



## NTS Bulletin May 2011 (Issue 1)

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- CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS
- ENERGY AND HUMAN SECURITY
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## MAIN HIGHLIGHT

### Thorium – The Way Forward for Safe, Affordable and Sustainable Nuclear Energy?

The problems caused by Japan's recent nuclear power plant crisis have revived the debate on the future of nuclear energy. Discussions appear to be centred around the dilemma of whether or not to rely on nuclear technology as a viable long-term source of cheap energy. According to fierce opponents of nuclear power, the situation in Japan should serve as a trigger for a global drop in the use of nuclear energy. On the flipside, nuclear energy proponents argue that, in fact, the events that unfolded in Fukushima demonstrate that nuclear energy continues to be a safe source of energy that facilitates development, which consequently makes us more resistant to forces of nature such as earthquakes or tsunamis.

However, there is a third dimension to this debate which has recently piqued global interest. According to some scientists, nuclear energy has a future. However, it is not one that is rooted in uranium or plutonium. It has been argued that another metal, thorium, could be a much cheaper, cleaner and safer alternative to plutonium and uranium.

Thorium is a naturally occurring radioactive chemical element that is available in most rocks and soils, in quantities four times more than uranium. A thorium fuel cycle offers several potential advantages over a uranium fuel cycle, including the superior physical and nuclear properties of the fuel, enhanced proliferation resistance and reduced nuclear waste production. A tonne of thorium can reportedly produce as much energy as 200 tonnes of uranium, or 3.5 million tonnes of coal.

These same scientists argue that the main reason for the limited interest in thorium thus far is that it cannot be used in the production of nuclear weapons, and that due to this, uranium and plutonium's potential were given greater research priority, particularly during the Cold War era. This feature of thorium would certainly appeal to both sides of the current debate, and it is perhaps time for us to further explore this possibility.

### Additional Info:

- Burns, Stuart, 'Is Thorium the Future of Nuclear Power', *Oil Price.com*, 31 March 2011.
- Conrad, Michael, 'Forget Uranium, Let's Use Thorium in Nuclear Reactors', *Vancouver Sun*, 9 April 2011.
- 'Using Thorium Could Reduce Risk of Nuclear Power', *BBC*, 12 April 2011.
- Fox, Eric, '4 Clean-energy Alternatives to Uranium', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 14 April 2011.
- Houghton, Des, 'Nuclear Future Can Be Viable', *The Courier Mail*, 20 April 2011.
- 'Time to Revive, Not Kill, the Nuclear Age', *Financial Times*, 24 April 2011.
- Cribb, Julian, 'Why Is No One Talking about Safe Nuclear Power?', *The Canberra Times*, 26 April 2011.

# CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS



## News & Commentaries

- 'Asia-Pacific Women Demand Gender-sensitive Commitments for Climate Justice!', *GenderCC*, 8 April 2011.
- 'ASEAN, Japan Agree to Enhance Cooperation in Addressing Natural Disasters', *The Philippine Star*, 10 April 2011.
- Rillorta, Paul, 'City Creates Team to Counter the Effects of Climate Change', *Baguio Midland Courier*, 17 April 2011.
- 'Scientists Call for Climate Change Early-warning System', *Reuters*, 18 April 2011.
- Grumbine, R. Edward and Xu Jianchu, 'Mekong at the Crossroads', *chinadialogue*, 18 April 2011.
- Gilroy, William G., 'Human Rules May Determine Environmental "Tipping Points"', *Notre Dame News*, 18 April 2011.
- Samad, Saleem, 'Bangladesh Seeks International Regime for Climate Change Refugees', *All Headline News*, 19 April 2011.
- Byravan, Sujatha and Sudhir Chella Rajan, 'Unprepared for the Rising Sea Level', *The Hindu*, 19 April 2011.
- Simpson, Peter, 'Environmentalists Call for Transparency in Chinese Dam Projects', *Voice of America*, 20 April 2011.
- Singer, Jane, 'Disaster Expert Seeks Better Tsunami Defense', *The Japan Times*, 23 April 2011.

## Selected Publications

- Laksmana, Evan A., 2011, *Climate Insecurities: Exploring the Strategic Implications for Asia-Pacific Armed Forces*, Asia Security Initiative Policy Series No. 13, Singapore: Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies.

This paper attempts to explore the implications of climate insecurities for the armed forces of the Asia-Pacific region. Although it does not provide a conclusive analysis of climate change impacts, it suggests that the region's armed forces should take into account the various security implications in their policy formulations.

- Wheeler, David, 2011, *Quantifying Vulnerability to Climate Change: Implications for Adaptation Assistance*, CGD Working Paper 240, Washington, DC: Center for Global Development.

This paper attempts to examine countries' vulnerability to climate change by developing three risks indicators: extreme weather events, sea level rise and agricultural productivity loss. It also looks at the implications for resources allocation. The paper concludes that all countries must be aware of the risks of climate change, some countries have to play a greater role in the control of carbon emissions and conventional divisions between countries should be avoided.

- World Bank, 2011, *World Development Indicators 2011*, Washington, DC.

This report aims to provide relevant, high quality, internationally comparable statistics about development and the quality of people's lives around the globe, revealing the progress made towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. User-friendly data on environmental hazards, natural or man-made disasters and climate change are also included and made accessible to policymakers, development specialists, students and the public.

- Almendra, Francisco, Logan West, Li Zheng et al., 2011, *CCS Demonstration in Developing Countries: Priorities for a Financing Mechanism for Carbon Dioxide Capture and Storage*, Working Paper, Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.

This working paper explores some of the key issues emerging around the effective financing of carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) demonstration projects in developing countries. It presents a series of options and recommendations to international policymakers and agencies working to support CCS development in a non-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) context.

## Events & Announcements

- 'Building Resilient Communities: Community-managed Disaster Risk Reduction', 9–20 May 2011, Cavite, Philippines.
- 'South Asia Media Workshop on Adaptation to Climate Change', 18–20 May 2011, Dhulikhel, Nepal.
- 'International Day for Biological University 2011: Forest Biodiversity', 22 May 2011, Worldwide.

# ENERGY AND HUMAN SECURITY



## News & Commentaries

- Price, Gareth, 'Minister: "No Turning Back" for Poland and Nuclear Energy', *Warsaw Business Journal*, 29 March 2011.
- Brown, Kevin, 'Asia's American Oil Venture Could Be Costly', *Financial Times*, 12 April 2011.
- Luft, Gal, 'The Pipeline Paradox: Why Is the United States Helping Iran Sell Natural Gas?', *Foreign Policy*, 12 April 2011.
- Goma, Eman, 'Arab Unrest, Oil Price Top Asia-Mideast Energy Talks', *Reuters*, 15 April 2011.
- 'Iran Calls for Oil Investments, Asks West to Cooperate on Energy Security', *Xinhua*, 18 April 2011.
- 'Time to Revive, Not Kill, the Nuclear Age', *Financial Times*, 24 April 2011.
- 'Asia to Buoy Australia in Clean Energy Shift', *Channel NewsAsia*, 25 April 2011.
- 'Energy-rich C. Asia, Gulf States Plan New Rail Route', *Reuters*, 25 April 2011.

## Selected Publications

- Prantl, Jochen, 2011, *Crafting Energy Security Cooperation in East Asia*, Policy Brief No. 9, Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies.

This policy brief highlights the importance of cooperation for guaranteeing energy security and points out that there exists a regime complex (a patchwork of loosely coupled rules, regulations and institutions that are overlapping and sometimes competing) instead of an integrated regime in East Asia. The brief argues that an energy-security regime complex may have advantages over an integrated regime as it provides building blocks for cooperation by being more adaptable, flexible and representative of the voices of small countries. These advantages can be exploited through stakeholder bargaining, multilateral pluralism and executive leadership.

- Florini, Ann and Benjamin K. Sovacool, 2011, 'Bridging the Gaps in Global Energy Governance', *Global Governance*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 57–74.

This paper points out that effective energy governance is largely absent at both global and national levels and this would have serious consequences on other issues that are closely linked to energy. It identifies five issue areas that are interconnected with energy which would have to be addressed in order to improve global energy governance and emphasises that successful energy management requires a comprehensive approach.

## Events & Announcements

- '2011 International Conference on Alternative Energy in Developing Countries and Emerging Economies', 25–28 May 2011, Hat Yai, Thailand.
- 'International Renewable Energy & Environment Conference 2011', 24–26 June 2011, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- 'World Shale Gas Conference and Exhibition', 7–10 November 2011, Houston, US.

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# FOOD SECURITY



## News & Commentaries

- Banks, Martin, 'Food Security "Most Dramatic Problem" Facing Mankind', *The Parliament*, 31 March 2011.
- Alexander, Harriet, 'World Hungers for More Food', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 April 2011.
- 'Bayer Opens US\$28 Million Seed Research Lab in Singapore', *The China Post*, 6 April 2011.
- Dyer, Gwynne, 'Real Population Density and the Future of Food', *Embassy*, 13 April 2011.
- 'Food: Biofuels Make a Comeback as Prices Rise', *IRIN*, 18 April 2011.
- Lim, Kevin, 'Cargill Unit Black River Plans \$400 Mln Asian Food Fund', 18 April 2011.
- Berthelsen, John, 'Starting a Food Revolution', *Asia Sentinel*, 19 April 2011.
- Mahajan, Sushmita, 'Radiation Threat in Imported Food from Japan – Real or Exaggerated?', *The Asset*, 19 April 2011.
- Bacala, Toni, 'Climate-smart Agriculture: The Future of Global Food Security', *MediaGlobal*, 20 April 2011.
- Ali, Shimelse and Vera Eidelman, 'The Surge in Food Prices: What's Different This Time?', *International Economic Bulletin*, 21 April 2011.
- 'Food Inflation at 8.74%; PM Calls for Enhancing Food Security', *IBN*, 21 April 2011.
- Fan, Shenggen, 'Seven Steps to Prevent Recurring Food Crises', *The Jakarta Post*, 25 April 2011.

- Lin, See-Yan, 'Can the World Still Feed Itself in 2050 When the Global Population Hits 9.6 Billion?', *The Star*, 23 April 2011.

### Selected Publications

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2011, *Global Food Price Monitor – 7 April 2011*, Rome: FAO.

This report is part of a monthly series of updates on global food prices, global food security trends and changes, and developments in food security such as early warning systems and region-specific news compiled by the FAO. This issue highlights changes in international cereal prices across Africa, Far East Asia, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Latin America and the Caribbean.

- McMichael, Philip and Mindi Schneider, 2011, 'Food Security Politics and the Millennium Development Goals', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 119–39.

This article reviews and compares two approaches to food security and their political and ecological implications. The first is the World Bank's new 'agriculture for development' initiative which seeks to improve small-farmer productivity with new inputs, and their incorporation into global markets via value chains originating in industrial agriculture. The second is an alternative claim, originating in 'food sovereignty' politics, which demands small-farmer rights to develop bio-regionally specific agro-ecological methods and provision for local, rather than global, markets.

- Brown, Lester R., 2011, 'The New Geopolitics of Food', *Foreign Policy*, May/June.

In this article, Brown explores the geopolitics of food with particular reference to inequitable distribution and access to resources; price surges and a lack of buffer for those most in need; the impacts of food insecurity on the environment, energy, and climate; increasing pressure on global agricultural production; and the growing and evolving demands for food from the developing world, especially Asia.

### Events & Announcements

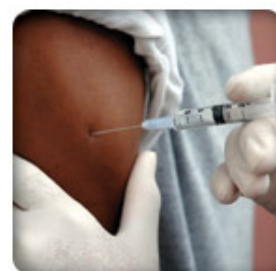
- 'Transition towards Sustainable Food Consumption and Production in a Resource Constrained World', 4–5 May 2011, Budapest, Hungary.
- 'SEMEAR 2011: First Brazilian Summit of Non GMO Products and Seed Markets', 10–11 May 2011, São Paulo, Brazil.
- 'Risk-based Food Control Programs in Southeast Asia: A Regional Seminar-Workshop', 17–19 May 2011, Laguna, Philippines.
- 'Third Expert Meeting for South-South Cooperation on Biodiversity for Development', 18–20 May 2011, Incheon City, South Korea.

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## HEALTH AND HUMAN SECURITY

### News & Commentaries

- Sri, Amanda, 'South Asians in Crying Need for Safe Water, Sanitation', *Xinhua*, 3 April 2011.
- 'FAO Calls on Asia to Tighten FMD Controls; Outbreak Reported in Taiwan', *MercoPress*, 4 April 2011.
- Lim, Jeremy and Seetharam Kallidaikurichi, '3 Myths that Plague Healthcare in Asia', *Today*, 4 April 2011.
- Ramos-Araneta, Macon, 'Health Dept Fears Serious Dengue Crisis', *Manila Standard Today*, 4 April 2011.
- 'Asia-Pacific Region Committed to Achieving Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support', *UNAIDS*, 8 April 2011.
- 'Monkeys Main Reservoir of Human Malaria in Southeast Asia', *Daily News & Analysis*, 8 April 2011.
- 'North Korea: Typhoid Epidemic Unleashes Panic in Pyongyang', *Spero News*, 19 April 2011.
- Macan-Markar, Marwaan, 'Polio Threatens Burma', *IPS*, 22 April 2011.
- Pak, Jennifer, 'Malaysia Obesity Campaign Targets Students', *BBC*, 19 April 2011.



### Selected Publications

- World Health Organization (WHO), 2011, *Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework for the Sharing of Influenza Viruses and Access to Vaccines and Other Benefits*, Geneva.

This document outlines the WHO's new framework for the sharing of influenza viruses and for equitable access to the medical and technological benefits resultant from virus-sharing. The framework includes certain binding legal regimes for the WHO, national influenza laboratories worldwide and industry partners in both developed and developing countries that will strengthen future pandemic responses.

- Ross, Emma and David Heymann, 2011, 'Smallpox: Threat Resurrected', *The World Today*, Vol. 67, No. 5, London: Chatham House.

This article weighs in on the contemporary smallpox dilemma that will be debated at the upcoming World Health Assembly: whether and when to destroy the last remaining stocks of the smallpox virus, which are still stored in laboratories in Russia and the US more than 30 years after its successful eradication. It outlines the main arguments for and against destroying the remaining smallpox stocks, as well as the potential problems that may arise from either retaining or destroying the stocks, including irresponsible laboratory re-creation of the virus and research laboratory accidents causing an unintended smallpox outbreak.

- Li, Hongyan, Ong Suan Ee and Bill Durodie, 2011, '(Un)natural Disasters: Health Responses after Natural Hazards in Southeast Asia', *NTS Perspectives*, No. 6, Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies.

This paper examines three natural disasters in Southeast Asia, namely the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and the Pacific typhoons of 2009, focusing on their impacts on Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines respectively. It seeks to highlight the distinction between natural hazards and natural disasters, arguing that the occurrence of the former does not inevitably lead to the latter. Whether a disaster results is not only dependent on the intensity of the natural hazard itself, but more importantly, is contingent on pre-existing in-country response, rehabilitation and reconstruction conditions.

### **Events & Announcements**

- 'World Malaria Day', 25 April 2011, Worldwide.
- 'WHO Global Forum: Addressing the Challenge of Noncommunicable Diseases', 27 April 2011, Moscow, Russia.
- 'The First Global Conference on Healthy Lifestyles and Noncommunicable Diseases Control', 28–29 April 2011, Moscow, Russia.
- 'Global Launch of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020', 11 May 2011.
- 'Sixty-fourth World Health Assembly', 16–24 May 2011, Geneva, Switzerland.
- 'World No Tobacco Day', 31 May 2011, Worldwide.

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### **About the Centre:**

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies was inaugurated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan in May 2008. The Centre maintains research in the fields of Food Security, Climate Change, Energy Security, Health Security as well as Internal and Cross-Border Conflict. It produces policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building capacity to address NTS issues and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The Centre also provides a platform for scholars and policymakers within and outside Asia to discuss and analyse NTS issues in the region.

In 2009, the Centre was chosen by the MacArthur Foundation as a lead institution for the MacArthur Asia Security Initiative, to develop policy research capacity and recommend policies on the critical security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific.

The Centre is also a founding member and the Secretariat for the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia). More information on the Centre can be found at [www.rsis.edu.sg/nts](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/nts).