

## Conclusion

# Comparing State Violence and Reconciliation across East Asia

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A careful reading of the recent history of East Asia indicates that there are indeed many examples of state violence in the region. As noted at the outset, many instances of the worst examples of such violence occurred during the Cold War, and violence was often directed against those who were regarded as enemies of the regime in power and by extension of the state. This conflation between regime and state security that was common during the Cold War continues to obtain in many countries. Countries with authoritarian regime types often use such broad conceptions of security to legitimize violence against critics. In fact economic development in East Asia has often not been accompanied by political development that distinguishes between state and regime interests and political norms that allow for a plurality of interests and their subsequent contestation within clearly established structural and procedural norms. Rather, political elites often seek to entrench their power base and broaden it if possible. Additionally, positive economic performance is often used to strengthen political legitimacy through performance-based criteria than enhance political pluralism.

An important issue is how to systematically think about state violence in East Asia. Similarly, how does one account for the different conditions under which such violence occurred and for how regimes and

countries have dealt with the past? Do such episodes have symbolic value in identifying transgressions and unacceptable behavior, and how were they reconciled in the national psyche of the countries involved? Do they fall into certain categories, and can we create a schema of sorts to better analyze these important episodes in the region's history? In other words, are such events comparable at some analytical level, or are they simply too discrete and diverse to offer any form of useful comparative information that can guide research? Whatever the case may be, the best starting point is perhaps to identify aspects of the violence that make them similar as well as different in order to at least arrive at some attempt to catalog them.

In some senses the Okinawan case is unique because it occurred during conditions of actual war. Interestingly, however, the violence that was directed by the Japanese military against civilians was aimed not at foreigners but rather at local citizens. The evidence also indicates that the military treated the Okinawans with suspicion regarding their loyalty to the state and the government in power. So atrocious was the motivation behind such thinking and so horrendous the crime inflicted on an innocent civilian population subjected to the perceptions of its own military that the topic was left unattended and conveniently forgotten. The fact that the Okinawans were an insignificant minority within the national scheme of things and had little impact on domestic politics made such behavior and denial easier. The Okinawans continue to retain memories of the atrocities inflicted on them by the military, owing to their standing as a minority community, and they see the incident as part of a larger pattern of the exercise of state power by a dominant majority. In fact, the location of US bases and troops on their territory has also become a major point in both local and national politics. Okinawans regard hosting US bases as a disproportionate burden borne by them and have regularly voted in local elections against the continued presence of foreign troops and bases on their soil. Unfortunately for them, however, even well-intentioned local politicians like Hatoyama Yukio, who led the Democratic Party of Japan to victory in 2009 on the promise of renegotiating the base agreement, have been unable to change the situation. And his successors Kan Naoto and Noda Yoshihiko appear less interested in pursuing the matter after US support in coordinating Operation Tomodachi in March 2011, in the aftermath of the massive earthquake and tsunami in the Tohoku region of Japan. If anything, the Japanese government has been far more concerned with reconstructing the damaged areas, reset-

tling the affected population, controlling and monitoring the nuclear fallout, and restarting the devastated regional economy.

The Thai and Korean cases occurred under rather similar conditions. Both countries were ruled by military authoritarian regimes, which perceived a domestic challenge to their monopoly on power. In both cases, it is clear that the nature of the violence was indiscriminate and that what was perceived as challenges did not constitute a significant threat to the regime in power. The monopoly on violence was clearly utilized as a demonstration of power and the ability to stifle dissent through the use of force. In this regard, the violence that ensued was exemplary in nature and aimed at both primary and secondary constituencies, while retaining the regime in power. The trajectory of domestic political developments in Korea was strongly determined by the fate of the two generals-turned-president who were responsible for the 1980 Kwangju massacre, and the movement and generation that harnessed inspiration from the suppression has paved the way for rising anti-American sentiment since the early 1980s. In fact, it may be argued that this generation has had a profound effect in undermining the security compact that used to previously exist between the United States and South Korea. The Kwangju incident served as a source of intense embarrassment to the military and helped facilitate and entrench an activist political culture as well.<sup>1</sup>

Conversely, in the case of Thailand, the state never dealt with past episodes of violence, and the military continued to use lethal force against its own citizens with impunity. The Red Drum massacre in the 1970s was only part of a pattern of widespread abuse of power by the army and enforcement agencies. However, the events did lead to sufficiently widespread social unrest that the military junta in power was forced to abdicate and allow for a brief democratic interlude from 1973 to 1976. The fact that the military has never been called to task for its behavior until today, while having undergone a measure of democratic transition, is perhaps indicative of the sway that the institution still holds in domestic politics. And the inability of the country's social activists, citizens, and state agencies to hold the military accountable for its excesses also reveals the weakness of these constituencies. The coup against the Thaksin government in 2006 and the unfolding evidence of the deep linkages between the military and the monarchy, especially through the military-dominated Privy Council, provides ample testimony to the position of the military.<sup>2</sup> The utilization of the constitutional and administrative courts to weaken the

political opposition and disqualify it from political contestation has also greatly weakened the more neutral bureaucratic apparatuses of the state. In this regard, Thailand has not undergone the social transformation that accompanies economic and political development at the national level compared to other countries in the region, although a measure of such consciousness does obtain in urban areas.

Another way to interpret the evidence is that the realization of such consciousness in rural areas is steadily being thwarted by elites in order to retain them in a subordinate and pliant position. Consequently, violence used against the civilian population has both instrumental and exemplary value—at the former level it entrenches a certain conception of the state that is held to be sacrosanct and not subjected to challenge. During the 2011 election that led to the victory of the Pheu Thai Party and its leader, Yingluck Shinawatra, the military commander General Prayuth Chan-Ocha continuously reminded the electorate to vote in favor of the monarchy—a curious call in a democratic election in a constitutional monarchy. And the military continues to treat the 2011 violence against the Red Shirt movement that led to the death of approximately ninety persons as a law-and-order issue and prevents attempts to hold it accountable for the use of excessive force against mostly unarmed civilian demonstrators. It has also thwarted attempts by the political elite to negotiate terms with the Cambodian government in resolving differences over the Preah Vihear temple complex that have led to sporadic outbursts of violence between the two countries.

The Indonesian case involves violence against civilians within the context of Cold War ideology, since it was primarily directed, at least at the outset, against members and sympathizers of the Indonesian Communist Party. However, a military authoritarian regime was certainly not in place when Sukarno was in power. Sukarno's notion of Guided Democracy, which characterized the Indonesian political system from 1960 to 1965, was rule by presidential decree. Sukarno's linkages to the military lay in the nebulous relationship between the nationalist faction in domestic politics and the early paramilitary units that engaged the Dutch from 1945 to 1949 during the so-called revolutionary period in the country's political history. But the military linkages were significantly different from those that obtained from military elites in the Thai and Korean cases, who were professional soldiers. In what was interpreted to be a coup attempt against the government after the assassination of a number

of top generals, the blame was squarely placed on the PKI. The military involvement in the violence was initially to secure the capital city, Jakarta, before the violence spiraled out of control. The situation was aided and abetted by paramilitary and Muslim youth groups opposed to the PKI. Douglas Kammen's chapter in this volume indicates that leading military commanders often took the initiative regarding whether they should be involved in the violence and how severely the purge would be carried out. As a result of this initiative, Kammen thinks that it would be unfair to identify the state as the source of the violence. The outbreak of violence was left unchecked for a long period of time and clearly had a certain pattern that lasted until 1968 in Kalimantan.

The massive violence that resulted in almost five hundred thousand deaths eventually paved the way for regime transition, leading to the installation of Soeharto's New Order government in 1967. This case quite clearly concerns regime transition, and the violence was exemplary, with the PKI as the primary audience and other potential future challengers as the secondary audience. Soeharto's personal involvement in the restoration of order as the head of the Army Strategic Command in Jakarta and his staunch anti-communist credentials meant that the massacres were not investigated. In fact, if anything, the state continued to purge those accused of communist leanings, and communism became an easy way to brand political opponents as enemies of the state. Soeharto's lengthy tenure in office and the relative success of his corporatist developmentalist regime also meant that he decided how history was to be interpreted. The ban on research and alternative interpretations of what had transpired between 1965 and 1968 has for the most part sealed the New Order regime's interpretation of events as sacrosanct. Since many of the country's senior military commanders were implicated in the violence and Soeharto's own support base derived from the military, there was no question of any kind of fact finding regarding what actually transpired during the transitional period. And although Indonesia has been a stable democracy since the election of the Yudhoyono government in 2004, there has been little effort at uncovering the past. The military is keen to retain its corporate identity and remains an important player in domestic politics. Leading figures in the present government as well as the opposition were also previously from the military, which makes investigation of past misdeeds problematic.

The Cambodian mass killing, by far the worst of the cases doc-

umented here, in terms of both the number of casualties and the extended period of violence, occurred under a military regime of sorts. The Khmer Rouge was clearly a military force with hierarchical command and control structures and a clearly defined strategy of warfare tailored along the Maoist model of rural insurgency. Whereas there was some attempted ideological justification of the sustained and large-scale violence directed against civilians, the general understanding of the situation is that the regime was motivated by extreme xenophobia against those of non-Khmer ethnicity but also sought a grotesque purity within the general population that quite simply defies logical explanation. This regime appears to have utilized violence to terrorize the entire population into general submission in order to reorder society and its structural norms with a seeming emphasis on proletarian values and a clear disdain for education and the arts. Sorpong Peou also mentions an ideology of radical egalitarianism, marked by extreme suspicion of urban dwellers and those engaged in capitalist enterprises. The violence also served as a cover for the inability of the Khmer Rouge to govern the country after the guerrilla victory.

The sustained nature of the violence in the Cambodian case far surpasses that of Indonesia in terms of total death toll and has often been classified as genocide. Evidence suggests that more people in the country perished as a result of malnutrition, starvation, and disease than outright killing. Whereas the Cambodian case falls under violence associated with regime transition, it is different to the extent that the Khmer Rouge was keen to erase all practices and memories associated with the past. Hence the violence and hardship had a far more pervasive and sinister character. And since the entire population was involved in the violence, it was clearly more than exemplary, in the way the term has been used thus far. Sorpong Peou tells us that the Khmer Rouge was motivated by extreme anxiety about its vulnerability in the urban areas and regularly purged its own cadres, so that the violence occurred within the state guiding the "revolution," as well as against its perceived enemies. And since the violence went all the way to the top and the movement was broad-based, there was a very real sense in which the situation spun out of control and the violence was nihilistic in character.

The Burma/Myanmar case presents a rather unique situation: a country where a military junta being challenged by the collapse of its socialist-style government was also challenged by a segment of the local urban

population. A nervous government, unable to cope with the challenge, used indiscriminate violence against its own citizens, with seeming disunity within the ranks of the military on the proper course of action. The closed nature of the state allowed for the incident to draw much less publicity than it would have otherwise, and there has been little serious effort to deal with this episode in the country's recent history. In 2007 the military brutally crushed an uprising that was led by the monkhood and subsequently detained a large number of monks. The military elite have demonstrated from their response to Cyclone Nargis in 2008 that human security is not high on the agenda. In fact, the manner in which the referendum on the new constitution was rushed through in the aftermath of the cyclone indicates the regime's obsession with its own longevity and security. And the election of November 2010 was intentionally designed to sideline Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD and privilege the military's Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP), which was in turn represented by military elite who simply changed into mufti. It is therefore clear that the military has no interest in relinquishing its power anytime soon and is in fact trying very hard to ensconce its position while attempting to gain a measure of international credibility through applying minimalist democratic procedures.

The Tiananmen incident in China is not unlike the Burma/Myanmar case in that the regime in power felt threatened by public demonstrations in urban areas calling for greater democratization. Unable to cope with the rising tide of dissent, the regime in power deployed the military and resorted to violence. Unlike the Burma/Myanmar case, however, the Chinese incident attracted widespread publicity internationally, because the timing of the violence coincided with the period when communism was being challenged in Eastern Europe and even the Soviet Union, under the Gorbachev government, had proclaimed its policy of perestroika and glasnost. Consequently, protestors may well have been taken in by the euphoria of broader global developments that appeared to suggest the weakening of left-leaning ideologies. There is some evidence to suggest that the protestors in Burma/Myanmar were similarly inspired.

Finally the Mendiola Bridge massacre in the Philippines shares a number of traits with the other cases as well, although the contestation of what actually transpired is probably much more troubling. Like the Thai case, the state in the Philippines appears to commit acts of political violence with impunity and is never brought to account for its actions.

The massacre also occurred within the framework of a democratic polity that had just entered the political fray against the background of a military authoritarian regime that was deeply embedded in the Cold War and supported by the United States. Whereas the number of victims was the least in comparison to the other cases examined here, the new democratic regime's reliance on the military for its stability and legitimacy appears to have compromised President Aquino. Importantly, the structuration of the Philippine political economy, which draws on its Spanish colonial past, appears to make the country impervious to any form of structural economic and social changes. If so, it is likely that instances of political violence in the Philippines will never be resolved and that the state and its organs have effectively been captured by the ruling elite, who then determine their interests and enemies. Rommel A. Curaming, however, does not apportion willful behavior that regularly legitimizes violence to the elite. Rather, he takes note of the impossibility of any form of resolution of past violence under existing structural conditions.

### INSTRUMENTAL VERSUS EXEMPLARY VIOLENCE

Vincent Boudreau argues in his chapter that East Asian states were much more prone to violence at the time of state formation as a result of a larger number of contenders for power, compared to the European experience. Yet as essentially postcolonial states, East Asian states were under pressures that were ameliorated by colonial structures and practices and the demonstration effect of old states and international norms within the broader global context. He also argues that since states in Northeast Asia evolved from an absolutist authoritarian tradition, subsequent regimes were less prone to instrumental violence. In other words, certain norms associated with political hegemony and attendant practices had already been established, and subsequent actions emphasized regulations for mass participation.

The absence of the distinction between state and regime security in many parts of East Asia meant that it was not uncommon for violence to be directed against detractors or challengers to state power. The interesting question that arises from such considerations is: when can a state's use of violence be regarded as legitimate? Presumably conditions that warrant the exercise of such violence are those that truly jeopardize the state and perhaps the regime in power. Yet it would be difficult to arrive at

an acceptable definition of what constitutes a threat. The reason for this assertion is simply the fact that such calls are invariably an exercise in judgment, and authoritarian systems typically tend to err on the side of their own safety. And if the incumbent regime monopolizes power and discourse during the outbreak of violence, to redress it afterward becomes problematic. Some cultures also appear more prone to violence than others, and violence inflicted on marginal or marginalized communities is more easily explained and accepted, as Boudreau contends. Such violence is also more likely to be instrumental and more intense since the mainstream political community remains unaffected by it. Additionally, even democratic regimes have been prone to excesses in the past, and ideological considerations and broadly defined notions of “national interest” have been loosely used against those deemed a threat.

If it is indeed true that violence perpetuated during state-building is functional and therefore perhaps justified in the evolution of the state, then almost all of the cases examined in this volume would not strictly qualify as state-building enterprises. There are two possible exceptions to this generalization. The first is the Japanese case, where center-periphery tensions appear to have exaggerated the Japanese military’s feeling of vulnerability when fighting US troops in Okinawa. Quite apart from Okinawa being a marginal community, a state of war with foreign forces on its soil would surely have constituted an existential threat to the state as previously constituted. The second case of a functional claim to violence can be made in the Myanmar case. After all, the military does not control the entire country and has negotiated peace agreements with seventeen different ceasefire groups that retain control over contiguous territory and the weapons in their possession. In fact, if anything, the cards have fallen in their favor, since the terms require the military to serve them notice when there is encroachment into these areas. The government’s attempts to try and convert these private armies into a Border Guard Force (BGF) have not succeeded, and in 2011, when the government attempted to construct a dam in Kachin state with Chinese assistance, there was an outbreak of conflict between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the military; the situation has been stalemated since, and the fighting has spread to other parts of the state. The larger of these groups are clearly unprepared to give up the territories that they have controlled for over half a decade. Consequently, the process of state construction remains incomplete even with regard to territoriality in Myanmar. The military

is therefore understandably harsh toward those who would challenge the regime in power and threaten its legitimacy, which is being given a democratic varnish.

The Philippine case provides clues to a number of other difficult considerations. Can we apportion blame onto the state if the political executive did not condone the outbreak of violence and would likely have acted to prevent it? In other words, the assumption that the state is a unitary one may well be problematic in some cases. Curaming also alludes to another important consideration. He argues that at the time when the violence broke out at the Mendiola Bridge in 1987, both the perpetrator and the victims had much to gain in terms of political leverage if violence actually broke out. In such a situation, it will clearly be much more difficult to apportion blame. And it is for this reason that the state's version of the events that transpired is subjected to careful scrutiny. And if differing interpretations of what actually transpired cannot be effectively brought to a close, then resolution becomes all the more difficult, worsened in the Philippine case by embedded elite interests within the state's executive and judicial institutions. Douglas Kammen also points out how the scale and intensity of the violence in Indonesia were a function of whether regional military commanders were allied with Sukarno and how the navy and the air force were much less complicit in the violence than the army and the RPKAD. Hence, the evidence from these two cases does appear to suggest that the state may not be unitary when violence is utilized. Or to put it differently, elements within enforcement agencies have some leeway in determining the nature of the response when confronted with challenges.

The linkage between state and regime is nebulous in many parts of East Asia, and some elite in difficult situations may well truly believe that challenges to those in power constitute an existential threat. For example, when the Burmese military resorted to violence in 1988 to quell student protests, it was a regime with a deep sense of insecurity and one that had not been openly challenged in urban areas for a long time. Added to this was the fact that the collapse of the Burma Communist Party (BCP) and the defection of its sword arms, the Wa and the Kokang, clearly threatened the territoriality of the state. The Burmese military, since the coup that placed it in power in 1962, had not been able to control many of the highland areas that were inhabited by ethnic minorities. It was in light of this threat that the military government quickly negotiated ceasefire arrangements with the major ethnic armies from 1988 onward. Addition-

ally, the military regards itself as the champion of the state and its citizens against local detractors and foreigners, as Mary Callahan informs us.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, in the Burmese case, the conflation between state and regime security clearly obtains.

If the distinction is between segments of a target audience rather than actions, as Boudreau suggests, then two more cases examined here will also qualify as examples of instrumental violence, albeit state formation was not the motive for the violence. The case of Kwangju in Korea targeted the inhabitants of a specific locale, while the violence directed against the PKI in Indonesia was equally instrumental in identifying the members of an organization and its sympathizers. In the Indonesian case, however, the violence acquired its own momentum after some time, and as Douglas Kammen tells us, there was much settling of private scores as well. Both examples qualify in terms of categorical violence, rather than violence directed at the general population at large. Nonetheless, Nam-hee Lee regards the Korean case as an example of exemplary rather than instrumental violence.

There were a number of other factors that aided widespread and systematic abuse of state power. The monopoly of power exercised by the state and those who led it implied that such power could be abused with little consideration of norms of proper or ethical governance. There were few structural or institutional restraints; even where such obstacles were present, they could have been totally ignored. More important, individuals and agencies that were involved in and directed state violence invariably exercised traditional power in the Weberian sense. In other words, elements of power and its availability were associated with specific individuals and often agencies that they led. In many instances such agencies were those tasked to preserve order and that therefore could claim a legitimate use of state power as well. Since there were often no clear distinctions made between internal and external security functions, the task of maintaining state security more often than not actually fell on the military. Internal and external security was viewed as indivisible, especially during the Cold War; as a result, enemies of the state were present inside the country as well. Consequently, military authoritarian regimes that were guided by ideological considerations of threat definition would have regarded the use of force against “subversive” elements as necessary and justifiable. As a result of such tendencies, it is arguable that state violence that occurred under military authoritarian regimes was regarded as

justifiable under the circumstances in which the state and international community then existed.

Even in the most widespread case of violence documented in the region—that associated with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia—Sorpong Peou argues in this volume that the regime suffered from a general perception of vulnerability and weakness at the individual and corporate levels. The Chinese “counterrevolutionary riots” in Tiananmen Square are said to have stemmed from insecurity resulting from reform-era initiatives. In the Thai case, although there was the threat of communist insurgency, personal antagonisms at the local level clearly appeared to have played a part. To recognize such justification does not necessarily mean to condone it, however. Rather, it merely introduces the importance of time- and situation-specific considerations into the equation.

While dealing with military-authoritarian-regime types, it may be useful to note that such regimes often employ armed groups with which they maintain loose linkages. In fact, history has shown that authoritarian, totalitarian, and communist regimes often employ idealistic and energetic youth groups to further their ideological goals. Nazi Germany and Communist China under Mao Zedong were notorious for the use of such youth groups. These groups enabled the state to mobilize resources to engage in activities that might be regarded as unlawful or extra-legal. There is sufficient evidence to indicate that paramilitary and youth organizations were often involved in such indiscriminate violence in East Asia. The Indonesian and Thai cases bear this out clearly. And both countries continue to mobilize such resources when their security forces are stretched or when their governments desire to retain some distance from indiscriminate violence. The Indonesian military mobilized many such groups before and after the Timor referendum, like Aitarak, Besi Merah Putih (Red and White Iron), and Pemuda Pancasila (Pancasila Youth), and Thailand did the same to counter the violence in its southern provinces. The use of such vigilante paramilitary and youth groups is clearly detrimental to the proper pursuit of law and order.

The exercise of traditional power in the states examined came with other connotative values as well. These included the fact that the appropriation of power and its exercise, no matter how illegitimate, could not be challenged. There were quite simply no mechanisms for changes and challenges. It is noteworthy that in a number of instances, a single individual was often associated with the lengthy tenure of an abusive gov-

ernment. This was certainly the case with the Soeharto government that rose from the violence against the PKI and its sympathizers and went on to cement a thirty-one-year leadership of the country. Additionally, the military, from which Soeharto first obtained power before consolidating his independence, remains well entrenched in Indonesian politics. Alternatively, the continuation of an existing structural situation that perpetuated power in a particular institution, as in the case of the Communist Party in China and embedded elite interests of the political executive in the Philippines, would also have thwarted addressing state violence.

If the state and its exercise of power were unrestrained, conversely, society was emasculated. Since the state often targeted specific groups or individuals as its enemies, it could generally continue its activities without broad-based challenges. And even in instances where resistance to such violence obtained, it was often muted or easily repressed. What societal structures existed were often co-opted by the state or placed under intense scrutiny for “subversive” activities that threatened the state. At best, some of these traditional structures could offer solace at the individual or very low levels of organization. In this regard it would make little sense to speak of state-society relations as we understand them today. The state quite simply existed independent of society and was often able to exert its will on society and attendant structures on its own terms. The only contingent conditions were probably the collapse of the regime from internal fissures; an uprising against it; or, in some cases, the withdrawal of external legitimacy. Alternatively, if the violence was exemplary and related to certain types of proscribed behavior, as Boudreau argues, then the general population learns to live by such proscriptions over time and internalize them.

### PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

The apportionment of blame for violence and the identification of victims are also central to this book. The military appears to have played a key role in an overwhelming number of cases of violence; military involvement was clearly the case for the Northeast Asian countries discussed here, although subtle differences obtain. For example, in the case of China, the military acted under the orders of the leadership of the Communist Party. In Southeast Asia, some distinctions surface: in the Philippines, the marines and the police were responsible for the violence,

whereas in the Cambodian case, the Khmer Rouge, responsible for the ongoing massacre, constituted both the regime and the military. Sorpong Peou also mentions the faceless organization “Angka,” a creation of the Khmer Rouge to which blame was attributed for both the violence and the identification of victims.

As for the victims, in China, they were predominantly “cross-class” demonstrators; in Japan, the violence was aimed at Okinawans; in South Korea, the victims were from Kwangju. The Japanese and Korean cases share similarities in that the violence was directed against a region-specific target. The Cambodian case, despite having a large number of victims, targeted urban dwellers, intellectuals and artisans, minorities, and religious groups in more systematic ways. In Indonesia, although the victims were initially members of the PKI and their sympathizers, there is also evidence of violence that targeted political enemies at a time of general turbulence and regime transition. The Myanmar case points to students and their sympathizers as the general targets of violence, and in the Philippine case peasants bore the brunt of the violence. The Thai study suggests that average citizens who were labeled as communists were subjected to violence.

An interesting correlation is that between state violence and the status of the regime in question. Four broad categories emerge from the case studies: regime crisis, regime transition, regime defense, and law-and-order considerations. The Chinese Tiananmen incident was clearly justified as a law-and-order issue, while the Japanese case appears to have been regarded as wartime defense of the state. The Korean case is a little complicated: it involved power transition within an existing regime, although it could be construed as regime defense as well, if the detractors are thought of as contenders for a different regime type. The Indonesian and Philippine cases also point toward violence associated with regime transition/consolidation, while the Cambodian and Thai cases tend toward regime defense. The Myanmar case differs from the others in that the regime was in crisis. The collapse of the BSPP government and Ne Win’s “official” retirement created the crisis, which in turn spawned the protests and subsequent violence.

Whatever the specific circumstances of the situation may have been, it is clear that regimes engaged in violence against their own citizens sensed a threat to their authority and the exercise of power. Unwilling to give up power and framing the national discourse against protestors or challeng-

ers by defining them as enemies of the state, these regimes resorted to the use of force. Given the conflation between state and regime interests that typically obtained and in the absence of competing structures at the political and social levels, they were well placed to exercise the monopoly on the “legitimate use of force.” In other words, as far as the regimes in power were concerned, their response was justified in returning the state to normalcy. And since police and military functions were not kept discrete, as in democracies, the military, with its far greater capacity for violence, was often utilized. The claim that those against whom violence was used threatened the regime in some way appears to have provided both sufficient provocation and subsequent rationalization for the use of force. Whereas the Cold War provided an ideological cloak in a number of instances, especially in the case of military authoritarian regimes, socialist and communist states also appropriated violence. In this regard, state violence has been a phenomenon of both the extreme right and the extreme left.

### RESOLUTION OF STATE VIOLENCE

As for political transition and reconciliation in the aftermath of the violence, it has not always been forthcoming. In fact, as mentioned earlier, only the Korean and Cambodian cases have been attended to with some amount of rigor. Of these two, only the Cambodian case has emphasized retribution, and this approach was largely inspired by pressures emanating from the international community. The Korean attempt at resolution, which involved an admixture of retribution and reconciliation, obtained within the framework of a democratizing polity. And Japan, which counts itself as a well-developed democracy today, has yet to address some of its past episodes of state violence. A deep culture of taboo continues to obtain, although past misdeeds have transformed the nature of the state and led in turn to far greater recognition of fundamental liberties at the state level. Important gains have also been made by community-based lobby and interest groups. And in the case of Japan, the courts have also been engaged in interpreting state powers in the face of legal challenges. This separation of powers between the judiciary and the political executive may well be the harbinger of greater changes to come, if civic and interest groups force the state to respond to citizen-initiated lawsuits.

As for questions regarding the postviolence situation and how states

have attempted to deal with it, there is a wide range of outcomes in the manner of resolution. China has been able to deflect some of the pressures associated with Tiananmen as a result of rising affluence and a youth culture that cements regime legitimacy. Although there have been no formal attempts at resolving the situation, the regime may well address it at some point in the future when it feels more confident. In the meantime, the regime has permitted far greater levels of associational life through civic organizations. A major reason why states have not addressed previous episodes of violence also has to do with state priorities and challenges. For example, it is arguable that in the Chinese case, the threats, or the regime-perceived threats, deriving from peripheral areas and minority communities, particularly in Xinjiang and Tibet, constitute a much more urgent matter than trying to reconcile the Tiananmen incident. After all, within the Chinese government's perception of priorities the maintenance of the state and its sovereignty is an overriding consideration. The same argument could be made with regard to the Taiwan issue. In the perception of the government, these are all issues that may well be regarded as state-building rather than aimed toward regime consolidation or transition, to borrow Boudreau's terms. Then there are tactics that regimes continually utilize to try and make amends with victims of state violence, albeit in an often piecemeal and opaque manner. Expressions of Chinese national pride at the country's new place in the international order and the breathtaking pace of socioeconomic changes blunt calls to address state violence, as demonstrated in Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Kate Merkel-Hess's chapter. In fact, public sentiment almost justifies the path taken, since it constitutes a demonstration effect of the successful path taken, as opposed to that which was not.

In Japan, the government has attempted a backhanded apology by honoring the war dead as heroes, and revisionist history textbooks have been allowed to coexist alongside official scripts. In the meantime, however, the Okinawan community has introduced a unanimous demand for recognition of wartime forced suicides. South Korea has been the most progressive in resolving past violence through compensating and honoring its victims. The initiators of this policy were the regime under Roh Tae Woo, which came to power in 1988, and the more recent regime under Kim Young Sam. The political opposition took up the cause, and acts to commence resolution of the situation were legalized.

As for Southeast Asia, the new regime under the Hun Sen government

in Cambodia committed itself to a resolution of the situation in cooperation with the United Nations, and tribunals to address the situation are ongoing at the time of writing. The resolution has adopted the European Commission's type of retributive justice, which seeks to prosecute the perpetrators of violence. However, the government has placed some limits on whom the courts may try and has warned international prosecutors and the community that extending the mandate and the target group to be prosecuted risks unraveling the peace that has obtained thus far. This intervention and threat naturally serve regime interests, since Khmer Rouge collaborators are in power at the present time. The Indonesian situation remains unresolved up until now, although it appears to be a matter of time before civic groups and NGOs place resolution firmly on the country's political agenda. The residual fears of the families of victims are also an important reason why there have been few calls from that quarter to address the violence and mete out some form of justice. The military also continues to remain an important national institution, with territorial-deployment and administrative functions, despite serious attempts at administrative and fiscal decentralization in the post-Soeharto period.

In the case of Myanmar, the regime is preoccupied with reestablishing a modicum of domestic and international legitimacy that was lost after the collapse of the Burma Socialist Program Party-led government. Additionally, there is the important issue of integrating territories and peoples that are currently being controlled by ethnic armies that challenge the sovereignty and legitimacy of the state. As in the Chinese case, these are issues that may well fall within the ambit of state building. The patronage of the Buddhist Sangha by the regime in Myanmar and its expenditures and upkeep of pagodas in the country are meant to grant the regime traditional legitimacy in accordance with Buddhist virtues. In the Myanmar case, the state continued with a repressive policy while slowly increasing tolerance toward local and foreign NGOs. Initial attempts at multiparty democracy were frustrated, and tension continues to exist between the regime and the political opposition. Elements of the political opposition, however, have tried to break the impasse by participating in the 2010 election to structurally attempt the introduction of opposition in parliament, and Aung San Suu Kyi was released from house detention. The government started negotiations with Suu Kyi, and it released some two hundred political prisoners in late 2011. And in April 2012, the NLD was allowed to register as a political party and suc-

cessfully won forty-three out of the forty-five seats that were available for contestation. Consequently, Suu Kyi is now a member of parliament and has been issued a passport for overseas travel as well. At the time of writing she is in the middle of a European tour that includes a stop in Norway to collect her Nobel Prize for Peace. Within the country many reforms are ongoing, and the international community has significantly relaxed its sanctions. In fact, many Western countries are now spearheading investment in Myanmar.

In the case of the Philippines, much has been done by way of symbolic resolution of the situation. President Corazon Aquino conveyed her condolences as head of state to the families of the victims of the violence, although there has been no conclusive outcome from the fact-finding mission that was commissioned. This mission continues to remain unsatisfactory to interested parties, and violence is ongoing over the issue of agrarian land reform, even though a monument to honor those who died at Mendiola has also been built. The incident remains a major political issue that regularly crops up on the national agenda. In Thailand, induced testimony brought the Red Drum incident to the fore, although there are still disagreements over the actual number of victims. Student organizations, the Interior Ministry, and elements within the military initiated the process of resolution, but no concrete actions have followed. As a result, whereas the military has admitted to the violence, there has been neither accountability nor reconciliation. Rather, victims have been reconciled to the “inevitability” of the situation and the culture of impunity, as described by Tyrell Haberkorn in this volume.

The initiation of retributive justice generally appears less likely in the East Asian cases examined thus far. There are multiple reasons for this assertion, including, importantly, retaining the memory of violence and summoning the political will to have it addressed at some point. The advocacy of such justice may suffer from disinterest and lethargy over time, especially when confronted with an authoritarian state. Notably, those who seek to keep such issues alive may themselves be branded as subversives and harshly dealt with. After all, repression is the easiest means of erasing negative memories associated with the state. As for the question of political will, successor regimes may naturally not see it as in their best interest to address past misdeeds. Regimes may regard such acts as unnecessary or beyond their purview. They may also paper over such events in order to demonstrate their willingness to forge a new social

compact that is devoid of the emotional baggage associated with the past. The political will to address past crimes may be forthcoming if a new regime is committed to specific changes in policy output and acquires its political mandate on the basis of campaigning for such changes prior to coming into power. Such drastic changes in regimes and their orientations are unlikely to obtain in states with more authoritarian structures and values. In any event, the regular conflation of interests between state and regime security makes the possibility of such changes in developing countries even more remote.

For all the reasons mentioned above and others that may be unique to specific countries, we conclude that East Asian countries are far more likely to engage in restorative rather than retributive justice. This is not to suggest that such states and societies are not keen to punish those associated with state violence and clear the names and memories of those persecuted. Rather, it appears to be the likely path toward some form of reconciliation that is intended to have a longer-lasting and less contentious transformative effect on state-society relations. This situation is likely to eventuate, especially if the previously hypothesized dichotomy between retributive and restorative justice corresponds broadly to the liberal and nonliberal traditions regarding law and human rights. Nonetheless, as mentioned at the outset, the restorative approach has its detractors too, who are interested in bringing those responsible for the abuse of state coercive power to account. Enforcing such accountability early on also has the demonstration effect of establishing norms of conduct for state and regime utilization of coercive power. Whatever approach is deemed necessary and workable, some form of neutral truth- or fact-finding commission is necessary at the outset in order to establish the terms of reference for both the perpetrators and the victims of violence.

### **POLITICAL TRANSITION AND RECONCILIATION IN THE EAST ASIAN CONTEXT**

The case studies that have been examined in this study yield no conclusive evidence about the nature of the relationship between political transition and reconciliation. The South Korean and Cambodian cases present starkly different findings. In the former, democratization was the major spur of attempts to deal with past violence, whereas in the case of communist Cambodia, the pressure of international opinion and the United

Nations led to the efforts at meting out retributive justice. And in the case of all the other countries examined, no settlement has been attempted or realized thus far. In any event, it is likely that states will find it easier to deal with events that did not involve large numbers of deaths in the first instance. For this reason, the Philippines may well find past violence easier to deal with: the Mendiola Bridge massacre resulted in relatively few casualties, although structural factors appear to have inhibited such an outcome. Conversely and notwithstanding the Cambodian example, it is likely that countries like China, Indonesia, and Myanmar will take much longer to deal with their past. Whereas it appears illogical that events involving mass casualties will not be accorded priority, the reality of the situation is that the number of affected and interested parties makes such an undertaking a large national one. And for this reason alone, only strong states with significant political will and the proper mindset are able to attempt to deal with past injustices. "Proper mindset" may seem an odd phrase in this context, but it refers to the regime's legitimacy and general principles of governance. For example, the Chinese and Myanmar governments continue to regard those who were subjected to state violence as essentially subversive elements that sought the overthrow of state power. Whatever the lexicon may be, it is important to realize that unless the discourse of the state shifts from emphasizing regime security to stressing some conception of human security, reconciliation is unlikely to be forthcoming. And as noted earlier, if the violence was indeed large-scale, elements of the state's coercive agencies that were responsible for the violence are likely to be still embedded within the social structure or to continue to have their interests structurally represented and protected.

And what is the nature of the relationship between reconciliation and regime transition? We posit that it is unlikely for states, especially authoritarian ones, to undertake reconciliation unless it serves regime interests in some way. A hybrid regime that is not entirely authoritarian and that seeks to entrench a corporatist or developmentalist ideology may well find some interest in undertaking such a task. This would especially be the case if sufficient time had elapsed to distance or disassociate the regime from past abuses of state power. Apart from changes to regime-specific characteristics and legitimacy, reconciliation may take place within the framework of revolutionary change inspired by a mass protest movement or alternatively by a regime that opts to drastically change its policies, even at the risk of its own potential displacement, as happened in the

South African case. However, in epochal terms, the period of revolutions appears to be over, and authoritarian regimes with benevolent and progressive leaders rarely exist. In light of such international norms, political transition is far more likely to lead to attempts to address past state excesses.

In any event, to draw this discussion to a close, regimes must abide by certain international norms of conduct, and there must be structural restraints on the exercise of coercive power. There must also be much stronger state-society relations and interaction, and the state must better reflect the constitution and will of its people. It is hoped that as countries examine their past and history is recorded, matters involving state violence will be seriously addressed. Failure to do so will invite legitimizing an essentially illegitimate use of power and violence. Ethical conduct at the individual, societal, and state levels requires nothing short of such redress.

## NOTES

1. Jung-kwan Cho, "The Kwangju Uprising as a Vehicle of Democratization: A Comparative Perspective," in *Contentious Kwangju: The May 18 Uprising in Korea's Past and Present*, ed. Gi-wook Shin and Kyung Moon Hwang (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 67–85.

2. See Duncan McCargo, "Network Monarchy and Legitimacy Crises in Thailand," *Pacific Review* 18, no. 4 (2005): 499–519.

3. See Mary P. Callahan, *Making Enemies: War and State Building in Burma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004).