

The Process of Holding the Ministerial Conference for Economic Development in Southeast Asia: A Study of the Sato Administration's Diplomatic Policy Toward Southeast Asia

NOZOE, Fumiaki

This article aims to analyze the cause of Japan's initiative to hold the Ministerial Conference for Economic Development in Southeast Asia in Tokyo in 1966, which was the first conference the Government of Japan held in the post-war era. Previous researchers have explained the reason why policymakers in Japan had held the conference by examining Japanese foreign policy and other external factors but they didn't pay enough attention to the internal factors, so we are unable to understand the cause of Japan's initiative clearly.

By exploring the domestic political and economic aspects, this article will demonstrate the following points. Firstly, Miki Takeo, MITI and the business circle played a very important role in hosting the conference. Since the Japanese economy was in serious recession in 1965, these actors tried to help the country recover by strengthening the economic relations with Southeast Asian nations. Secondly, when the conference was held, Japanese political and economic leaders considered that Japan should play the role of a model or guide for Southeast Asian nations to develop their economy. Finally, despite the fact that the US and the Southeast Asian nations appeared to welcome Japan's initiative, the reality was that these nations did not accept it as they felt repulsed by Japan's self-seeking attitude.