Research Seminar

‘SARS Revisited: Limited Global Governance of Infectious Disease’.

By: Dr Frank Smith, Research Fellow, Griffith Asia Institute and Associate Investigator, CEPS.

Has globalization increased global governance of infectious disease? According to most literature about global governance and health security, globalization has radically increased the extent to which transnational outbreaks of infectious disease are governed by non-state actors and international organizations – particularly the World Health Organization (WHO). Allegedly, this increase in global governance was demonstrated during the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003.

However, I revisit the SARS outbreak and argue that global governance by the WHO and other non-state actors was of limited content and consequence. Ironically, the same was true during the eradication of smallpox decades earlier, which is another accomplishment often attributed to the WHO, like the control of SARS. In both cases, states determined the most important outcomes associated with treatment and control. Consequently, no radical change in global governance of infectious disease has occurred. Transnational outbreaks are still governed largely by powerful states and local governments.

Frank Smith is a research fellow at the Griffith Asia Institute and an associate investigator with the Centre of Excellence in Policing and Security. His research examines military and civilian decisions about international disaster and disease response. In addition, he has worked on several projects that address technology and national security at the RAND Corporation, Argonne National Laboratory, and Department of Defense. He has a B.S. in biological chemistry and Ph.D. in political science, both from the University of Chicago.

→ Thursday 14 May 2009
→ N16 Room 1.22
→ Nathan campus
→ 12.30 -1.50pm

To RSVP, please contact Natasha Vary on (07) 3735 5322 or n.vary@griffith.edu.au no later than 5.00pm Tuesday 12 May 2009