



Cheonan sinking Re-igniting the Cold War in Asia

The sinking of a South Korean navy corvette by North Korea in March has become the catalyst for Cold War-type posturing, writes Hyung-A Kim.

More than 100 days after the sinking in March of the South Korean navy corvette, the *Cheonan*, with the loss of 46 lives, the UN Security Council presidential statement of 9 July epitomises the impasse that the global response to this incident has now reached.

The statement did not directly condemn or blame North Korea but simply stated that it 'condemns the attack which led to the sinking of the *Cheonan*', and called for 'appropriate and peaceful measures to be taken against those responsible for the incident'. Yet, while the UN Security Council took more than a month to adopt this statement, the sinking has become the catalyst for some significant developments in Northeast Asia, reminiscent of the Cold War posturing of the past.

These developments include:

- the exploitation by the United States of the *Cheonan* incident to forge stronger US–Japan relations and maintain a strengthened alliance structure in Northeast Asia in order to keep China in check
- the use of the *Cheonan* incident by the United States to nullify opposition to the United States in Japan in its negotiation of the Futenma issue, which they now have now settled
- the juxtapositioning of China and Russia against the United States and Japan in their approach to the incident and to North Korea
- the deployment of a US carrier off China's coast, regarded by China as a



*Sit-down protest demanding the return of operational control, as well as a reinvestigation of the *Cheonan* sinking. Photo: [Chosun Ilbo](#).*

provocation that will disaffect the Chinese public from the United States

- the three-year delay of the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON)
- from the United States to the South Korean military until 1 December 2015—OPCON was to be transferred in April this year

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- the massive increase in the South Korean defence ministry's draft budget for 2011, up 6.9 percent or 2.05 trillion won from this year to 31.6 trillion won (US\$26.1 billion). (More than one-third of the planned increase for next year is reportedly allocated to weapons programs designed to counter North Korean threats with short-range missiles and submarines.)
- the maintenance of scepticism to the talks by South Korea, the United States and Japan, with South Korea arguing that there is no point in resuming them without solving the Cheonan incident, and pushing for increased sanctions, despite a generally positive attitude by North Korea, China and Russia about resuming the Six Party Talks as rapidly as possible



The Cheonan was hit by a huge explosion in the Yellow Sea near the border between the two Koreas. (Reuters: Ongjin County office)

The United States also voiced scepticism in saying that if North Korea 'wants to engage seriously in the six-party process, there are very specific actions that North Korea has to take first before we would

consider a resumption of the six-party process'. State Department spokesman Philip Crowley reportedly told reporters, 'If they're not prepared to show through affirmative actions a willingness to fulfill existing commitments under the six-party process—that it's prepared to give up its nuclear program—then you have to ask the fundamental question: What are we going to talk about?'

In effect, the Cheonan sinking triggered the resemblance of a new Cold War in Northeast Asia. On the Korean peninsula, relations between the North and South had already moved back to the Cold War era soon after President Lee took office in February 2008, when he declared his hard line 'Vision 3000' policy, which demanded North Korea's complete abandonment of its nuclear weapons program for economic

aid. The North immediately cut off virtually all dialogue with the South.

Following the Cheonan incident, increased pressure on North Korea through sanctions and other punitive measures being sought by South Korea's allies, the United States and Japan, has been seeding fierce and potentially dangerous confrontation with China, Russia and North Korea.

'Both China and Russia see any escalation of military activity in the region as provocative and are demanding 'calmness and restraint.'

North Korea's close allies, China and Russia, which have maintained equal relations with both North and South Korea since the 'end' of the Cold War, continue to question the results of the Lee Myung-bak administration's Cheonan Joint Investigation Group—made up of experts from five countries, including Australia—and are concerned that South Korea, the United States and Japan are aiming to corner North Korea. They see US manoeuvres in Japan as evidence of that.

According to the South Korean progressive daily newspaper, *Hankyoreh*, the Russian Government notified its independent investigation results on the Cheonan incident only to China and the United States, which infuriated South Korean officials who found out about its contents indirectly through those two countries. It would seem that the confrontational posture of the Cold War era is re-emerging, at least in Northeast Asia.

The different geopolitical perspectives in Northeast Asia are an important factor in this context. I have already listed some of the developments that have resulted from these perspectives. But they could have serious consequences. China, according to Agence France-Presse, warned the United States and South Korea against holding joint naval exercises in the Yellow Sea. China is obviously concerned that the US-led Northeast Asia Alliance will

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strengthen because of the *Cheonan* incident. Both China and Russia see any escalation of military activity in the region as provocative and are demanding 'calmness and restraint' in response to the *Cheonan* incident, arguing that retaliation against the North would increase tensions and could result in military action.

'By denouncing the Cheonan sinking without directly blaming North Korea, the way may well be open for renewed dialogue.'

China and Russia are concerned that increased tensions on the Korean peninsula could damage their vital interests, but South Korea and the United States seem unconcerned about the threat of imminent conflict. In fact, US–South Korea focus on the need to resolve the *Cheonan* incident by imposing sanctions on the North has, in effect, put a halt to the far more important Six Party Talks. Can the South Korean or the US response be successful in dealing with the *Cheonan* incident?

North Korea has consistently used a strategy of 'action for action, dialogue for dialogue' toward South Korea, the United States and Japan. It has demanded that sanctions be lifted as a condition for resuming the Six Party Talks, and any additional sanctions or denouncements will therefore prevent the resumption of the talks.

Now that the UN Security Council has issued a presidential statement which reflects a China–US compromise, if not cooperation, by denouncing the *Cheonan* sinking without directly blaming North Korea, the way may well be open for renewed dialogue. Any dialogue is a better option than none at all, and from this viewpoint, the 90-minute talks between the US-led UN Command and the North Korean military at Panmunjom to discuss the sinking on 8 July is promising.

To prevent the *Cheonan* incident from re-igniting the Cold War posture in Northeast Asia, I would argue that three things must be resolved. Firstly, the cause of the

Cheonan sinking must be re-investigated, by way of a joint investigation team involving all key parties, including North and South Korea, the United States and China. This is not to suggest that North Korea should conduct its own investigation' into the sinking of the *Cheonan* as it has been demanding.

Secondly, inter-Korean relations must be normalised as soon as possible, for peace and stability in Northeast Asia are geopolitically improbable without stabilising inter-Korean relations. And thirdly, the Six Party Talks must resume at the earliest possible time. Dealing with the investigation of the *Cheonan* sinking now and the talks later is not an appropriate approach.

The *Cheonan* sinking essentially illustrates the need to establish a peace regime and resume the Six Party Talks to denuclearise the Korean peninsula. Of particular importance is the need to build a consensus between South Korea and China on the conditions for genuine peace and stability on the peninsula, thus providing China with a greater facilitative role in the region and establishing a solid strategic partnership.

In this respect, the *Cheonan* incident presents the momentum to initiate negotiations on such a partnership.



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Political crisis in Kyrgyzstan

Clan politics and regime change

After the recent ethnic riots in Kyrgyzstan, KIRILL NOURZHANOV sees no silver lining in sight.

In early April 2010 the government of President Kurmanbek Bakiy succumbed to a series of riots which started in the provincial towns of Naryn and Talas in the north of Kyrgyzstan and quickly spread to the national capital, Bishkek.

The riots were organised by disgruntled members of the country's political elite and bore all the hallmarks of a coup rather than a spontaneous mass uprising by a people driven to the edge by Bakiy's corruption, economic mismanagement and disregard for democracy. Rigidly structured along sub-ethnic clannish lines, competition between the elites in this Central Asian republic led to a second violent regime change in five years.

Bakiy's predecessor, the first president of Kyrgyzstan Askar Akaev, was removed from office in March 2005 when leaders of informal patronage networks, predominantly from the south of the country, rallied against what they perceived as the usurpation of political and economic power by Akaev's clan from the northern Chui Valley.

Thousands of ordinary Kyrgyzs were bused into Bishkek by regional strongmen where they were joined by local lumpenproletariat and criminal elements in the assault on government buildings and the large-scale looting and pillaging that followed.

In April 2010 the scenario of forced elite rotation was almost identical. The only difference was that this time around it was mostly the northerners who conspired against the president and his patrimonial ruling clique who hailed from the southern region of Jalalabad. The subsequent 14-strong Provisional Government, led by Roza Otunbaeva, comprised traditional heavyweights from Talas, Naryn, and the Chui Valley. Two notable exceptions to this geographic divide were Azimbek Beknazarov and Omurbek Tekebaev from Aksy and Bazar-Kurgan in the south—both personal enemies of the Bakiy family.

Politics has not been immune to the overall process of de-modernisation in Kyrgyzstan following the collapse of the USSR in 1991. The country has experienced deindustrialisation, de-urbanisation, and a tremendous decline in the quality of life. It took President Akaev nearly a decade and a half to evolve from a champion of national commonwealth with a reputation for liberalism to a quasi-sultan concerned only about the wellbeing of his own family and extended clan. Bakiy's transformation was much more swift. His clumsy attempt to install his son Maxim as an heir apparent for



Demonstrations in Osh.

presidency in late 2009, followed by a frontal attack on the constitutional venues for counter-elites to have access to power in early 2010, served as

a signal for rival factions to unite and strike.

The fact that politics in Kyrgyzstan has returned to its primeval and utterly un-ideological contest for scarce resources among regional cliques may have been lost on external observers, who still prefer to operate with the familiar binary terminology of 'authoritarian/democratic' or 'pro-Russian/pro-Western' when describing the country's political trajectory.

Otunbaeva, just like Bakiy before her, keeps up pretences for the sake of international public opinion, claiming to have acted in the best interests of the people, paving the way for good governance, true sovereignty, and economic prosperity. The harsh reality is that her regime will remain viable only insofar it maintains a balance among the major patrimonial groups. It cannot even count on the loyalty of the army and other uniformed services, which are demoralised and as given to sub-ethnic

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cleavages as other institutions of authority. As Police General Omurbek Suvanaliev recently put it, 'If 50 000 people are brought to the central square of Bishkek, nobody will resist them... The power is lying on the ground: bring 50 000 in, take the White House [an administrative building housing the presidential administration], become the president. This is an established practice now.'¹

Suvalaliev's scenario may be realised reasonably soon. The Provisional Government is a loose coalition of warring cliques temporarily united by their hatred of Bakiev. All of its members served in high positions under the previous regimes and cannot be suspected of being 'organic' democrats infused with Jeffersonian values. Its first act of business was the dissolution of parliament (something that was not done after the 2005 coup), followed by the suspension of the Constitutional Court.

From day one of its existence Otunbaeva's cabinet has been beset by internecine rivalry, incompetence, and scandals. Her deputy Almaz Atambaev publicly fell out with another deputy, Azimbek Beknazarov. The latter accused the former of selling government posts, while Atambaev insinuated that Beknazarov had stolen a million dollars from the state coffers in the heady days after the coup.

The new leadership has failed to reassure foreign investors, collect taxes or manage ethnic tensions. Its only achievement to date seems to be a referendum held on 27 June which provided the regime with a modicum of legitimacy and endorsed a new constitution heralding the move from a presidential to a parliamentary republic.

However, even the success of the referendum may be questioned. The 90 per cent affirmative vote cannot be regarded as a mandate to rule for Otunbaeva's regime. The poll was fraught with irregularities, the questions about constitutional change and Otunbaeva's interim presidency were cleverly lumped together, and in any event people who voted may have simply expressed hope for the

'Bring 50 000 in, take the White House, become the president. This is an established practice now.'

restoration of stability vested in any central government regardless of its form. Both Akaev and Bakiev had used plebiscites to manipulate the political system in the past, which did not help them in the long run. Another Otunbaeva deputy, Omurbek Tekebaev, admitted that the real popularity rating of the Provisional Government at the time of the referendum hovered between 20 and 40 per cent, compared to Bakiev's 50 to 70 per cent after his coup in 2005.²



Osh, where a Kyrgyz mob consisting mainly of young men from outlying villages went on a rampage.

On paper, the parliamentary system looks like a good proposition for a fragmented polity, where all factions can be represented in an authoritative body and have a say in strategic decision-making. Members of Otunbaeva's cabinet have made allusions to Germany and Switzerland as role models. However, a functioning parliamentarism hinges on the possibility of consensus or compromise in the name of a national interest. Reaching such compromise in Kyrgyzstan would be an uphill battle. In the lead-up to the parliamentary elections scheduled for 10 October 2010, all senior members of the Provisional Government have set up political parties with indistinguishable programs solely as vehicles for personal aggrandisement. As of 14 July, most of them resigned from the cabinet to conduct election campaigns. However, they kept their seats in the so-called Legislative Assembly, a non-constitutional body through which they can still rule by decree, dispense patronage, and exercise oversight of Otunbaeva.

There is no guarantee that a patrimonial politician would not bypass the niceties of legislative pork-barrelling if an opportunity

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presented itself. It is worth remembering that both Akaev and Bakiev experimented with parliamentarianism before turning super-presidential. Suvanaliev who formed a party of his own has also promised to push for strong executive rule if elected to the national legislature.

The incapacity of the new regime to exercise authority was fully demonstrated by the ethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan's part of the Ferghana Valley, which started on 11 June and resulted in hundreds of deaths, tens of thousands of refugees and large-scale destruction of property. The Provisional Government blamed supporters of the former president Bakiev, the criminal underworld, Islamic fundamentalists, and external forces based in Tajikistan and Afghanistan for igniting the violence. These often clumsy attempts at deflection camouflage its own culpability.

Tensions between the Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities in the south of the country have simmered for decades. Under Akaev and Bakiev, the authorities exhibited a nationalist slant, denying the Uzbeks fair representation in local government, discriminating against the Uzbek language and practising land-management regimes advantageous to the titular ethnicity. Unsurprisingly, the Uzbek community took an active part in the coups of 2005 and 2010.



In April 2010, Omurbek Tekebaev promised Uzbek leaders radical change in official policy, should

they support the anti-Bakiev uprising. This support was granted; Uzbek activists helped in ousting pro-Bakiev cadres in Osh and Jalalabad, and eventually even set Bakiev's house on fire in his home village. The Uzbeks' seemingly rising fortunes provoked a Kyrgyz backlash both at the grassroots level and among Tekebaev's cabinet colleagues.

Fuelled by wild rumours of secession and incensed by the news of an inter-ethnic land and water dispute in the Batken region in late May, a Kyrgyz mob consisting mainly of young men from outlying villages went on a rampage in Osh and Jalalabad. The Provisional Government could not stop the pogroms quickly; in fact, some of its members may have been complicit in them.³ Beknazarov has subsequently accused Tekebaev of being a provocateur.⁴ Suvanaliev, who was hastily appointed military commandant of Osh and eventually achieved some semblance of order after a week of fighting, resigned on 21 June citing disagreements with Otunbaeva's attempts to hide the truth about the conflict.

Relative calm in Kyrgyzstan's south may be shortlived. The Provisional Government has done little to uncover and prosecute the perpetrators of violence. In fact, ethnic Uzbeks are increasingly used as scapegoats by the investigating authorities.⁵ There are fears on the ground that a new wave of violence may occur in September–October, once the summer agricultural cycle is over.

'Fuelled by wild rumours of secession and incensed by the news of an inter-ethnic land and water dispute, a Kyrgyz mob consisting mainly of young men from outlying villages went on a rampage.'

It would be rather trite to say that Kyrgyzstan is at a crossroad at the moment, yet the country's immediate future is clouded with uncertainty. It is unlikely to become a failed state embroiled in civil war—the tragic experience of neighbouring Tajikistan is still a powerful antidote to such an eventuality, and external powers such as Russia, China, and the United States would not let this happen. It is not going to evolve as a stable democratic country either, not until the existing predatory elites are somehow tamed.

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There is a possibility that Roza Otunbaeva, who is presently a mere arbiter of powerful regional strongmen, will consolidate her rule during the remainder of her interim presidency until the end of 2011.

'It is probable that the current regime will lurch from one crisis to another, until another paroxysm of elite rotation takes place.'

Soviet and post-Soviet history is replete with examples of an incumbent *primus inter pares* overcoming oligarchic resistance. The new Constitution is ambiguous enough to provide Otunbaeva with levers of real power even after the parliamentary elections.

It is probable that the current regime will lurch from one crisis to another, until another paroxysm of elite rotation takes place. If chaos persists, the emergence of a 'saviour of the nation' who would restore law and order with an iron fist can be expected. After all, Suvanaliev is not the only general with ambitions and growing public appeal waiting in Kyrgyzstan's political wings.

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WIA conference

Crisis, agency and change

The College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australia National University is hosting the [10th International Women in Asia \(WIA\) Conference](#), from 29 September to 1 October 2010 at the ANU, Canberra.

The WIA conferences have been held regularly since 1981 and are supported by the Women's Forum of the Asian Studies Association of Australia. These are international conferences, with attendees from throughout Australia and the Asian regions, including those who are working on or in the region.

Participants include academics and students; representatives of NGOs and other organisations involved in aid and development; artists and performers; and interested members of the general public. The



*Bangladeshi woman.
Photo: Ujjoyinee Rahman*

conference provides excellent opportunities for networking and getting to know others in the field.

The theme for the 2010 conference—the 10th anniversary WIA conference—is Crisis, Agency, and Change. The organisers hope this will stimulate discussion across disciplines and across regions on the impact of crises, whether personal or collective, on women; on the representation of women and crisis; and on women's agency, actions, and activism in response to crisis and in efforts to achieve change.

Contributions are invited from a broad range of participants from various disciplines. Participants are encouraged to submit proposals for panels (with 3–4 papers per panel).

Individual proposals for papers are also welcome, as are innovative suggestions for films, exhibitions and other presentations.

[Further information.](#)

West's perception of South Asia

'Western South Asia' important; 'Eastern South Asia' peripheral

The West's focus on Afghanistan, Pakistan and India is hindering attempts by South Asia to become a coherent region, writes CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN.

This bifurcation is happening due to the West's heavy focus on the three nations that comprise Western South Asia—Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. It reflects the West's overwhelming geo-strategic needs and desires.

One consequence of the West's heavy focus on Western South Asia is that the five South Asian nations that comprise Eastern South Asia—Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka—have become, in Western eyes, largely peripheral.

With the exception of Bangladesh, which is the world's seventh most populous nation, all of these nations are small in area and population. All are poor and lack international 'clout'. All seemingly offer little strategically and/or economically to the West.

Furthermore, with Nepal apparently in control of its Maoists and with Sri Lanka's recent defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, there is little imperative now for the West to help resolve political and humanitarian issues in this 'region'. Indeed, with

The nations of Eastern South Asia, however, do have strategic significance and economic assets—as India and China know. Bangladesh has large, exploitable gas reserves; Sri Lanka has some excellent deepwater harbours; the Maldives has international tourism; Bhutan and Nepal have water and hydro-

electricity—and strategic borders with China. These factors greatly interest India, the territory of which strategically, and advantageously, keeps the nations of Eastern South Asia separated from each other.



Map courtesy Y & C Critchell, Cartographic Consultants

India seeks regional leadership of these 'lesser' eastern nations, whose strategic situations it seeks to oversee. India also wants, and needs, their energy. It would like transit routes through Bangladesh in order to obtain easier access to, and from, its seven volatile north-eastern states, and to Myanmar beyond, which also has energy assets. Perhaps most importantly, India wants to limit China's increasing role and influence in South Asia, a strategic situation that the West tends to ignore.

While the West may be disinterested in Eastern South Asia, it is keenly interested in Western South Asia, chiefly in relation to stabilising Afghanistan and assisting Pakistan, India also is strategically important to both these nations—and any resolution of their issues. Afghanistan is on the West's 'radar' because the bulk of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) seeking to defeat the brutal, xenophobic Taliban are from Western nations, 40 of 46 militaries by my count. Despite—or perhaps because of—such a diverse array of Western expertise, experience and ideas, ISAF is losing in Afghanistan. Based on its own criteria, it

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has been unable 'to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency ... and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development, in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population'.²

This situation is unlikely to change in the short term. Escalating ISAF fatalities also are making casualty-averse Western governments keen to extract their forces from the counter-insurgency quagmire that is Afghanistan. This desire exacerbates one of ISAF's significant weaknesses: unlike the Taliban, ISAF's commitment is not open ended. The Taliban knows that it can simply wait for its enemy's eventual departure. This possibility further intimidates Afghans, many of whom dislike the Taliban but are uncertain about ISAF's longevity.

This brings us to Pakistan. Pakistan is highly important to the West. ISAF's major supply route runs through it, while Taliban elements have long obtained sanctuary among ethnic brethren living in remote parts of Pakistan's Federally-Administered Tribal Areas and/or Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (formerly the Northwest Frontier Province). These Taliban, most of whom are ethnic Pukhtoons, freely traverse the porous Afghanistan-Pakistan border to fight against, or to flee from, ISAF.

The West needs Pakistan's support to control the cross-border 'Af-Pak' situation. This has been difficult to obtain because Islamabad sees the Afghanistan Taliban as the best instrument to secure Pakistan's important strategic interests in unstable Afghanistan in which many nations, including India, are now meddling.

For this reason, Islamabad may be providing sanctuary to the so-called 'Quetta shura' of Mullah Omar and other senior Afghan Taliban leaders. Their safe haven in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province, is located just 'down the road' from Kandahar, the major centre of anti-ISAF activities. The general silence about the Quetta shura is deafening, and curious. Nevertheless, if the West is serious about eliminating anti-Western

terrorist safe havens in South Asia, it also needs to move against this group.

The West, particularly the United States, eventually realised, after much clever prompting by Islamabad, that to obtain Pakistan's support to placate anti-ISAF elements in the 'Af-Pak' area, it must help Pakistan deal with its internal issues. For this strategic reason alone, Pakistan will continue to be of importance to the West. Pakistan needs enormous assistance to overcome significant economic and social problems. These include electricity shortages, water shortages, economic issues, poverty, and illiteracy compounded by a severe shortage of secular educational facilities.

'Given its geo-strategic position, Afghanistan offers India an opportunity to fulfil the maxim that my enemy's enemy is my friend by outflanking Pakistan.'

Anti-social Taliban elements in Pakistan also currently pose a significant internal threat. Pakistan wants advanced Western military materiel (such as helicopters and night-fighting equipment) to help it control its Taliban in northwestern areas. But less obviously, Pakistan also has Taliban elements in southern Punjab who may cause problems in future. Islamabad may seek to deflect or direct such elements to operate in Afghanistan and/or in Indian Kashmir. However, a great United States' fear is that Pakistan's nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of such elements. Thankfully, the Taliban's popularity in Pakistan is waning. Recent brutal attacks against a variety of religious elements not adhering to the Taliban's narrow and strict interpretation of Islam have been unsettling and unpopular with Pakistanis.

Into this 'Af-Pak' mix, we must add India. India inclines more towards Western South Asia than to Eastern South Asia. This chiefly is because of India's inimical history with its immediate neighbour, Pakistan. India has a poor-to-parlous relationship with heavily-armed Pakistan (although this is a stable state of affairs that makes India-Pakistan relations reasonably predictable).

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Given its geo-strategic position, Afghanistan offers India an opportunity to fulfil the maxim that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' by outflanking Pakistan. (For the same reason India, Pakistan and China have a good relationship.) To Islamabad's chagrin and concern, India currently has a good strategic relationship with Afghanistan, partly because of some significant and helpful aid projects there.

Apart from competing in Afghanistan, India also competes with Pakistan to be the United States' number one ally in South Asia—with all of the geo-strategic, political and military benefits that such status entails. This contest involves limiting the benefits that the other nation might obtain from the United States.

New Delhi seeks to influence Washington to rein in Pakistan's support for anti-Indian terrorists in Indian Kashmir and, more latterly, in Afghanistan, and to discourage US military assistance to Pakistan (such as combat helicopters). Equally, Islamabad seeks US support for its major issues with India, particularly the Kashmir dispute and Pakistan's increasing water shortages due to a burgeoning population and, as Islamabad sees it, Pakistan's inferior lower riparian position.

For its part, Washington needs both to reassure Islamabad about India's intentions, particularly in Afghanistan, and to encourage New Delhi to desist causing Pakistan problems that might encourage Islamabad to move its focus, and military forces, from the Afghanistan border to the Indian border. So far, the US has managed to do so.

Most importantly, many Western nations, including the United States and Australia, are keen to be involved with India's rapid economic development. Being the most populous, powerful and prestigious nation in South Asia, India offers significant opportunities—and profits. The West partly justifies such involvement by praising India's stable democracy, a political system not yet fully embedded in military-

'Regardless of what may happen in Afghanistan, India will remain the West's long-term focus in South Asia.'

dominated Pakistan or in unstable Afghanistan. Washington and Canberra also seem to like, and perhaps support, some of India's strategic aspirations, particularly those military and maritime ones that 'Look East' towards limiting China.

So, regardless of what may happen in Afghanistan, India will remain the West's long-term focus in South Asia. Furthermore, after ISAF forces eventually leave Western South Asia, both Afghanistan and Pakistan will quickly lose their current strategic importance. Thereafter, if history is any guide, these two nations will become peripheral in Western eyes—just like the nations of Eastern South Asia currently are. We may then need to rename South Asia, the 'Indian subcontinental region'.

For now, however, the West's focus is strongly on all of Western South Asia.

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The globalisation of sushi

The global popularity of sushi leads MATTHEW ALLEN and RUMI SAKAMOTO to ask, what constitutes 'authentic' sushi?

Sushi has become a global food over the past two decades; the annual sales of the 25 000 plus restaurants outside of Japan that sell sushi are worth billions of dollars.¹

There's also the related fishing, aquaculture, agricultural produce involved², not to mention transport, infrastructure, etc., all supporting the sushi business. And in becoming a global commodity, sushi has transformed itself. It has become a culinary fetish with multiple incarnations: it's a snack food, health food, gourmet treat and culinary delight. Caterpillar sushi, spider roll sushi, volcano sushi, taco sushi, smoked chicken and avocado roll sushi, and mermaid sushi are all non-Japanese variants of sushi. Indeed the variations appear endless. Yet each is marked with the sign 'Japan' and is marketed as something with the 'odour' of Japan attached.³



The authors on sushi course at the Tokyo Sushi Academy.

Much of the literature that discusses the expansion of national cuisine culture abroad emphasises diasporas—that is, those who move overseas take their cuisine with them and, if there are enough

potential customers, establish restaurants and grocery stores. These in turn generate custom from the mainstream population, as in the case of Sydney's Lebanese community⁴, for example, or with Chinese migration⁵, or the Turks in Germany.⁶

The case of sushi is somewhat different. Rather than simply being directly linked to the Japanese diaspora, it is clear that the expansion of sushi is due to other factors as well. Sushi is often made and sold by non-Japanese to non-Japanese all over the world. In Australia and New Zealand,

sushi is commonly produced by non-Japanese Asians, yet is marketed as 'Japanese', complete with the signs of Japan attached. Interestingly sushi is almost never produced by *non-Asians*—indeed, most of the sushi restaurants and takeaway outlets in Australia and New Zealand are owned by Koreans, Chinese, and Southeast Asians.

It is apparent that white people don't *make* sushi. But white people *do* consume it. In fact, according to interviews conducted with sushi restaurant owners in Australia and New Zealand, white people make up the vast majority of customers.

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This leads us to ask, in this context, what exactly is it that most consumers think they are buying? And why do non-Japanese sushi restaurant owners feel that it is appropriate to sell sushi, marketing it as 'sushi', yet being conscious that it is indeed something that is quite different to the original incarnations in Japan?

It also leads us to ask, is the expansion of the sushi business globally related to the high profile of Japan? Is it a response to Japan's increasing capital of 'soft power'?⁷ Related to these questions is the issue of sushi's 'authenticity'—what constitutes 'authentic' sushi?

It appears that consumers in Australia and New Zealand have quite idiosyncratic perceptions about sushi. Often it depends on the place in which the sushi outlet is located. In shopping malls, food halls, and takeaway stores, much sushi is rolled in seaweed (*makizushi*) and sold as a 'healthy' alternative to other fast foods, mostly catering to office workers, shoppers and casual visitors.

The most popular sushi of this type consumed in New Zealand is raw salmon, followed by chicken and avocado.⁸ In Australia, chicken and avocado rolls are

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Globalising sushi

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the most popular fast-food sushi, followed by salmon.⁹ From the customers' perspective, they are buying something that is 'healthy', tasty, relatively cheap and 'Japanese' in origin, reinforced by the representation of Japanese signage and descriptions of the food, and by the Asians working in the stores.

Nik Katsoulis, the owner of New Zealand's largest sushi chain, says his company tried to sell sushi with white people working in the stores, but that it was unsuccessful until he introduced all Asian staff into the stores.



Other Asian sushi restaurateurs reinforce this position, explaining that in Australia and in New Zealand, customers want to

see that the sushi is 'Japanese', and emphasise that the average consumer cannot differentiate between Asian ethnicities. Therefore, the marketing of the product emphasises the Japanese nature of the cuisine, and the implied 'authenticity' of the sushi for sale.

Strategically exploiting their 'Asian-ness' in many cases, Koreans, Chinese, Taiwanese and other Asian proprietors all rely on the same messages of the Japanese 'authenticity' of the product. This is not the case in Japanese-owned restaurants; but the issue of 'authenticity' is still somewhat cloudy.

In the more upmarket sushi restaurants, though, where *nigiri* sushi is sold, there is considerable variation in both the quality of sushi offered and the price point at which it is made available. Customers who frequent such establishments have higher expectations of the kind of sushi they can buy.

This leads us to the issue of the popularity of sushi overseas. Interestingly, it appears that sushi has in fact expanded its international appeal partly as a result of Japan's expansion of its soft power

'Although its marketing still emphasises its Japaneseness, sushi overseas has embraced multiple influences. The result is a wide range of flavours, forms, and ingredients that would defy the imagination of sushi chefs trained in Japan.'

abroad. In a forthcoming paper, we discuss in detail the implications of the soft power nexus on the expansion of sushi, and we look at the Japanese Government's conscious manipulation of images of Japan to promote exports of Japanese sourced raw materials that go into the production of sushi.

Selling sushi overseas has had some interesting permutations that for us were quite unexpected. While the range of sushi available outside Japan is enormous and often culturally esoteric—California rolls, spam sushi (Hawaii), curry sushi (Singapore), for example—these kinds of 'alien' or 'foreign' sushi are making their way into Japan today. In fact there has been the establishment of what is called 'reverse import' (*gyaku yunyu*) sushi restaurants, mostly in Tokyo, which provide customers with a taste of how 'foreigners consume our cuisine'. Another forthcoming paper we have written engages this topic in detail.



From a Japanese base sushi has expanded to become an international food medium, its ubiquity in the United States, Europe, Asia and Australasia evidence of its increasing popularity.

Although its marketing still emphasises its Japaneseness, sushi overseas has embraced multiple influences. The result is a wide range of flavours, forms, and ingredients that would defy the imagination of sushi chefs trained in Japan. And this is the basis for the reverse import movement—that is, selling goods that have been exoticised overseas, deconstructed and reconstructed there,

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Globalising sushi

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and re-exported to Japan as 'foreign' sushi. Meanwhile sushi's popularity around the globe, regardless of who makes it, continues to grow. Tracking sushi's growth and evolution outside Japan can provide us with a little more evidence about the complex and often unpredictable nature of globalisation.

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9. Interview with Joyce Chen, owner of Sushi Train, Cairns, Feb. 2009

Matthew Allen is a professor in the School of History and Politics, the University of Wollongong, and Rumi Sakamoto a senior lecturer in Japanese Studies at the School of Asian Studies, the University of Auckland, are working on a joint project on the emergence of Japanese food on the global arena.



MASSA call for colloquium papers

Papers are being called for the 16th Malaysia and Singapore Society Colloquium, to be held at the Australian National University, 10-11 December 2010.

With Malaysian and Singaporean societies undergoing significant social and cultural shifts in recent years, a range of new debates are being heard, new players have come forward and new perspectives on social life, both past and present, are being discovered. Some of these shifts have opened possibilities for political transformation, most notably in Malaysia after the 'political tsunami' of the March 2008 general election.

Since then older political discourses centred on race and religion are being reconstituted, as long-term players also begin to adapt to new, increasingly palpable, social and economic realities. Yet new racial and religious exclusivisms, and new scandals, have also surfaced, heightening the sense of political contest. In the context of such change, whether openly or more subtly expressed, new research on Malaysia and Singapore is slowly beginning to decentralise the narrowly national, racial or statist scholarship of the past. In particular, research which crosses or blurs the borders between localities, nations, disciplines, or racial, religious or gender constructs is beginning to impact on public discussion.

Apart from papers dealing specifically with the 2010 Colloquium theme, the Malaysia and Singapore Society of Australia (MASSA) will welcome papers on all subjects relating to the history, politics, society, economy, culture, etc. of Malaysia and Singapore. Individual papers and panels are both invited. Abstracts of up to 250 words for each paper, along with panel abstracts of up to 250 words where relevant, should be sent to massa.colloquium@anu.edu.au by 15 September 2010. Postgraduate students are encouraged to submit abstracts. Please direct all e-mail enquiries to Dr. [Yasuko Kobayashi](#) and consult the [MASSA website](#) for updates.

New RMIT institute polishing the gem of ancient Chinese science

Chinese medicine is now a major form of complementary and alternative medicine in the Western world.

CHARLIE XUE, who has been at the forefront of the development of Chinese medicine education and research in Australia and the Western world, talks about the aims and work of RMIT University's newly opened Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute.

Chinese medicine is a health-care system which has evolved over a period of at least 2000 years. It has always been considered an essential component of Chinese culture. Its central tenets and principles underpin the development of most forms of traditional medicine practised throughout East Asia.

While continuing as a significant component of the healthcare system of China, over the past 30 years, Chinese medicine has been progressively adopted throughout the world, and is practised in most Western countries, including Australia. Indeed, Chinese medicine is considered to be a unique contribution by China to global health and its potential to contribute to therapeutic advances in modern medicine is now widely recognised. The introduction of acupuncture as an option for pain management and the development of 'new' therapeutic agents from ancient herbal remedies, such as artemisinin for malaria, are just two examples.

The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) is acknowledged internationally as a leader in the development of Chinese medicine education and research in the Western world. In 1993, RMIT was the first public-funded tertiary institution in the West to introduce university-level training in Chinese medicine. Because of the close links between Chinese medicine and Chinese culture, the Confucius Institute headquarters in Beijing established the Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute (CMCI) at RMIT in late 2008.

After 18 months of preparation, Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping officially opened the CMCI, which is Australia's first Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute, on 20 June 2010. Vice-President Xi said the establishment of the institute was 'another vital achievement' for China and Australia in the field of people-to-people, cultural exchange and cooperation. He also spoke highly of Chinese medicine, describing it as the gem of ancient Chinese science, and a key to open the treasure of Chinese civilisation.

The CMCI is a collaborative project between RMIT University and the Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine, supported by the Confucius Institute headquarters in Beijing. It was established to promote the study of modern, evidence-based Chinese medicine, its development over millennia and also its links with Chinese culture.



Chinese Vice-President Xi Jinping with RMIT Vice-Chancellor Professor Margaret Gardner AO at the opening of the Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute.

Our aim is to enrich the training of Chinese medicine practitioners by introducing students to relevant components of Chinese language and culture and providing opportunities for them to

travel to China to extend their clinical skills and study aspects of Chinese culture.

We also provide opportunities for Chinese medicine researchers and research trainees to undertake academic exchanges with their counterparts in leading Chinese medicine research institutions in China, as well as organising public lectures, seminars and workshops to increase public awareness of Chinese medicine. Another aim is to provide high-level expertise within Australia and neighbouring countries on Chinese medicine education training and practice. It is expected that these activities will enhance teaching and research in Chinese medicine at RMIT and further strengthen collaborative links with partner institutions in China.

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Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute

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Under my leadership over the past 15 years, the Chinese medicine program at RMIT has developed an international reputation for excellence in Chinese medicine education and research. In 2005, RMIT Chinese medicine was designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine. In 2008, it was one of only two institutions internationally to receive the prestigious Wang Ding Yi Cup International Prize for Contributions to Traditional Chinese Medicine, awarded by the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies in Beijing.

Currently RMIT offers both undergraduate and postgraduate training programs in acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine which are approved by the Chinese Medicine Registration Board of Victoria. A new undergraduate program combining acupuncture and manual therapies, such as Tui Na massage, will be introduced in 2011.



Dr Brian May dispensing herbal medicines at the RMIT Chinese Medicine Teaching Clinic.

These teaching programs aim to combine the best aspects of the traditional approach to therapeutics, in which the focus is on the individual patient, with the results of clinical and experimental research.

The undergraduate program in acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine involves five years of study, which includes a substantial biomedical sciences component to ensure graduates are well equipped to practise in the Australian healthcare context, using the principles of evidence-based medicine. Clinical training is undertaken in the RMIT clinic at Bundoora, with an option of one semester in a hospital in China. Following graduation, students may take up registration and begin to practise in a range of settings—including multi-modality clinics—or to undertake a research degree.

‘Chinese medicine is considered to be a unique contribution by China to global health and its potential to contribute to therapeutic advances in modern medicine is now widely recognised.’

The Discipline of Chinese Medicine, which is located in the School of Health Sciences, places a high priority on research, and this year 31 students are undertaking a research degree (masters or PhD) in projects ranging from randomised



Professor David Story (front) and Dr Thomas Cheung at the RMIT's Chinese Medicine Herbal Medicine Laboratory.

clinical trials of acupuncture and the quality of herbal medicines to studies on the mechanisms of action of herbal medicines at the molecular level.

The Traditional and Complementary Medicine Research program is one of the four at the RMIT Health Innovations Research Institute. Chinese medicine is the core component of the program, whose primary aims are to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Chinese medicine and to elucidate the mechanisms of therapeutic action of Chinese medicine interventions for common clinical conditions.

The program consists of six research groups in Traditional and Complementary Medicine: acupuncture and herbal medicine clinical trials; herbal medicine resources and quality control; medicinal chemistry and chemical profiling; herbal pharmacology and toxicology; molecular pharmacology for diabetes; and computer modelling for drug delivery optimisation.

The WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine aims to promote collaborative projects and RMIT is engaged with a range of Australian and international partners. Seven recent major clinically focused projects have attracted more than \$3 million in external funding.

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Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute

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The WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine aims to promote collaborative projects and RMIT is engaged with a range of Australian and international partners. Seven recent major clinically focused projects have attracted more than \$3 million in external funding. These include research and trials into the use of acupuncture for conditions such as seasonal allergic rhinitis and chronic

and chronic musculoskeletal pain; the use of Chinese herbal medicine for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; and trials of acupuncture vs. pharmacotherapy for acute pain relief in emergency departments.

Other experimental projects underway include experimental studies on the herb Dan shen (*Salvia miltiorrhiza*), including genetic identification, its phytochemical properties, its anti-cancer and cardioprotective effects and its effects on drug metabolism. Previously, this herb was cultivated locally and its potential as a new crop was evaluated.

The development of Chinese medicine education and research at RMIT is guided by an evidence-based Chinese medicine practice framework which emphasises the close links between education and research.

Chinese medicine is now a major form of complementary and alternative medicine in the Western world and has been playing an increasingly significant role in global health.

From 2012, Chinese medicine practitioners will be nationally registered under the national health professional accreditation and registration scheme. The Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute at RMIT will play a major role in this development by its emphasis on the inter-connections between medicine, language and culture.



Professor Xue is Discipline Head (Chinese Medicine) and Director of the Traditional and Complementary Medicine Research Program at RMIT and is Director of the Chinese Medicine Confucius Institute.

PAFTAD Young Fellowships

The Pacific Trade and Development (PAFTAD) International Steering Committee is seeking to select 6–8 aspiring researchers (aged 35 years or younger) to present papers on themes related to Asia Pacific Trade and Development.

The 2010 Fellowships will take scholars to Peking University's China Centre for Economic Research where they will present their papers the day before the PAFTAD 34th Conference on 6 December 2010 and participate in the conference itself from 7 to 9 December.

The PAFTAD Young Fellowship is considered one of the most distinguished and prestigious awards for young scholars working on the Asia Pacific economy, providing the opportunity to meet top, established and emerging academics and to be involved in the conference itself.

Since its inception in 1968 the PAFTAD conference series has established itself as one of the leading sources of ideas and discussion on issues affecting economic development in the Asia Pacific.

The essence of PAFTAD's contribution is both intellectual and practical. It generates ideas about regional economic exchange and integration, provides empirical evidence to support or reject policy proposals and facilitates ongoing debate among policy influential policy experts.



*PAFTAD Young Fellows
Conference, 2009.*

The ideas and evidence generated by PAFTAD have entered the public policy dialogue of most Asia Pacific economies, due in no small part to the intellectual and policy leadership shown by PAFTAD participants at both a national and regional level. [Further information.](#)

18th biennial conference

ASAA conference takes broad look at Asian crises and opportunities

The ASAA's 18th biennial conference was both challenging and, at times, controversial. PURNENDRA JAIN and GERRY GROOT report.

Delegates from across Australia and 17 other countries—mostly from Asia, as well as from Europe and the United States—attended the [18th Biennial Conference](#) of the Asian Studies Association of Australia at Adelaide University this month.

Officially opened on 6 July by the first Asian Lieutenant-Governor of South Australia and conference patron Mr Hieu Van Le, the three-day event involved panels and presentations on subjects, including Asian society, culture, religion, history, politics, international relations, media, and language and linguistics. Le's opening remarks to the 375 delegates were pertinent in light of the current debate over refugee arrivals in Australia, referring to Le's own arrival as a refugee from Vietnam in 1977 and his subsequent rise to the position of lieutenant-governor in 2007 and Chairman of the South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission in 2009.

In a challenging opening address, former Australian diplomat John McCarthy expressed concerns about perceptions of Australia in Asia, especially India and the Sub-continent, where the recent attacks on Indian students in Australia had a major impact that he believed was seriously under-appreciated in Australia.

A former Australian ambassador to the United States and many Asian countries, including Indonesia, Japan and India, McCarthy suggested this lack of recognition was perhaps relevant to another problem—complacency about Australian success.

One way to improve Australia's image, McCarthy suggested, was to establish a generous scholarship scheme to attract many more of Asia's 'best and brightest'.

An addition to the conventional ASAA conference format were several roundtables on contemporary topics, including India's Look-East policy, and a sometimes emotional debate on whether Confucius institutes around the world represented a soft power push or conspiracy by China.



Keynote speaker Tan Sri Dr M. Munir Majid

A number of international scholars were invited to present plenary sessions through sponsorship from educational institutions. They included:

- Dr Maznah Mohamad, from the National University of Singapore, who was the special invited speaker to the Asian Studies Women's Forum
- Dr Asghar Ali Engineer, Chairman, Centre for the Study of Society and Secularism, Mumbai, who spoke on Muslims in modern India and the issue of mass prejudice, government apathy and poor leadership (sponsored by the Australia India Council (Canberra) and the South Asian Studies Association of Australia)
- Dr Atreyee Sen, Fellow at the Research Council United Kingdom, who discussed communal politics in urban India slums (sponsored by the Australia India Institute)
- Dr Colin Barlow, of the Australian National University, who presented the James C Jackson Memorial Lecture on Malaysian agriculture in transition between 1960 and 2010 (organised by the Malaysia and Singapore Society of Australia)
- Associate Professor Goh Beng Lan, Head of the Southeast Asian Program, National University of Singapore, who presented the 2010 Flinders University Asia Centre Annual Lecture on the crisis of area studies in a global age from a Southeast Asia perspective

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ASAA biennial conference

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- Associate Professor Benny Tai Yiu Ting, University of Hong Kong, who presented on law and religion in traditional and contemporary China (sponsored by the Research Unit for the Study of Society, Law and Religion, the University of Adelaide).

Keynote speaker Tan Sri Dr M. Munir Majid, Chairman of Malaysia Airlines and Senior Fellow at the London School of Economics School of Economics, questioned where Asia would be in the 21st century.

Tan Sri highlighted the need for Asian nations to assert themselves in global finance to better reflect the other increases in Asian strengths, and suggested an Asian bond market should be one such goal. Tan Sri's presentation was sponsored by Santos.

Another keynote speaker, Professor Wang Hui, of Qinghua University in Beijing, spoke at a special public forum on the



*Professor Wang Hui
—raising the
Tibetan question.*

Tibetan question. His presentation was organised in association with the Confucius Institute at the University of Adelaide.

A conference highlight was the large number of Australian and overseas postgraduate students who were able to attend as a result of special ARC Asia Pacific Futures Research Network (APFRN)-related funds, carried over from the successful 2008 signature event, 'Globalizing religions and cultures', held at Adelaide.

With 40 postgraduates receiving full or partially funded scholarships, about one-third of conference delegates were postgraduates, many of whom used the conference as their first chance to present papers and findings.



*Dr Dr Maznah
Mohamad—
Asian Studies
Women's
forum.*

Many of the papers presented at the conference are expected to appear as journal articles, book chapters and even collected volumes.

The conference organisers are offering delegates the opportunity to publish the work they presented.

Revised papers will be considered for publication online and will need to meet the requirements for inclusion in ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia) research outputs reporting. This includes consideration by anonymous referees.

The deadline for paper submission is 16 October 2010. Guidelines for making submissions are available on the ASAA conference proceeding [style guide](#).

Purnendra Jain, a professor at the Centre for Asian Studies, University of Adelaide, and *Dr Gerry Groot*, senior lecturer in Chinese Studies at the University of Adelaide, were convenors of the conference.

The Mekong Delta before Angkor

The ST Lee Annual Lecture in Asian Art and Archaeology lecture will be at the University of Sydney on 11 August 2010.

This year's lecture, 'The Mekong Delta before Angkor: origins, landscapes and emergent complexity', will be given by Professor Miriam Stark, Archaeologist, University of Hawai'i—Manoa,

Professor Stark has worked in collaboration with Cambodia's Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts since 1996 on the archaeology of the Mekong Delta. This region was politically central during the Axial Age, and work by her Lower Mekong Archaeological Project began with research at the archaeological site of Angkor Borei in Takeo province.

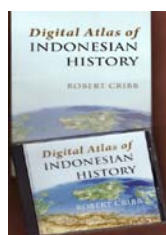
See Diary Notes, p.21 for details.

New books on Asia

From the [AsiaBookroom](#)

This month we feature the second edition of Professor Robert Cribb's *Digital Atlas of Indonesian History* which, though only just published, is already receiving much praise.

Another extraordinary work is the large folio volumes which make up the Comprehensive Atlas of the Dutch United East India Company. The final two volumes—VI: India, Persia, Arabian Peninsula and VII: East Asia, Burma to Japan—in this seven-volume set will be published at the end of this year: Listed below are three of the earlier volumes in this series. Each of these excellent, limited-edition volumes stand on their own, as well as forming an important set.



Digital Atlas of Indonesian History.

By Robert Cribb. Mixed media pack. NIAS Press, 2006. \$69.95.

There will be many glad cries from all interested in Indonesia, modern or historical, on hearing of the publication of Cribb's Digital Atlas of Indonesian History. It has been a long time in the making, which only serves to underline the amount of work that has gone into this extraordinary work. Can you imagine researching and then drawing over 500 maps? Cribb delivers these maps and much more in this greatly revised and expanded development from his Historical Atlas of Indonesia, published in 2000.

On top of taking what was already an excellent work to a higher level, this new work takes advantage of technology not as readily available when the atlas appeared in hardback 11 years ago. The format is quite different—instead of a hardback book the work is delivered on CD. There are the maps of course—more than 400 of them. Not only can they be viewed onscreen, but they can also be downloaded for Powerpoint presentations and even used royalty-free in publications. Cribb's mission is clearly to inform and encourage the understanding of Indonesian history rather than to profit from all of his work. There are also blank

maps that can be printed for class use, and a host of links to online historical maps.

Additionally, with the purchase of a copy the buyer can register online and use the atlas via the web. Cribb will be adding and revising the online edition as time goes by at no further cost to the purchaser. It is impossible to do justice to this important reference in a few paragraphs. Clearly the Digital Atlas of Indonesian History will be vital for scholars. But it will also be helpful to teachers in high school and ideal for anyone with any interest in Indonesian history, as well as for those with a cartographic bent.



Comprehensive Atlas of the Dutch United East India Company.

Vol. 2. Java and Madura. By Arend de Roever and Bea Brommer. Laminated dust-jacket and

slipcase. 432pp. Jointly published by the Royal Dutch Geographical Society, Utrecht University/Explokart and Asia Maior/Atlas Maior Publishers, 2007. \$1195

A limited edition has been printed on 170 gsm mc art paper in colour throughout and with cloth binding and slipcase which it can be removed from with ease. \$1195.00



Comprehensive Atlas of the Dutch United East India Company. Volume 3, Malay Archipelago and Oceania. 424pp. \$966.

Containing approximately 580 maps, plans and topographical drawings dating from the VOC period, the bulk of which have never been before published, this volume covers the entire Malay Archipelago beyond Java and Madura, including Sumatra, Sulawesi, the Moluccan and Banda Archipelagos, Timor and the Lesser Sunda Islands and the Malaya Peninsula, as well as the Philippines, New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand and the Dutch explorations in the Pacific Ocean. Besides hundreds of pages of hitherto almost unknown cartographic and pictorial

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New books on Asia

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material, this volume offers for the first time a complete survey in facsimile of all VOC manuscript maps and drawings of Australia and New Zealand preserved in public archives around the world.



Comprehensive Atlas of the Dutch United East India Company. Volume 4, Ceylon. 404pp. \$966.

Containing 540 maps, plans and drawings, this offers a complete picture of one of the most

important possessions of the VOC, the cinnamon-rich island of Ceylon, and of Tuticorin and its subsidiary settlements on what was known as the Fisheries Coast in South India, which was also part of the administrative territory of Ceylon in the VOC era. Again, a very large proportion of the map and pictorial material, including scores of maps and plans from the collections of the Sri Lanka National Archives and the Sri Lanka Survey Department, has never before appeared in facsimile.

New books from the ASAA series

[Southeast Asia Series](#)

The Southeast Asia Publications Series seeks to publish cutting-edge research on all countries and peoples of Southeast Asia across disciplines including anthropology, geography, history, literature, political economy, politics, sociology and the fields of cultural studies, communication studies and gender studies.

[Women in Asia Series](#)

The Women's Caucus of the ASAA operates a publication series in conjunction with Routledge that focuses on promoting scholarship on Women in Asia. See the Routledge web site [ASAA Women in Asia Series](#) for full details.

Job websites

These sites offer career prospects for graduates and postgraduates in Asian Studies. If you know of other useful sites advertising jobs for postgraduates in Asian Studies, please send them to [the editor](#).

www.jobs.ac.uk advertises worldwide academic posts.

<http://isanet.ccit.arizona.edu/employment.html> is a free-to-access website run by the International Studies Association.

www.reliefweb.int is a free service run by the United Nations to recruit for NGO jobs.

www.aboutus.org/DevelopmentEx.com has a paid subscription service providing access to jobs worldwide in the international development industry.

<http://h-net.org/jobs> is a US-based site with a worldwide scope. Asia-related jobs (mostly academic) come up most weeks.

www.aasianst.org is the website of the Association for Asian Studies. New job listings are posted on the first and third Monday of each month. You must be a current AAS member to view job listings.

www.timeshighereducation.co.uk The *Times Higher Education Supplement*.

www.comminet.com is the site of The Communication Initiative Network. It includes listings of jobs, consultants, requests for proposals, events, training, and books, journals, and videos for sale related to all development issues and strategies. You can view all posts on these pages without registering, but will need to register to post your items.

Diary Notes

FORUM ON BURMA'S 2010 ELECTIONS, Canberra, 23 July 2010.

The forum will consider scenarios for and beyond Burma's anticipated 2010 elections. Burma scholars from the ANU, a representative from the Australian Electoral Commission, and other speakers will combine to explore and debate the possibilities. Venue: Lecture Theatre 2, Hedley Bull Centre, ANU, 1.30pm–2.30pm. Further information from Lyn Ning, on 6125 4790, Trevor Wilson on 6125 0569.

ST Lee Annual Lecture in Asian Art and Archaeology 2010, Sydney, 11 August 2010.

The Lee Annual Lecture in Asian Art and Archaeology will be held in the refectory of the Main Quadrangle of the University of Sydney from 6pm Wednesday 11 August 2010. This year's lecture, 'The Mekong Delta before Angkor: origins, landscapes and emergent complexity', will be given by Professor Miriam Stark, Archaeologist, University of Hawai'i–Manoa. **Location:** refectory of the Main Quadrangle of the University of Sydney. RSVP: Monday 9 August 2010, Martin King 02 93517667 or martin.king@sydney.edu.au.

INDONESIA UPDATE 2010, ANU, Canberra, 24–25 September 2010 The focus of this year's update—the 28th—will be on the nexus between employment, social participation and reform, poverty and inequality is a major area of social and economic life and of public policy. Enquiries Indonesia.Project@anu.edu.au Ph +61 2 6125 3794 Fax +61 2 6125 3700 (see page 12).

Tenth International Women in Asia (WIA) Conference, Canberra, 29 September–1 October 2010. Hosted by the College of Asia and the Pacific at the ANU, the WIA conferences have been held regularly since 1981 and are supported by the Women's Forum of the Asian Studies Association of Australia. See p.7 for more information.

Contributing to Asian Currents

Contributions, commentary and responses on any area of Asian Studies are welcome and should be emailed to the [editor](#). The general length of contributions is between 1000–1500 words. As *Asian Currents* is intended for scholars and general readers, please avoid technical language and keep references and notes to a minimum.

About the ASAA

The Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) promotes the study of Asian languages, societies, cultures, and politics in Australia, supports teaching and research in Asian studies and works towards an understanding of Asia in the community at large. It publishes the *Asian Studies Review* journal and holds a biennial conference. The ASAA believes there is an urgent need to develop a strategy to preserve, renew and extend Australian expertise about Asia. It has called on the government to show national leadership in promoting Australia's Asia knowledge and skills. See [Maximising Australia's Asia knowledge: repositioning and renewal of a national asset](#).

Asian Currents is published by the ASAA and edited by Allan Sharp. The editorial board consists of Kathryn Robinson, ASAA President; Michele Ford, ASAA Secretary; Mina Roces, ASAA Publications officer; and Lenore Lyons, ASAA Treasurer.