

# **Democracy and Democratisation in Asia**

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## **Summary**

This paper presents three scholarly approaches to democracy, discusses the advantages and weaknesses of procedural democracy, and asserts that within a few decades, this type of democracy may have become a universal norm. There may also, however, come an anti-democratic backlash, but to be effective such a backlash needs to be driven by a region with economically successful states. The only region today that may have such a potential is Pacific Asia. This region thus holds the key to either establish procedural democracy as a universal system, or to rolling back the third wave of democratisation.

The paper also includes a chronology and a bibliography of recent literature on democracy in Asia.

## **Three Approaches**

Democracy is coming up again as a hot topic for research on Asia. There should be a chance of avoiding much unnecessary confusion if we agree from the outset to be precise about how we define 'democracy'. This does not mean that we should all use the same definition or approach, but it would be a great advantage if each scholar could be precise about her definition, or, alternatively, about her reason for not wanting to define the term. There is little to gain from discussions where the real reason for disagreement is that the participants define the basic term differently.

Basically I see three possible scholarly approaches to democracy, which in my

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<sup>1</sup> 'Asia' in this article includes all Asian states east of the Middle East, from Iran to Japan. Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea are not considered parts of Asia.

view ought to be clearly distinguished from each other:

The first uses a 'procedural' or 'institutional' definition, focusing on respect for basic freedoms, the freedom and fairness of elections, and the relationship between elected and appointed institutions of government. Within this school of thought some think the main test to be passed for a viable procedural democracy is a peaceful transition of political power from one government to another whereafter the members of the resigning government continue to operate freely on the political arena. This scholarly approach is 'top down' since it focuses on the decision-makers themselves rather than the people at large, who mainly play the role of electorate or public opinion. A researcher using this first approach can choose to focus on formal rules (constitutions) or on actual political practice. Research can be made on the local, regional or national level.

It is essential to understand, and to accept (if a meaningful discussion shall be possible), that the definition used by a researcher taking this approach is *abstract*, and thus globally applicable as a basis for description of actual individual polities. A procedural definition makes it possible to determine whether or not any given polity is procedurally democratic or not. Then afterwards one can discuss how and why. Still it would be wise of a researcher using a procedural definition to demonstrate her awareness of the fact that the approach in itself is not culturally insensitive. It builds on a definition of democracy developed in the Western liberal tradition. A research project using this approach on individual Asian nations might gain from a discussion of the extent to which procedural democracy is compatible with the cultural patterns of that particular country. Such a discussion might for instance lead to the discovery of ways in which procedural democracy has been, can be, or cannot be, modified to become culturally compatible.

Yet again this cultural awareness must not be allowed to relativise the whole approach. From a scholarly point of view, it is fully legitimate to measure the extent to which any state in the world lives up to the basic requirements of procedural democracy. The approach cannot be dismissed from Asian studies simply because it builds on experiences that were first made in Europe. If we should dismiss global comparisons of procedural democracy on such grounds, we would also have to dismiss studies of phenomena such as national elections, national assemblies and nation-states, all of which were first developed in Europe. A consistent cultural relativist might force us to speak of 'Asian values elections', 'Asian values assemblies' and 'Asian values nation-states', and

then in the next instance dissolve Asia into a long range of local sub-values. Such cultural relativism would make global comparisons impossible.

One considerable advantage of approaching the question of democracy from a precise global definition of its basic procedural requirements is that this is scholarly manageable. A procedural definition makes it relatively easy to assess to what extent a given state is democratic or not.<sup>2</sup> The disadvantage of the approach is that it focuses mainly on the concerns of political elite groups.

The second scholarly approach applies a 'substantial' definition, focusing on actual popular participation in political decision-making. This is a 'bottom-up' approach which looks for 'real' popular influence. It looks beyond formal structures and analyses how people actually exert (or do not exert) influence on political decisions. Projects using this approach will need to analyse the way people organise (or do not organise), and to map the kinds of channels that exist (or do not exist) between local communities/grassroot organisations and decision-makers on various political levels.

Like the first approach this also requires an abstract, global definition that can be applied on any part of the world, and it may well be that a researcher using the second approach can find more substantial democracy in a country which does not have a procedurally democratic state than in a country with free elections, a free press, etc. A researcher using the 'substantial democracy' approach would also gain from being sensitive to cultural factors inducing or inhibiting popular participation in decision-making. It is essential that a definition of substantial democracy does not take any particular kind of institutions for granted. It must be open to all kinds of popular influence, across cultural difference.

The student of substantial democracy overcomes the main deficiency of the first approach by focusing on the people at large. Moreover the substantial definition is closer to the ethymological meaning of the word 'democracy' (government by the people). On the other hand it is, at least at the moment, far less scholarly manageable since it is difficult to establish precise research criteria for assessing the degree of popular

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<sup>2</sup> One may for instance turn to the ten point democracy/autocracy score used in the Polity III database, perhaps in combination with the scale used by Freedom House. See Keith Jagers & Ted Robert Gurr, 'Tracking Democracy's Third Wave with the Polity III Data', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 32, no. 4, November 1995, pp. 469-482.

participation in decision-making. It should, however, be possible to develop numerical scales for substantial democracy (voter turnout; trade union membership; number of newspapers per citizen; number of NGOs, etc.), perhaps on the model of the Human Development Index (HDI) of the UNDP. It seems to me that we need more studies taking this second approach, and that much remains to be done in developing good manageable definitions of substantial democracy. The question of how to widen popular participation is likely to soon become far more important in Asia than it is today. When more widespread labour movements emerge (and they surely will), there are going to be stronger demands for the right to participation, and some powerholders will see popular participation as a way of accommodating the population and thus prevent illegal strikes and revolts.

The third scholarly approach is *discourse analysis* and does not require a definition of democracy at all. Indeed it is mandatory for a scholar using this approach to avoid having a definition of her own, even at the back of her mind. The approach consists in analysing Asian concepts of democracy, leadership and authority, how various Asian movements, governments, leaders and thinkers have defined and conceived of these terms and concepts, and on how they use democracy as a catchword. When using this approach, it is essential to linguistically assess the connotations of the various translations of the term. An open-minded scholar using this approach will probably find that 'democracy' has been a convenient catchword for many groups opposing the existing government, but with little genuine intention of creating either procedural or substantial democracy. She will also be able to analyse how it has been used by governments to legitimise their holding on to power. The most interesting, perhaps, will be to see how the concept has been inserted in various already existing political and religious discourses. One advantage of this third approach is that, at least in principle, it brings the scholar into Asian political cultures without a pre-established universalist (or 'Western') scale of judgment.

I do not want to say that any of these three approaches is of greater scholarly value than the others. What I want to suggest is that we could avoid much confusion if all scholars wanting to undertake studies of democracy in Asia would make it clear to themselves and to others which one of the three approaches they apply, or when they move from one to another. This, in my view, applies to all social science disciplines.

In the following I shall speak about *procedural democracy*: an institutional system of decision-making at the national level, based on free and secret elections, established

mechanisms for non-violent replacement of executive leadership, and full respect for the basic liberties (of assembly, press, etc.).

### **The Future of Democracy**

The closer we get to the year 2000, the more we shall indulge in predicting the world's political future. Such predictions are almost always wrong; and if true, at least their premises are false. The overwhelming probability of failure, however, makes no good reason to abstain. No one can avoid guessing about the future, and some guesses are better than others, even if they all are wrong. The most successful predictions are either self-defeating or self-fulfilling. They point out dangers or opportunities, and the best that can be hoped for is that they spur action either to prevent or to make sure they come true. Most people expect the risks and opportunities of the future to look almost like those of the present, only perhaps in a magnified form. Thus, if we do not imaginatively discuss future possibilities, the dullness of our implicit expectations is likely to restrain creativity. Warnings against big likely dangers and prospects for reasonable progress are often both politically useful and fruitful in generating good research questions.

My purpose with the present paper is to investigate the possibility that, within the next few decades, political democracy can become a universal norm, accepted by all significant territorial states. I also see, however, a danger of a worldwide anti-democratic backlash. Such a backlash may be stimulated by the emergence of authoritarian models of the kind that fascist Italy and communist Russia represented in the 1920s. In this paper, I shall argue that the most likely authoritarian model of the early 21st century will be the Confucian development state in Pacific Asia.

If we look at global political developments over the last twenty years, there is no doubt that the number of procedural democracies has increased tremendously, but it is far more difficult to determine if the world populace has gained more influence over political affairs than before. The fact that more people live in open political systems does not necessarily mean they have more political influence. This depends on the situation of each state, and on its general leverage. When borders are opened up to flows of investment and trade, multinational corporations increase their leverage, and they are not under democratic control. At the same time requirements of the market (as interpreted by the IMF, the World Bank or other creditors) restrict the options available to individual

sovereign states. As we have seen in certain debtor nations of Africa and Latin America, the democratisation of a state can go hand in hand with a structural adjustment process that reduces politics to a mere question of selecting the persons to adopt and take public responsibility for externally prescribed measures. On the other hand, some successful states in the global marketplace (i.e., Japan, Singapore, Switzerland or Norway) have got rich enough to exert a much higher degree of influence both on their own matters and in the world at large than they could have done if they had been less integrated in the global economy.

A world system of democratically elected governments is thus no guarantee for either a high degree of popular influence within each state, or for allowing democratic states to fill their procedural forms with genuine choice and power. Still, for three reasons, the question of whether or not a state has procedural democracy can in no way be dismissed as unimportant. Apart from establishing some of the institutions where more substantial democracy *may* exert itself, procedural democracy offers three major advantages: First, from a global point of view, only a system of democratically elected governments is likely to constitute a basis for establishing legitimate and binding procedures for decision-making on matters of global concern.<sup>3</sup> More and more matters are of global concern, and it is difficult to imagine that authoritarian governments will be able to found a responsible international regime with a capacity to impose macro-economical, environmental or human rights measures on transnational corporations and individual states. Second, in a system of procedural democracy governments are *accountable*; i.e., they have to abstain from actions that can be assumed to bring electoral defeat. This may sometimes inhibit even sensible and much required actions, and it often induces governments to promise more than they can deliver, but the main function of free and secret elections is to deter political leaders from furthering their own interests to the extent of ignoring the needs and attitudes of the people at large. Third, procedural democracy is most probably conducive to both internal and external peace. In the long run, democratic

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<sup>3</sup> 'Europeans practiced democracy within the boundaries of their nation-states but not outside. (...) Today, we must start with a rebirth of democracy that promotes freedom, prosperity, and justice both within each country and among nations, including the less-developed countries: a global democracy.' Kim Dae Jung, 'A Response to Lee Kuan Yew. Is Culture Destiny? The Myth of Asia's Anti-Democratic Values', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 6, November/December 1994, p. 193.

mechanisms of leadership succession provides the safest way to obtain political stability. Without such mechanisms, an opposition movement has no hope of achieving power peacefully and will therefore be tempted to use violence. This will also be assumed by the authoritarian regime, who will therefore apply more repression than it would need to if it had been democratic. Non-democratic systems tend sooner or later to end up in violent succession struggles. Peace researchers have moreover found that democratic states never, or extremely rarely, go to war against each other. (Democratic states have often waged war against non-democratic states, but not against each other.) It has not been *proven* that this is due to their being democratic, but the very strong historical correlation between democracy and absence of war gives reason to assume that there is causation involved, either between them or between each of them and some other factors which contribute both to democracy and international peace.

Is there a real chance that, in the foreseeable future, we may have a world system of (almost) only democratically elected governments? I think yes. The disappearance of fascist, militaristic and communist one-party regimes from the political map of Europe and America and the transition in several African countries has left democracy - at least for the time being - as the only legitimate form of government within the Christian world. The many transitions in Asia, and democracy's strong standing in South Asia, has made it a forceful alternative there as well. This general appeal is contradicted by a tendency within some parts of Asia and Africa to reject 'the West' and seek for alternatives to the 'Western form of democracy'. But such rejection of 'the West' has not prevented Asian and African states from adopting other of the basic institutions coming from Europe, such as the doctrine of popular sovereignty, the principle of the nation-state as such (with flag, anthem, membership in the U.N.), the principle of the 'rule of law', not even the use of elections. Virtually every state in the world today has some form of elections, and many regimes are trying to obtain legitimacy and a certain degree of accountability through elections while at the same time seeking guarantees against losing them. This is of course impossible. Regimes cannot have true elections and be sure of winning them too. Whenever this dilemma comes to the forefront of a country's political agenda, the regime is tempted to either cancel elections altogether or allow them to be a little freer and less predictable than in the past. In 1990, the Burmese junta went too far in the second direction, and had to disregard the result afterwards in order to survive. The Burmese

tragedy did much to heighten the democratic awareness in Asia, with Aung San Suu Kyi as a focus point.

To me it seems quite possible that more and more Asians and Africans will realise the universal advantages of procedural democracy, and seek to establish their own *versions* of democracy rather than an alternative authoritarian system. Procedural democracy exists in many forms already, both in Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia: direct/indirect representation; parliamentary/presidential system, one chamber/two chambers, majoritarian/proportional elections, unitary/federal states. One might also invent new forms, such as elections based on household suffrage instead of individual suffrage. This would satisfy the critics of 'Western individualism', but would be unpopular among women and single men.<sup>4</sup> My point is not to advocate 'household democracy', but to demonstrate how, within the confines set by a system of procedural democracy, there is room for considerable variation. The possibility of establishing procedural democracy as a universal norm is clearly at hand.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Danger of a Backlash**

Why, then, is it yet quite probable that we shall have a backlash and that Felipe Fernández-Armesto will ~~be~~ on false premises of course ~~be~~ proven correct in his recent prediction that 'rival totalitarianisms will return' and that 'Western liberalism, enfeebled

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<sup>4</sup> Lee Kuan Yew has not gone this far, but has suggested to give a double vote to males between 40 and 60 years old who have children: Fareed Zakaria, 'Culture is Destiny. A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 2, March-April 1994, p. 119. Regardless how much one dislikes this proposal, it must be admitted that it would not destroy the mechanisms of procedural democracy. Such a reform, were it to be instituted, would no doubt become the target of opposition groups mobilising to get rid of it again, and this would make it more difficult than in the past to suppress opposition in Singapore. For this reason, the Singaporean government is unlikely to try to implement Lee's Confucian reform.

<sup>5</sup> This is also the view of Francis Fukuyama who recently tried to show that 'there is no fundamental cultural obstacle to the democratization of contemporary Confucian societies, and [that] there is some reason to believe that these societies will move in the direction of greater political liberalization as they grow wealthier.' Francis Fukuyama, 'Confucianism and Democracy', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6, no. 2, April 1995, p. 32.



by its inconsistencies, seems bound to be wishy-washed away by a new wave of fascism'<sup>6</sup>

This has a number of reasons:

The first has to do with the general limitations of procedural democracy. It contains the advantages just mentioned, but democratic constitutions are sometimes also expected to create a just society. When the introduction of a democratic constitution is accompanied by such expectations, people will be thoroughly disappointed. Procedural democracy does not in itself solve economic or social problems. It does not provide justice, only the right to advocate it and some limits to what you are allowed to do in order to realise it. Procedural democracy provides good ways of getting a less violent, less evil state, but makes it cumbersome to carry through rapid social change. Perhaps the main weakness of procedural democracy is exactly that it tends to inhibit obviously necessary reforms and measures (such as a sharp increase in the taxation of rich Americans and the payment of the US debt to the United Nations). Democratic systems contain many checks and balances, and instills in politicians a paralysing fear of unfavourable polls. This is irritating to such leaders who have more than just personal ambitions, and also to poor people who want to improve their lot. Another major weakness of procedural democracy is that it is built on a presumed absence of sharp ethno-religious divisions. A smoothly functioning democracy presupposes a national civil society. People may have many faiths and belong to many different ethnic groups, but their political rights and engagement in national politics must be based on their citizenship, not on their belonging to this or that group. When ethnicity and religion become more politically relevant to people than their citizenship, the state is forced to either dissolve and become a federation, or institute a hybrid regime with open or secret negotiations between community leaders. Malaysia's political system is good proof that it is possible to make a hybrid system work as long as one dominant party discretely manages the ethnic compromises. But this system could hardly survive if the country's religious and ethnic leaders were to mobilise against each other during election campaigns. Then also the

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<sup>6</sup> Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Millenium. A History of Our Last Thousand Years*, London: Bantam Press, 1995, pp. 699-700. As for the false premise, it seems highly unlikely that the particular 'inconsistency' Fernández-Armesto is thinking of, namely that democracies kill innocent unborn babies while keeping criminals alive, will be a main reason for the anti-democratic backlash.

freedoms in Mahathir's Malaysia have been and remain curtailed. Moreover, the government in Kuala Lumpur is struggling hard to strengthen the people's sentiments toward their national citizenship in order to overcome the present state of affairs. This is done through massive propaganda for a shared future-oriented endeavour ('Vision 2020'). Mahathir's emphasis on nation-building points to yet another weakness of procedural democracy, namely that it requires a national, democratic culture. A democratic system is based on a number of gradually developed and continuously changing norms for how to represent constituencies, how to resolve or manage disputes, and how to compete for support. Elections and votes are just two of the many ways whereby political decisions are framed. The political process is highly complex. A procedural democracy can therefore develop only gradually, and always achieves a distinctly different form within each and every country. If a democratic constitution is adopted suddenly, and is written by foreign experts, it will have less chance of becoming embedded in a democratic culture than if it is elaborated through a self-sustained political process in the country itself.

My second reason for believing that a backlash is likely to occur is precisely that many of the states which were democratised in the 1980s and 1990s did adopt democratic constitutions quite abruptly, in a crisis situation or as a way of achieving badly needed international support. These countries lack a political culture (civil society) that can fill the new procedures with democratic life, and may easily succumb to temptations to substitute democratic chaos with clear, enlightened leadership.

A third reason is that many of these same states, particularly in Africa and Eastern Europe, are bound to experience serious economic and social problems for many years ahead. Such problems tend to undermine any kind of regime and can easily be blamed on democracy. This has happened before. It is quite comforting, however, that in several East European countries, the initial disappointment with market liberalism has led to a legal resurgence of post-communist, socialist parties with a clear commitment to respect democratic procedures, rather than a call for authoritarian rule.

A fourth reason for expecting a backlash is the strain that current trends of globalisation have put on the cohesion of established nation-states. A democratic system can work optimally only in a state where the population at large, and particularly the intellectual and organisational elite, identify with *their* nation and *their* state. At present two worldwide processes tend to widen the gap between the working class population and

the educated middle classes, and to alienate both from the state. The first is the growing and persistent unemployment in many parts of the globe which tends to disempower and humiliate people, create resentment against foreigners, against politicians, against the elite. The second is the internationalisation of the middle classes who shuttle between airports or surf on the internet, and get less and less involved in local and national politics. To many of them, the nation is no longer on the horizon. They operate instead within a segment of the global market: technology, R&D, finance, arts, sports, or academe such as 'comparative politics'. To these people, politics is not closely related to a place where they live or work. Politics no longer happens above or around themselves, but somewhere 'out there'. If increasing numbers of educated people stay outside, or move in and out of national politics, the political arena may develop into a kind of intellectual backwater.

The fifth and last reason why I fear a backlash, is that so far procedural democracy has been firmly entrenched only in the Christian, Hindu and Japanese civilisations. In Islamic, Buddhist and Confucian states it remains weak or contested. Still it is interesting that all but two of the world's Buddhist nations have gone through a recent transition to democracy: Sri Lanka, Mongolia, Thailand, Cambodia, but not yet Laos or Burma. These transitions, as well as the suppressed democracy movement in Burma, belong to what Samuel Huntington has called *The Third Wave*; he describes the democratisation of states as having happened through three 'waves', the two first followed by 'reverse waves'.<sup>7</sup> If one looks more closely into Huntington's 'first wave', one will find that it was not a wave at all, but a process going on in Christian Europe and America between 1828 and 1926 (he calls it a 'long wave'). In my view, the term 'wave' should be reserved for regime transformations that follow each other at fairly short intervals, and with some causal relationship either between them (what Huntington calls 'snow-balling') or between each of them and a shared cause (a 'single cause wave'). Huntington's first reverse wave (1922–42) was of the snowballing sort, his second wave (1943–62) consisted, in my view, of two waves, one caused by the Allied victory in the Second World War, and one by decolonisation. Most liberated colonial territories adopted democratic constitutions at first, but embraced authoritarian rule during the second reverse wave (1958–75). It is highly

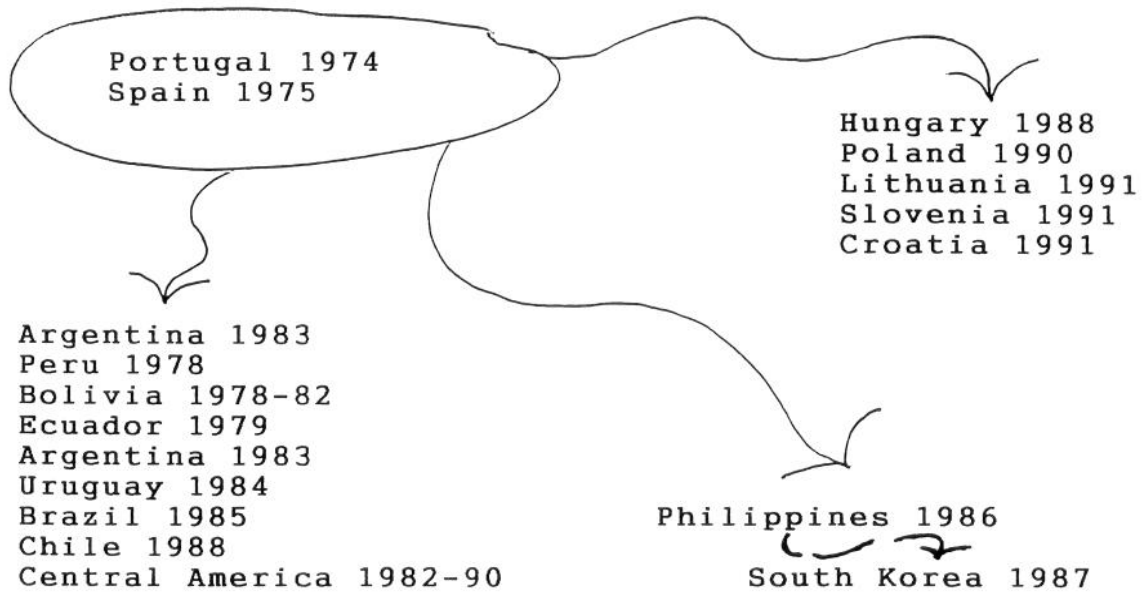
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<sup>7</sup> Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave. Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

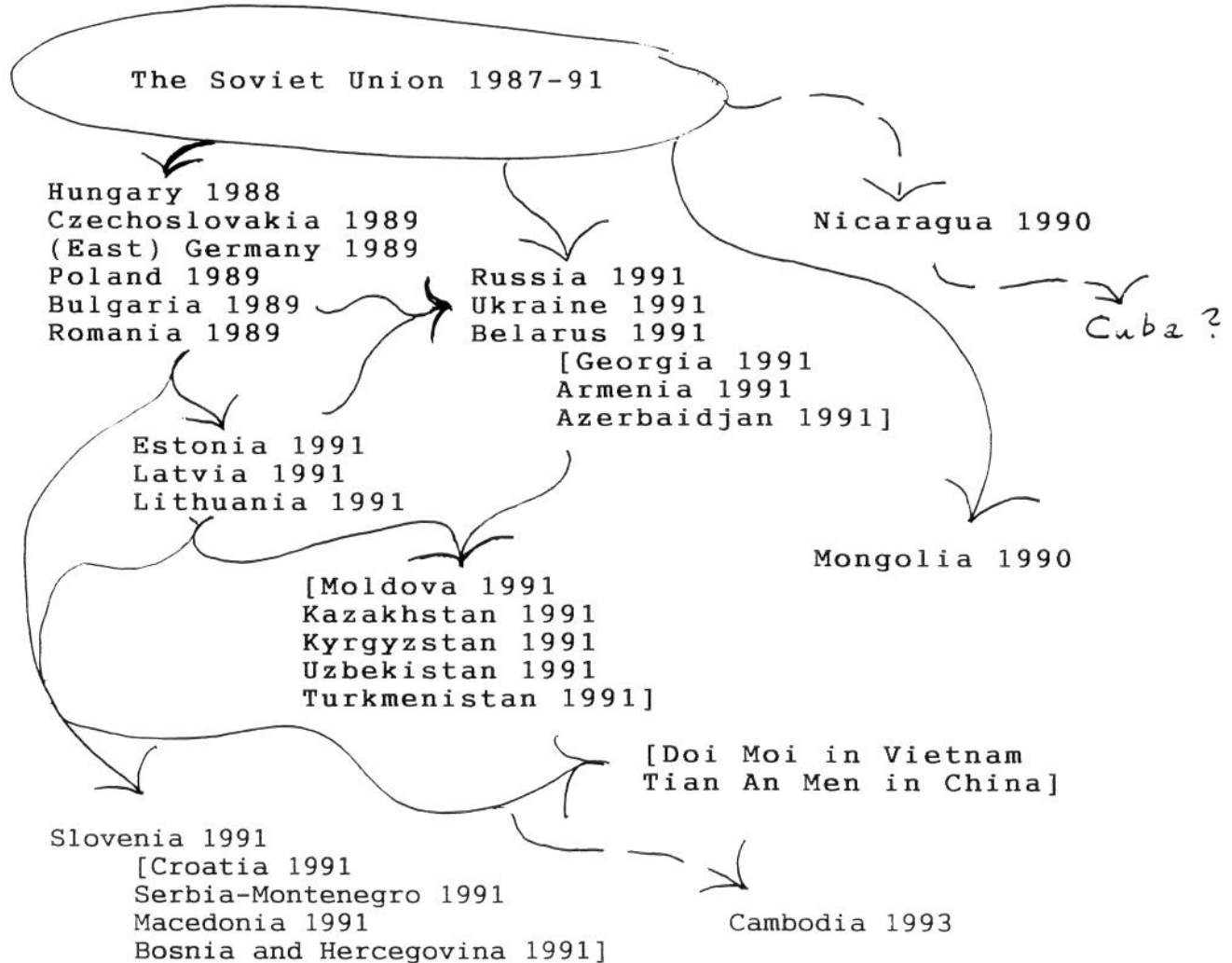
significant that most African and Asian nations had their first experience with procedural democracy during and immediately after the colonial period. Colonialism and democracy were - unfortunately - to a great extent associated with each other (cf. Hong Kong today). The transition to one-party or military rule during the second reverse wave was often seen as a continuation of the anti-colonial struggle.

Huntington's third wave (1974-?) may also be divided into two, perhaps three, waves: one *Catholic* which was caused by economic and other failures of the dictatorships in Southern Europe and Latin America; and one *Post-Communist*, caused by the similar failures of the centralised planning economies in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. One might also speak of an independent *African* wave culminating in the South African elections of 1994, although the democratic transitions in Africa were at least in part unleashed by the post-communist wave which removed the final attractions of the socialist development model (see figures).

## The Catholic Wave



## The Post-Communist Wave



+ African Wave

As shown on the figures, the democratic heartland used to be Protestant, but has, during the Third Wave, been extended to Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. It has also been established or reinstated in all the states of South Asia, with the exception of the benevolent kingdom Bhutan. The continent where the third wave(s) has met strongest resistance, is Pacific Asia, notably because the Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese Communist Party leaderships have refused to be washed away, the resilience of Suharto's political militarism in Indonesia, and the new 'Asian values discourse' of two semi-democratic post-colonial regimes in the former British Malaya: Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore and Mahathir's Malaysia. The Philippines were democratised under the Catholic wave, in a process resembling the Latin American transitions, and the Catholic community also played a role in the democratisation of South Korea. The Philippines and South Korea were among the many Asian states to be democratised during the third wave. The others were Pakistan, Taiwan (the first Chinese democracy), and the two Buddhist nations Cambodia and Thailand. The democratisation of Cambodia in 1993 came as an internationally mediated compromise to a military stalemate. Thailand was already democratic before the third wave started, but its commitment to democracy was significantly strengthened when students in Bangkok mobilised to end military rule in 1992. One might add Hong Kong to the list of newly democratised Asian states, but the British crown colony's transition to democracy has been only partial and will not be completed before it becomes a part of China in 1997.

Now, why is Asia so important for the future of world democracy? This is not only because so much of Asia remains un-democratic, but because the growth region in Pacific Asia has the greatest potential for taking over the former European role in constituting political models for others. There is little doubt that political movements will resurge in Europe, America and Africa advocating the abandonment of democracy and the imposition of stronger leadership. They will need alternative models, and will look for them among states enjoying economic success. Therefore, their gaze will focus Pacific Asia. If the successful states of East and Southeast Asia are becoming or staying democratic, there may not be alternative models at hand since the authoritarian states of the Middle East are unlikely to achieve enough success to inspire movements outside the Islamic world. But if the states of Pacific Asia continue to cultivate their 'Asian values' in a way that legitimates repression of human rights and leadership by 'strong men', this can

be used not only in Asia, but in Africa, Europe and the Americas as well, in rhetorics such as the following: 'Look to Asia. The Asians don't waste their time on party politics. They don't allow the normative foundations of society to break up. They make a joint national effort in the pursuit of the common good. This is what we used to do ourselves in the past. Let us not forget our history. Let us learn from Asians and arrest the degeneration of the Christian (or Western, or Slavic, or African) world.'

### **Likely Model States**

Which of the states in Pacific Asia are most likely to serve as models for others? Will they be democratic or not? These are key questions that demonstrate how important it is to study current political developments in East and Southeast Asia. To answer the first question, we need an idea of what it is that constitutes 'model states'. I've already mentioned that they need to be successful economically. Military strength and achievements can also generate the awe that underlies inspiration, but population size is probably not in itself significant. It is more important for political model states to have impressive leadership, influential zeal and what we may call a blueprint system. The latter is essential. The political system must have certain features that lend themselves to imitation. And these features must be at the core of a kind of ideology that the political leaders believe in and advocate on the world scene.

Now, which are the likely model states in Asia, and will they be democratic or not? As of today, the results of the third wave in Asia can be summed up by dividing Asian states in four categories, three of which did not experience a transition to democracy during the third wave:

(1) Pre-Third Wave democracies in India (887 million inhabitants) and Japan (125 million): two states with 1 billion people (population figures are from 1993).

(2) Stable, controlled 'semi-democracies' maintained in Malaysia (19 million) and Singapore (3 million): 2 states with 22 million people.

(3) Democracy introduced or reintroduced during the third wave in Pakistan (123 million), Bangladesh (113 million), the Philippines (65 million), Thailand (59 million), South Korea (44 million), Taiwan (22 million), Uzbekistan (21 million), Sri Lanka (18 million), Kazakhstan (17 million), Nepal (20 million), Cambodia (9 million), Hong Kong (6 million), Tajikistan (5 million), Kyrgyzstan (4 million), Turkmenistan (4 million), and

Mongolia (2 million): sixteen states with more than half a billion people.

In the case of Sri Lanka it is perhaps difficult to speak of a 'transition' to democracy since electoral politics have continued all the time, amidst a state of virtual civil war. But the end of the emergency and election of the opposition candidate as president in 1994 have at least provided hopes of a return to the kind of democratic politics that Ceylon was famous for before ethnic conflicts took off in the 1970s, although the political effects of the large scale military campaign against the Tamil Tigers in 1995 remain to be seen. Cambodia and Tajikistan also combine procedural democracy with armed internal conflicts. In fact the civil war in Tajikistan has contributed to an anti-democratic backlash in its neighbouring states: By 1994, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan had all returned to clearly authoritarian rule. This was rendered more acceptable for the population of these countries by the spectre of the worse developments in Tajikistan.

(4) Third wave blocked in China (1,176 million), Indonesia (189 million), Vietnam (71 million), Iran (59 million), Burma (43 million), North Korea (23 million), Afghanistan (17 million), Laos (5 million), Bhutan (0,6) and Brunei (0.3 million): ten persistently authoritarian states with 1,6 billion people. (The case of Afghanistan is special since it has been through a transition from one kind of regime - and one kind of civil war - to another kind of regime - and another kind of civil war.)

What, then, are the 'modular capacities' of the democratic versus the authoritarian states? The 'stable democratic' category includes only two states, India and Japan, but in return the former has the world's second largest population and the latter the world's second largest economy. So far, however, it is far from apparent that either India or Japan has played a role as democratic models for others. Although India once had a strong influence in Southeast and East Asia, its Hinduism now makes it a world apart. Furthermore, it is not a unitary state but a federation, and is strongly marked by its British heritage. During the Cold War, India did little to advocate procedural democracy abroad. Instead it focused non-alignment and saw itself as representing 'The Third World'. Third World ideology has survived longer in India than elsewhere, and Indian economic growth has lagged behind that of China and the East Asian tigers. Since the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 there has been a lack of impressive leadership, and the federal government repeatedly has to confront violent conflicts with separatist



movements and between religious groups, particularly in Kashmir, Punjab and Assam. Furthermore the effectiveness of the federal state was lost because of the populist policies of Indira Gandhi.<sup>8</sup> India's political system is highly complex, with a mixture of all-Indian and regional parties. It is indeed impressive that its secular, progressive democracy has survived for almost fifty years (with a brief interlude 1975-77), but it is not very likely that it will become a blueprint system to be copied elsewhere. But perhaps, if US and European influence in Asia are further reduced, India and Japan may feel compelled to find each other in a shared commitment to democracy.

As a democratic model, Japan is severely hampered by the legacy of its imperialist policies during the five decades 1895–1945. This prevents Tokyo from translating its enormous financial power into political and cultural influence in Korea, the Chinese states, and also in the Philippines, but not so much in Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia or Malaysia, nor probably in Vietnam. The post-war generation of Japanese leaders have preferred to operate under the US umbrella and to exert only discrete influence abroad. Mahathir has tried to induce Japan to a higher profile as an Asian state that can 'say no' to the United States, but the 'Asianisation of Japan' is still just a recent tendency which will not necessarily go much further. Then also (like India), Japan does not have a 'blueprint political system' ready to be copied by others. Its constitution is often seen as a US dictate. From 1955 to 1993 Japanese politics were dominated by one political party, the LDP, and the Japanese regime is better known abroad for its powerful bureaucracy than for a vibrant democracy. At the moment much of the Japanese electorate seem tired with politicians altogether. Still we must not forget that the generations who have grown up since 1945 are accustomed to the basic freedoms and to electing their leaders. They are unlikely to give this up easily, and will most probably back up democratic movements elsewhere, such as in Burma. One should not exclude the possibility, however, of an anti-democratic backlash both in Japan and India, in particular if their economies get into more severe problems while the rest of Pacific Asia continues to grow. From an Asian democratic viewpoint it may be seen as a weakness that Japan and India have so little to do with each other. The Japanese flows of investment to other Asian countries go

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<sup>8</sup> Atul Kohli, *Democracy and Discontent: India's Growing Crisis of Governability*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

primarily to Pacific Asia, where Indonesia for a long time was the major benefactor. In India, however, Japan figured only as the sixth largest foreign investor in 1994, and US investments were more than eight times higher.<sup>9</sup> It would no doubt worry Beijing should India and Japan move closer together, i.e., in a joint effort to achieve membership in the UN Security Council. Perhaps it is a sign that Japan in 1995 applied for membership in the Non-Aligned Movement, which has 113 members and thus commands a majority in the UN General Assembly. Today India and Japan are seen by the military leaders in Beijing as China's most likely enemies in a future war. If an authoritarian, unitary China continues to expand its military power, it may contribute to bringing India and Japan together in a 'naval-democratic cordon sanitaire'.

Malaysia and Singapore form the small, but extremely important second category. From a democratic perspective this is where we find perhaps the most disheartening developments. The strong elected leaders of these two highly successful states, who used to be loyal partners of Britain and the USA during the Cold War, have engaged themselves in a belated anti-colonial revolt in the rhetorical and ideological sphere, with the aim of proving the compatibility of capitalism and authoritarian rule. The strong criticism that Mahathir and Lee Kuan Yew have directed against the 'decay of the West', and their attempt to define 'Asian values' linked to family, discipline and the common good are reminiscent of the high-spirited social darwinism which characterised Europe a century ago.<sup>10</sup> Their rhetoric may be motivated by the need to forge a strong national consciousness in a multi-cultural society, but also has the effect of legitimating authoritarian measures not only within their own states but, more importantly, in Indonesia, Myanmar, Vietnam and China. Through anti-Western rhetoric the two British-educated leaders are trying to endear themselves to the major authoritarian states of Asia.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 12.10.95.

<sup>10</sup> In September 1995, the Vice-Chancellor of the Uppsala University opened a conference on political culture in Southeast Asia with a reception in an impressive century-old building. It was felt as quite fitting that, while mounting the huge staircase, the participants could read engraved in big letters on the wall above: 'Att tänka fritt är stort. Att tänka rätt är större' ['To think freely is great. To think correctly is greater'].

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the most thoughtful presentation of the 'Asian values' school can be found in Noordin Soopie (ed.), *Towards a New Asia*, A Report of the Commission for A New Asia, 1994. A devastating critique of political repression in Singapore can be found in Ian

In 1994, Singapore was the largest foreign investor in Vietnam, the second largest in Burma, and the sixth largest in China and Indonesia. Malaysia was the sixth largest in Burma, the ninth largest in Vietnam and the tenth largest in Indonesia.<sup>12</sup> Now, both Singapore and Malaysia satisfy many of the criteria for becoming model states: strong leadership, a zeal to advocate the right solutions for Asia, a defined ideological enemy ('the West'), a democratic facade, an efficient state bureaucracy (at least in Singapore), subtle and efficient ways of repressing opposition movements, a long record of having avoided ethnic strife, and, above all, rapid economic growth. The two states also have well established universities and publication programmes to solidify their national ideologies. This, however, may be a double-edged sword. In both countries there is a looming desire for more freedom among the middle class. Social scientists, journalists and writers are continuously testing the limits of what the government can tolerate.<sup>13</sup> Malaysia and Singapore may also be hampered in their drive to establish 'Asian values' by the fact that they are leaning towards different great powers. Malaysia looks to Japan for leadership whereas Singapore sees China as Asia's natural leader. This also has to do, of course, with the presence of a huge Chinese minority with a crucial economic role in Malaysia. The Malaysian-Singapore relationship is a kind of miniature mirror-image of that between China and Japan. If the latter cooperate, there is likely to be stability on the Malay peninsula. Serious friction between China and Japan, however, will endanger the cohesion of Mahathir's state and frustrate his 'Vision 2020'. Thus it is hardly surprising that Mahathir wishes China and Japan to 'maintain a peaceful equilibrium, and [that] they will be the twin engines driving Asian development'.<sup>14</sup>

What then about the third category, the more newly democratised states? It is quite significant that in fact all independent states in South Asia have adopted procedural

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Buruma's review of two books by Francis T. Seow and Dr. Chee Soon Juan: 'The Singapore Way', *The New York Review of Books*, October 19, 1995, pp. 66-71.

<sup>12</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 12, 1995.

<sup>13</sup> Derek da Cunha, *Debating Singapore. Reflective Essays*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1994.

<sup>14</sup> Mahathir Mohamad and Shintaro Ishihara, *The Voice of Asia. Two Leaders Discuss the Coming Century*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1995, pp. 125-126. When published in Japanese in 1994, this book was called "*No*" to *ieru Ajia* [The Asia that can Say 'No'].

democracy, with the exception of the soft monarchy Bhutan. Despite religious and other tensions, democracy seems to have become a norm of good governance on the South Asian peninsula. The questions then are if their democracy will be durable, and if it can inspire others. Pakistan may have a moderating influence within the Islamic world, although so far it is rather the islamist forces that are pressuring the government of Benazir Bhutto. At present the leaders of Pakistan and Bangla Desh are not sufficiently secure in their positions to exert much influence abroad. Their two populous states have not so far enjoyed impressive economic success, and the small political elites are hampered by endemic factional struggles.

If we move to the more recent democracies in East and Southeast Asia, we shall find the most vibrant dedication to democratic values in Asia today. It was in South Korea and the Philippines that the suppression of the Burmese democracy movement led to the strongest expressions of solidarity. At present, the two leading advocates of democracy in Pacific Asia are Aung San Suu Kyi and the South Korean former opposition leader Kim Dae Jung. They have both openly rejected the claim that pluralistic democracy is a 'Western' phenomenon which is incompatible with Asian cultural values.<sup>15</sup> In a global historical context, the democratisation of Taiwan and South Korea may prove essential since they represent the first Confucian transitions to democracy (if we place Japan outside the Confucian world and see democratic reforms in Singapore and Hong Kong as results of British policy). The lack of an internationally recognised status makes it impossible for Taiwan to serve as any kind of model state on the world scene, but if China should go through a transition to democracy, the Taiwanese experience is likely to play a significant role in that process. In this context, it is important to analyse the powerful role of business interests in South Korean, Taiwanese and Thai politics. In South Korea and Taiwan the state has actively managed the economy, and democratisation has in all three countries resulted not only from popular movements or middle class demands, but also from a need for mechanisms to resolve conflicts within the state itself. Politics are used by corporate

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<sup>15</sup> Kim Dae Jung, *op.cit.* 'It is a strong argument for democracy that governments regulated by principles of accountability, respect for public opinion and the supremacy of just laws are more likely than an all-powerful ruler or ruling class, uninhibited by the need to honour the will of the people, to observe the traditional duties of Buddhist kingship.' Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom from Fear and Other Writings*, London: Penguin, 1991, p. 173.

interest groups and business companies to advance their interests within the state bureaucracy, and many politicians openly represent particular companies.<sup>16</sup> The question is how the electorate will relate to such commercialised politics. Perhaps a reputation of 'honesty' will become a must for politicians wanting to be popular. In Thailand it seems that popular animosity towards corrupt politicians is greater than the general commitment to democratic rule. When Chatichai's democratic government was overthrown by the military and substituted with an 'honest' government in 1990, there were few protests, but when a less 'honest' military government was established in 1992, the students and the 'honest' mayor of Bangkok mobilised and brought about a return to democracy. Another question is how the growing labour movements will relate to the commercialisation of politics. Will they play business themselves, like in the United States? Or will they develop a fundamental critique of the role big business plays in politics? How will the governments react to such critique? Maybe the communist states Vietnam and China are better prepared to accommodate and integrate modern labour movements than the business-democracies of South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand?

The more fragile regimes in the second category are unlikely to come out as model states. They may rather be among the first to look for external models, if they manage to overcome their internal conflicts. Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Tajikistan are ravaged by serious internal strife or civil war. Both Tajikistan and the only state in Central Asia which has kept at least a democratic facade (Kyrgyzstan) may soon follow the examples of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and organise a referendum to 'legalise' authoritarian rule.

The fourth category is the one that resisted the 'third wave'. The Iranian revolution of 1979 made it the pioneering country within the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. Its fundamentalist regime has survived a drawn-out war with Iraq and will soon have been in place for two decades. The regime has been able to combine the most violent repression of its internal enemies with a surprisingly democratic political process within its representative institutions. In elections the voters have had a certain degree of real choice within the limits set by the regime. It is now slightly more moderate than before, and is

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<sup>16</sup> Kanishka Jayasuriya, 'Political Economy of Democratisation in East Asia', *Asian Perspective*, vol. 18, no. 2, Fall-Winter 1994, pp. 141-180.

trying to strengthen its ties with other Asian states, notably China. As a model for others, however, Iran is hampered by belonging to the shiite version of Islam. Other islamic states are mostly sunni. Outside the islamic world the Iranian regime has no appeal whatsoever.

The two Confucian communist states Vietnam and North Korea are both one-party states with a history of bloody military struggles during the Cold War period. North Korea has tried to become a nuclear power, but is now squeezed between neighbours who steadily increase their cooperation with each other. North Korea has become completely eclipsed economically by the phenomenal growth in South Korea, and the *Juche Thought* has lost what attraction it may have had outside Kim Il Sung's state. His son and appointed successor has not yet been able to take up the Presidency, and there are rumours of looming internal conflict in Pyongyang. Indeed it is quite unlikely that the present regime in North Korea can survive for long. Vietnam, of course, is in a far more favourable position, but its security is weak. The recent ASEAN membership will no doubt increase the Vietnamese role in Southeast Asian affairs, but will not help Vietnam to liberate itself from the necessity to maintain - at almost any cost except the loss of territory - its present peaceful relations with the northern neighbour. Vietnam has no longer any major allies. Over the last nine years Vietnam has carried through promising reforms in the economic field, and has also gone a long way to institute the 'rule of law', but it lacks visionary leadership. Vietnamese politics are characterised by compromises and division of labour between economic reformers, prudent military leaders and party orthodoxy. The latter have been able, since 1990, to prevent further expansion of the basic freedoms. A more daring leadership might be in a unique position to use its recent economic success, and the most generally respected aspects of Ho Chi Minh's heritage, to carry out a national reconciliation with the refugee communities abroad, and gradually develop a democratic state which could serve, together with South Korea and Taiwan, as a model of Confucian democratisation.<sup>17</sup> So far, however, there are no signs indicating that Hanoi should be thinking of seizing this opportunity. Most likely Vietnam is going to continue its present policy of trying to catch up with the tigers economically while treading the water diplomatically and maintaining enough political repression to avoid democratisation. It is quite possible that the army will further increase its political

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<sup>17</sup> Stein Tønnesson, *Democracy in Vietnam?* NIAS Reports, no. 16, 1993.

influence.

Indonesia must be considered the world's most successful military dictatorship in the post-war period, and as such has already served as a model for others, primarily the Burmese junta. While most other military dictatorships have justified military rule as a temporary expediency, the Indonesian army has seen itself as the institutional core of the nation with a fully legitimate political function in addition to its purely military duties (*dwifungsi*). An elaborate system of organisations with the state-party Golkar at the centre has been built up, and the regime has developed a comprehensive state ideology (*pancasila*) based on principles formulated by Sukarno, but transformed to embrace a constant vigilance against two major evils: communism and religious fundamentalism. Under Suharto, Indonesia has enjoyed considerable economic growth. As of today it constitutes perhaps the main potential model state in the world for politicised military rule, and this is a form of government which may soon reassert itself elsewhere. However, there are also some inherent weaknesses in the Indonesian political system. The first is the country's multi-insular geography which opens the prospects of local separatist movements whenever the central state should enter a period of crisis. The continuing struggles in East Timor and West Irian do not, perhaps, entail great dangers of spilling over to other areas, but if the separatist islamic movement in Aceh should be able to resume its struggle against the central government, it might well lead to the resurgence of similar movements elsewhere. Other main weaknesses are the widespread corruption at the top political echelon, a latent animosity among the city populations towards the Chinese minority, and the fact that Suharto's succession remains unresolved. The latter problem touches directly at a main weakness of non-democratic regimes in general: their lack of a recognised mechanism for leadership succession.

Paradoxically, communist China resembles anti-communist Indonesia in many ways. Both of these populous nations are ripe with speculations about successor struggles, and there are also doubts about the future cohesion of the unitary state as such. Both regimes have to cope with the aspirations of a new class of technocrats, and with growing demands for freedom from the new middle classes. In both countries the army and navy have a central role in the policy-making process. Only in Indonesia the role of the military seems at the moment to be declining from its past complete predominance, whereas in China the army and navy are on the ascendancy although still formally under the complete

control of the Communist Party (CCP). Both countries continue to need foreign investments as well as access to foreign markets, and must therefore try to reconcile a repressive policy in the political and cultural fields with liberal economic policies and pragmatic foreign relations. They are both under US pressure for democratisation, but have so far fought off the threat of sanctions. After the failed coup in Moscow in August 1991, the CCP drew five main lessons including the rejection of multiparty democracy, the rejection of bourgeois liberalism, the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat, a reaffirmation of the central position of state-owned enterprises, and party supremacy over the military.<sup>18</sup> Much of what was said earlier about Vietnam is relevant for China too. In fact, Vietnamese policies have been much inspired from Beijing, including the campaign against 'peaceful evolution'. China and Vietnam both try to reconcile openness and reform in the economic sectors with continued social and political control by the state. This is likely to be exceedingly difficult, something that is apparent from the dilemmas the regimes are facing when it comes to the use of modern communication technology. Internet, migration and urbanisation are good for business, but in the main they are bad for social control.

## **Conclusion**

The key to establishing democracy as a universal norm may be found in the Confucian world, but this region also has the greatest potential for developing models inspiring an anti-democratic backlash. This means it is essential, from a global viewpoint, to analyse political developments in China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam and Singapore. One may develop two main scenarios for the democratisation of this part of the world. In the first scenario, China remains a unitary state with an increasing emphasis on the rule of law. The party leaders overcome some of their fear of chaos, and start to allow opposing views to be aired more openly in the party, the media, and the representative institutions of the state. Beijing reasserts its role as China's political and intellectual capital, and the party leaders engage in open dialogue with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the political representatives of the main coastal growth regions. Six years ago the hopes of seeing such

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<sup>18</sup> Carlyle A. Thayer, 'Sino-Vietnamese Relations', *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXIV, no. 6, June 1994, p. 521.



a scenario realised under the direction of Zhao Ziyang were frustrated by the repression of the student movement on Tian An Men square, and by Zhao's replacement with Jiang Zemin, but a process of democratisation from above could start anew. The second scenario involves the breakup of China as a unitary state, and the institution of democratic governments in the provinces who negotiate a federal system between themselves. In this case, China would need inspiration from other federations, such as India, Germany and Australia, even Russia and the United States. It is perhaps difficult to imagine a peaceful breakup of the Chinese unitary state. But then it was almost impossible, only five-six years ago, to imagine that the Soviet Union would break up as peacefully as it actually did.

On the other hand, if the Chinese do not democratise, but pursue the courses laid down by Deng Xiao-ping and Lee Kuan Yew, they shall have a greater chance than anybody else of developing an attractive political alternative to procedural democracy, possibly inspiring a worldwide anti-democratic backlash. On the surface this may enhance Confucian values, but it will not bring peace under heaven.

### Third Wave Chronology in Asia, 1985-2000<sup>19</sup>

In his book *The Third Wave*, Samuel Huntington analyses a worldwide 'wave' of democratisation with its origin in Southern Europe 1974 and which may not yet have ebbed out. He reckons India's return to constitutional rule in 1977 as the wave's first manifestation in Asia, and the similar return in Turkey 1983 as the second. These two events, however, can hardly be seen as parts of an international wave. It was not till 1985 that Asian democratisation started to look like a wave. Thus this chronology begins in 1985, the year after the People's Action Party (PAP) failed to gain more than 63% in the Singaporean elections (and the opposition doubled its representation from one to two seats); the year after Indira Gandhi was assassinated and Rajiv Gandhi took over as head of government in India; the year after General Zia obtained 97.7% 'yes' in a Pakistanese referendum; and the same year as the second last General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union died.

1985

March	Opposition leaders in South Korea form a Council for the Promotion of Democracy.  The illegal Nepalese Congress Party (NCP) embarks on a campaign to replace 'Panchayat non-party democracy' with a multiparty system of parliamentary rule under a constitutional monarchy.
August	Ali Khamenei is re-elected president of Iran with 85.7% of votes cast. There were three candidates, but nearly 50 had been rejected.
September	Elections are held anew in Punjab. Won by the regional party Akali Dal.
November	Under US pressure, Fidel Marcos announces presidential elections in the Philippines for February 1986.
December	Elections are held anew in Assam, won by the militant regional party Asom Gana Parishad.  <i>Third Wave in Pakistan:</i> General Zia (under US pressure) restores fundamental rights.

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<sup>19</sup> The main source has been the *Europa Yearbook* for 1995.

1986

January	Elections in Nepal are held, but the NCP has called for boycott.
February	<i>Third Wave in the Philippines:</i> Revolt against the Marcos regime, after Corazon Aquino's party has won the elections. Marcos leaves the country, and Aquino heads the government until 1992 (surviving several coup attempts).  Supreme People's Council in Laos adopts draft constitution and draft electoral law.
March-April	Mass rallies in Seoul demand constitutional reform and the resignation of President Chun.
April	Benazir Bhutto, chairwoman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) returns to a tumultuous welcome in her homeland
August	Sweeping victory for Mahathir's UMNO-dominated Barisan National (BN) in Malaysian general elections.
November	4th Congress of Lao People's Revolutionary Party launches 'new thinking'.
December-January	<i>Third Wave Resisted in China:</i> Student demonstrations in Hefei, Shanghai and Beijing demand democracy. This leads to CCP campaign against bourgeois liberalisation, and to Hu Yaobang's resignation as General Secretary. Zhao Ziyang takes over.  <i>Third Wave in Taiwan:</i> Government promises to lift martial law (in force since 1949). In legislative elections, a new party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), wins about one quarter of the votes.

1987

February	US-style constitution approved by referendum (76%) in the Philippines.
March	Geneva accords on Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan.
April	Doi Moi policy introduced in Vietnam.
May	Dissidents arrested by the Singaporean government who claims they are part of a 'Marxist network'.
June-December	<i>Third Wave in South Korea:</i> Demonstrations, strikes and US

warnings against instituting martial law lead President Chun Doo Whan to relinquish power. A democratic constitution is adopted in a referendum in October, and in December the government's candidate Roh Tae Woo is elected President with 36.6%. The two opposition candidates, Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Yung receive 27% each.

- October-November 13th CCP Congress provides impetus for reform, including limitations in the functions of the Party.
- November Noboru Takeshita takes over as Japanese PM after Yasuhiro Nakasone.
- November-December New legislation in Malaysia to monitor and control the media.

### 1988

Political parties proscribed in Brunei (independent sultanate since 1984).

- January Taiwanese President Chiang Ching-kuo dies, is replaced by Lee Teng-hui (a native Taiwanese).
- February New Indonesian legislation reaffirms *dwifungsi*.
- March Student demonstrations are repressed in Rangoon.
- April Elections to the National Assembly in South Korea. No party gains majority.
- June Vietnamese National Assembly elects the VCP candidate as PM but 36% of the deputies refuse to vote for him.
- July *Third Ripple in Thailand:* Elections for the House of Representatives in Thailand lead to the formation of a new government under Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan of the 'business party' *Chart Thai*. This is the first time since 1976 that an elected leader is in charge of the Thai government.
- July-Sep *Third Wave Blocked in Burma:* New demonstrations for democracy are quelled in a massacre. U Ne Win resigns. Aung San Suu Kyi, after having returned to Burma from exile in the UK, joins in the formation of a National League for Democracy (NLD). U Ne Win's successor is forced to resign after new demonstrations. The government retreats, and promises free elections, but then military forces reassume power, instating a State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). Killings

	continue.
August	General Zia killed in plane crash in Pakistan.
September	Elections in Singapore once more give PAP 63%. Non-PAP representation is reduced by 50% (from 2 to 1).
November	The People's Party of Pakistan (PPP) wins 93 out of 207 parliament seats in legislative elections leading to formation of new government under Benazir Bhutto.
	New trade unions allowed in South Korea with power of collective bargaining.
	A group of Uzbek intellectuals form Birlik, the first opposition movement in Uzbekistan.
December	Presidential elections in Sri Lanka for the succession of Jayewardene (55% turnout) are won by the United National Party (UNP) candidate Ranasingha Premadasa (50.4%) against Sirimavo Bandaranaike (44.9%). The strong executive presidency (introduced 1977) and the state of emergency (declared 1983) continue.

## 1989

	In Indonesia, members of parliament, leaders of the state party (Golkar) and senior Army officers call publicly for changes.
January	The death of the Japanese emperor ends the Showa era and inaugurates the era of Heisei ('achievement of universal peace').
February	President Premadasa temporarily repeals the state of emergency in Sri Lanka (in force since 1983). Legislative elections are organised under widespread violence. The UNP secures a majority of seats.
March	Elections to the Supreme People's Assembly in Laos for the first time since the communists came to power in 1975. From a list of 121 candidates, 79 are elected for an indefinite term.
April	Death of Hu Yaobang unleashes new Chinese student movement, demanding a dialogue with the top leaders. Students occupy Tian An Men square.
	Takeshita is replaced by Sosuke Uno as Japanese PM.

- June *Third Wave Broken in Beijing:* Crackdown with vast killings puts an end to the Chinese democracy movement. Zhao Ziyang is dismissed from all Party posts. Jiang Zemin takes over as General Secretary.
- Death of Ayatollah Khomeini. President Khamenei elected by Council of Guardians to succeed him as Iran's spiritual leader.
- July Rafsanjani elected president of Iran with 95.9% of votes cast. Also with 95%, 45 proposed amendments to the constitution are accepted.
- Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD chairman Tin U are placed under house arrest in Burma.
- August Uno is replaced by Toshiki Kaifu as Japanese PM.
- November *Third Wave in Eastern Europe:* A string of communist regimes collapse.
- In Indian federal elections with a 60% voter turnout (300 million out of a 500 million electorate), Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party loses its majority. A minority government under V.J. Singh is formed.

## 1990

- The Sultan of Brunei encourages the people to embrace the Melayu Islam Beraja (Malay Muslim Monarchy) as state ideology.
- January Merger of parties in South Korea into a new Democratic Liberal Party aims at establishing Japanese-style consensus politics.
- An opposition alliance is founded in Nepal which launches a campaign for democracy. The movement is repressed.
- February-March Elections to the Supreme Soviet give the communists an overwhelming majority in the legislatures of all five Central Asian republics. In Uzbekistan Birlik is prevented from presenting candidates.
- March-April *Third Wave in Nepal:* 100,000 march towards the royal palace in Kathmandu. 50 are killed. The King gives up the 30-year ban on political parties, dissolves all Panchayat organs and appoints a new government.

	<p><i>Third Wave in Mongolia:</i> After widespread demonstrations and the formation of opposition groups, the entire politburo of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party resigns. A new one is formed, an extraordinary party congress held, and the opposition parties are legalised.</p> <p><i>Third Wave resisted in Vietnam:</i> Tran Xuan Bach, a politburo member who had advocated democratisation, is expelled from the VCP. The Party makes clear that it will not introduce a multi-party system.</p>
May	<p><i>Third Wave again Resisted in Burma:</i> Multiparty elections give crushing victory to the NLD alliance whose real leader is Aung San Suu Kyi (still under house arrest). 29 parties are represented in the new parliament. SLORC continues as de facto government and refuses to convene the elected assembly which it considers just a Constitutional Convention.</p> <p>Open letter of protest against government policy in Iran leads to a number of arrests.</p>
June	Uzbekistan declares itself a sovereign state.
July	Multiparty elections in Mongolia give the MPRP 357 of 430 seats in the People's Great Hural.
August	<p>The President of Pakistan dismisses the Bhutto government and dissolves the National Assembly.</p> <p>Tajikistan and Turkmenistan declare themselves sovereign states.</p>
October	<p>Elections in Pakistan bring the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA) under Nawaz Shariff to power.</p> <p>Unusually competitive general elections in Malaysia. The new UMNO under Mahathir wins significant victory over a group which had broken with him the previous year.</p> <p>Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan declare themselves sovereign states. First Secretary of the Communist Party in Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, is elected president with 98.3%.</p> <p><i>Third Wave Resisted in Laos:</i> Three officials who have demanded democratic reforms are arrested and kept in prison for almost two years without a trial.</p>
November	Political crisis in India leads to the resignation of V.J. Singh and the formation of a government under Chandra Shekhar. New

elections are scheduled for May 1991.

Democratic constitution is promulgated in Nepal.

An Association of Muslim Intellectuals is formed in Indonesia, led by Minister of Research and Technology Habibie.

In Singapore Lee Kuan Yew steps down as PM in favour of Goh Chok Tong, but remains Senior Minister.

December

*Third Wave in Bangla Desh:* Mohammad Ershad is forced to resign when proving unable to halt strikes and demonstrations.

A Burmese coalition forms a counter-government in Manerplaw.

1991

February

*Reverse in Thailand:* Bloodless military coup against Chatichai leads to the dissolution of the National Assembly and formation of new government consisting of mainly civilian technocrats, led by the industrialist Anand Panyarachun.

February-March

Elections in Bangla Desh lead to the formation of a constitutional government under Begum Khalida Zia.

March

In the referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union, 95.7% vote 'yes' in Turkmenistan, 94.1% in Kazakhstan, 90% in Tajikistan, 87.7% in Kyrgyzstan, 'overwhelming' in Uzbekistan.

5th Congress of Lao People's Revolutionary Party formally rejects political pluralism.

May-June

Congress Party leader Rajiv Gandhi is murdered amidst the Indian electoral campaign. The elections are postponed to June and then won by the Congress Party (227 of 511 seats) and the Hindu fundamentalist party BJP (119 seats). The Congress Party forms minority government under Narasimha Rao.

20 parties contest general elections in Nepal. NCP wins a comfortable majority.

The first elections ever are held in Hong Kong. 18 of the Legislative Council's 60 members are elected, the rest nominated by the British Governor. The United Democrats win 12 seats.

August

*Post-Communist Billow:* The Soviet Union is dissolved after a failed coup attempt in Moscow. Among the leaders of the Central



Asian republics only the Kyrgyz leader Askar Akayev unequivocally condemns the coup attempt. On 31 August, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan declare themselves independent. Mass demonstrations force the resignation of President Makkhamov in Tajikistan.

The Supreme People's Assembly in Laos adopts new constitution, providing for a National Assembly, confirming the leading role of the LPRP. New electoral law is promulgated.

Elections give PAP 61% in Singapore; Non-PAP representation triples (from 1 to 3).

September

Tajikistan declares itself independent. The Communist Party is banned, and the republic is run by a caretaker government.

October

Turkmenistan declares itself independent after a referendum (94.1% opting for). Presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan reconfirm Akayev with 95% of votes cast.

Kaifu is replaced as Japanese PM by Kiichi Miyazawa.

Aung San Suu Kyi is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Peace accord for Cambodia signed in Paris.

November-December

*Third Ripple in Central Asia:* Former First Secretary of the Communist Party Rakhmon Nabiyev is elected President of Tajikistan with 57%. The Communist Party of Uzbekistan becomes the People's Democratic Party under the continued leadership of Islam Karimov. Karimov is elected president with 86%. In Kazakhstan Nazarbayev is elected president with 98.8%.

Partial elections to the National Assembly in Taiwan give the KMT altogether 318 seats and the DPP 75.

New Thai constitution, prepared by an appointed military-dominated Legislative Assembly, is proclaimed in Bangkok.

1992

*Third Wave resisted in Indonesia:* Before the national elections the authorised opposition Democratic Party of Indonesia (PDI) campaigns strongly on social justice, but makes a poor showing at the polls. General Suharto's Golkar wins another crushing victory.

January	Democratic constitution adopted in Mongolia.
March	<p>Elections to the National Assembly in South Korea give humiliating setback for the DLP, which only narrowly keeps a working majority.</p> <p>Suharto is unanimously reelected president of Indonesia by the People's Consultative Assembly (for a sixth consecutive five-year term).</p> <p>Legislative elections under the new constitution in Thailand give no clear majority, and lead to the formation of a government led by the Commander-in-chief of the Army, Suchinda Kraprayon.</p>
April	<p>Vietnamese National Assembly unanimously approves a new constitution (several earlier proposals had been returned to the government for revision).</p> <p>Kabul falls to the Mujahidin: Proclamation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan under rotating presidency.</p>
April-May	Elections to the Iranian Majlis tip the power balance towards president Rafsanjani's 'reformers' and away from the 'conservative' supporters of Ayatollah Khamenei.
May	<p><i>Third Wave in Thailand:</i> Pro-democracy movement demonstrates against General Suchinda's military government. Around 100 demonstrators are killed. The King intervenes, and Suchinda is forced to resign. The King appoints Anand Panyarachun to head a new government.</p> <p>Combined presidential and national assembly elections in the Philippines. Fidel Ramos elected president, although with only 23.6% of the votes.</p> <p>Armed conflict erupts in Tajikistan. A 'Government of National Reconciliation' is formed.</p> <p>New constitution adopted in Turkmenistan (strong executive) while opposition parties are banned by president Niyazov.</p>
June	<p>Elections to the Mongolian Great Hural give the MPRP 57%.</p> <p>Niyazov is re-elected unopposed in Turkmenistan (99.5%).</p>
July	Elections for Vietnamese National Assembly. Voters can choose from a limited number of carefully screened candidates.

September	<p>National elections in Thailand are won by the conservative Democrat Party (DP). Its leader, Chuan Leekpai, forms a coalition government.</p> <p>Nabiyev resigns in Tajikistan. Frequent leadership changes follow in a state of full civil war. A year later, by May 1993, most of the Islamic opposition forces have fled to Afghanistan.</p>
October	<p>14th Congress of Chinese Communist Party. Purge of veteran officers in the People's Liberation Army (PLA).</p>
November	<p>The old mosque (Babri Masjid) in Ayodhya is destroyed by Hindu activists linked to the BJP.</p> <p>The three officials in Laos who were imprisoned in October 1990 for having demanded democratic reforms, are sentenced to 14 years in prison.</p>
December	<p>First elections to the National Assembly of Laos under the Constitution of 1991.</p> <p>Full elections to all seats of Taiwanese National Assembly.</p> <p>South Koreans elect Kim Young Sam (with 42%) as the first civilian president in 31 years.</p> <p>Burhanuddin Rabbani elected president by a new Constitutive Assembly in Afghanistan.</p> <p>New constitution enacted in Uzbekistan. The opposition movement Birlik is banned.</p>
1993	
January	<p>New constitution enacted in Kazakhstan (strong executive).</p> <p>In Burma the National Convention (Assembly) elected in May 1991 is finally convened (excluding members found guilty of 'offence'). It is quickly absolved again when it refuses to accept SLORC proposals.</p> <p>VCP central committee sharpens demands for control of artistic and cultural life in Vietnam.</p>
March	<p>Presidential and State Council Elections in China. The National People's Congress adopts constitutional amendments, mainly to constitutionalise already implemented market mechanisms.</p>

	<p>Peace accord in Afghanistan promises legislative elections within six months. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar becomes prime minister. Fighting continues, and no elections are held.</p>
April	<p>Representatives of a number of Asian states issue the 'Bangkok declaration' in preparation for the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, emphasising the right to development rather than individual human rights.</p> <p>The president of Pakistan uses the '8th amendment' to dismiss the prime minister (Nafaz Shariff), but in the following month the dismissal is repudiated by the Supreme Court, and Shariff is restored to power.</p>
May	<p><i>Third Wave in Cambodia:</i> UN-supervised elections, with the participation of four main parties, give a high turnout, and lead to the formation of a coalition government.</p> <p>Sri Lankan President Premadasa is killed in a suicide bomb attack during the campaign for local elections.</p> <p>New constitution adopted in Kyrgyzstan (strong legislature).</p>
June	<p>New government in Afghanistan representing nine Mujahidin factions.</p> <p>Presidential elections in Mongolia are won by President Punsalmaagiyn Ochirbat (57%), who had formerly represented the MPRP, but now was candidate of the opposition.</p> <p>Rafsanjani is re-elected president of Iran with only 63.2% of the vote and a low voter turnout.</p>
July	<p>General elections in Japan with record low turnout (67%) lead to the formation (in August) of the first non-LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) government since 1955. The new PM is Morihiro Hosokawa.</p>
September	<p>Democratic constitution adopted in Cambodia.</p>
October	<p>General elections under military supervision in Pakistan give low turnout (50%) and no clear majority. Benazir Bhutto forms coalition government.</p>
November	<p>In state elections in India, the Hindu fundamentalist BJP loses majority in three important states.</p>
December	<p>In Indonesia, Sukarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri is</p>

elected to chair the small, but legal opposition party PDI.

1994

- January Japan adopts a new electoral system with 300 single-member constituencies and 200 in blocks with proportional representation.
- In a national referendum, 96% support the continued presidency of Akayev in Kyrgyzstan. In another referendum, 99.5% exempt president Niyazov in Turkmenistan from having to seek re-election in 1997.
- March Elections in Kazakhstan.
- Prime Ministers Hosokawa of Japan and Li Peng of China make joint announcement that 'it is not proper to force a Western or European type of democracy onto others'.
- April Hosokawa is replaced as Japanese PM by Tsutomu Hata).
- June Hata resigns as Japanese PM. A coalition government is formed by Tomiichi Murayama (veteran socialist).
- The Indonesian government revokes the publishing licences of the country's three main news magazines.
- The Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) adopts *Dare To Change* as its slogan. This was the title of a book published by its dissident leader Chee Soon Juan.
- July Death of Kim Il Sung amidst a crisis concerning North Korea's refusal to allow international investigation of its nuclear facilities.
- A coup attempt (or alleged such) is forestalled by the Cambodian government.
- August The opposition People's Alliance wins legislative elections in Singapore with 48.9% against 44% for the UNP. Thus ends 17 years of UNP rule. A new government under Chandrika Kumaratunga (Sirimavo Bandaranaike's daughter) is formed.
- September In Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi is invited from her house arrest to meet the SLORC leaders.
- November Fair elections in Nepal give setback for the NCP, and make the communist CPN-UML the largest party. In December a communist minority government is formed.

Chandrika Kumaratunga (SLFP) is elected President in Sri Lanka (62.3%) thus ending 17 years of UNP rule. She pledges to abolish the executive presidency.

December

Soviet-style rigged legislative elections in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

1995

February

Legislative elections in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

March-April

*Reverse Wave in Central Asia:* Constitutional Council in Kazakhstan rules that the March 1994 elections were unlawful. President Nazarbayev responds by dissolving parliament, and (emulating what Niyazov had done in Turkmenistan a year earlier) calls a referendum where 95.46% say 'yes' to cancel the scheduled elections for 1996 and keep the president in office till 2000. Parallell development in Uzbekistan, where President Karimov cancels the elections due for 1997 and organises a referendum giving an overwhelming majority for keeping him till 2000.

April

National elections in Malaysia give new sweeping victory to the BN under Mahathir.

June-July

Normalisation of Vietnam's relations with the USA and membership in ASEAN are accompanied by arrests and trials of dissidents.

July

Aung San Suu Kyi is released from house arrest, starts a dialogue with the Burmese military leaders.

National elections in Thailand lead to the resignation of Chuan Leekpai, and the establishment of a seven-party coalition government under Banharn Silapa-archa.

September

Political agreement on electoral reform in Mongolia.

Elections for the Legislative Council in Hong Kong give landslide victory for the Democratic Party (which wants to stand up against Beijing).

A group of Pakistani officers are arrested and accused of plans to stage a coup.

October

Burmese government rules that Aung San Suu Kyi cannot resume leadership of the National League for Democracy (NLD).

December

Elections in Taiwan for the first time give the Guomindang less than 50% of the votes, but it keeps a parliamentary majority.

1996

Presidential elections due in Taiwan and Kyrgyzstan. Legislative elections due in Bangla Desh, Mongolia and South Korea.

8th Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

6th Congress of Lao People's Revolutionary Party.

1997

Hong Kong to become part of PRC.

Legislative elections due in Laos and Vietnam, presidential elections due in Mongolia and South Korea.

1998

National elections due in Cambodia. Presidential and legislative elections due in China and the Philippines.

1999

National elections due in Thailand.

2000

National elections due in Malaysia.

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