The Myths and Mysteries of Burma Strategic Studies

by Andrew Selth

While often dismissed as a small, weak and isolated member of the region, Burma is in fact an important actor in the Asia-Pacific strategic environment. Studying this subject, however, is not easy. Burma is a closed society and its government makes an effort to protect any information related to national security – a term with a wide meaning in Burma. Hard, verifiable facts on strategic issues are difficult to obtain. Many reports in the news media tend to be incomplete or misleading. Some of the more sensationalist stories that have appeared in recent years are simply incorrect. The picture is further clouded by the highly charged atmosphere that surrounds contemporary Burma studies. The public debate tends to be dominated by Burmese expatriates, foreign activists, academics and representatives of the military regime, many of whom have strong points of view and specific policy agendas. As a result, a number of myths have arisen about key aspects of Burma’s strategic environment, hampering clear-sighted analysis and policy formulation. The more enduring myths, briefly examined in this seminar, relate to the reported presence of Chinese military bases in Burma, the regime’s apparent use of chemical and biological agents, and its purported efforts to acquire nuclear weapons.

→ Thursday 10 May 2007
→ Room N72 -1.18 (Business 2)
→ Nathan campus
→ 12.30-1.50pm

A light lunch will be served on arrival. To RSVP, please contact Jill Moriarty on (07) 3735 7624 or j.moriarty@griffith.edu.au no later than 5.00pm Friday 4 May.