



The Pacific Review >

Volume 23, 2010 - [Issue 4](#)

5,609

Views

63

CrossRef citations to date

13

Altmetric

Original Articles

ASEAN's unchanged melody? The theory and practice of 'non-interference' in Southeast Asia

Lee Jones

Pages 479-502 | Published online: 11 Aug 2010

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2010.495996>

Sample our
Area Studies
Journals



>> [Sign in here](#) to start your access
to the latest two volumes for 14 days

Full Article

Figures & data

References

Citations

Metrics

Reprints & Permissions

Read this article

Share

Abstract

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is widely supposed by theorists and commentators of many persuasions to have elevated the principle of absolute non-interference in the internal affairs of states into a central pillar of Southeast Asian regionalism. Non-interference is also criticised for retarding ASEAN from taking meaningful action over economic crises, problematic members like Myanmar, and transnational security threats. This article critiques this consensus, arguing that the norm has never been absolute, but has rather been upheld or ignored in line with the interests of the region's dominant social forces. While the principle formally remains in place despite such challenges and serious instances of violation, it is now subject to competing demands and contestation.

Keywords:

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Christopher Bickerton, Katja Freistein, Emily Paddon, Carolyn Haggis and two anonymous reviewers for extremely helpful comments on earlier drafts.

Lee Jones is a lecturer in International Politics at Queen Mary, University of London. His research focuses on questions of state-society relations, governance, political economy, sovereignty and intervention, particularly in post-colonial countries. He has recently completed a book manuscript on sovereignty regimes in Southeast Asia.

Notes

1. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand joined in 1967; Brunei Darussalam, in 1983; Laos and Myanmar, in 1997; and Cambodia, in 1999.
2. B. Kausikan, interview with the author, Singapore, February 2008.
3. B. Desker, interview with the author, Singapore, February 2008.
4. Kraissak Choonhavan, interview with the author, Bangkok, January 2008.
5. Ali Alatas, interview with the author, Jakarta, February 2008.
6. J. Asda, interview with the author, Bangkok, January 2008.
7. B. Kausikan, interview with the author, Singapore, February 2008.
8. ASEAN Secretariat Official, interview with the author, Jakarta, February 2008.

Related Research Data

[The English School and ASEAN](#)

Source: The Pacific Review

12 Myanmar: Preoccupation with Regime Survival, National Unity, and Stability

Source: Unknown Repository

ASEAN and East Asian International Relations

Source: Unknown Repository

The Dual Narrative of “Good Governance”: Lessons for Understanding Political and Cultural Change in Malaysia and Singapore

Source: Contemporary Southeast Asia

Cambodia and Burma: The ASEAN Way Ends Here

Source: Asian Survey

East Timor and Asian security

Source: Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars

The politics of ‘Asian values’

Related research

People also read

Recommended articles

Cited by
63

Information for

[Authors](#)

[R&D professionals](#)

[Editors](#)

[Librarians](#)

[Societies](#)

Opportunities

[Reprints and e-prints](#)

[Advertising solutions](#)

[Accelerated publication](#)

[Corporate access solutions](#)

Open access

[Overview](#)

[Open journals](#)

[Open Select](#)

[Dove Medical Press](#)

[F1000Research](#)

Help and information

[Help and contact](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[All journals](#)

[Books](#)

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email



Sign me up



Copyright © 2025 Informa UK Limited [Privacy policy](#) [Cookies](#) [Terms & conditions](#)

[Accessibility](#)

 Taylor and Francis Group

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG