

democratization and other forces and institutions have forced the military in Indonesia, Thailand and elsewhere in the region to rethink their role in politics. But in Myanmar (the new name given by the State Law and Order Restoration Committee or SLORC) colonialism, World War II, and the failures of post-colonial governments have left no countervailing forces or institutions to challenge the tatmadaw's dominance of the state through coercion. For how much longer can this tatmadaw dominance of the state continue? This is the challenge for Myanmar's neighbours and partners in ASEAN: to conceive of alternative futures for Myanmar and strategies to initiate change.

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***Non-Traditional Security in the Asia-Pacific: The Dynamics of Securitisation.* By Ralf Emmers.** Singapore: Eastern Universities Press [Marshall Cavendish International (Singapore)], 2004. 84pp.

In a region marred by comprehensive and multifaceted security challenges, non-traditional security agendas have attracted a great deal of scholarly attention in Southeast Asia to grapple with security issues that cannot be explained by the traditional approaches. Ralf Emmers' monograph, *Non-Traditional Security in the Asia-Pacific: The Dynamics of Securitisation*, is an important contribution to the growing discourse on non-traditional security studies in the region. Comprising four major chapters with a brief Introduction and a succinct Conclusion, the author examines non-traditional security issues in Thailand, Singapore and Australia using the "securitisation theory" of the Copenhagen School.

Chapter 1 discusses the framework of analysis developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde of the Conflict and Peace Research Institute (COPRI) based in Copenhagen. In the book, *Security: A New Framework of Analysis* (Lynne Rienner, 1998), Buzan and his associates introduce the concept of "securitisation" to challenge the traditional conception of security. Emmers applies the "securitisation theory" to have a deeper understanding of the "securitisation" of drug trafficking, piracy/maritime terrorism, and people smuggling in Thailand, Singapore and Australia, respectively. Though the Copenhagen School of security

has been criticized for its conceptual limitations, Emmers considers it a useful framework to define security in the Asia-Pacific and to determine how a specific matter becomes securitized and desecuritized in the region (p. 3). Emmers also regards the Copenhagen School as an attractive framework in identifying the referent of security and the securitizing actors in the three aforementioned countries. In fact, the Copenhagen School provides the coherence and logic of the monograph, reflecting the author's mastery of "securitisation theory". Aware of the conceptual shortcomings of the Copenhagen School, Emmers "employs a more rationalist understanding of securitisation" in the Asia-Pacific (p. 6), making the author a "revisionist" disciple of the Copenhagen School.

Chapter 2 examines the securitisation of drug trafficking in Thailand. Because the drug trade aggravates crime, spreads sexually transmitted diseases, undermines family structures, creates shadow economies and compromises the political system, among others, the Thai government declared drug trafficking as a threat to national security. Emmers identifies Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his government as the securitising actor while the referent objects of security are "the national sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Thailand (military and political security), the integrity and stability of the political system (political security), the Thai population (societal security), and the economic development and prosperity of the country (economic security)" (p. 14). Emmers observes that the securitisation of drug trafficking is also motivated by political purposes and electoral benefits in order to increase the chances of reelection of the present government. The act of securitisation also gives the issue of drug trafficking "a new sense of urgency" attracting fund support against the drug menace. Emmers argues that without the act of securitisation, the anti-drug campaign would not have generated an increase in budgetary support in Thailand.

Chapter 3 analyses the securitisation of piracy and maritime terrorism in Singapore. In the act of securitisation, the securitising actor is the Singapore government while referent objects of security are "the safety of navigation in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (economic and military security) as well as the ecological environment of the Straits (environmental security)" (p. 41). Emmers contends that as Singapore is a maritime state which depends on freedom of navigation for economic prosperity, piracy and maritime terrorism have become threats to its national security.

Chapter 4 studies the securitisation of people smuggling in Australia. The John Howard government has been identified as the securitising actor while the referent objects of security are "the national sovereignty

and territorial integrity of Australia (military and political security), the fabric of society (societal security), and economic welfare (economic security)” (p. 66). Though the securitisation triggered international controversies, the Howard government succeeded in the securitising move because of societal support. In fact, the securitisation according to Emmers “stopped the flow of people smuggled by boat into Australia” (p. 76). Like the case of the Thaksin government in Thailand, the securitising move also resulted in the re-election of the Howard government making the act of securitisation a powerful re-election tool.

Having examined the three cases, Emmers concludes that non-traditional security threats are still treated as traditional ones because the prime referent object remains the state. Emmers underscores that “the state has usually been described as the only actor capable of responding effectively to non-traditional security issues” (p. 82).

Strictly speaking, the author fails to provide any new data on the state of drug trafficking, piracy/maritime terrorism, and people smuggling in the three country studies. The author uses data that have already been published elsewhere. The author merely analyses existing data using the securitisation theory as the framework. In fact, Emmers’s main contribution in this monograph is his impressive ability to apply the securitisation theory in the examination of non-traditional security issues in Thailand, Singapore and Australia. His excellent application of the securitisation theory puts his monograph on par with other works like *Security and Southeast Asia: Domestic, Regional, and Global Issues* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2003) authored by Alan Collins.

However, the title of the monograph is misleading. While it claims to have examined “non-traditional security in the Asia-Pacific”, it frustrates readers to discover that the scope only contains three countries in the Asia-Pacific. The monograph should be properly entitled “Non-Traditional Security in Thailand, Singapore and Australia: The Dynamics of Securitisation”. To be worthy of the present title, Emmers should have examined more countries in the Asia-Pacific like the securitisation of terrorism in the Philippines and the United States, the securitisation of the Aceh rebellion in Indonesia, the promotion of human security in the Asia-Pacific by Canada, and the like.

Despite this minor flaw, the monograph gives the reader a deeper understanding of non-traditional security issues. It also gives the reader a better appreciation of the securitisation theory. More importantly, it complements the *Non-Traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Select Publishing, 2001) edited by Andrew Tan and J.D. Kenneth Boutin. Finally, the monograph is laudable because, as Amitav

Acharya notes in the Foreword, “This work is the first to be published as part of the Non-Traditional Security in Asia (NTSA) Series.” Emmers provides a very good start and readers can look forward to the publication of other parts of the NTSA series.

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