

# Comparing the Role of the Military in the Politics of Southeast Asia: Controlling or Playing Politics?

Dr. Robert H. Taylor



Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a general trend toward the establishment of civilian regimes in the formerly militarily governed countries of South East Asia. The obvious exception at the moment is Thailand. Indonesia and Myanmar have transitioned to civilian led regimes and the Philippines has managed to fend off attempts to overthrow civilian governments. That, however, does not mean that the armies of these and other Southeast Asian governments are under the firm control of civilian authorities. Indeed, the opposite may, in part, be the case. Examining the political role of the militarily comparatively, in the light of historical parallels in European history, remains a fruitful endeavor. Professor Taylor's lecture will focus on these concerns and their implications for the future of the military in South East Asian politics.

Robert H. Taylor is current a Visiting Research Scholar at the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University. He previously taught at the University of Sydney and was Professor of Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) before serving as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham. Most recently, he has been a frequent Visiting Senior Research Fellow at ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore. His publications have primarily been studies of aspects of the politics of Myanmar but he has contributed to several standard textbooks on modern Southeast Asian history. *The State in Myanmar* (2009) and *General Ne Win: A Political Biography* (2015) are among his major works.

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