan, N. “Myanmar–China relations: interlocking interests but independent output”. *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 12/1. 2011. 95–111.
- Jennings, R. “Why Malaysia Stays Quiet About Its Claims In The South China Sea”. Forbes. 2 June 2016. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ralphjennings/2016/06/02/why-malaysia-stays-quiet-about-its-claims-in-the-disputed-south-china-sea/#1e9c20a81beb>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Kissinger, H. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994.
- Krishnamoorthy, N. “Laos backs China over South China Sea dispute, rejects Hague ruling”. International Business Times. 15 July 2016. <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/laos-backs-china-over-south-china-sea-dispute-rejects-hague-ruling-1570737>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Ku, S. “China's Rising Influence in Laos”. The Diplomat. 3 March 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/chinas-rising-influence-in-laos/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Lee, L. “Myanmar's transition to democracy: new opportunities or obstacles for India?”. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International and Strategic Affairs* 36/2. 2014. 290–316.
- Legarda, B. “Two and a half centuries of the galleon trade”. *Philippine Studies* 3/4. 1995. 345–372.
- Panda, A. “South China Sea: Indonesian Military Stages Massive Natuna Sea Exercise”. The Diplomat. 8 October 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/10/south-china-sea-indonesian-military-stages-massive-natuna-sea-exercise/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Pereira, C. “Brunei Silenced on South China Sea Claims”. Asia Sentinel. 30 April 2016. <http://www.asiasentinel.com/politics/brunei-silenced-south-china-sea-claims/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Reid, A. *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999.
- Saravanamuttu, J. *Malaysia's Foreign Policy – The First Fifty Years*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2016.
- Sarma, S. “India-Vietnam relations after Modi's visit”. The Diplomat. 5 September 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/india-vietnam-relations-after-modis-visit/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Savada, A. M. *Laos, a country study*. Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1995.
- “Singapore military ties now a 'threat'”. Taipei Times. 23 April 2002. <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2002/04/23/0000133008>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Supriyanto, R. A. “Breaking the Silence: Indonesia Vs. China in the Natuna Islands”. The Diplomat. 23 March 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/breaking-the-silence-indonesia-vs-china-in-the-natuna-islands/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Tatsumi Y. “Why Japan's defence deal with the Philippines is unique”. The Diplomat. 10 March 2016. <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/why-japans-defence-deal-with-the-philippines-is-unique/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- “Thailand Hopes South China Sea dispute ends through joint efforts”. The Nation (Thailand). 12 July 2016. <http://www.asianews.network/content/thailand-hopes-south-china-sea-dispute-ends-through-joint-efforts-22477>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.
- Weinstein, F. B. *Indonesian foreign policy and the dilemma of dependence: from Sukarno to Soeharto*. Jakarta: Equinox Publishing, 2007.
- Wong, D. T. K. “Vietnam-Champa Relations and the Malay-Islam Regional Network in the 17th–19th Centuries”. *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia* 5. 2004. <https://kyotoreview.org/issue-5/vietnam-champa-relations-and-the-malay-islam-regional-network-in-the-17th-19th-centuries/>, Accessed on 26 January 2017.