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Studie

The Impact of Democratization on the Making of Foreign Policy in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines

Jörn Dosch

Abstract

For the most part foreign policy in Southeast Asia has been regarded and analyzed as an isolated policy area, separated from the structures and dynamics of the respective political systems. This seemed to be an appropriate approach as long as foreign policy was the domain of small political élites and autocratic regimes. Assuming that the processes of (re-)democratization in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia have not only resulted in new national political orders but also have had an impact on foreign policy making the article will delve into the following questions: Do formal institutionalized and informal mechanisms and patterns exist to open the decision-making process beyond the special foreign policy interests of small political elites, and to make those interests subject to intra-systemic checks and balances? And has democratization led to the broadening of actor participation in the formulation of foreign policy interests and strategies? The study will look particularly at the role of the armed forces, parliaments and civil society organisations in the making of foreign policy. (*Received July 28, 2006; accepted for publication August 30, 2006*)

Key words: Southeast Asia, Democratization, Foreign Policy, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines

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Studie

Demokratisierung und Außenpolitik in Indonesien, Thailand und den Philippinen

Jörn Dosch

Abstract

Die Außenpolitiken der südostasiatischen Staaten sind bisher zumeist als isolierte Politikfelder ungeachtet der Strukturen und Dynamiken der jeweiligen politischen Systeme betrachtet und analysiert worden. Ein solcher Zugriff schien so lange akzeptabel zu sein, wie sich Außenpolitik als die Domäne kleiner politischer Eliten autoritärer Staaten abbildete. Ausgehend von der Annahme, dass sich die Demokratisierung der Philippinen, Thailands und Indonesiens in weitreichendem Maße nicht nur auf die jeweiligen nationalen politischen Herrschaftsordnungen, sondern auch auf das Feld der Außenpolitik ausgewirkt hat, widmet sich der Aufsatz vor allem den folgenden Fragen: Existieren formale und informale Verfahren der Einflussnahme und Kontrolle, die sicherstellen, dass außenpolitische Entscheidungsprozesse nicht mehr länger ausschließlich die Interessen kleiner politischer Eliten reflektieren? Und, damit zusammenhängend, hat die Demokratisierung der drei betrachteten polities zu einer Erweiterung des Akteursfeldes bei der Formulierung außenpolitischer Interessen und Strategien geführt? Die Studie geht dabei insbesondere auf Rolle und Einfluss des Militärs, der Parlamente und zivilgesellschaftlicher Organisationen bei der Formulierung von Außenpolitik ein. (*Eingereicht am 28.7.2006; angenommen zur Veröffentlichung 30.8.2006*)

Key words: Südostasien, Demokratisierung, Außenpolitik, Indonesien, Thailand, Philippinen

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Introduction: Crossing the Domestic-International Divide in the Study of Foreign Affairs

Why did Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo decided to withdraw the country's troops from Iraq in exchange for Filipino hostage Angelo de la Cruz in 2004, despite immense pressure from the United States and its allies not to give in to the demands of Iraqi militants?¹ Why, on the other hand, did the killing of two Thai soldiers in Karbala in December 2003 – the first Thai troops to lose their lives on an overseas battlefield since the Vietnam War – initially not change the overly positive attitude within the country toward the military mission in Iraq? And why have subsequent democratically legitimized governments in Jakarta struggled to revive the golden days of Indonesian diplomacy under President Suharto's autocratic rule, when the country enjoyed the role and status of a regional leader? The answers to all three questions lie in the domestic sources of foreign policy making.

In 1967, British political scientist Peter G. Richards complained about the lack of academic research on the various actors involved in the process of foreign policy making. In his view, the neglect of parliaments and societal forces in most analyses, for example, was partly due to the fact that foreign affairs “tend to be overlaid by other issues” and “are generally considered a matter for the executive branch of government” (1967, p. 13). Some four decades on this assessment still holds true to a large extent. While publications on the domestic-international nexus, the President versus Congress pattern and the role of public opinion in American foreign policy fill entire libraries; other countries have not been widely analyzed in this regard. Even in the case of most European states studies on the domestic dynamics of foreign policy are rare. What primarily matters to scholarly observers and policymakers alike is the visible actions of states on the international stage. The underlying internal processes that influence and

¹ Research for this article was made possible by a grant from the British Academy's Southeast Asia Committee, which is gratefully acknowledged. Core findings are mainly based on interviews which I conducted with, government officials, parliamentarians and scholars in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand during various short visits between 2002 and 2005. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the East West Center, Honolulu/Hawaii. The feedback I received greatly helped me to improve my arguments. I am also thankful for the constructive criticism of the two anonymous reviewers. An empirically and theoretically more detailed and significantly extended version of this article will appear in Jörn Dosch (forthcoming).

drive state behavior often remain in the dark.² The lack of attention is mainly due to the seemingly unchanging reality of executive dominance in the foreign policy process. In the mainstream view, unlike almost all other policy areas the conduct of foreign affairs was always, and remains, in the hands of presidents, prime ministers and government departments. According to this rather narrow perspective, any involvement by state and non-state actors other than the executive branch of government in foreign policy can safely be deemed marginal.

There are a few notable exceptions, though. One of the most influential contributions to foreign policy analysis has been the metaphor of the two-level game as introduced by Robert Putnam (1988) and developed further by many others since (especially Evans et al. 1993). The two-level game framework is the “central analytical device ... to span the domestic international divide” (Caporaso 1997, p. 567). It follows the idea that “the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded have a fundamental impact on state behavior in world politics” (Moravcsik 1997, p. 513). The two-level game links the national and international context of decision-making. At the national level, domestic constituencies pressure the government to adopt policies they favor. At the same time governmental actors seek power by building coalitions among these constituencies. At the international level, governmental actors seek to satisfy domestic pressures while limiting the harmful impact on foreign relations. Thus, political leaders must simultaneously play both the international game and the domestic game. The requirement that decision-makers satisfy both domestic constituencies and international actors is what produces constraints on foreign policy behavior. In sum, while the two-level game emphasizes negotiating behavior, it also serves as a metaphor for understanding the impact of domestic influences on the broad spectrum of foreign policy decisions (Trumbore and Boyer 2000, p. 680). Joe Hagan amends Putnam’s approach by introducing a further analytical layer. He correctly stresses that political leaders “must engage in two, not one, domestic political games involving diverse opposition actors with different goals and interests” (Hagan 1993, p. 4). The first imperative of this dual domestic game is coalition policy-making, or the requirement that agreement is to be achieved among actors who share the authority necessary for committing the resources of a nation to a particular course of action in foreign policy. The necessity for coalition-building is rooted in what Vincent Pollard calls

² Among the few studies that have looked at the convergence of national and international systems are James N. Rosenau’s path-breaking edited volume *Linkage Politics* (1969).

“stretched organizational pluralism,” which “generically refers to the extent to which the foreign policy power is shared, willingly or unwillingly, with other individuals and institutions” (1998, p. 5). The second feature of the two-fold domestic embeddedness of foreign policy making is retaining political power, or the imperative to maintain and, if possible, enhance the political support base necessary for holding on to political power (Hagan 1993, pp. 4-5). In other words, “foreign policy decision-makers are not simply agents of the national interest but political animals who must worry about their survival in office and the viability of their overall set of political goals, domestic and foreign” (Skidmore and Hudson 1993, p. 3). However, the two-level-game approach does not explain the impact of domestic factors on foreign policy making in *different* regime types. It does not differentiate between democracies and autocracies but explains that regardless the respective political system, no senior governmental actor is completely immune from intrastate pressure. In principle, strong government agencies, insulated groups of technocrats, or rival actors (the military for example) can challenge and influence the foreign policy making of authoritarian leaders as effectively as can societal forces, NGOs, or parliaments in liberal democracies. Yet, while both authoritarian and democratic leaders generally face a similar pattern of constraints when confronted with decisive decisions about their countries’ external relations, the *degree* of pressure on decision-makers seems to vary greatly according to the overall structure in which foreign policy making is embedded. The influence of non-governmental actors in the foreign policy arena is prominently related to the way in which regime accountability constraints the government’s latitude of decision-making in foreign affairs. In an authoritarian state regime, accountability tends to be low because the procedures for power transfer are not institutionalized. The continuity of a regime is not linked to the legislative process, elections, judicial decision, or even the regime’s performance. Hence, accountability does not impose a significant limitation on foreign policy making in authoritarian polities. In contrast, democratization increases regime accountability and, as a result, restricts the regime’s leeway in determining and implementing foreign policy goals (Park, Ko, and Kim 1994, p. 173). In this regard David Skidmore and Valerie Hudson (1993) differentiate between two ideal models, the statist and the pluralist approach, which show that regime accountability is a crucial variable. The statist model is most likely to be found in a non-democratic environment. In extreme cases, foreign policy is guided by a national interest that is narrowly defined and, over time, very consistent. Given their almost absolute insulated position within

the state and its political system, foreign policy decision-makers can safely ignore societal interests and even opposition. As a result, the conduct of foreign policy is almost free of domestic constraints (Skidmore and Hudson 1993, pp. 7-8). In the antipodal pluralist model, the case of a quasi-unlimited open and responsive democratic system, foreign policy choices are inevitably linked to their perceived effect on the decision-maker's political standing in his or her constituency. In such an environment the vast majority of foreign policy options go along with societal division and political mobilization either because the material interests of various groups are affected differently – producing both winners and losers – or because foreign policy choices provoke ideological conflict over values and purposes. By that, any given policy choice on an important international issue will stimulate a range of support and opposition. A good example of the pluralist element in foreign relations is the strong impact of Japanese public opinion and local politics, toward the US military presence in Okinawa, on the state and future of the US-Japanese security alliance (S. Smith 2000). While both statist and pluralist models are ideal types, which – in their pure forms – are seldom resembled by political reality, it is nevertheless possible to observe significant shifts and changes on a scale between these two ultimate points.

As for the study of foreign affairs in Southeast, for the most part the foreign policies of Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and other states in the region have been regarded and analyzed as an isolated policy area, separated from the structures and dynamics of the respective political systems. This seemed to be an appropriate approach as long as foreign policy was the domain of unaccountable autocratic regimes and their small political élites. In the early 1980s, for example, none of the three governments would have lost much sleep over the interests of domestic actors. Southeast Asia's small political elites operated within autocratic or at best semi-democratic environments and hence were able to follow and implement narrowly defined national interests, which were largely unconstrained and unchallenged by competing political actors, civil society groups, or a critical media. Foreign policy tended to be separated from domestic politics and, within the field of foreign relations and security – understood as hard security or the management of threat to the integrity of the nation – ranked highest on the political agenda. However, the making of foreign policy under the condition of democracy is on the whole fundamentally different from the way authoritarian regimes shape their relations with their external environment. Since the beginning of (re-)democratization – counted from the year of the first democratic elections

that followed the most recent authoritarian regime – in the Philippines (1986), Thailand (1992) and Indonesia (1999) the foreign policy arenas have opened up to the extent that groups from outside the executive branch have forced their governments to pay more prominent attention to issues such as human rights and environmental matters in foreign affairs and blocked or significantly re-shaped governmental initiatives toward other countries. In order to understand and not least predict the behavior of states on the chessboard of international relations, it is inevitable to open the black box and identify the domestic structures and actors that impact on foreign policy.

The following analysis of foreign policy making in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand is based on the proposition that democratization in these polities has altered the two-level game due to: (1) gradually changing formal and informal rules and procedures that govern foreign policy making; (2) increasing regime accountability, which imposes a significant limitation on the government's decision-making power; and (3) growing state autonomy from social elites, especially the armed forces and cronies, and decreasing state autonomy from civil society and intermediate actors, such as parliaments, that try to exert influence over foreign relations. As the result, one can observe a shift from a statist to a pluralist model of decision-making. In making this argument the article delves into the following two questions:

1. *On the structure of foreign policy making:* Do formal institutionalized and informal mechanisms and patterns exist to open the decision-making process beyond the special foreign policy interests of small political elites, and to make those interests subject to intra-systemic checks and balances?
2. *On the actors involved in foreign policy making:* Has democratization led to the broadening of actor participation in the formulation of foreign policy interests and strategies? Who are those actors?

The understanding of democracy used here is based on Wolfgang Merkel's concept of "embedded democracy," which goes beyond Robert Dahl's definition of polyarchy (Dahl 1971) and "consists of five partial regimes: a democratic electoral regime, political rights of participation, civil rights, horizontal accountability, and the guarantee that the effective power to govern lies in the hands of democratically elected representatives" (Merkel 2004, p. 36). However, I will not discuss the degree of democratic consolidation in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, but rather analyze how and to what extent democratization – that is, the transition

from authoritarian or semi-authoritarian rule to a democratic political system (independent variable) – has changed the structures of, and actors involved in, the process of foreign policy making (dependent variable) in these three polities.

Formal and Informal Institutions in Foreign Policy Making

Provisions concerning the conduct of foreign policy can be found within the formal institutional architecture of both the authoritarian and the democratic regimes of Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. As one would expect, their respective constitutions are the main sources for norms and rules related to foreign affairs, including the respective roles and duties of the executive and legislature in areas such as the negotiation and implementation of international treaties, declaration of war, and command and control of the armed forces. However, a comparison of pre-democratic and democratic constitutional provisions reveals significant differences in Indonesia and the Philippines. Different formal concepts of foreign policy are partly due to informal institutions, such as traditional perceptions of the head of state's role and specific experiences in the respective nation's history. In Indonesia, the constitution of 1945 institutionalized a very strong role for the president. Nine of the thirteen articles of the pre-1999 constitutional text that dealt with the presidency provided powers *to* the president. Limitations and checks and balances *on* the president were not given. As Juwono Sudarsono observed in 1994 toward the end of the Suharto regime, Indonesia's autocratic leader took maximum advantage of this institutional framework: "Even more than in most presidential systems, in Indonesia it is the President – not the foreign minister – who is the chief diplomat. It is President Soeharto who has set the tone and decided on the timing of various foreign policy initiatives that have been taken over the last 25 years or so" (reprinted in Sudarsono 1996, p. 66). Although two amendments made after the downfall of Suharto in 1998 have strengthened the role of the Indonesian parliament (the House of People's Representatives, DPR), core provisions related to foreign policy remain unchanged. Article 11 gives the president almost unrestricted authority over foreign policy. Neither international treaties nor a declaration of war require the formal consent or any other formalized participation of the Indonesian parliament. Article 11 only asks for the "agreement" of the legislature without institutionalizing any rules specifying the procedure of how any agreement should or must be reached.

The hegemonic position of the Indonesian president can only be understood and explained within the context of informal institutions and structures, particularly cultural factors and the influence of history on the nation's political system. First, the strong position of the chief executive corresponds with the traditional Javanese concept of absolute power. At least until the end of the Suharto regime, large numbers of Indonesians, especially Javanese, perceived the president essentially as a king: "On numerous occasions presidential behaviour is more easily understandable in cultural terms as that of a traditional monarch [rather than as] a modern head of state" (Surbakti 1999, p. 62). Second, the constitution and the role of the president are rooted in the anti-colonial struggle and a strong sense of nationalism, including a wide range of sacrosanct national symbols. In the view of both the drafters of the constitution and subsequent political elites, a successful process of nation building required strong political leadership in all policy areas, including foreign policy (for details, see Leifer 2000; Weinstein 1972). One of the most important national symbols and a core element of the consensus-driven and non-negotiable blueprint for Indonesia's external relations has been the doctrine of a free and active foreign policy (*politik bebas dan aktif*) introduced by the first vice president, Mohammad Hatta. Following the popular understanding of this guiding principle, the policy is independent because Indonesia does not side with world powers. At the same time Indonesia's foreign policy is active to the extent that the government does not maintain a passive or reactive stand on international issues but seeks active participation in their settlement. Third, politics in Indonesia are characterized by a distinct inter-relationship between foreign policy and domestic politics. For example, except for a short period during the national revolution, Indonesian governments have been keen to avoid the influence or even dictates of Islamic considerations in foreign policy: "They have sought to avoid incautious engagement in international issues which might be exploited either to advance claims presented by Muslim groups or to enhance the political standing of Islam in the Republic" (Leifer 1983, p. xvi). In sum, foreign policy of both the Sukarno regime and the Suharto government fell into the statist model and can be described as a blocked two-level game, because structural factors, both formal and informal, prevented, as far as possible, the participation of actors other than the president and a very small group of political elites. Although the respective constitutional provisions in Indonesia have not been changed since 1998 (with the exception of Article 13, which institutionalizes the DPR's participation in the process of ambassadorial appointments), foreign

policy making in the era of democratization no longer seems to be guided by the once powerful informal institutions of the authoritarian past. It will be shown below that, despite the lack of new constitutional procedures in the area of foreign policy, actors outside the executive, particularly the DPR, are already successfully influencing the management of Indonesia's external relations.

Unlike political change in Indonesia, the re-democratization of the Philippines has brought about important implications for formal procedures of foreign policy making. On 21 September 1972, then-president Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law, closed the Philippine Congress and assumed its legislative responsibilities. During the 1972-1981 martial law period, Marcos, invested with dictatorial powers, issued hundreds of presidential decrees. The constitution of 1973 further strengthened his position. In order to restrict the power of future presidents and reduce the risk of dictatorship, the democratic constitution of 1987 introduced an elaborated system of checks and balances partly modeled on the US political system. The Philippine Congress is one of the most powerful legislatures in the Asia Pacific, as far as its role in foreign policy making is concerned, and has played its cards on several occasions. In particular, Article 7, Section 21 ("No treaty or international agreement shall be valid and effective unless concurred in by at least two-thirds of all the Members of the Senate") has proven to be a strong and decisive instrument of the legislature. Of the three states analyzed here, it is in the Philippines that the two-level game in the foreign policy process comes closest to Putnam's model.

In Thailand, political change in the aftermath of the 1991 coup d'état has not resulted in any new formal framework conditions for foreign policy. Although Thailand's constitution of 1997, the sixteenth since 1932, brought about far-reaching implications for the nation's political system (see Croissant and Dosch 2001), the content and wording of the two sections related to foreign policy have remained practically unchanged compared with the previous, military-oriented constitution of 1991. The king as head of state has the prerogative to declare war with the approval of the bicameral National Assembly (Sections 180 and 223 respectively), and to conclude international treaties. Treaties that provide for a change in the Thai territories or the jurisdiction of the state, or that require the enactment of legislation for implementation, must be approved by the National Assembly (Sections 181 and 224 respectively). However, judging foreign policy making in Thailand solely on the basis of formal constitutional structures would be too simplistic a view. The almost identical constitutional passages hide the

fact that today's decision-making process is open to a wider spectrum of actors. During the times of imperialism and the Cold War in Southeast Asia, Thailand's foreign policy followed a realist pattern based on the primacy of security. This, and the role of the military as a legitimate instrument of state policy, contributed to a pre-eminent position of the armed forces in foreign policy making. Even more, the military regularly monopolized the decision-making process, excluding the parliament and even the foreign ministry at times. As a result of the democratization process, the institutionalization of civilian control over the armed forces and the subsequent decline of the military's power to intervene in politics have significantly reduced the generals' authority over foreign affairs (see Rüländ 2001, p. 1027).

The Declining Role of the Military

One of the most visible results of regime change has been the declining role of the armed forces as a major foreign policy actor and the revival of foreign affairs as a civilian domain.³ As already explained, during Suharto's 'New Order' (1966-1998) Indonesia's foreign policy decision-making was characterized by a pre-eminent position of the President. Former Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja once admitted that all strategic foreign policy decisions, such as the normalization of Indonesia's relations with China in 1990, were made by Suharto without any significant contribution from other actors.⁴ At the same time this hegemonic role would not have been possible without the strong backing of the armed forces. On the basis of the *dwi fungsi* (dual function) doctrine, stipulating a dual political and security function for the military, the armed forces claimed the right to be represented in the government, the legislature and the state administration. In the area of foreign policy this assertion materialized in a military-dominated Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), despite the fact that all three foreign ministers of the 'New Order' were civilians. According to Bob Hadiwinata, "although some diplomats of civilian background (Ali Alatas, Nana Sutresna, Hasyim Jalal and some others) did make a good career in the foreign service, it does not necessarily

³ For the most comprehensive analysis of the armed forces' political role see Alagappa, ed. (2001).

⁴ At a seminar at Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta, in September 1987.

say that civilians had their grip in foreign policy-making.”⁵ Other military agencies were also involved in influencing, if not determining, New Order foreign policy, including Hankam (Ministry of Defense and Security), Bakin (Intelligence Body), BAIS (Intelligence and Strategic Organization), Lemhanas (Institute of Defense and Security), and Setneg (State Secretariat) (Suryadinata 1996, p. 30; see also Singh 1994).

The shift towards civilian supremacy in the conduct of foreign affairs in post-1998 Indonesia first gained momentum with the selection of Abdurrahman Wahid as president in October 1999. Wahid immediately asserted his authority over the military with a series of bold appointments and rotations at the highest levels of the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI; National Armed Forces of Indonesia). While it is likely that the Armed Forces will try to hold on to the *dwi fungsi* concept and maintain political power and influence over decision-making in domestic politics for the time being,⁶ the military’s reduced leverage over the conduct of foreign policy is already visible, for example with regards to Indonesia’s participation in the war on terror. The military’s attempt to develop a hard-line approach in Indonesia’s contribution to the international fight against terrorism has been markedly softened if not overruled by the government’s reluctance to upset the Muslim groups. And despite the muscle-flexing of the armed forces in the dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia over overlapping territorial claims in the Sulawesi Sea – the oil and gas rich ‘Ambalat Block’ – in 2005 civilian politicians rather than generals took the lead in trying to de-escalate and resolve one of the country’s potentially most explosive diplomatic conflicts in decades. As a further

⁵ Author e-mail conversation with Hadiwinata, August 2005. Hadiwinata is a professor of international relations at Parahyangan Catholic University in Bandung, Indonesia, and a leading expert on Indonesian foreign policy.

⁶ The gradual reduction of the TNI’s sociopolitical role during the Wahid presidency did not reach the stage of a “pact” between civilian and military actors that would have taken away the TNI’s footing in political interventions. Furthermore, the reform process came to a standstill if not a drawback after Megawati Sukarnoputri became president in 2001. While the election of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono Indonesia’s first directly elected head of state in the October 2004 landslide win against Megawati, seemed to pave the way for a continuation of Wahid’s reform program (despite Yudhoyono’s military background), the fundamental problem remains that the military is driven by the necessity to meet its financial requirements. According to Hadi Soesastro (2003) the military gets no more than 30 percent of its funds from the national budget. The necessity of the military to look for its own money is the source of much evil in the country. Similarly, the inability of the government to finance the military limits the ability of the government to impose effective civil control.

indicator of the armed forces' reduced grip on foreign relations, senior ambassadorial appointments do not longer go to senior officers of the armed forces but career diplomats. High-ranking personnel in the MFA agree that foreign policy making is now much more complex than during authoritarian days. When in the past the MFA would simply follow the unitary opinion of the president and Lemhannas, officials now have to listen to different opinions from the president, the Parliament, and the military.

Similar to the Indonesian case the changing political role of the military in Thailand has contributed to a rising profile for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). While the Foreign Minister is traditionally not among the most powerful members within the hierarchy of the Thai cabinet, the MFA has the most modern leadership structures and best educated bureaucrats of all Thai ministries. Apart from short periods the Ministry had been in the shadow of the Armed Forces in past decades. During the Cold War Thailand's foreign policy followed a realist pattern, which was based on the primacy of security and directed towards the containment of Vietnam. This and the role of the military as a legitimate instrument of state policy contributed to the central position of the Armed Forces in foreign policy making. As a result of democratization the institutionalization of civilian control over the armed forces and the subsequent decline of the military's power to intervene in politics have significantly reduced the generals' authority over foreign affairs. An incident in 1993 became the test case for military involvement in foreign policy. The first Chuan Leekpai government allowed eight Nobel Prize laureates (among them the Dalai Lama) to visit Thailand. Their objective was to demand that the Burmese junta release Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the country's opposition and 1991 Nobel Prize winner. In the run-up to this high-level visit, a conflict emerged between the government and armed forces, in particular army chief General Wimol Wongvanich. The armed forces did not agree to the visit, because they wanted to maintain a smooth relationship with the Burmese army. Furthermore, as Surachart Bamrungsuk (2001, pp. 80-81) explains, the Thai army was determined to keep its "special relationship" with China, because of the uncertainty of war and peace in Cambodia at that time and China's past assistance to Thailand during the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia. The generals thought that the presence of the Dalai Lama in Thailand could have a negative impact on relations with China, but this disagreement did not lead to a confrontation as in the past. The military made its position clear and sent a message of disagreement to the government. However, the moment the cabinet

announced its decision, the army stopped speaking. “This was a good [omen] for Thai democratization. The military could voice its opinion so long as it did not threaten to overthrow the government. And the military agreed to stop voicing its opposition when the cabinet made its final decision indicating a certain degree of civilian control over the military as well as military professionalism” (p. 80). As well, the 1992 transition to democratic rule incidentally occurred alongside the end of the Cold War in Southeast Asia. The main and powerful symbol of the changing international structures was the withdrawal of Vietnamese forces from Cambodia, resulting in a normalization of relations between Thailand and Vietnam and, consequently, the diminishing of a major threat to Thai national security. No longer did the nation’s armed forces have a major enemy to fight; neither internal nor external threats seemed to exist any longer in the post-Cold War era. In this new security environment the military needed to adjust its role and mission. In sum, the 1992 watershed in Thailand’s political development helped take control over the ideological content and direction of foreign policy away from the Thai army, which, during the final decade of the Cold War, was preoccupied with the Vietnamese threat from Cambodia (Kislenko 2002).

However, the MFA did not immediately re-emerge as the central foreign policy player with the beginning of re-democratization in 1992. Due to frequent changes of governments and foreign ministers – during the 1990s Thailand had eleven different foreign ministers – the position of the Ministry was not as strong as it might have been in the case of continuity at the top. Finally under Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan (1997-2001), the MFA established itself as the undisputed leader in most foreign policy areas. Surin’s charisma, his outspokenness and new ideas about a reform of ASEAN contributed to the re-emergence of the Ministry as Thailand’s diplomatic face to the outside world. At the same time the armed forces have managed to retain some crucial impact over the conduct of foreign relations with neighboring countries as a result of the close personal and economic ties that Thai generals had established in the 1980s with Burmese and Laotian generals as well as Khmer Rouge leaders during the pro-Vietnamese regime in Cambodia. These links helped the military to dominate relations with Cambodia and Burma – and, to a lesser degree, with Laos – long after the foreign affairs portfolio passed to civilian hands in the early 1990s.

In the Philippines a stronger subordination of the armed forces (AFP) to the national legislature and a reorientation from an internal police force to an external defense posture was achieved in the early 1990s during Fidel Ramos’ presidency

(1992-1998). Generally, most military leaders found civilian supremacy more difficult to accept with respect to the domestic order than in the case of foreign relations, a domain that the AFP had never ‘owned’, even not during the martial law days of the Marcos dictatorship. While the US-supported post-11 September 2001 fight against terrorism in the Philippines, particularly the crackdown on the Abu Sayyaf group in Mindanao, has once again endowed the Philippine armed forces with a domestic mission, the civilian supremacy over the military is institutionalized. That many former military officers succeeded in making the transition to second careers in electoral politics, most prominently President Fidel Ramos, who served as the deputy staff of the armed forces under Marcos, is not a contradiction. And it was particularly the Ramos administration that appointed dozens of retired military officers to core civilian positions, including powerful posts in the Department of Defense and the National Security Council (NSC). One of the best-known examples is retired brigadier general José Almonte, a major power broker under Ramos, who served as head of both the NSC and National Intelligence Coordinating Authority (NICA), and various ambassadorial posts. Almonte has also been among the most active and influential foreign policy makers of the democratic era. While bureaucrat- or politician-turned former AFP leaders like Almonte have decisively shaped the country’s foreign policy since 1986 they have done so as individuals who were driven by general strategic motivations other than the aim to safeguard or even enhance the position of the military as an institution in foreign affairs. Overall, it can be concluded that with regards to foreign policy-making, democratization in all three polities has resulted in growing state autonomy from the armed forces. But has this process been to the advantage of other core actor groups? Most importantly, has democratization led to decreasing state autonomy from legislatures that try to exert influence over foreign relations?

A Role to Play for Legislatures?

It has been suggested that legislatures are particularly insistent on asserting their right to influence foreign policy early on in the process of democratization. “Because this process is about establishing property rights to policymaking, legislators are reluctant to concede in the institutional power struggle by allowing the executive much discretion. In contrast, in established democracies we typically see extensive delegation (but rarely abdication) to the executive branch” (Martin 1997,

pp. 68-69). Among the three cases discussed here, the Indonesian example seems to support most clearly this assumption that newly democratized legislatures are particularly trying to enhance their authority over foreign policy.

There is reason to assume that the Indonesian parliament challenged President Gus Dur (Wahid) whenever possible in order to strengthen its position in what is widely perceived as an ongoing zero-sum game for political power not only in legislature-executive relations but also between the competing political parties and their leaders. As Arief Budiman explained at a time when Gus Dur was still in office, the president “seemingly ignores the power composition of Parliament ... which is controlled by members of other parties. Thus, the Wahid administration is subject to much turbulence, because it is constantly being attacked by the political forces that control the legislature” (2001, p. 150). For example, Wahid’s inability to give formal recognition to Israel was the result of opposition from the parliament, which in turn was influenced by demonstrations and societal forces (Smith, A. 2000, p. 504). Since 1999 the House of People’s Representatives (DPR) has established a strong interest in foreign policy issues, mainly in the following areas:

- Indonesia’s relations with the newly independent state East Timor.
- Indonesia’s bilateral relations, in particular with the United States, Australia, China, Israel, Palestine, Malaysia, Singapore, and Burma.
- Responses to terrorism in the wake of 11 September 2001 and the Bali bombing of 12 October 2002.
- Preservation of the territorial integrity of the nation (the cases of Aceh and West Papua).

When Megawati took office, it first seemed that the DPR would adopt a more passive role than during the previous government. A report by the Jakarta-based Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) identified three reasons for an observed sudden change in approach. According to this view, first, most members of the parliament wanted to slow down after the long process of impeaching President Wahid. Second, since there was no political indication that Megawati had been involved in any wrongdoing in terms of collusion, corruption, and nepotism (referred to as “KKN” in Indonesia), the parliament found it difficult to attack the new president. Third, immediately after Megawati’s inauguration, the national policy agenda required the full concentration of the parliament, which

had to focus on the annual session of the People's Consultative Assembly in early November 2001 (CSIS 2002, p. 13). After a brief period of passivity, however, the DPR quickly re-established a powerful role in foreign policy making as an effective means of strengthening its institutional position within the political system. Commission I, which oversees foreign affairs and defense issues, has been the center of gravity of the parliament's claim to actorness in foreign relations, and the commission's head, Yasril Ananta Baharuddin of Golkar,⁷ has been among its most prominent faces. The commission challenged Megawati especially on the issues of Indonesia's relations with East Timor and Australia. It is widely believed that Yasril's radical political stance on Australia and East Timor was primarily a convenient weapon to attack the Megawati government and to increase Golkar's bargaining power vis-à-vis the administration and Megawati's Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), then the largest faction in the DPR (*Laksama*, 21 July 2002). Unlike in Thailand, however, where – as will be shown – the legislature's role in foreign policy is tied to the interests and activities of one senator, the position of the Indonesian parliament is to a markedly higher degree embedded in the overall institutional context of the political system and involves a larger number of key actors. Neither has Yasril been the sole legislative voice of opposition, nor has the parliamentary interest in foreign relations been confined to Commission I of the DPR. For example, when in September 2002 the commission called for Australian prime minister John Howard to postpone a visit both Amien Rais, speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly, and Akbar Tanjung, speaker of the House of People's Representatives, immediately rendered support and refused to meet Howard.⁸ This was a powerful statement of the entire legislative branch vis-à-vis the executive.

At the same time, the parliament's foreign policy interest cannot entirely be reduced to the quest of establishing property rights in executive-legislative relations. The DPR also sees itself as the guardian and savior of Indonesia's

⁷ Under Suharto Golongan Karya (Golkar) was the de facto government party centred on the functional groups in the Indonesian society. In the current parliament, elected in 2004, Golkar holds the majority of seats.

⁸ The Indonesian criticism of Australia is related to Canberra's role in East Timor and Irian Jaya. In 1999, the intervention of an Australian-led peacekeeping force into East Timor, which at that point was still regarded as sovereign Indonesian territory by the government in Jakarta, caused widespread anti-Australian sentiment. In the following years prominent Indonesian politicians, including Yasril Ananta Baharuddin, had accused Australia of backing the independence movement in the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya (West Papua).

independent and active foreign policy. On the basis of this doctrine Indonesia efficiently played the role of a regional leader and was among the most influential and diplomatically successful medium powers in international relations until about the mid-1990s. Since then however, the country's foreign policy-makers and diplomats have struggled to put Indonesia back on the map partly due to often conflicting views by the DPR and the administration on the best foreign policy strategy and the resulting lack of a comprehensive and coherent post-Suharto interpretation of 'independent and active'.

Unlike in Indonesia there has not been any indication yet for a decisive active foreign policy role of the Thai legislature, the bi-cameral National Assembly, in institutional terms. Not more than two or three senators are keen to get involved in foreign affairs. While the 1997 Constitution has empowered both the House of Representatives and Senate vis-à-vis the executive branch of government, the *realpolitik* of executive-legislative relations have only gradually and slowly been changing and this is particularly the case for foreign policy. Furthermore, foreign affairs rank low within the Assembly's committee hierarchy in terms of prestige and, clearly related, political influence. Membership in the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs committees is not attractive to most legislators as the Committees have nothing to distribute in terms of material resources. The minimal foreign policy impact of the National Assembly in institutional terms, however, has to be seen separately from the strong input of individual lawmakers, mainly and most prominently Senator Kraisaak Choonhavan. The chairman of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee has developed a strong personal interest in Thailand's relations with Burma and human rights issues and is well represented in the national and international media. Yet, there seems to be little if any coordination between Kraisaak's foreign policy agenda on the one hand and the MFA and the Prime Minister on the other to the extent that Kraisaak often stands for an alternative or even parallel foreign policy⁹ in Thailand's external relations as the position of Kraisaak and 'his' Senate Foreign Affairs Committee on Burma demonstrate. Mainly for economic reasons and due to the prevailing influence of the armed forces in the domain of Thai-Burmese relations, the government of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra retained an appeasement policy towards Burma and signed several bilateral agreements to provide grants and long-term loans to improve

⁹ I owe this term to Uwe Solinger, a former advisor to the National Assembly.

the neighboring country's infrastructure.¹⁰ Kraisak promoted the exact opposite position and urged the government to "halt all forms of assistance to Burma and suspend bilateral cooperation until the new Burmese leadership makes a firm commitment to national reconciliation and democracy" (*The Nation*, 21 October 2004). This view has been supported by parts of the Thaksin-critical English language media in Thailand. Personal rivalries such as the one between Thaksin and Kraisak (who is the son of former Prime Minister Chatichai Choonhavan) are of course not uncommon in Thai politics or anywhere else in the world and are often as much related to policy issues as they are to long-standing competition among political clans and dynasties. What makes the Thai case almost unique is the choice of foreign policy as the battlefield. The term *parallel foreign policy* seems appropriate to describe the case of Thailand because the international media often presents Kraisak's views and initiatives in a way as if they constituted elements of Thailand's official foreign policy rather than alternative options. Coverage of the ASEAN summit in Laos in November 2004 illustrates this point. The summit was dominated by the controversial issue of ASEAN's softly-softly approach towards the military regime in Rangoon. On the eve of the summit an ASEAN parliamentarian conference in Malaysia discussed the restrictions on the freedom of movement of Burma's opposition leaders by the military junta and urged the regional grouping not to pass its chairmanship to Burma in 2006. This gathering was attended by some of Southeast Asia's most prominent parliamentarians, most of whom representing oppositional political parties in the respective states' legislatures, such as Kraisak, the Minority Leader of the Philippine Senate Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Malaysian opposition leader Lim Kit Siang. The meeting received extensive media coverage and in some instances its outcome was wrongly interpreted as an indication that the ASEAN member states were about to adopt a tougher stance aimed at committing the junta to serious political change. Such a policy, however, did not materialize at the summit. At the same time, the example shows that parliamentary interests in foreign affairs have grown to the extent that they can effectively challenge the views of the executive branch of government.

This is particularly true for the Philippine legislature. Modeled on the US example of an intermixture of powers, the 1987 Constitution grants Congress and especially the Senate a substantial share of authority over the foreign policy

¹⁰ For recent trends in Thai-Burmese relations and a review of the Thaksin premiership see McCargo and Ukrist 2005.

architecture. For example, the Congress alone can declare a state of war – a provision that substantially exceeds the authority of the Thai and Indonesian legislatures – and only the Senate is empowered to ratify international treaties. One of the most decisive involvements of the legislature in foreign affairs took place in September 1991 when the Senate blocked the renewal of the Military Bases Agreement with the United States that would have extended the US military presence in the country for another ten years in return for US\$ 203 million a year in US aid. Then-President Corazon Aquino initially considered leading a referendum to overturn the Senate's decision but later backed away from the plan and respected the legitimate act of the legislature as granted by the constitution. This decision not only confirmed the Senate's influential role in foreign affairs but also strengthened the democratic political system in general. The controversy over the American military presence did not end with the withdrawal of the US forces in 1991 and resurfaced in the context of American support for the Philippines in the fight against the Abu Sayyaf bandits and militant insurgency movements in Mindanao. Members of Congress took the lead in voicing concern over the possibility of the 1999 Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) and 2002 Military Logistics and Support Agreement (MLSA) becoming stepping-stones for the eventual establishment of a larger and more permanent US military presence in the Philippines. In a more recent case, in April 2005 the Philippines Senate passed a motion calling on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to ban Burma from assuming the organization's rotating chairmanship in 2006. The Philippines legislature (as its counterpart in Malaysia) have been instrumental in leading the push for greater pressure to be exerted on Burma, in the hope of securing a timetable for democratic reform and the release of pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi. While the latter has not been achieved yet, the initiative was insofar successful as the Burmese government eventually – in a tactically clever move, as some observers commented – renounced its claim to chairmanship.¹¹

¹¹ For a more detailed account of the legislature's role in Philippine foreign policy and other examples for the domestic-international nexus in the conduct of foreign affairs see Pollard 2004.

The Powerful Role of Public Opinion and Non-State Actors

The interests of legislatures in the process of foreign policy making and public opinion are often inter-related. The Indonesian legislature has repeatedly jumped on the bandwagon of anti-Israeli, anti-Australian and anti-American sentiments in the electorate. Among the three countries discussed here the Philippine government is probably the most receptive to public opinion. One of many examples of populism in foreign policy-making was the response of freshly re-elected President Gloria Arroyo to the Iraq hostage crisis in July 2004. Despite immense pressure from the United States and its allies, particularly Australia, not to give in to the demands of Iraqi militants, Arroyo decided to withdraw the Philippines troops from Iraq in exchange for the life of Filipino hostage Angelo de la Cruz. The government met the demands of de la Cruz' kidnappers from the Khaled ibn al-Walid Brigade to pull out the 51 troops by 20 July 2004, one month ahead of schedule. One of the country's most influential columnists, Amando Doronila (2004), commented, "Unfazed by the criticism that she pandered to cheap populism, Ms Arroyo left no doubt that she gave higher priority to domestic interests over the widely embracing stakes of the Philippines' major partners in the coalition".

Increasing openness and transparency of foreign policy decision-making have also contributed to a stronger societal input in Indonesia and Thailand. The rapid growth of civil society in both countries implies that foreign policy can no longer be made in isolation by a small number of insulated political elites. The democratic environment has resulted primarily in a stronger influence of business-related interest groups on foreign relations. Prior to the 1990s, Thai foreign policy had been formulated independently of the public domain to the extent that the Foreign Ministry was dubbed 'the twilight zone'. Pressures, both external and internal, have opened up foreign policy decision-making to greater public scrutiny (Kusuma 2001). The democratic environment in Thailand has resulted primarily in a stronger influence of business-related interest groups on foreign relations. At the same time, the activities of pro-democracy and human rights NGOs and movements, which have emerged in large numbers since the late 1980s, have contributed to the shaping of foreign policy. Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai's (1997-2001) foreign policy pronouncement to Parliament in November 1997 outlined a Wilsonian vision of foreign policy by announcing Thailand's participation in the global protection and promotion of democratic values and

human rights. Six years on, in September 2003, under the succeeding Thaksin government the vision materialized when Thailand sent 420 soldiers to Iraq in an effort to rebuild the war-ravaged country. Unlike in most other countries, which dispatched troops to Iraq, the military mission was not controversial in Thai public opinion and widely accepted and supported as the inevitable international duty of a country that wants to play a prominent and useful role in international affairs.

While civil society organizations in Thailand, on the whole, do not tend to challenge foreign policy makers to the extent that it would force the respective governments to compromise on key agendas, the Indonesian government's reaction to the "war on terror" has provided an excellent example of the executive's dilemma created by the two-level game in a democracy and the new pluralist nature of foreign policy-making. Apart from refocusing Indonesian foreign policy on ASEAN, further improvement of Indonesia's overall good relations with the United States had been Megawati's main foreign policy concern, not least for economic reasons. The president managed to secure US\$530 million in new financial aid that was promised when she visited Washington, D.C., soon after the events of 11 September 2001. To avoid any damage to Indonesia-US relations, it had been in the interest of the Megawati government to support the Washington-led war on terror in Afghanistan. However, pressured by anti-American demonstrations in the streets of Jakarta and elsewhere, the administration could not go beyond vague political rhetoric without risking the escalation of public unrest. To Anak Perwita, "massive reactions of some elements of Indonesian Muslim society towards the war in Afghanistan and the wave of anti-Western (the US) mass demonstrations were clear examples of people's strong willingness to participate in Indonesia's foreign policy" (2001, p. 377). Despite Megawati's initial intention to support a proposed Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) declaration condemning international terrorism, the declaration did not materialize, particularly because domestic constraints prevented the Indonesian (and Malaysian) government from officially sponsoring and signing such a document. Instead, the APEC summit in Shanghai in October 2001 produced only a very general statement on terrorism. At the same time, the Indonesian government was concerned that the war in Afghanistan could increase domestic support for radical Islamic groups, such as the *Pembela Islam* (Islamic Defenders Front) and *Laskar Jihad* (Jihad Troops) (Perwita 2001, p. 377). *Laskar Jihad*, a Java-based paramilitary group, was founded in early 2000 and has been most active in Maluku, where the militant extrem-

ists intervened on behalf of local Islamic groups in the violent conflict between Muslims and Christians. Although Laskar Jihad has not been able to attract mass support among Indonesian Muslims and is unlikely to change the character of the country's overall moderate approach to Islam, the government takes the group extremely seriously. What makes Laskar Jihad particularly dangerous from the ruling elite's point of view is the fact that as many as 80 percent of its 3,000-10,000 members could be TNI soldiers, as some observers have suggested (Davis 2002, p. 22). In a situation that resembled a typical two-level game, the Indonesian government, in formulating its official foreign policy responses in the wake of 11 September 2001 and Washington's subsequent replies, had to deal with two conflicting positions and realized that it would soon have to undergo a delicate balancing act. On the one hand, government officials loyal to President Megawati were greatly aware that the devastating event of 11 September 2001 would become a serious international issue with wide-ranging global policy implications. Hence it was assumed that Indonesia might not have many choices outside expressing its support for the US call to counter the threat of terrorism. On the other hand, the Indonesian administration strongly perceived the need to carefully weigh its position against possible domestic reactions, particularly from the Muslim community. There is no doubt that the Megawati government was aware that Indonesia's support for the US call for a global war on terrorism was likely to be construed at home as an act of submission to the United States (Sukma 2003, p. 132).

By contrast, under the presidencies of Habibie and Wahid, Islam as a core issue had entered foreign policy only in form, not in substance. Even though Islam became a significant factor in national politics after the fall of Suharto, foreign policy continued to be subject to constraints imposed by the reality of domestic weakness and the dilemma of dual identity, namely the fact that Indonesia is a secular state whose government cannot ignore the fact that the vast majority of the population are Muslims. "Therefore, any government in Indonesia is obliged to move beyond strict secularism by taking into account Muslim aspirations but short of moving towards the establishment of an Islamic state" (Sukma 2003, p. 22). While the governments of both Habibie and Wahid sought and bore strong Islamic credentials, they continued to pursue a foreign policy dictated by the imperative of maintaining good relations with the West. Consequently, the non-religious character of Indonesian foreign policy was sustained (Sukma 2003, p. 121). This dilemma of dual identity continued to leave its marks on

Indonesian foreign policy under Megawati, when the nonreligious character of foreign policy was preserved and reinforced further. Rizal Sukma concludes: “The Islamic factor serves as a ‘control mechanism’ rather than a primary motivating factor in Indonesian foreign policy” (2003, p. 142).

While a strong impact of public opinion on foreign policy formulation is obvious, the degree and importance of think tank consulting is difficult to assess in the absence of extensive academic research on the topic. In general terms, a small number of mostly semi-governmental research and university institutes have influenced especially ASEAN-related policies in most member states for at least two decades, and also during times of authoritarian rule. The most prominent role has been played by the Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), which are part of the ASEAN-ISIS network, such as the CSIS (Jakarta), the ISIS in Kuala Lumpur), and the ISIS in Bangkok. ASEAN-ISIS was instrumental in outlining the concept of the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). In a very rare study on policy advisory institutions in Southeast Asia, Dewi Fortuna Anwar concludes for Indonesia, “it is premature to argue that the presence of think-tanks has really made a significant contribution to the larger political process and outcomes, for their numbers are still limited and many have only been established in the last several years. The case of think-tanks shows that institution-building in Indonesia is still in a highly formative, transitional stage” (1999, p. 251).

Conclusion: Similar Processes, Different Outcomes

As Skidmore and Hudson’s pluralist/statist model and Putnam’s two-level game suggest, the structural and institutional framework for the making of foreign policy under the condition of democracy is on the whole fundamentally different from the way authoritarian regimes shape their relations with their external environment. The cases of Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines support this argument. In the absence of institutionalized checks and balances within the respective political systems, independent legislatures that were more than rubber stamps of the governments, a free media, and a proactive civil society (with the partial exception of the Philippines that had always been more advanced in this regards than its neighbours), the small circles of actors involved in the drafting and conduct of foreign policy in Indonesia under Suharto, in the Philippines under Marcos, and in Thailand under subsequent military regimes, normally did not

need to respond to non-governmental concerns. Consequently, autocratic regimes could implement foreign policy strategies based on narrowly defined national interests. In the 1980s, for example, Indonesia's overriding foreign policy strategy was aimed at regional leadership, mainly in the context of ASEAN, while the Philippines' superseding foreign policy focus was the alliance with the United States, and Thailand's main priority was the containment of Vietnam.

In all three instances, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, the process of democratization has had not only a far-reaching impact on the respective domestic order but also on the structure, actors and issues in foreign policy-making. Due to the traumatic experiences of martial law under Ferdinand Marcos, the Philippine Constitution of 1987 establishes a far-reaching system of legislative checks on the President, including the area of foreign affairs. In contrast, re-democratization in Thailand has not influenced the formal structures of the foreign policy process. The same applies to Indonesia where the provisions on foreign policy-making in the 1945 Constitution have mainly been left untouched with the exception of ambassadorial appointments which now require the President to consider the parliament's views. At the same time the formal institutionalized rules that govern the management of foreign affairs say little about the real power relativities and patterns of influence among the actors involved. The new democratic environment in all three states has opened up the foreign policy arena and gives access to a larger number of actors compared with the days of authoritarian rule, mainly to the benefit of ministries, other government officials and a civilian diplomatic service. In all three cases the impact of the military on foreign affairs has been significantly reduced. At the same time public opinion has proved to be a decisive factor pushing the respective executive towards the prominent consideration of business, human rights and religious issues. The role of the legislature differs from country to country. Whereas, according to the letter of the constitution, the Congress of the Philippines is the most powerful legislature of the three in foreign affairs, in real political terms the Indonesian House of Representative is the most active in putting its mark on foreign affairs. Lawmakers have successfully challenged or even vetoed major foreign policy decisions of the post-Suharto administrations. The bi-cameral National Assembly of Thailand as a whole has not developed a decisive interest in the country's external relations but the chairman of the Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee regularly succeeds in getting international attention for his government-critical suggestions for a 'better' Thai foreign policy. In sum, general cross-regional assumptions about the role of parliaments in foreign

policy decision making of newly democratized states can not made in the case of Southeast Asia. It can be established, however, that the wider spectrum of actors and the multiplication of special interests pose a major test to the often inexperienced executives in newly (re-)emerging democratic systems as far as the making of foreign policy is concerned.

It goes without saying that foreign policy change is not entirely and exclusively driven by internal dynamics. History, issues of political leadership and above all international structural change and global developments, such as shifting power relativities and the vanishing of old threat perception and the growing intertwinedness of security and economics, play their part, too. After all, the foreign policies of China and Vietnam have also seen adjustments despite the absence of far-reaching political liberalization. As this article has shown, what differentiates autocracies and democracies is the way in which regime accountability constraints the government's latitude of decision-making in foreign affairs. In the case of the authoritarian regimes in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines regime accountability tended to be low because the continuity of the respective governments was not linked to the legislative process, elections, judicial decision, or even the regimes performance. Hence, accountability did not impose a significant limitation on foreign policymaking. In contrast, democratization increased regime accountability and, as a result, has increasingly restricted the post-authoritarian governments' leeway in determining and implementing foreign policy goals. In short, while the conduct of foreign policy was almost free of domestic constraints in an authoritarian regime, in a democracy foreign policy choices are linked to their perceived effect on the decision-maker's political standing and the views of constituencies.

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