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### Book Note

**Caballero-Anthony, Mely, Ralf Emmers, and Amitav Acharya, eds. 2006. *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Dilemmas in Securitisation*. Aldershot: Ashgate. xii + 257 pp. ISBN 0-7546-4701-3 (hb). Price: £55.00.**

Reviewed by Geoff Harris [2 May 2007]

The move away from confining security issues to the territorial integrity of the state began in the early 1980s with the contributions of Ullman and Buzan. Wider definitions received much strength from the *Human Development Report 1994* and, since the late 1990s, from the Copenhagen School of securitization. The eleven chapters in this book are built on the Copenhagen School's understanding. This claims that any matter can be "securitized," that is, presented "as an existential threat which must be handled through extraordinary means, by breaking the normal political rules of the game if necessary" (p. 226).

The nine case studies in this book securitize a number of such matters for various parts of Asia – illegal migration (chapters 2 and 3), piracy (chapter 4), trafficking of small arms and drugs (chapter 5), health issues (chapters 6-8), poverty (chapter 9), and water resource competition (chapter 10). These threats have, as a common feature, the potential of unstructured chaos and turmoil which makes them difficult to tackle by conventional means. The actors involved, it should be noted, are not only states but can include NGOs, communities, even individuals.

The approach is particularly well applied in Bob Hadiwinata's chapter on poverty and the role of NGOs in Indonesia. Poverty tends to be securitized when the state is seen as having failed to protect the disadvantaged and, indeed, is seen as part of the problem. NGOs then serve as securitizing actors, with the disadvantaged as the referent object and the public as the target audience. There are a number of possible approaches that NGOs can take but all are likely to be based on the proposition that conventional economic approaches, particularly structural adjustment programs, do not serve the needs of the poor. Non-conventional alternatives, such as autonomous village development, may be promoted instead. NGOs may also engage in "speech acts" which lay the blame for the state of the poor at the feet of government, in the hope that it might react by paying more attention to poverty.

There are academics – and the reviewer is one – who see clear differences between political science and peace studies. One of these differences is the explicit concern of peace studies to resolve, or at least manage, conflicts whereas many political scientists seem to be content to analyze conflicts, perhaps assuming that this will somehow lead to their resolution. The securitization concept illustrated in this book is welcome in that it does not view the actors involved simply as competitors in a zero-sum game; rather, it sees the potential for collaborative, mutually beneficial outcomes. Collaborative problem-solving is never a quick fix, but it does have greater prospects of a sustainable resolution of conflicts.

The editors (all at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore) and the authors have done a very good job at integrating the chapters into a readable and cohesive book which meets its objective: to apply (and extend) the Copenhagen School's concept of securitization to a range of Asian examples.

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