

# NTS-Asia Newsletter

CONSORTIUM OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY STUDIES IN ASIA

49th Edition | August 2021



Photo Credit: Flickr/ Secretaria Especial de Saúde Indígena (Sesai).

## LATEST NEWS

The Covid-19 pandemic has been around for almost two years and various developments can be discerned during this time. First is the ebb and flow of the number of infections as the virus has mutated and the more virulent variants began to spread. This has resulted in overwhelmed healthcare facilities, overstretched healthcare personnel, and a surge in Covid-19-related deaths in countries like India and Indonesia. Fresh infection cases were also detected in countries that have previously managed to keep the number low such as Vietnam and Singapore. This was happening against the backdrop of vaccine rollouts that were likewise facing uneasy hurdles such as logistical issues and resistance from some segments in the societies. Interestingly, despite all these, some countries already began to open their borders or were making plans towards allowing overseas travels soon.

With all the different things taking place simultaneously, it is hard to tell whether the situation will improve anytime soon. The progress may be more incremental than many might have thought. However, there are reasons to hope. For one, the global economy has shown some degree of resilience, at least to date. Secondly, countries have proven to be willing to respond to calls for aids from those countries that suffered from a shortage of medical equipment. These are positive development that need to be continuously strengthened as we continue to deal with the virus until it is fully contained.

## MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARIAT

After postponing our annual conference last year because of the pandemic, we are proud to have successfully organised the 5th NTS-Asia Consortium annual meeting in April this year. With the theme of "Asian Security in a Post-Covid-19 Environment," the virtual convention has brought together members from Southeast Asia, South Asia and Northeast Asia to share their perspectives on issues such as crisis impact on inequality and vulnerable groups; cybersecurity and transnational crimes; and crisis response and sustainable future. Shortly after the conclusion of the conference, we welcomed Dr Jyoti M.Pathania, Senior Fellow & Chairperson

Outreach of the Centre For Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) based in New Delhi, India, as a member of the Consortium. Dr Pathania was a guest speaker at the 5th annual meeting, and her expertise has contributed richly to the discussion.

Additionally, in the past year, the NTS-Asia Consortium Secretariat has launched a number of internet-based initiatives that are aimed at increasing the visibility and reach of the work of our members. These include the creation of the NTS-Asia Facebook page, the inclusion of other types of materials such as members' external publications and media interviews on

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)

Humanitarian Futures in Southeast Asia II

30 September - 01 October 2021 | Singapore  
Click [here](#) for more details.

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### NEWSLETTER TEAM

Mely Caballero-Anthony and Margareth Sembiring

Designed by Joey Liang

the NTS-Asia webpage, and the creation of attractive monthly Electronic Direct Mail featuring members' publications and activities.

We are excited about all these latest developments that have come up despite this pandemic period. We look forward to stronger collaborations with and among members.

Warmest regards,  
Mely Caballero-Anthony  
Secretary-General

# Researcher Profile

## Dr. Jyoti M. Pathania

Dr Jyoti M. Pathania is an academician and analyst with more than 20 years of teaching and research experience in various Indian universities to include, a few - Symbiosis University, Jiwaji University, Jammu University, Law College, St. Xavier's and Amity University.

A doctorate in Political Science; she graduated in Political Science (Hons) from Lady Shri Ram College; and secured Third Rank in Delhi University; she earned her M.A. and M.Phil. Degree in International Politics, from School of International Studies/JNU, New-Delhi; She was selected to go on a scholarship to the European Peace University (Austria, Spain and Ireland) where she pursued an advanced Master Degree in 'Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies'.

Recipient of Prof. Randhir Singh Award (for distinction in Political Theory); Prof NN Aggarwal Memorial award (for excellence in seminar presentation) Delhi University, also awarded by the former COAS (now CDS) Gen Bipin Rawat for excellence in research and establishing academic cooperation with foreign think tanks. She has contributed in various journals and foreign newspapers, authored a book - India and Pakistan, Confidence Building Measures (2012). Published a co-edited Monograph titled Non- Traditional & Traditional Security: South Asia. She is also the Founding Editor of Online Indian Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution (2016).www.oijpcr.org. in and broadcasts her Podcasts titled-'Indian Conflict Resolution'. Her areas of interests & specialisation are Conflict Resolution, Non-Traditional Security, Women issues,



International Politics, United Nations and South Asia.

Currently, she is Senior Fellow & Chairperson Outreach Committee at Centre for Land Warfare Studies, (CLAWS) New-Delhi, India.

# REFLECTIONS

## Reconceptualising Security Discourse: South Asian Context

By Dr. Jyoti M. Pathania

Centre for Land Warfare Studies, (CLAWS) New-Delhi, India



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Re-conceptualisation of security has become necessary because of gradual, fundamental changes in the international system. Some of the prime factors which necessitated new thinking on the concept and scope of security studies was the demise of Cold War leading to a globally interdependent world; change in nature of warfare to include a struggle for techno-economic superiority; political and cultural space rather than purely conventional military might. States, today, are more than ever dependent on international society and institutions.<sup>1</sup> Our century saw a rise in

<sup>1</sup> Sujit Dutta (1997), 'In search of New Security Concepts', Strategic Analysis, April 1997

the prominence of non-traditional security issues, be it related to climate change, natural disasters or the ongoing COVID -19 pandemic.

### Genesis of Non-Traditional Thinking

The genealogy of the idea can be traced back to, the growing dissatisfaction with prevailing notions of development and security in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Economics undoubtedly led the way with its critiques of the dominant models of economic development beginning in the 1960s. In the middle 1970s, the **Multinational World Order Models**

**Project** (WOMP), launched an ambitious effort to envision and construct a more stable and just world order, and as a part of this endeavour drew attention to the problem of individual well-being and safety.<sup>2</sup>

The most important forerunners of the non-traditional security issues were a series of multinational independent commissions composed of prominent leaders, intellectuals and academicians, for instance, in the '70s the Club of Rome group produced a series of volumes on the **'World**

<sup>2</sup> Saul Mendelowitz (1975), 'On the Creation of a Just World Order', New York: The Free Press.

**Problematique** which were premised on the idea that there were a host of complex problems troubling people of all nations: poverty, degradation of the environment, alienation of youth, rejection of traditional values, inflation and other monetary and economic disparities. He may be concerned about personal power or the power of the nation in which he lives. He may worry about a world war ..... or a war next week with a rival clan in his neighbourhood<sup>3</sup>

In the 1980s two other independent commissions, the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, chaired by Willy Brandt, issued the so-called **North-South Report** (1980) which raised issues like how to overcome world hunger, mass misery and alarming disparities between the living conditions of rich and poor<sup>4</sup>, and the second commission, the **Independent**

3 Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen Randers & William W. Behrens (1972), 'The Limits to Growth', New York: Universe Books, pp. 17-18.

4 The Independent Commission on International Development Issues (1980), 'North-South: A Programme for Survival', Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, pp. 13.

**Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues** (1980's), chaired by Olof Palme, authored the famous 'Common Security Report', which acknowledged that common security requires that people live in dignity and peace, they have enough to eat; can find work and live in a world without poverty and destitution. <sup>5</sup> In the decade of 90's, the Stockholm Initiative on Global Security and Governance issued a call for 'common responsibility' (1991) referred to 'challenges to security other than political rivalry and armaments' to include environmental degradation, excessive population growth and movement and lack of progress towards democracy. The Commission on Global Governance's report (1995), 'Our Global Neighbourhood' the security of people and the security of the planet was also added.

The first explicit document mentioning the name '**Human Security**' as an important element of non-traditional security was the UNDP report of 1994, wherein 'security was

5 Kanti Bajpai (2000), 'Human Security: Concept and Measurement', Occasional Papers, August 2000

equated with the security of individuals and not security of territory alone'. This new concept of security was to be reflected in the lives of our people, not in weapons of the countries. Fundamentally, human security will be achieved through development, not ... through arms.<sup>6</sup> The UNDP's human development report of 1994 titled '**Redefining Security: The Human Dimension**' offered an alternative to traditional security, and listed seven specific values of human security viz. economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.

### Differentiating Non-Traditional Security from Traditional Security

The paradigm shift in the concept of security from the old traditional to the contemporary non-traditional issue can become clearer by understanding the difference between the two security paradigms:

6 Mahbub ul Haq, 'New Imperatives of Human Security', RGICS Paper No. 17, RGICS.

Traditional Security	Non-Traditional Security
Orthodox belief in security wherein the primary objective is to ensure the survival of nation- state	Re-conceptualisation of security wherein the primary objective is to ensure the survival of people
Primary means of defence against the enemy is by the use of military means or force	Use of international law, international organisation and global governance norms
Traditional security issues are as old as the state itself	These are new threats to security, which have come up with urgencies of the post-cold war era
Unilateralist, narrow concept of security	Multilateralist, broad-based concept of security.
Traditional threats largely originate from the state itself	Non-military threats largely originate from non- state actors and transnational actors like terrorists' groups, crime groups, climate change, health crisis etc
Realist Theory of International Relations	Liberal Theory of International Relations

Source: Annotated by the Author

### Interface between Traditional and Non-Traditional Security

The non-traditional security (NTS) concerns are not mutually exclusive but overlap & have linkages with traditional security issues. To address these NTS issues has become the urgent need of our times as many of these issues are beyond the capacity of the individual states to tackle alone; there exists an increasing interdependence of security issues like for instance, an increase in the environment of traditional non-state actors as emerging security threats. e.g., Al-Qaida; such non-traditional security threats have the potential to destabilise the world and reverse decades of hard work in social and economic sectors. The COVID-19 Pandemic is a case in point.

Non-military threats in the form of overpopulation, cross-border terrorism, environmental degradation, health issues, transnational criminal organisations, corruption, and internal disputes arising

out of the security of natural resources and employment pose a challenge for Home, Economic, Foreign and Defence departments. There is an urgent need to address these problems at the regional, national and global levels. Many a time, these kinds of problems demand solutions which are much beyond a military solution.

Such non-traditional issues should be included in our national policy framework. We have to realise that if we do not include them in our policies, the chances of survival for our future generations will be bleak, given the extent of damage already caused, and continuing, to our habitat on Earth. The transnational character of such issues needs to be addressed and internalised promptly by all the researchers, scholars and policymakers of security management.

### South Asian Scholars

A few South Asian scholars have examined non-traditional security issues where non-military means have been predominantly

employed to threaten the security of a nation- states; some academics pitch in for a 'pluralistic co-existence' of differing concepts of security, to include 'national security', 'collective security' and 'environmental security' along with 'human security'. Other scholars review key non-traditional security (NTS) issues facing the region, like excessive military spending; rising food costs; natural disasters, environmental degradation and the lack of long-term energy planning by South Asian countries. <sup>7</sup>

Few analysts have also researched on the 'interconnected challenges' of non-traditional security issues which include, the food-energy-water nexus, climate change, transnational crime, terrorism, disaster relief and economic performance which has huge implications for the South Asia, which fared poorly in the 2020 World Risk Index on strengthening their abilities

7 Farooq Sobhan (2011), Non-traditional Security Challenges in South Asia, NBR Special Report 28, June 28, 2011, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/nontraditional-security-challenges-in-south-asia/>



to prepare and adapt to extreme events.<sup>8</sup>

The nation must look beyond the conventional military security threats, address the non-traditional security issues in order to have a stable comprehensive and holistic security. South Asian region assets are its historical linkages, sociological and natural geographic connect, an

<sup>8</sup> Down to Earth, <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/how-ready-is-india-for-climate-change-not-much-says-this-report-73502>

ideal condition for good neighbourly relations and trade; yet it remains the least integrated region in the world. Non-Traditional Security Challenges facing the region, like natural disasters, waters crisis, locusts' problems, poverty & hunger, including the ensuing epidemic are transnational in character, encompassing the region as a whole. Such common challenges need a common action plan or a joint agenda. Regional organisations

like SAARC, BIMSTEC, SAFTA, etc, should be strengthened for such non-traditional security concerns. Comprehensive security covering the non-traditional security dimensions is urgently needed to be formulated and strengthened for the progress, development and survival of the future generations of the South Asian Region.

# Researcher Profile

## Mr. Christopher Chen

Mr. Christopher Chen is an Associate Research Fellow at the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore.

He obtained a Master of International Relations and a Bachelor of Arts (Media & Communication and Politics & International Studies) from the University of Melbourne (UniMelb), Australia. He currently specialises in the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. His research interests include HADR in the Asia-Pacific;

institutional memory; human rights in Asia; humanitarian technology; politics and conflicts in the Asia-Pacific.

Prior to joining the Centre, he served an internship with the International Detention Coalition (IDC) in Melbourne where he was tasked to produce advocacy communications materials and periodic insights. He also produced a briefing paper to assist the IDC in developing its strategy for engagement with ASEAN on the issue of child immigration detention and on promoting alternatives to detention.



**Mr. Christopher Chen**  
Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies  
(NTS Centre), RSIS

# REFLECTIONS

## Future-Proofing the Aid Sector with Artificial Intelligence

By Christopher Chen

Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)



Photo: Freepik.com

As the international humanitarian community collectively acknowledges the need for sector-wide change, rhetoric has focused mainly on improving the effectiveness of humanitarian action. Aid workers and organisations have been trying to use new and emerging technologies to

facilitate earlier, faster, and potentially more effective humanitarian action. Part of this technological shift involves the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to optimise humanitarian responses and field operations.

### AI for Anticipatory Humanitarian Action

Embracing innovation is part and parcel of future-proofing the humanitarian sector. Future-proofing refers to the process of anticipating future shocks and stresses and developing methods to minimise

their effects. Artificial Intelligence(AI)/ Machine Learning(ML)-based interventions contribute to this by automating and positively impacting various aspects of humanitarian work.

The ICRC [defines](#) AI systems as “computer programs that carry out tasks – often associated with human intelligence – that require cognition, planning, reasoning or learning”. It also defines ML systems as “AI systems that are ‘trained’ on and ‘learn’ from data, which ultimately define the way they function”. An example of this is [IBM’s ML system](#) that analyses drivers of migration and uses the data to forecast cross-border movements and refugee flows. As a United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) report [states](#), these systems can facilitate analysis and interpretation of large and complex humanitarian datasets to improve projections and decision-making in humanitarian settings.

Developments in AI/ML and predictive analytics make it possible to anticipate when disasters are about to strike. This facilitates a more proactive, anticipatory approach to humanitarian action and

enables humanitarians to deliver more timely assistance to populations. AI may be harnessed to improve workflows and optimise the disbursement of aid. For example, in July 2020, predictive analytics frameworks implemented by the UN and other partner organisations forecasted severe flooding along the Jamuna River in Bangladesh. In response, UN OCHA’s Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated and released funding – roughly \$5.2 million - to several humanitarian agencies, which enabled them to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations before flooding reached critical levels. This was CERF’s fastest-ever disbursement of funds in a crisis.

### Ethical Considerations

While aid agencies might benefit from the use of AI/ML, these technologies can inadvertently bring risks to vulnerable populations. Inadequate data governance and protection might cause unintended harm to vulnerable populations, while poor artificial intelligence and machine learning implementation can exacerbate and intensify existing inequalities and bias. As such, these risks and challenges must be

identified and mitigated to ensure that the use of new technology does no harm and protects the life and dignity of those it is intended to serve.

Without the right safeguards, AI/ML could exacerbate inequalities and further marginalise vulnerable groups. Learned bias in AI/ML can lead to further discrimination of vulnerable populations. This challenge underscores the importance of users having a healthy scepticism when they engage with AI/ML processes. Especially in situations involving vulnerable and at-risk populations, human control and judgement in applications of AI/ML should be prioritised. AI and ML systems should only be used to augment analytical processes; it should not replace the human element involved in decision-making. This will help to preserve a level of ethical accountability and ensure that digital transformation in the sector takes place in a fair and ethical manner. While guidelines or legislative frameworks are important elements of an ethical and safe AI/ML ecosystem, they need to be underpinned by a human-centred approach.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### Bangladesh Institute of Peace & Security Studies (BIPSS)

Jubaida Auhana Faruque, Biden Administration: Re-engaging with South Asia, Commentary

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Subham Barua, The Myanmar Coup D’état: The Seeds of Colonialism and Implications on Regional Security, Commentary

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Subham Barua, Paris Commitments and the Nationally Determined Contributions: The Role of the Military, Commentary

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Peace and Security Review, Volume 9, Number 22, Third Quarter 2020



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Jubaida Auhana Faruque, Withdrawal of U.S. Forces from Afghanistan: A South Asian Perspective, Commentary

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## Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS)

WISCOMP – RCSS Joint Publication "South Asian Perspectives on Sustainable Development and Gender Equality", Book, 28 June 2021



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RCSS Newsletter 2021 – Issue 1, Newsletter, 23 June 2021



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Human Trafficking And Drug Trade In Sri Lanka: A Twin Concern, 4 June 2021

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Whither South Asia? Understanding Climate Security In The Anthropocene Epoch, Policy Report, 28 April 2021

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## Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP)

WISCOMP – RCSS Joint Publication "South Asian Perspectives on Sustainable Development and Gender Equality", Book, 28 June 2021



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WISCOMP Journal Peace Prints on Peace Accords in India's Northeast through a Gender Lens, Newsletters, 10 August 2021



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## Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)

Jose Ma. Luis P. Montesclaros, Paul Teng, Community Gardens: A "Fourth Basket" in Singapore's Food Story?, Policy Report, 24 August 2021

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NTS Bulletin August 2021, Newsletter, 19 August 2021



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Alistair D. B. Cook, Christopher Chen, Disaster Governance in the Asia-Pacific: Future Pathways for South and Southeast Asia, Policy Report, 16 August 2021

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Patrick Daly, Jamie McCaughey, Caroline Brassard, Reuben Ng, Laavanya Kathiravelu, Benjamin Horton, Perceptions of COVID-19 Mitigation Measures by Singaporean Citizens and Permanent Residents, NTS Insight, 13 August 2021



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Patrick Daly, Jamie McCaughey, Caroline Brassard, Reuben Ng, Laavanya Kathiravelu, Benjamin Horton, Access to Resources and Support for Singaporean Citizens and Permanent Residents during the COVID-19 Circuit Breaker, NTS Insight, 11 August 2021



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Patrick Daly, Jamie McCaughey, Caroline Brassard, Reuben Ng, Laavanya Kathiravelu, Benjamin Horton, The Social and Economic Impacts of COVID-19 Mitigation Measures on Citizens and Permanent Residents During the Circuit Breaker Period in Singapore, NTS Insight, 11 August 2021



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NTS Bulletin April 2021, Newsletter, 26 April 2021

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Julius Cesar Imperial Trajano, Whitsun Reef Incident: Duterte's China Strategy Sinking?, Commentaries, 19 April 2021

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# PAST EVENT SUMMARIES

Bangladesh Institute of Peace & Security Studies (BIPSS)

## Securing Sri Lanka Through Community Engagement



Mr. Shafqat Munir, Research Fellow and Head of Bangladesh Centre for Terrorism Research (BCTR) recently spoke at a virtual roundtable organised by the Institute of National Security Studies, Sri Lanka (INSSSL). The roundtable was titled 'Securing Sri Lanka Through Community

Engagement'. Institute of National Security Studies is a premier national security think tank under the Ministry of Defence, Mr. Munir has been a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the INSSSL since 2019. In his remarks, Mr. Munir discussed about the role of technology in community engagement with an emphasis on the growing role of social media. He also highlighted the growing importance of non-kinetic measures in countering violent extremism (CVE). The discussants at the round table also deliberated on the recent events in Afghanistan and the likely impact on the regional threat landscape. The Honourable Governor of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka was

the Chief Guest whilst Professor Rohan Gunaratna, Director General of the INSSSL moderated the roundtable. The audience included flag officers from the armed forces, heads of departments, scholars, members of the media and representatives of various agencies of the government.

## 'Taliban have influence over militants in Bangladesh'

In an interview with Prothom Alo, President, BIPSS Maj Gen ANM Muniruzzaman ndc psc (retd.) spoke of the possible impact of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan and what reaction this can provoke in global and regional geopolitics. He also shared

his views on what a Taliban government would mean for the rights of women, the stakes of regional actors and a possible rise in militancy in Bangladesh.

Click [here](#) to read more.

## The Digital Revolution: Understanding The Impact of Digitalisation



We hosted the event alongside Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) of Germany with eminent scholars and experts from Bangladesh, India, Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka presenting at the international conference. The event was attended by senior government officials academics, media personnel, members of the armed forces and other relevant stakeholders.

## Militarization in Asia: Role of Smaller Nations



President BIPSS Major General Muniruzzaman ndc psc (retd.) spoke at a webinar hosted by Centre for Governance Studies with the theme 'Militarization in Asia: Role of Smaller Nations'. In his presentation, he highlighted the need for Bangladesh to engage with all initiatives in the region and stressed on the importance of maintaining it's strategic autonomy. The event was attended by many dignitaries and scholars where deliberations were centred around the West's shift in focus towards the Indo-Pacific, the situation in Myanmar and the Quad, among others.

## Post COVID World Order: Changing Foreign Policy Dynamics and Future Security Implications



BIPSS recently organized an expert level discussion meeting titled 'Post COVID World Order: Changing Foreign Policy Dynamics and Future Security Implications' to deliberate on key international security issues such as changes in the world order, vaccine diplomacy, battle for technology and post covid economy, among other topics. Attendees were eminent scholars, journalists and former ambassadors and the session was moderated by President, BIPSS Major General ANM Muniruzzaman ndc psc (retd.).

Click [here](#) to read more.

## South Asia Security Sector Governance Forum



PPresident, BIPSS Major General ANM Muniruzzaman ndc psc (retd.) recently participated in the South Asia Security Sector Governance Forum organized by Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF). President Muniruzaman was the head of the Bangladesh delegation and was joined by other distinguished diplomats, defense personnel and scholars from Afghanistan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Pakistan as well as members from DCAF.

The event was a 3 day forum where experts gave their insights on issues pertaining to their respective countries and also talked about enhancing governance of the private security industry.

## Influence Operations



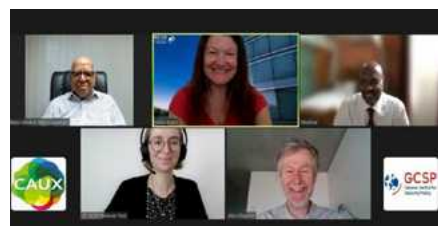
BIPSS has successfully proceeded with the series "BIPSS Security Lab" and recently organised its second event on "Influence Operations". Considering the Covid situation, the event was a hybrid one with most guests present online. The discussion focused on the introduction of this emerging issue, its mechanisms and outcomes affecting national and international security. The interactive

conversation among the eminent guests from various sectors of the government, diplomats, media, academia, defence force made the discussion more constructive.

The session was moderated by President BIPSS, Major General Muniruzzaman ndc, psc (retd) and the keynote speaker was Mr Simen Agnalt Nilsen, a postgraduate student of Security Intelligence and Strategic Studies at University of Glasgow and currently a research intern at BIPSS.

Click [here](#) to read more.

## Navigating Climate Peril: What kind of Leadership will it take?



President Major General A N M Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (Retd), spoke at the high level plenary of the Caux Dialogue on Environment and Security (CDES), 2021. The plenary theme was 'Navigating Climate Peril: What kind of Leadership will it take?' This important yearly event was organised by Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). CDES plenary will also provide key input to the concurrent 'Summer Academy on Climate, Land and Security'. The events were attended by a large number of experts and policymakers from around the world. President BIPSS gave a presentation in the plenary titled 'Leadership in Times of Climate Crisis'. He focused on the need for multi-layered leadership to meet the challenge of climate change. He stressed the urgency of global consensus on crafting a strategy for climate change and security. General Muniruzzaman (Retd) is the current Chairman of the Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change (GMACCC); he is a leading voice on the international scene on matters of security implications of climate change.

Click [here](#) to read more.

## Biodiversity and Security





BIPSS, in partnership with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), jointly hosted a webinar on “Biodiversity and Security”. The event was moderated by President, BIPSS Maj Gen ANM Muniruzzaman ndc psc (retd.) and a presentation was delivered by Keynote Speaker Mr. Raquibul Amin, Country Representative of IUCN. The webinar was attended by a plethora of dignitaries ranging from security and climate experts to youth activists.

Click [here](#) to read more.

### Grey Zone Warfare



BIPSS has recently launched its new event under the banner “BIPSS Security Lab”, where we aim to explore and discuss niche and emerging security scenarios in presence of security specialists and practitioners to critically analyse the subjects and to develop a clear and comprehensive understanding. With that end in view, its first episode on the theme “Grey Zone Warfare” dropped the curtain in presence of esteemed officials and personnel from various sectors to discuss extensively about this emerging but arcane topic.

The discussion was moderated by President, BIPSS Major General Muniruzzaman ndc, psc, (retd) and a keynote presentation on the introduction to the topic was offered by Mr. Simen Agnalt Nilsen, a post graduate student of Security Intelligence and Strategic Studies at University of Glasgow and currently working as a research intern at BIPSS.

Click [here](#) to read more.

### Inundated and Unstable: Understanding the Security Implications of Climate Change



BUnstable: Understanding the Security Implications of Climate Change”. The keynote speaker of the event was Major General A N M Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (Retd) Chairman, Global Military Advisory Council on Climate Change (GMACC) and the session was moderated by Ayesha Kabir, Consulting Editor, Prothom Alo (English)

Opening remarks were made by BIPSS Research Fellow and head of Bangladesh Centre of Terrorism Research (BCTR) Mr. Shafqat Munir in which he gave an overview on BIPSS’ activities on Climate Change. He further added that the organization had been working on the subject for over a decade and also reaffirmed the institution’s commitment to working towards Climate Change in the days to come.

The policy cafe was attended by many distinguished dignitaries such as diplomats, journalists, government officials, climate change experts and youth representatives.

Mr. Mohammad Navid Safiullah, Joint Secretary, Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance also attended the event as a discussant and highlighted many important initiatives of the Government of Bangladesh on climate change. He particularly focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), putting emphasis on SDG 13, 14 and 15.

The dialogue revolved around key climate induced security issues at the local, regional and international levels and charting a way forward. The discussions were vibrant

and generated some important policy recommendations.

BIPSS’ Policy Cafe is an initiative by BIPSS to convene experts, practitioners and policy makers. Policy Cafe allows them to engage in interactive discussions on key strategic, security, regional and national issues of the day.

Click [here](#) to read more.

### Developing a Critical Understanding Against Fake News and Disinformation

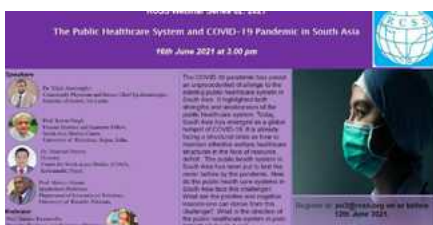


BIPSS recently hosted a workshop titled, ‘Developing a Critical Understanding Against Fake News and Disinformation’ to educate the youth and cultivate the necessary thought process to be able to discern false information. The keynote speakers of the event were Ms. Ayesha Kabir, Consulting Editor of Prothom Alo (English) and Mr. Shafqat Munir, Research Fellow at Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS) & Head of Bangladesh Centre for Terrorism Research (BCTR). The workshop was divided into 2 sessions. The opening remarks were made by President, BIPSS Major General Muniruzzaman ndc, psc, (retd). Ms. Kabir and Mr. Munir gave their presentations respectively and participants asked stimulating questions throughout the workshop. The event concluded with certificates being distributed to the participants.

Click [here](#) to read more.

## Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS)

### RCSS Webinar on “The Public Healthcare System And Covid-19 Pandemic In South Asia”



The COVID-19 pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge to the existing public healthcare system in the region. This crisis highlighted both strengths and weaknesses of the public healthcare system. It is already facing a structural crisis as to how to maintain effective welfare healthcare structures in the face of resource deficit.

Thus, the public healthcare system in

South Asia has been put to test like never before by the pandemic. How does the public healthcare system in South Asia face this challenge? What are the positive and negative experiences and lessons one can derive from this challenge? What is the direction of the public healthcare system in post-COVID-19 South Asia?

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

**RSIS World Humanitarian Day 2021 Webinar**  
19 August 2021



This webinar will generate discussion on the following topics: (i) Challenges faced by the humanitarian sector during COVID-19, (ii) Potential solutions and initiatives to help alleviate these challenges, (iii) Risk perception and its effects on crisis management. The panel discussion will aim to raise public awareness on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the region by providing a venue for exchange of ideas, insights and experiences from those involved in the protection and assistance of vulnerable groups displaced by disasters, particularly from a Singaporean perspective. The annual event to commemorate World Humanitarian Day brings together local players in the humanitarian sphere to celebrate the dedication of humanitarian workers around the world, and to remember those in most need of assistance.

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

**36th Asia-Pacific Roundtable**  
18 August 2021



Head of NTS Centre, Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony joined the panel on “Recovery Disrupted: The Challenge of Vaccine Distribution and Diplomacy, at the 36th Asia-Pacific Roundtable on 18th August 2021. The Roundtable was organised by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia and ASEAN-ISIS.

**RSIS Webinar on Nuclear Security Governance in the Asia-Pacific: Pathways to Cooperation**  
29 July 2021

The NTS Centre organised a webinar on “Nuclear Security Governance in the Asia-Pacific: Pathways to Cooperation” on 29

July 2021. Chaired by Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony, Head of NTS Centre, this webinar featured eight nuclear governance experts from selected Asia-Pacific countries. The panel included Dr Trevor Findlay (Principal Fellow, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne); Dr David Santoro (President, Pacific Forum); Mr Tom Corben (Research Associate, United States Studies Centre); Dr Hosik Yoo (Vice President, Korea Institute of Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Control); Dr Zha Daojiong (Professor, School of International Studies, Peking University); Dr Masahiro Okuda, Engineer, Ms Naoko Noro, Chief Training Instructor (Integrated Support Center for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Security, Japan Atomic Energy Agency); and Mr Julius Cesar Trajano (Research Fellow, NTS Centre, RSIS). The presentations and panel discussions explored key safety, security and non-proliferation issues in the Asia-Pacific as well multiple pathways to enhancing nuclear governance such as national actions, bilateral cooperation, ASEAN-led frameworks, and bottom-up approach involving NGOs, educational institutions and Track II networks. Around 80 participants attended the webinar.



Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

**RSIS Webinar on “Climate Change and Communities – a Human Security Perspective”**  
28 July 2021



RSIS organised a webinar on “Climate Change and Communities – a Human Security Perspective” on 28 July 2021. Moderated by Dr Tamara Nair, Research Fellow at NTS Centre, this webinar brought together 4 experts from around the Asia-Pacific to investigate how framing climate change through a human security lens might ensure the security and stability

of communities in a new climate future. The speakers included Assistant Professor Oscar A. Gómez, Assistant Professor at the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan, Dr Maria Tanyag, Lecturer at the Australia National University, Dr Serina Abdul Rahman, Visiting Fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the National University of Singapore and Associate Professor Alan Chong Associate Professor, Head of Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS. During the webinar, the panellists discussed topics such as the human security perspective of climate change, the specific vulnerable communities affected by climate change in Southeast Asia, the importance of feminist perspectives on the causes and effects of climate change as well overall global environmental governance.

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

**Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia’s (ERIA) working group meeting of the research project on ‘Enhancing Food Supply Chain Resilience and Food Security in ASEAN with Utilization of Digital Technologies’**  
16 July, 2021



The NTS Centre’s Food Security group at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU) contributed to the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia’s (ERIA) working group meeting of the research project on ‘Enhancing Food Supply Chain Resilience and Food Security in ASEAN with Utilization of Digital Technologies’ on 16th July, 2021. This ERIA study involving a network of research institutes aims to examine 1) the impact of the COVID -19 on food security in ASEAN and 2) the status of utilizing digital technologies in food and agriculture sector. The presentation was delivered by Professor Paul Teng, Adjunct Senior Fellow with the NTS Centre, RSIS. He shared about the potential evolution or future of a digitally-integrated ASEAN



agricultural sector, including 1) 'smart farming' based on digitalized, aggregated and analysed data and information, 2) real-time information availability for farms and fisheries, 3) procurement of farming inputs and selling product through digital marketplaces and 4) food and agricultural products with digital ID for supply chain traceability. Some recommendations to achieving this include the sharing of best practices, the development of a harmonised language for inter-operability across data applications in agriculture, and exploring 'quad-partnerships' (private sector, universities and research centres, government, farmer cooperatives) for e-commerce and agricultural extension.

### 3rd ASEAN-ICRC Joint Platform on "Adaptation to the Evolving 'Riskscape' in ASEAN and beyond"

24 June 2021



Head of NTS Centre, Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony, joins panel on ASEAN and Complex Emergencies at the 3rd ASEAN-ICRC Joint Platform on "Adaptation to the Evolving 'Riskscape' in ASEAN and beyond", held virtually on 24 June 2021.

### The Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar

23 June 2021



Head of NTS Centre, Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony speaking at the Workshop on "The Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar", jointly organised by DCAF, Geneva and the Ateneo de Manila University on 23 June 2021. Joining Prof Mely in the panel was Ms Claudine Haenni from Bridging Changes. Both speakers spoke on the international and regional efforts in addressing the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar.

### Disinformation Expert Working Group Meeting

10 June 2021



Dr. Alistair Cook is the Coordinator of the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Programme and Senior Fellow at the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre), S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore. In this video, Dr. Cook explains the nexus between human security and disinformation. He also highlights the expert recommendations from the Disinformation Expert Working Group meeting held on June 10, 2021.

Click [here](#) to watch the video.

### World Environment Day Interview

4 June 2021

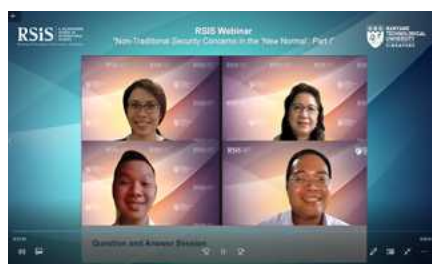


Ms. Margareth Sembiring, Associate Research Fellow with the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), was interviewed by POWER98FM on the occasion of World Environment Day, June 5th, 2021.

Click [here](#) for the interview.

### Non-Traditional Security Concerns in the 'New Normal': Food, Climate and Nuclear Security

01 June 2021



The COVID-19 pandemic has had important

implications for Non-Traditional Security (NTS). This first part of the series on Non-Traditional Security Concerns in the 'New Normal' discussed perspectives on what this new normal looks like in the region, from perspectives of food security, climate security and nuclear security, examining the implications of COVID-19 for national and regional efforts to govern these issues, and explored possible pathways for future action.

### Impacts of a Hybrid Health-Economic Crisis on Food Security:

The first presentation, by Mr Jose Ma Luis Montesclaros, Associate Research Fellow, began by defining "new normal" relative to the sector of impact. Thus, from a food security perspective, COVID-19 is "new" if it significantly impacts on the 4 dimensions of food security (food utilisation, physical access, economic access, and availability); and it is a new "normal" if it is expected to stay; otherwise, it is only a new "abnormal". To assess its "newness", Mr Montesclaros shared the pathways through which COVID-19 has evolved into a hybrid health-economic crisis, through international and domestic lockdowns that have had recessionary effects. These impact on food security through disruptions to supply chains; crop planting cycles; production targets; and food trade (export restrictions). He concluded, it is indeed "new" for food security, but whether it will become a new "normal" depends on the state of pandemic preparedness of the world, moving forward.

### The Triple Planetary Crisis:

The second presentation, by Ms Margareth Sembiring, Associate Research Fellow, investigated different concepts in the attempts to solve environmental problems. In light of the triple planetary crisis, namely climate, nature, and pollution, that is confronting the world today, Ms Sembiring questioned whether the enduring human-centric approach to the care of the environment will be sufficient to solve the problems conclusively. Taking a historical perspective, Ms Sembiring traced the origins of such approach to the time when the first global conference on the environment was held in 1972, and saw its continuity in the upcoming COP26 later this year in Glasgow. She noted that alternative approaches to environmental predicaments were already existent fifty years ago, and that more alternative concepts that see these issues from a holistic perspective have come up since then. She concluded that dialogues with these alternative concepts are needed to formulate truly potent solutions to the



world's increasingly alarming issues related to the triple planetary crisis.

**Role of Nuclear Technologies:** The third presentation, by Mr Julius Trajano, Research Fellow, discussed the role of nuclear technology in addressing some of the NTS issues that we face today especially in COVID-19 era. Nuclear technology can help support disease surveillance and prevention through the use of nuclear-derived testing techniques. One example Mr Trajano cited is the real-time "reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction" or RT-PCR being used for COVID-19 testing. Another NTS issue where nuclear technology has a role is environmental protection. Marine plastic pollution has worsened since the COVID-19 pandemic. Nuclear technology provides a sustainable and scientific approach to tackling this environmental problem. Mr Trajano pointed out that the nuclear security regime needs to be continuously enhanced to ensure the safe and secure use of nuclear energy and technology in addressing many of the global issues and problems that we have.

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

### RSIS-SPRINGER Book Launch Webinar of "Humanitarianism in the Asia-Pacific: Engaging the Debate in Policy and Practice"

19 May 2021



Humanitarianism in the Asia-Pacific: Engaging the Debate in Policy and Practice offers insights of the international humanitarian system, considering what constitutes humanitarianism in Asia-Pacific, and how it shapes policy and practice in the region and globally. It adds to the conversation on reforming the global humanitarian system by providing the space to share perspectives on humanitarian action from our place in the world. The authors answer these questions by focusing on a range of issues from national to sectoral perspectives to relations between 'traditional' and 'emerging' players, concluding that the dynamics of the humanitarian system from the perspectives of the Asia-Pacific are rooted in their localized experiences and

built outwards. The first significant trend is that understandings of humanitarianism in the Asia-Pacific are primarily shaped by the experience of disasters at home. Second, national governments play a dominant role in humanitarian affairs in the region. Finally, the humanitarian landscape in the Asia-Pacific constitutes a diverse yet under-appreciated set of actors. This book is based on the RSIS Conference on Asia and the Humanitarian World held in 2019 in Singapore. It is relevant to students, scholars, practitioners and policymakers with an interest in humanitarian assistance, disaster management, strategic studies and international relations in Asia-Pacific.

Click [here](#) to watch the webinar.

### UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) Dialogues

18 May 2021



Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros, Research Fellow at the NTS Centre, spoke at the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) Dialogues hosted by the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) last 18th May, 2021. The theme of the event was "Breaking Silos: Transforming Agricultural Education and Research toward Sustainable Food Systems in Southeast Asia." Mr. Montesclaros shared insights on food system transformation from the experience of Singapore, as Southeast Asia's most food secure country based on the Economist Intelligence Unit's Global Food Security Index 2020.

### The 5th NTS-Asia Consortium Annual Meeting: "Asian Security in a Post-COVID-19 Environment"

13-15 April 2021



The RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies convened the annual meeting of the NTS-Asia Consortium for the 5th time on 13 to 15 April 2021. The three-day conference of a two-hour panel session each day was held on Zoom platform. The conference brought together 12 speakers from member institutions and its non-member partner and was attended by about 40 participants each day. The theme for this year's meeting was "Asian Security in a Post-COVID-19 Environment." The conference provided a platform for Consortium members to exchange their perspectives and analyses on the continuing relevance of NTS issues amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

During the sessions, panellists shared their observations and findings on three key areas, namely crisis impact on inequality and vulnerable groups; cybersecurity and transnational crimes; and crisis response and sustainable future. The panellists of the first session reflected on the experiences of vulnerable groups including women in India and Indonesia who were affected disproportionately by the pandemic. The public health crisis has also demonstrated the scale of challenges that potential massive crises such as climate eventualities can pose on the different systems in the society. The panel highlighted the issues of environmental degradation and carbon emissions that are driven by human consumption, therefore the need to find an alternative model to economic development to avert climate crisis.



The panellists of the second session impressed on audience the increasing importance of governing the cyber space. The expanding use of digital equipment in human day-to-day life would challenge the definition and scope of security and potentially widen inter-generational gap. The increasing use of data may transform the society into a Digital Intensive Society and bring with it a set of new issues such as "who is safe" in view of data accessibility, use, and vulnerability. Additionally, the panel showcased the experiences of social media use to propagate cyber hate, as well as human and drug trafficking, in Sri Lanka.



Finally, the third panel discussed the various challenges that India and Malaysia are facing in their efforts to address the pandemic. Political distrust and vaccine imperialism are among issues that hamper effective responses. The panel also stressed the need to push for sustainability agenda that include food waste reduction and inclusive green growth for sustainable development and environmental protection.



In her closing remarks, Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony, Head of the NTS Centre at RSIS and Secretary-General of the NTS-Asia Consortium, highlighted the continuing necessity to exchange experiences to see how the pandemic has affected people in different regions and observe if there are any commonalities in responses and the kind of problems and insecurities being faced. The public health

crisis is unusual and even extraordinary in the way its repercussions cutting across multiple security areas. Professor Caballero-Anthony emphasised that the multifaceted challenges brought about the pandemic affirm the relevance of the concept of security beyond national borders and highlight the critical importance of governance and multilateralism. She thanked the members of the Consortium for their active participation and valuable contributions that made this year's conference successful.

Click [here](#) to watch the webinars.

### RSIS-ICRC Data Governance and Protection in Humanitarian Action Workshop 2021

16 & 31 March 2021

The Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Programme and the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC) co-organized the Workshop on Humanitarian Futures in the Asia Pacific on 31st March at the Changi Naval base, Singapore, with support from the Humanitarian Futures team. The workshop brought together a group of participants from government agencies, think tanks, NGOs, the private sector, and the military, with the aim to inspire adaptation, innovation and renewal for our shared future. It was the second part of the two-part workshop.

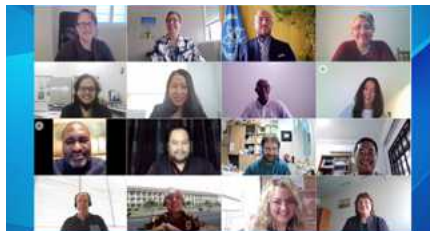


On the second day of the workshop, the speakers and participants mapped out the evolving landscape in the humanitarian sector in the Asia-Pacific region, discussed the disruptions and opportunities caused by COVID-19 in different sectors, and explored how organisations with humanitarian roles and responsibilities could adapt to preferred futures.



### Leadership Meeting of the International Nuclear Security Education Network

3 March 2021



Mr Julius Trajano (3rd row, 4th column), Research Fellow at the NTS Centre, delivered a presentation at the Virtual Leadership Meeting of the International Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN), organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency on 3 March 2021. Mr Trajano spoke on enhancing collaboration among INSEN members, educational institutions, and think tanks to advance nuclear security education and research.

### Vaccine Diplomacy in Southeast Asia

17 February 2021



Head of NTS Centre, Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony, spoke at the webinar on Vaccine Diplomacy in Southeast Asia, organised by the Stimson Centre on 17 Feb 2021.

Chaired by Prof William Wise, the other speakers were Prof. Yanzhong Huang of Council on Foreign Relations and Ambassador Robert Blake, former US Ambassador to Indonesia.