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A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia. Edited by Andrew T.H. Tan. Glos.: Edward Elgar Press, 2007. Hardcover: 491pp.

Immediately after the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States, Southeast Asia began to be characterized by various media reports as the "second front" in the American-led "war on terrorism". At a news conference held in 2007 in Washington, D.C., Brigadier General John Toolan, Principal Director for South and Southeast Asia, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, described Southeast Asia as a "crucial front in the long war" against violent extremism. Recent mass casualty attacks in the region, such as the 2002 Bali bombing (which killed more than 200 individuals) and the 2004 sinking of the MV Superferry 14 in the Philippines (which killed more than 100 individuals), have bolstered fears that terrorism has become entrenched within the region. However, the recent proliferation of terrorism-focused scholarly literature, public discussions and government warnings regarding terrorism in Southeast Asia has been criticized by some as excessively alarmist and focused exclusively and unjustifiably on Islamist-related terrorism. The recently-published *Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia* seeks to address these concerns by providing a full-spectrum approach to terrorism and insurgency in the region.

This edited book is divided into six sections, each focusing on a particular theme of terrorism. Not only does the book cover Islamist terrorism — with extensively detailed chapters focusing on various jihadi groups — but it also highlights other non-religious terrorism (such as classic separatist insurgencies), and also includes an extensive analysis of terrorism emanating from the state itself, perhaps the most horrific form of terrorism in terms of scale of violence and numbers of individuals tortured and killed.

The first section of the book is written solely by the editor and provides a broad overview of terrorism in the region. Among other things, he argues that the persistence of terrorism and other sub-state violence in Southeast Asia can be attributed to "low levels of governance, ineffective institutions and a high level of corruption" (p. 17). The editor also proposes a useful four-class division model for analyzing different types of terrorist groups or terrorism-generating movements in the region, including (1) separatist insurgencies; (2) armed anti-government political opposition groups; (3) radical Islamist groups which aim to overthrow the central government

by force; and (4) an amorphous mix of mostly overt and currently legitimate radical organizations "that have known sympathies for radical Islamist ideology, but which are seen by governments to possess the potential for violence" (p. 45).

The second section focuses on the contemporary challenge of radical, militant Islam. A theme that emerges in many of the chapters is the connectivity between local movements and the larger, global Islamist-jihadi movement. For example, Australian analyst Greg Fealy asserts that an organizing theme found within most militant Muslim groups is a persistent narrative of humiliation and vulnerability fostered by the "ruthless manipulation and exploitation by the Christian and Jewish-controlled West, which is inherently hostile to Islam" (p. 65). This narrative can be found among disparate groups in the region, which may explain some instances of trans-regional cooperation among certain groups. This theme of connectivity between local and global terrorism trends is explored further in Adam Dolnik's examination of suicide bombings in Southeast Asia, which he characterizes as "not surprising" given the fact that "suicide bombings have become the most influential and fastest-spreading terrorist tactic in the world" (104). Dolnik notes that the planners for the various suicide attacks in Indonesia were pro-Al Qaeda members of Jemaah Islamiyah, thus reinforcing the theory of strong connectivity between local and global organizations. Dolnik ominously predicts that the tactic may likely spread into Southern Thailand and the Philippines in the near future.

Elena Pavlova provides a comprehensive look at the ideology underpinning Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), and particularly the group's doctrinal document known as *Pedoman Umum Perjuangan Al-Jama'ah Al-Islamiyah* (PUPJI) which, she argues was instrumental in refashioning JI as an "alternative community of believers" (p. 99). James Veitch and Badrus Sholeh provide graphic accounts of the inter-religious violence between Muslims and Christians in Central Sulawesi and the Maluku Islands (including Ambon) respectively. The theme that emerges in both of these chapters is the failure of the Indonesian government to effectively manage or mitigate the crisis, thus setting the stage for generation-long resentments that can later be exploited by external groups. For example, Sholeh somberly concludes that the conflict in the Maluku islands has "left a legacy of local radicalized groups that will continue to pose a serious security challenge for some time to come" (p. 162).

Section three moves away from contemporary Islamist terrorism to more traditional and separatist insurgencies, many of which

have existed for decades. Paul Rodell provides a particularly insightful overview of the insurgency that has plagued the southern Philippines for more than a century. He argues that the insurgency is the product of the "unsuccessful integration of the Muslim population into the Christian dominated nation-state and society" (p. 225). Kamarulzaman Askandar examines the Aceh insurgency, which until recently was "one of the longest and bloodiest insurgencies in Southeast Asia" (p. 248) and which was, ironically, rooted in the same movement (the 1953 Darul Islam rebellion) that gave rise to JI decades later.

In his survey of the insurgency in Southern Thailand, Thitinan Pongsudhirak makes the point that heightened global Muslim identity, stimulated after the 9/11 attacks in the United States, provides a context for — and arguably stimulant to — local Muslim grievances in southern Thailand, which of course have existed for over a century. On the other hand, Philips Vermonte characterizes the separatist movement in Papua as being a product of incomplete Dutch decolonization, Indonesian nationalism and Cold War geopolitics.

Section four addresses state terror, featuring examinations of state terror in Arakan (in Western Myanmar), Laos and East Timor. Syed Serajul Islam details the harrowing plight of Rohingyas in Myanmar who are "being killed, tortured, raped, incarcerated and expelled from their homeland" (p. 342). Gary Yia Lee describes the treatment of the Hmong, a minority group in Laos, who have been subjected to discrimination and armed suppression, while Peter Carey's description of East Timor under Indonesian occupation (1975–99) is a horrific and graphic account of Indonesian abuse (including murder, torture and rape) of East Timorese.

Section five consists of a stand-alone chapter written by Miriam Coronel Ferrer who addresses the communist insurgency in the Philippines. Notwithstanding the end of the Cold War, the Philippines continues to battle a persistent 40-year-old insurgency led by the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and its armed wing the New People's Army (NPA). Like many other writers in this book, Ferrer lists weak and ineffective governance as a key enabler for the communist insurgency. For example, Ferrer notes that CPP has been able to flourish (recruiting and consolidating its presence in rural communities) because of the fact that it functions almost like a separate state, "imposing its own brand of peace, order and social justice in areas where governance remains weak" (p. 430).

The final section of the book features two essays on counter-terrorism presented by two regionally-based scholars. Rohan Gunaratna, who has written extensively on Al Qaeda, describes the linkage between local groups and the larger Al Qaeda movement. Among other things, he argues that "the dispersal of al-Qaeda worldwide into less centralized nodes has dictated the dramatically altered security environment in Southeast Asia" (p. 437). Renato Cruz De Castro argues that contemporary terrorism in Southeast Asia can be tied to incomplete or disruptive globalization: "As globalization creates alienation and religious and cultural extinction, those who are alienated and marginalized may act out their discontent and grievances through terrorism" (p. 457).

Overall, this book establishes an ambitious agenda and, given the wealth of information presented (and the diversity of background and experience of the authors), accomplishes its objectives reasonably well. The book is not perfect of course. It suffers from the usual deficiency of many edited books: somewhat uneven quality of writing and thematic inconsistency in various chapters or sections. Nevertheless, the advantage of this book is its authenticity: the chapters are written by Southeast Asian scholars (or Western scholars who have spent their careers studying the region). The chapters reflect a level of regional and cultural understanding that is sometimes lacking in other analysis generated by those with little experience in the region. Most importantly, however, is the fact that the book is full-spectrum: it approaches the subject of political violence historically as well as in a contemporary sense, including examinations into both religious and non-religious groups and movements. This is an important and worthwhile book that should be read by anyone seeking to understand the history and evolution of political violence in Southeast Asia, including the origins of contemporary militant Islamist terrorism.

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