

The Role of the Military and other Elites in S.E Asian Politics.

Elites have played a key role in the political development of S.E. Asian countries as they have moved from their mainly colonial heritages, through industrialization to today's more democratic systems of government.

The military for instance have played an important role in shaping, or supporting political systems in many S.E. Asian countries. In Thailand and Indonesia they have helped sustain or change governments while in Myanmar they still dominant. Other elites-bureaucratic, political and business- have also been key players in supporting different types of regimes. In Malaysia and Singapore bureaucratic and political elites have shaped the types of governments while business elites have, and still play, a significant role in most S.E Asia countries.

Elites, when cohesive and working smoothly with each other tend to bolster regimes, both authoritarian and democratic, generally acting as a stabilizing force. This can be seen in Indonesia both under the New` Order and now under *reformasi*. When however elites are in conflict and not working cohesively together they can, as Thailand's history well illustrates, bring about change and instability.

This course examines how the various elite groupings in S.E Asia have been formed and their influence on the form of government in the different countries. Particular attention will be given to their role in Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines and Malaysia though other SE Asia countries will also be looked at.

Guest lecturers specializing in the roles of elites, military or otherwise, in the different countries will be invited to participate in the course.

