

**Event Name:** Examining the Politics of Democracy in South East Asia

Date: Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Location: Rudin, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Puck Building

Time: 4:30 – 6:00 PM

**Event Description:**

Democracy has had a mixed record in South East. Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, is considered to be a beacon of democratic transformation in the region despite serious obstacles along this path. Meanwhile, Thailand and the Philippines, which were once heralded as icons for successful democracies, have disintegrated into political crisis. In the rest of South East Asia, there is a wide range of political systems, including emerging democracies, authoritarian regimes, Leninist states, and right-wing totalitarian regimes.

This panel will bring together two leading experts on South East Asia and democracy to discuss critical questions facing the region. What is the meaning of democracy in South East Asia? Does a Southeast Asian "model" of democracy exist? Does Islamist terrorism affect prospects for democracy in South East Asia? How do democratic and non-democratic regimes in the region differ in their international relations approaches and interactions with regional superpowers like China? In addition, what is the countries' perspective on the American democracy? What do these developments mean for US foreign policy in Asia?

**Format of Event:**

Speakers' presentations (20-30 min. each), followed by Q&A with audience.

**Speakers' Bios:**

**\*Mr. David Merrill**

David Merrill's career has been devoted to Asia. He is currently the President of the U.S. – Indonesia Society (USINDO). His posts in the U.S. government include U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh (1994-1997), Director of USAID in Indonesia (1989-90), and USAID Director for East Asian Affairs. Following distinguished government service, he has managed private and non-government sector activities in Asia.

As U.S. Ambassador to Bangladesh, Mr. Merrill worked with political leaders to provide support for free and fair 1996 elections that led to Bangladesh's first peaceful transfer of power between democratically elected leaders. In 1997, he helped Bangladesh gain a \$500 million increase in U.S. investment in the energy sector. Earlier, he built a coalition of private sector, NGOs, donors

and government to address U.S. buyers' issues in Bangladesh and maintain industrial employment.

Ambassador Merrill was the Mission Director for USAID in Indonesia from 1987-90, where he managed a wide range of programs including financial sector development, democracy and civil society, population, environment, education, agriculture, and health. Ambassador Merrill's other posts in government were with USAID. As Deputy Assistant Administrator in Washington from 1990-93, he managed U.S. aid programs in the Near East and to assist Eastern Europe's transition to democracy and economic reform. From 1966-87 he held other posts in AID Washington overseeing U.S. economic aid to East Asia and the Pacific, conducting AID's Congressional relations, and serving in AID posts in Rangoon and Bangkok.

After government service Ambassador Merrill was Director of Asia-Pacific Business Development for Halliburton Company, based in Malaysia (1977-99); General Manager, Asia Government Relations and Regulatory Affairs, for Enron Corporation, based in Singapore (1999-2001); and Senior Vice President, International, at Nathan Associates in Washington DC (2001-2007).

He has received AID's Distinguished Honor Award, the President's Meritorious Honor Award, and the State Department's Superior Honor Award. He reached the rank of Career Minister, AID's highest career Foreign Service rank, in 1992.

Ambassador Merrill holds an MPA in Asian economic development and public administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; an M.A. in international affairs from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University; and a bachelor's degree from Brandeis University. He is married to Irrum Mehmood Merrill.

#### **\* Professor David Denoon**

David Denoon is Professor of Politics and Economics at New York University and Director of the NYU Center on U.S.-China Relations. He has a B.A. from Harvard, an M.P.A. from Princeton, and a Ph.D. from M.I.T.; and has served in the Federal Government in three positions: Program Economist for USAID in Jakarta, Vice President of the U.S. Export-Import Bank, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Professor Denoon is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (London), the Asia Society, the U.S.-Indonesia Society, and is Co-Chairman of the New York University Asia Policy Seminar and the Columbia University Faculty Seminar on Southeast Asia. He is also Chairman of the Editorial Advisory Board of Great Decisions.

He is the author and editor of seven books, including Real Reciprocity - Balancing U.S. Economic and Security Policy in the Pacific Basin. He has two recent books, a monograph titled The Economic and Strategic Rise of China and India (Palgrave-Macmillan) and an edited volume, China: Contemporary Political, Economic, and International Affairs (NYU Press).

**Student Group Sponsor:**

**Asian Pacific American Student Alliance (APASA)** is committed to raising visibility and awareness regarding Asian/ Pacific Islander American social and policy issues both domestic and international, within the public service sector and the wider community. APASA also strives to provide a network and support system among Wagner APIA and other students of color, and enhance the educational experience through various forums and resources geared towards professional development, social events, and dialogue addressing relevant issues concerning the APIA community.

**Contacts:** Nhu Truong, APASA President [ntt217@nyu.edu](mailto:ntt217@nyu.edu)  
Sehee Chung, APASA Outreach & Communication [seheechung@nyu.edu](mailto:seheechung@nyu.edu)