

the Vladimir Petrov affair to benefit politically in the 1954 federal election. The cost of the threat exaggerations since 1940, however, was not altogether insignificant. By overinflating the danger of domestic subversion, the Australian government and media created an environment that was marked by suspiciousness and hostility. Although Australia suffered little physical damage during the war, it did witness the persecution of innocents and minorities.

Loeffel's research is extensive and impressive. The book includes a helpful series of cartoons, photographs, and posters on the fifth column scare. If a criticism can be levelled, it is that the work would have benefited from a more sustained discussion of race relations, religious tensions, and identity in Australia. The appeal of communism and fascism among members of the population could also have been given more focused attention. These subjects have longer histories than those explored in the text. A deeper appreciation of them would provide greater insight into the anxious Australian wartime search for domestic enemies, and why some groups — beyond their direct association with adversarial foreign state actors — were more susceptible than others to be linked to subversion and treachery. Those missed opportunities aside, scholars will still profit much from reading this elegantly written volume.

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*Defect or defend: Military responses to popular protests in authoritarian Asia*

By TERENCE LEE

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Terence Lee's *Defect or defend* takes on the difficult question of why some popular uprisings against authoritarian rule succeed and some don't. It is an ambitious undertaking in both breadth and depth. In terms of depth, Lee turns to the experience of Asia in a detailed examination of: The People Power revolution of 1986 in the Philippines; the 1998 protests against the New Order regime in Indonesia; the Tiananmen Incident of June 1989 in China, and the 2007 suppression of the Buddhist monks in Burma. Although the focus of the book is on Asia, Lee also broadens the inquiry by positing the key question in terms of a causal logic that is not geographically bound — but possibly applicable in understanding the 2011 mass uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa.

Lee argues that the main factor determining the success or failure of popular revolts is the military's response — whether the armed forces defect and side with the protesters or suppress the mass demonstrations and uphold authoritarian rule. In deciphering the military's probable response to 'defect' or to 'defend', the type of institutions underpinning the regime are significant. Lee's central argument is that whereas personalism within the armed forces creates apt conditions for the

defection of disaffected senior officers, military defection is unlikely to occur in non-personalistic authoritarian regimes where the armed forces are more likely to put down popular demonstrations.

Drawing from the experience of Indonesia and the Philippines, Lee makes the case that highly personalistic dictatorial rule in these two countries resulted in disaffection within the military and set favourable conditions for military defections from authoritarian rule. Thus when mass protests occurred, the armed forces refused to fire on the protestors. On the other hand, in China and Burma, nonpersonalistic authoritarian rule organised around power-sharing institutions mitigated personalism and created favourable conditions for military loyalty and the military's use of force against the demonstrators in defence of authoritarian governments.

The focus of Lee's book is primarily on civil–military relations in authoritarian Asian regimes — namely the interactions between the military, autocratic leadership and governments of the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma and China. In particular, it is a book on the 'how' and 'what' conditions under which the military will defect from autocratic rule in the face of popular protests. If dictatorial regimes have power-sharing institutions, the ruling elite, including the armed forces, are invested in the continuation of the regime and consequently help protect authoritarian rule when the regime is threatened. On the other hand, if authoritarian institutions are personalistic, elite defections are more likely to take place when popular challengers emerge.

Beyond the civil–military relations sphere, Lee's work is also a significant contribution to the study of 'People Power' revolts in Asia where thousands of people from cross-class backgrounds take to the streets in the name of political liberalisation. From the case studies, one can draw on the empirical and theoretical explanations for the success and failure of 'People Power' transitions in the context of the Philippines, Indonesia, China and Burma. Lee's work does not displace current theories of democratisation or authoritarian transition, but it does give new insights into how autocratic rule can break down in Asia or in certain cases, continue to be upheld by the incumbent regime.

One question that remains unanswered is whether the argument presented by Lee can travel beyond the geographical boundaries of East Asia — particularly when compared with cases such as the Arab Spring? Lee admits that the personalism-power-sharing heuristic does not quite stand up to the test in Libya, Syria and Bahrain, but evidence of personalised dictatorial rule in Tunisia and Egypt could explain the defections of the armed forces in those cases. It is noteworthy that even in the case of Egypt, military support for the initial popular uprising did not prevent a subsequent coup d'état and installation of a military-backed interim government. Perhaps the ethnic and sectarian diversity of the Middle East does require a different explanation that is more historically contingent than Lee's personalism-power-sharing framework.

Overall, Lee's *Defect or defend* is a seminal contribution to the study of civil–military relations in Asia. By analysing the interactions between the military, autocratic leadership and ruling government of the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma and China, Lee provides a useful theoretical take on the big questions of 'how' and 'what' the military will do in the face of popular protests in authoritarian regimes. As a work of

serious scholarship, Lee's work would appeal to the academic community of political scientists and Asianists interested in political transitions in Asia.

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*Democracy in East Asia: A new century*

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In a seminal essay published in *Foreign Affairs* nearly twenty years ago, Fareed Zakaria (1997) posited the paradox of how democracy as embraced by much of the world was not the type prescribed by textbooks and Western liberal democracies. This state of affairs seems to echo the words of Thailand's latest coup leader, now prime minister, Prayuth Chan-o-cha who memorably dismissed allegations of torture of dissidents, 'Our country has seen so much trouble because we have had too much democracy.' Or has it?

The present edited volume, *Democracy in East Asia: A new century* exactly aims to plumb the state of democracy in East Asia. As a measure of how fast things change when it comes to politics, right after this book went to print, Thailand underwent yet another coup in May 2014. Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won the elections in Myanmar late 2015. Malaysia's 1MDB scandal was still roiling Kuala Lumpur in 2016. Whether democracy is held at abeyance or it has advanced on different fronts, the contentions that are raised by this stimulating collection of essays remain as relevant as ever.

This collection pivots on two main themes: China's influence on the rest of Asia, and the adoption of gradualism or creeping trade-offs in the implementation of democracy. None of the essays approaches the shrill alarmism of Gordon G. Chang's infamous 2001 thesis. Francis Fukuyama, for instance, believes China leads the rest of the East Asian nations in a skein of economic development based on authoritarian modernisation. Along the same vein, Benjamin Reilly proposes a geographical explanation for the salience of the China model. For example, countries which share a border with China (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) are more authoritarian than maritime states like Indonesia.

But Fukuyama doubts the ability of such regimes in managing future challenges. China might inadvertently sow the seeds of its own 'social explosion'. Pei Minxin shares similar pessimism. Pei cites two factors for the longevity of the CCP in China: economic performance and political repression. He discounts the so-called institutional reforms in China. Herein lies the rub, just how far can the argument be made that the PRC has little institutional reform backing its economic performance?

Another variant of China's relations with its neighbours stands the conventional argument on its head. Chu Yun-han details the influence of Taiwan on mainland