THIS COLLECTION OF PAPERS was inspired by two considerations. First, the Asian geostrategic arena has emerged as the centre of international change and conflict in the post-war era. Comparatively, European international relations and US-USSR relations as they relate to arms control, European security and Third World conflict issues are in a stable and a predictable phase. Here the post-Cold War approach has been to adjust East-West power relationships without disturbing the territorial status quo in Europe and to conduct foreign policy according to the classical European principles of compromise and compensation among the powers. In contrast, power relations in the Asian and the Indian Ocean arena are fluid; the structures of power in the Asian continent, in regional security systems and in the Pacific and Indian Oceans are evolving and they are not easy to categorise. The internal and external imperatives of major Asian powers are varied and changing as are the internal and external power relationships among Asian states; and the mental outlooks of Asian political leaders are also varied. Japan has arrived as an economic superpower on the world scene and is gradually developing its presence in the Asian/Pacific/Indian Ocean arena. This arena remains a flashpoint of superpower naval and air confrontation especially in the North Pacific. The Peoples Republic of China has turned its back against Maoism and Marxism. Its future as an Asian power is assured but the range and limit of its diplomatic skill and its economic and military prowess is still unclear. Australia is slowly developing the Asian dimension of its diplomacy recognising the limitations of its Western contacts but it must work in the context of a growing anti-nuclear sentiment in the South Pacific and a complicated international environment. The international relations of Southeast Asia appear to be on a steady course. There are signs that the interventionist impulses of extra-regional powers have been sharply curtailed, and the danger of Vietnamese domination has also been checked. However, the South Asian and Gulf regions remain the centres of gravity of militarisation and war, ethnic conflict, internal political challenges and regime change and shaky diplomatic dialogues among hostile pairs of states. Thus, a stable Europe and a steady superpower relationship on the one hand and a turbulent and changing Asian/Gulf arena on the other hand, is the setting for this collection of essays on Asian diplomatic and military affairs.

Secondly, at a time when the Asian/Pacific/Indian Ocean arenas are growing in importance in the economic, military, diplomatic and social spheres, the academic literature, especially in North America, is failing to stay abreast of
modern developments and to provide the necessary data and theoretical
guidance. Here the danger is that such neglect will fail to provide the academic
infrastructure which is required to prepare our students to cope with Asian
international relations, and which is needed by academicians and practitioners
to make intelligent policies and to shape modern political thought. The
premise is that comparative study of Asian diplomatic theories and practices
is required to fulfil academic and policy tasks.

The present volume is a step in this direction but I am aware of the limitations. The coverage is not comprehensive, partly because of limited space and partly because of a shortage of available expertise. My hope is that readers will share their criticisms and constructive suggestions for improvement with the editor so as to build on this modest effort.