

READINGS IN ISLAMIC  
DA'WAH

*Editor*  
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# FACETS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA CONSTITUTING THE SOCIO-CULTURAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXTS FOR ISLAMIC *DA'WAH*\*

*Mohd Kamal Hassan*

## **Introduction**

Contemporary Southeast Asia, in the words of one writer, "is an exciting cultural complexity, a political fiction, and an international problem of uncertain but disturbing proportions" (Robert Bone 1962:3).

We have become accustomed to use the term "Southeast Asia" in a general, undifferentiated way, without realizing that it came into general use only during the Second World War, when as a result of military circumstances and geopolitical considerations, the concept of a Southeast Asian region began to take hold (Osborne 1990:4). Before the Second World War, the region was sometimes described as "Asia of the Monsoons" or even "Further India" (Osborne 1990:4). Without a precise designation, the reference was to the southeastern region of the Asian continent which was neither "little India" nor "little China." It was felt that the huge peninsula of Indochina and the extensive archipelago of what was sometimes called the East Indies formed some kind of a geographical unit. The Philippines, however, was excluded from the initial conceptualization "for the question of whether or not the Philippines formed part of Southeast Asia was to remain a matter of scholarly uncertainty as late as the 1960s" (Osborne 1990:4). Although the Philippines was not originally regarded part of Southeast Asia because its history has not followed the general historical pattern of Southeast Asia, it is now

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