

**Regional Workshop on Energy and Non-Traditional Security
28-29th August 2008
Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore**

Executive Summary

The issue of energy security – namely the security of supply, demand and sustainable development of energy – has taken on added significance given the devastating effects of spiralling world oil prices. This has only exacerbated pressures on national economies and thwarted socio-economic developments of many developing countries. The significance of oil on the global economy has therefore transcended beyond the traditional political concerns and into the sphere of non-traditional issues such as human, health and food security, which have ultimately served to undermine the security of the state.

The stream of protests in various parts of Asia, as a result of governments' action of raising domestic fuel prices and their inability to mitigate soaring prices of basic food commodities, clearly underscores this trend. The demonstrations in Myanmar, Indonesia and Thailand in 2007 are a reminder of this trend and an indication of the risks posed to governments if they fail to provide the basic needs of their people, especially the poor and marginalised who would be most affected. Thus, it is critical to adopt a holistic and inter-disciplinary approach to addressing rising energy as well as human security needs.

Amidst spiralling world oil and food prices, the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, organised a Regional Workshop on Energy and Non-Traditional Security on the 28th and 29th August, 2008, in Singapore. The workshop was supported by the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia), which is led by the RSIS Centre for (NTS) Studies.

The workshop examined the attendant issues and challenges in addressing the problem of energy security. It focused mainly on the East Asian region and adopted a multi-disciplinary approach in examining the complex issues surrounding energy security and its impact on East Asia, state and human security.

The premise of the ensuing discussions was based on the consensus that traditional political thinking on the issue of energy security focused on ensuring supply without much emphasis on the socio-economic and environmental impact as well as the role of non-state actors.

Therefore, the workshop analysed, among other things, the shifting approach to energy security beyond the conventional, state-centric, geo-political approach toward a human security-centric approach.

A total of 26 scholars of varying expertise were convened and grouped under four themes which were split into seven sessions over the two days.

The first day covered two themes - contemporary views on energy security and country studies, which included major players from the northeast and southeast regions, the United States, India and Australia. The second day discussed the non-traditional dimensions of energy security, environmental and socio-economic impact, and the role of the market, technology and civil society.

The workshop concluded that states have indeed begun to factor in the non-traditional security issues into their national energy security policy frameworks albeit at varying degrees and pace. However, the challenge for most states remains securing their national energy needs while simultaneously mitigating its impact on the environment with an eye towards sustainable development in the long-run.