

that HIV/AIDS is a human rights issue: thus those regimes and social systems that prevent public health objectives should be transformed. Many of the descriptive scenes are not necessary, and the key information could have been conveyed in a book half the length. Technical epidemiological details could have been dealt with best in an introductory section, rather than scattered throughout the narrative. There are numerous acronyms and initialisms that are not indexed, making the reading less than easy.

This book will appeal to readers who are drawn to conspiracy theories and idealistic solutions for the state of the world, and who respond readily to ideologically sound slogans. Despite the evocative title (which is sure to sell many copies among the politically-correct Western middle class), this is not political economy in the true sense: it is the personal testament and thematized travel tale of a committed HIV/AIDS activist, and should be read as such.

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***Grey-Area Phenomena in Southeast Asia: Piracy, Drug Trafficking and Political Terrorism.* By Peter Chalk.** Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defense, No. 123. Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, 1997. 117pp.

Peter Chalk is to be congratulated for providing a tightly written, highly informative and far-reaching study on the so-called "grey-area phenomena" (GAP) of maritime piracy, drug production and trafficking, and political terrorism in Southeast Asia. The study provides useful case studies combined with trenchant observations and analysis of often complex and unconventional regional security problems. The policy-oriented conclusion examines specific measures for integrating and coordinating responses to the GAP at national levels, together with sets of recommendations for developing multilateral and regional responses.

From the outset, Chalk utilizes a paradigm of "grey-area phenomena" developed by two other authors, Jim Holden-Rhodes and Peter Lupsha in an article written for *Criminal Justice International* (Vol. 9, No. 1, 1993). GAP is "loosely defined as threats to the stability of sovereign states by non-state actors and non-governmental processes

and organisations” (p. 5). This presents two major difficulties as far as this reviewer is concerned. First, we are dealing with a purely state-centred perspective of security threats, which may obfuscate our analysis of specific problems or issues associated with so-called GAP. For instance, our analysis of particular kinds of undocumented cross-border trade may be portrayed as a threat to state security even though state functionaries may be involved or implicated in that trade. Furthermore, there are parts of Southeast Asia where it is highly debatable whether or not the tentacles of the official state apparatus can ever be said to have reached. When *de facto* political parties, armies and organs are effectively in control of territory, people and resources, what does the term “grey-area” actually mean? To whom and by whom is the term being applied? Who is posing a threat to whose security? Sometimes it is the attempts by states to impose a particular version of order and security that adds to the insecurity of significant groups of people.

Secondly, “grey-area phenomena” encompass a very broad range of activities, situations and players. In trying to derive a suitable set of common legal, political and institutional responses to GAP, it is first necessary to examine underlying causal mechanisms. Herein lies the problem of trying to cover maritime piracy, drug trafficking and political terrorism under the banner of GAP when in fact they each have different causal dynamics. For instance, Chalk’s discussion of political terrorism is mostly in association with different examples of ethnic or religious insurgency, but by focusing on the concept of GAP it is the international connections of the insurgencies that receive most analytical attention rather than some of the deep-seated historical, contextual and socially-specific details, which means that we tend to be deflected towards some of the symptoms of insurgency rather than the root causes. With regard to the latter, Chalk misses the opportunity to include a discrete chapter on conflict management processes and approaches which are highly relevant if GAP associated with political insurgency are to be addressed. However, the author does provide a clearly written chapter on each of the selected GAP, and each chapter includes useful insights for those interested in these phenomena.

In chapter one, Chalk highlights several “global” and “international” reasons why GAP are on the rise at the end of the twentieth century. First, the so-called “dollarization” of the globe has led to the spread of Western materialism and commercial values, aided by electronic media and easy travel. “Black dollar” groups thrive in a climate of rapid economic changes, and recruitment to such groups is probably easier in places where legitimate economic opportunities are lacking. Secondly, Chalk notes a world-wide “resurgence of atavistic forms of identity” related to ethnicity, religious affiliation, and non-state forms

of identification, which provide sponsors of political terrorism with a potentially numerous and disparate clientele. Thirdly, the covert operations of the superpowers during the Cold War has left the world with a nasty legacy, that is, not only has there been a proliferation of all kinds of weaponry but there are in existence many non-state organizations that have “the knowledge of how to foment, organise and sustain insurgency” (p. 13). Fourthly, the time-space shrinking technologies, flows and networks associated with “globalization” have not only assisted the “transnationalization of world politics” but have also benefited GAP players, who by their very nature are not bound by “national” or “international” rules, regulations or conventions in the same way as are sovereign states, associations of states and legitimate international organizations.

According to Chalk, the growth and resilience of GAP organizations in Southeast Asia are due to the “global” tendencies noted above, and also to specific factors relating to the region’s history, politics, economy and geography. Nevertheless, the author occasionally makes generalizations that require much greater debate than is provided in this short study. For example, the argument that “fundamentalist extremism” in the Middle East and Afghanistan has connections with the Muslim groups in Aceh (Indonesia), Pattani (Thailand) and Mindanao (Philippines) requires further examination as to what is “fundamentalist” and what is “extremism”, which organizations are connected, and why and what are their aims? Some details are provided in the chapter on “political terrorism”, but the problem is that evidence, in the absence of remarkable “insider” knowledge, can only be based on the often sketchy data that has entered the public domain, which is partly why the study of GAP is so intriguing.

Chalk’s chapters on specific GAP are concise, informative, and include numerous useful references. Chapter two, on maritime piracy, contains a useful description of three distinct kinds of piracy — “harbour and anchorage thefts/attacks”; “the ransacking and robbery of vessels on the high seas or in territorial waters”; and “the hijacking of vessels to convert them for the purposes of illegal trading — the so-called ‘phantom ship’ phenomenon”. There is a discussion of the highly contentious issue of state complicity in certain acts of piracy off the shores of China and Indonesia. Here the author remains objective by trying to present both sides of the argument. However, the issue of complicity further reinforces the fact that some of the remedies to GAP may well require substantial efforts to reform state structures and to reduce corruption at different levels of the state apparatus. The piracy chapter touches on important weaknesses in international law, particularly in relation to the sensitive issue of “hot pursuit” and the problems

of seas where there are disputed or no clear maritime boundaries, truly “grey-areas”! It also raises significant regional examples of active co-operation, such as the joint maritime patrols by the littoral states of the Malacca and Singapore Straits which have helped to reduce incidents of piracy. The chapter on narcotics production and trafficking (chapter three) illustrates the problems of drug-related crime; the association of drug use and the growing regional problem of HIV/AIDS; the economic basis of the drug trade in areas like the Golden Triangle; the effects of narco-dollars in encouraging official corruption in government and military circles; the links between the drug trade, the buying of weapons and political instability; and the links between the operations of drug cartels and “white-collar financial crime” such as money-laundering.

Chapter four, on political terrorism, highlights the significance of terrorist actions associated with cases of ethnic, religious and political insurgency in four countries — Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Cambodia, with some brief comments relating to Myanmar. The case studies presented are sometimes too concise to draw any profound conclusions. Nevertheless, it is clear from reading them that if the GAP are to be tackled then there is a need for highly nuanced conflict management approaches to be adopted. Unfortunately, such approaches are thin on the ground in Southeast Asia and the preferred *modus operandi* for the states concerned seems to be the use of coercive military options against perceived subversive elements and terrorists, rather than to engage in the often delicate and lengthy processes of multi-track political dialogue and peaceful negotiations. However, even where negotiations have been adopted and produced results, as with the Davao Consensus between the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Government of the Philippines, signed in September 1996, strong “rejectionist” political factions have emerged that are apparently more willing to resort to terrorist tactics to achieve their aims (pp. 70–75).

In the concluding chapter, Chalk emphasizes the need for counter-measures to GAP that transcend military and civilian law enforcement jurisdictions and overcome the traditional distinctions between “internal” and “external” security dimensions. According to the author, the failure of “inter-agency cooperation and interaction in Southeast Asia has much to do with the bureaucratic competition and jurisdictional jealousy that afflicts many of the region’s security establishments” (p. 85). He suggests that the proposed Philippine Counter Terrorism Center (PCTC), which aims to integrate the expertise and training of different law enforcement, customs and intelligence agencies, may provide a useful model for other states to follow. With regard to

international co-operation, the author cites a list of important regional developments, particularly with regard to anti-piracy initiatives in the Malacca and Singapore Straits; between Malaysia and the Philippines; and between Thailand and Vietnam. Even so, the author argues that most initiatives tend to be “reactive and ad hoc in nature, lacking any real degree of proactive, long-term planning” (p. 89). He then examines how the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) could be used to “enhance transparency”, reduce “transaction costs” of collaborative action, and “facilitate agreements” aimed at combatting GAP and threats of low-intensity conflict (LIC) (pp. 90–92). He suggests that the states of Southeast Asia should look to extra-regional governments, particularly the United States and those of the European Union which have more experience in co-ordinating and integrating responses to GAP forces (p. 92). Such wide-ranging conclusions require more comparative empirical work and framework building than was possible in this one publication.

Overall, Chalk’s study provides a useful introduction to so-called “grey-area phenomena” in Southeast Asia, and it seems likely that GAP may actually become more important than ever in a period of relative financial, economic and political uncertainty in the region. Furthermore, it is clear that research into GAP raises many questions and issues that go well beyond the scope of one study, such as the political character of states; the nature of inter-stateness within the region; the sensitivity of political and territorial sovereignty issues; state-minority relations; the relative strengths and weaknesses of state authority; the development of suitable cross-border institutions and mechanisms to tackle GAP; and the extremely controversial issues of state-level complicity and corruption in some GAP activities. There is plenty of scope for further research.

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