

NTS-Asia

- Security Beyond Borders-

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first edition of NTS-Asia. This newsletter marks the start of a series of activities and projects of the newly establishment Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia). The Consortium is a product of years of collaboration among research institutes and think tanks in Asia that work on the emerging field of Non-Traditional Security. It is supported by the Ford Foundation and currently comprises 14 member institutes, namely:-

- The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS)
- Centre of Asian Studies (CAS), University of Hong Kong
- Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Indonesia
- Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies (IAPS), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), China
- Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), Singapore
- Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China
- Institute of World Economy (IWE), Vietnam
- Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS), Philippines
- Ilmin International Relations Institute (IIRI), Korea University
- Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), India
- Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), Bangladesh
- Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Sri Lanka
- Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), Foundation for Universal Responsibility, India
- The WorldFish Center, Malaysia

The Secretariat of the Consortium is based in IDSS, Singapore. Consortium activities are coordinated by my colleague, Dr. Mely C Anthony, with the assistance of our Research Analyst / Webmaster, Ms. Sofiah Jamil. It is our vision that our Consortium builds on the knowledge and expertise of our network members in promoting the study of non-traditional security (NTS) and in being able to provide policy-relevant analysis in addressing a host of NTS challenges in the region. We also hope that with this monthly newsletter and our NTS website (www.idss-nts.org), we would jointly develop a core database of NTS sources in the region and become a major avenue in disseminating information regarding our relevant work on NTS. More importantly, our Consortium website will provide a vital network to be kept up to date with events and other activities organized by fellow Consortium members. Thus, we encourage network members as well as other members of the international community to contribute NTS-related articles for the website and future newsletter editions.

With that, I would like to take this opportunity to express my pleasure to work with fellow network members in building up the Consortium. Together, we can achieve our vision of an epistemic community that effectively addresses NTS issues and challenges

With my best wishes,



Amitav Acharya
Secretary General, Asian Consortium on NTS
Professor
Deputy Director and Head of Research
Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies





Network Members at the 2nd Regional Plenary Meeting (3rd – 4th Dec 2004) in Singapore

With the beginning of the third phase of the IDSS-Ford Foundation project on non-traditional security (NTS), the establishment of the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia) is highly monumental. Though not officially launched till the first week of December 2006, much groundwork has been covered in the initial 2 phases of the project. Since 2001, not only have NTS issues been identified and examined in depth, but ties have been strengthened and networks have been forged. As a result, NTS-Asia provides a mechanism for institutes in the Asian region to collectively highlight the significance of non-traditional security in determining the well-being of states and their peoples.

Why NTS?

NTS issues are challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that arise primarily out of non-military sources. These dangers are often transnational in scope, defying

unilateral remedies and requiring comprehensive – political, economic, social – responses, as well as humanitarian use of military force. It is with this in mind that the NTS project combines theoretical innovation, and empirical research programme and policy-relevant analysis and findings.

Major themes of NTS in Asia have been identified by Consortium members such as climate change, resource scarcity, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking and transnational crime. Brief descriptions of some of these concerns are as follows:-

Economic Security

Primarily concerned with material well-being, it should not be taken lightly as it overlaps with other NTS issues and a lack of it could result in grave repercussions. In Asia, economic insecurity is characterized by widespread poverty, irregular migration patterns, human and

drug trafficking and corruption, just to name a few. Such economic insecurity can potentially lead to instability and conflict and thus threaten state and human security.

Irregular Migration

One particular observation in this theme would be the tension between economics and social cohesion. The flow of migrants is often dictated by the pull of better economic well-being in the host country and/or the push out of poverty in one’s own country. Similar migration patterns are also observed between rural and urban areas within a state. These migrants are beneficial to their host countries as they are often a source of cheap labour thus allowing firms to maximize their profits. While this would conveniently suit the economic needs of foreign job seekers and local employers, it becomes problematic when the social and cultural fabric of the host country is threatened. This is particularly so when extreme poverty and suffering forces

victims to migrate via illegal means. Consequently, the fear of having one's nation overrun by migrants does not sit well with many. Moreover, images of migrant-filled slums are associated with poverty and petty crime and thus would give rise to social tensions and potentially conflict between the two groups. Hence, we see again the significance that economic security plays within the spectrum of irregular migration.

“The battle for peace has to be fought on two fronts... The security front where victory spells freedom from fear... [And]... the economic and social front, where victory means freedom from wants”

-UNDP, 1994 -

Pandemics

Pandemics in Asia are not a new phenomenon. AIDS, Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD), SARS and more recently, the Avian Bird flu, have had a tremendous impact on Asian states and their peoples. Even curable diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, diarrhea and influenza pose a grave risk to the masses of developing states.

The lack of economic security, no doubt plays a major role in this. Insufficient state funds (whether due to poor economic circumstances or corruption) often result in the lack of proper

preventive measures and health facilities. Consequently, individuals become less productive, mortality rates increase thus leading to an overall economic loss for the state. This, in itself, will feed back into economic insecurity and ultimately instability. Hence, the outbreak of deadly viruses has the potential to be more destructive than military conquests and other traditional security threats.

Environmental Security

While often put on the backburner, environmental security is an extremely broad sphere and, if not addressed effectively, poses highly damaging and even catastrophic outcomes. Environmental degradation, a depletion of natural resources and climate change are just some of the detrimental consequences that have been largely caused by industrialization. The effect of climate change, in particular, is astonishing and needs to be curtailed. Rising global temperatures, mounting sea levels threaten many low lying and small island regions of Asia, such as Singapore. Studies have also shown that the increased frequency of natural disasters (such as typhoons) is a result of climate change. Such effects further exacerbate economic insecurity and thus overall state security.

Yet, discussions on tackling climate change are complicated by the fact that many developing Asian states aspire to industrialize and attain levels of development on par with the West as soon as possible. While

sustainable development provides long term benefits, its costly capital delays the rate of development. The challenge for Asian states has therefore been to pool their resources and develop cost effective mechanisms for sustainable development.

Where to from here?

Hence we see that the study of NTS is vital in addressing pertinent challenges that the international community has failed to deal with effectively. Critics argue, however, that there is a tendency within NTS studies to draw up a long list of what constitutes a security threat, which would render the concept of NTS too broad and unwieldy. Others suggest that NTS are developmental issues rather than security threats. Such criticism only reflects the lack of in-depth understanding of the severity of the issues.

In this highly globalised world, where capitalism and democracy are increasingly the norm, levels of development are not only an indicator of affluence, but rather a crucial factor in determining the capacity of governments to meet societies' demands. The effects of this are more potent in Asia, where underdevelopment remains rampant and many increasingly question the legitimacy of their governments. The growing socio- economic disparities between the developed and developing world only serves to threaten a state's legitimacy and in turn, its stability. Hence, NTS cannot be sidelined as a peripheral problem but rather needs to be mainstreamed into people's





mindsets as being crucial to our security. Moreover, Government officials must seriously take into consideration socio-economic changes and effectively expand their understanding of security threats beyond the scope of the military.

More importantly, it must also be acknowledged that due to the transnational nature of many of these challenges, such as pandemics and the environment, states cannot deal with these issues on their own. Regional cooperation amongst states and non-state actors such as non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) is thus *vital* in tackling these security threats. By pooling together their resources and knowledge capabilities, only then can these actors play an effective role in addressing the increasingly complex realm of non-traditional security.

New Publications

Non-Traditional Security In Asia: Dilemmas in Securitisation, Mely Caballero-Anthony, Ralf Emmers, and Amitav Acharya (eds.), 2006

A comprehensive analysis of the nature of security issues confronting Asia. Given the growing trend of an expanding security agenda beyond the military dimension of inter-state relations, this volume provides an extensive study of emerging non-traditional challenges to this region. These challenges include: environmental degradation, illegal immigration, HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, transnational crime, poverty and underdevelopment.

In particular this volume –

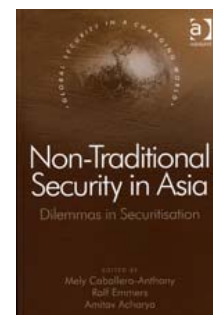
- Brings together regional perspectives from across Asia
- Examines how these perspectives are perceived and managed
- Develops a systematic, conceptual framework

Specifically this study draws upon, modifies and operationalises the concepts of securitisation and desecuritisation. A valuable contribution to existing studies on security and ideally suited to core and supplementary reading for third-level undergraduates and post-graduates of security studies, international relations and development studies.

Review

"A much needed empirically rich addition to the securitisation literature. This book is much more than a coverage of NTS in Asia, it develops, problematises and enriches our understanding of the securitisation/desecuritisation process. The theoretical developments are on their own invaluable but its application to Asia addresses on of the critiques of securitisation – that it is Euro-centric – and in so doing this volume helps to elucidate that critique."

-Dr Alan Collins, University of Wales Swansea, UK-



Studying Non-Traditional Security In Asia: Trend and Issues, Ralf Emmers, Mely Caballero-Anthony, and Amitav Acharya (eds.), 2006

The security challenges confronting Asia today go beyond the traditional dimensions of security and tend to be more diverse than what the region has ever known before. Issues like infectious diseases, trafficking in illegal drugs, irregular migration, environmental degradation, financial crisis, and natural disasters are increasingly being treated as pressing concerns with serious security implications. Such concerns pose threats to the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of nation-states as well as to the welfare and security of their respective societies and individuals.

Consisting of a collection of essays, this volume presents current trends and research directions in non-traditional security in Asia. It is structured around research projects undertaken by various research institutes in the region, showcasing their major findings and highlighting key implications for the field of non-traditional security studies.



It's a long and bumpy road for NTS-Asia but certainly not impossible. Non-traditional security threats must be taken seriously and be supported by effective responses from the global community. Leaders must go beyond rhetoric and seek to channel funds effectively to non-traditional security issues. Patience and perseverance are also vital in this process as the results are largely gradual rather than instant.

Forthcoming Publication

***Introduction on Non-Traditional Security* by Yu Xiaofeng, Pan Yihe and Wang Jiangli, of Zhejiang University. To be published by Zhejiang People Press in September.**

This book provides a comprehensive guide to the rise of non-traditional security concerns. Chapter 1 provides the theoretical background to the study NTS. Chapter 2 raises the problems and impediments faced by NTS research. Chapters 3 to 9 provides a range of various non-traditional security concerns; namely human security, terrorism, ecological security, economic security, cultural security, information security and international public security. Chapter 10 and 11 discuss the issue of NTS at the inter-state level and also describes several approaches taken by states with regards to NTS. The final chapter hones in on the role of NTS in China and how lies for it in the future

Consortium Activities

- 20 Aug Prof Amitav Acharya of IDSS Singapore gave a talk on "Asian Regionalism" at BISS in Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 21 Aug Dissemination Workshop on the project "Population Movements: Non-Traditional Issue in South Asian Security Discourse". Prof. Amitav Acharya of IDSS, Singapore presented the keynote paper on theoretical construct of "Securitisation" in the inaugural session. The project is supported by The Ford Foundation
- 25- 26 Aug 1st meeting of the Coordination Committee of the KAF-CSDS Study of Youth in India. Held at CSDS in Delhi, India
- 14- 15 Sept Workshop on Non-Traditional Security in Hanoi, Vietnam Conducted by Prof. Amitav Acharya, Dr. Mely Caballero-Anthony and Dr. Ralf Emmers of IDSS, Singapore. Workshop jointly organised by the Asia Foundation and Institute of International Studies (IIR), Vietnam.
- Oct Establishment of The Non-Traditional Security and Peace Development Research Center in Zhe Jiang University
- 4 – 5 Dec Official Launch of the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia), Singapore
- Early 2007 NTS-Asia Dissemination workshops in CSIS, Washington and San Francisco

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