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**Ian Storey. Southeast Asia and the rise of China: The search for security. Routledge Security in Asia Series. London and New York: Routledge. 2011.**

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**Ian Storey. *Southeast Asia and the rise of China: The search for security.*  
Routledge Security in Asia Series. London and New York: Routledge. 2011.**

Disentangling the connections between China and Southeast Asia throughout history has been a complex undertaking because of the diverse and overlapping nature of those connections. Migrants from China, for example, have ranged from wealthy merchants capable of establishing thriving mercantile networks linking the region's coastal cities with its mineral and natural product production sites to individual coolie laborers aiming to find a better life through diligence and luck. A similar mixture of migrants is evident today in Laos and Myanmar, establishing their own businesses and households and building the very infrastructure that will more tightly bind the countries of the region together, namely the Asian Highway Network<sup>1</sup>. Kinship, cultural, linguistic, historical, and logistical connections are created and reproduced through the presence of migrants, who may subsequently be absorbed into a society that is itself changed by their ongoing presence. These changes are very often small in scale and receive little attention. Nevertheless, they are as important for societal formation as any state-level interaction between the governments of the migrants' home and host nations might be.

In recent years, China has utilized a particular form of state-level interaction with the governments of other nations. As China has begun to reach out to Southeast Asian governments with a view to both resource and market-seeking activities, among other motivations, the actors involved in such interactions are very likely to be Chinese corporations. Just as the Korean and Japanese governments, (among other rapidly industrializing East Asian states, ) have in the past used their corporations to enact a variety of developmental goals, both internally and internationally, the Chinese government is following the same path: its corporations are used throughout Africa, for example, both to capture scarce resources and also to build the hospitals and sports stadiums that persuade host governments to sign the exclusive concession agreements. The means by which the governments can cause the corporations based in their territory to pursue these developmental goals vary over the course of time and according to the relative power of the corporations and the ability of the state to leverage its control of the corporations' finances and licenses and the like. Unfortunately, neither this sort of corporate-state interaction nor the individual interactions between migrants and their home and host nations receive much attention in Ian Storey's book, which instead focuses almost entirely on state-state interactions in the strictest sense (i.e. of the policy-based, government to government type) and is written, without overt discussion of its theoretical framework, from a species of the realist form of thinking that suggests states are in competition with each other in the search for security, along with some secondary goals.

Storey, in fact, offers a pragmatic interpretation to China's actions to the south (the flow of intentions and actions is generally assumed to be in this direction), with little overt interest in the time from the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War to the end of the Cold War; he focuses instead on the subsequent period of engagement (or "sunshine diplomacy"), from the 1990s onwards, which has increasingly come to be characterized by economic cooperation in a variety of fields. Storey's interpretation is laid out in the first section of the book, which provides (after a short introduction) three chapters detailing the evolution of Southeast Asian-Chinese relations in chronological sequence: during the Cold War; during the 1990s, and then in the current century. Attention is paid to the modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and Navy (PLAN)

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<sup>1</sup>The Asian Highway Network is a cooperative project among countries in the region to improve the highway systems in Asia. Agreements have been signed by 32 countries to allow the highway to cross the continent.

and its potential use in the South China Sea and other operations. (The book is slightly hampered here by the fact that it cannot spend too long dealing with Taiwan, despite the island's proximity to Southeast Asia and its importance to the stability of the region as a whole.) Attention is also paid to aggregate trade figures and their changes; the environmental impact of dams on the Mekong; and to the workings of various international institutions in which China and Southeast Asian nations might participate, principally in the areas of economics and politics. These areas of activity mark out the territory that Storey's text inhabits; in the two subsequent sections, he then examines the progress of relations between China and each of the eleven Southeast Asian states, first with the states of the Mekong Region and then with the island states. Each of these chapters is full of details in each of the areas of investigation and occasionally also touches on some cultural or human issues where these are deemed to be of particular importance. There is a danger with this approach, not entirely avoided here, of the successive chapters becoming somewhat predictable and even slightly repetitive. Perhaps it is better to imagine that the book will be used by readers interested in one or a small number of the states involved, rather than of the region as a whole.

In the individual country chapters, Storey's judgment generally appears to be sound and is, in any case, well-supported by the level of detail provided. For presumably practical reasons, each of these chapters is approximately the same length, with lower page counts for Cambodia, Laos and, of course, Brunei and Timor Leste. A great deal more could, nevertheless, be said in some of these chapters: those on Thailand and Burma/Myanmar in particular would have benefited from a closer evaluation in the first case of Thai companies becoming active in southern China and in the second case of the role of Chinese capital in converting much of the northern part of Myanmar into a kind of para-state outside the control of normal state regulations and policing. In addition, the chapters on Malaysia and Indonesia in particular seem to rely too much on a small set of discrete events, such as treaty signings, and not enough on other levels and forms of interaction. The impact of technology in the form of modern telecommunications and the internet might also have been profitably introduced into these arguments. Additionally, although again this would be extending the book before its scope, it would have been interesting to see some consideration of how the relationships studied may be affected by the changes in global climate conditions and the implications of these changes and, also, of China's potential elevation into a global superpower in its own right with all the responsibilities and threats associated with such a development.

Within his remit, Storey has successfully managed to provide a detailed account of state-level interactions between China and Southeast Asia. The coverage of disputes in the Paracels and the Spratlys is particularly impressive, and he appears to have a clear grasp of the nature of the Chinese military, how it has been changing, and the reasons underlying those changes. It is a pity that the many facts could not be marshaled in a way that provides greater understanding by reference to an emergent theoretical framework, rather than appearing as one damned thing after another. It would also have been helpful if a little more attention had been paid to cultural or sporting interactions between the countries involved, but perhaps that would have required too ambitious a piece of work. Nevertheless, this will be a very useful resource for readers interested in both Southeast Asia and in Chinese diplomacy and politics.

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