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Internal-External Linkages in Asia Security: The Non-Traditional Security Agenda

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Although there remain three militarized borders in Asia (North-South Korea, China-Taiwan, and India-Pakistan), and each could erupt into hot war, nonetheless the principal challenges to stability and security in Asia during the post-Cold War era are increasingly internal and transnational in nature. Accordingly, the regional security agenda has, in recent years, increasingly focused on "governance" and "non-traditional" security. Regional research institutes, conferences, and publications frequently focus on these issues.[1] The "IDSS-Ford Foundation Project on Non-Traditional Security in Asia,"[2] and the follow-on Consortium for Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia,[3] have been instrumental in forging institutional collaboration across the region—with a Secretariat at the S. Rajarathan School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and spearheaded by Mely Caballero-Anthony and Amitav Acharya (now University of Bristol), but including 14 research institutes spanning the region in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, China, Vietnam, South Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Philippines, and Malaysia.[4]

Consideration of these "soft security" issues in Asia could well benefit from the European perspective and experience—given Europe's experience with the OSCE,[5] nation-building in the Balkans, and pan-regional non-traditional security challenges that have afflicted the continent since the end of the Cold War. The most recent (September 2007) German Marshal Fund 2007 survey of *Transatlantic Trends* indicates that a number of non-traditional security threats rank high in European public concern: energy security, economic security, terrorism, immigration, Islamic fundamentalism, infectious diseases, and global warming.[6] This Second Berlin Asian Security Conference offers a good opportunity to exchange European and Asian (and American) views on NTS threats, as it takes a particularly comprehensive sweep through the region—considering linkages of internal-external security across Northeast, Southeast, South, and Central Asia—thus offering an opportunity to consider the similarities of challenges facing regional actors.

Issues associated with domestic governance, state capacity, and internal stability will figure centrally in our discussions—given the "weak (but not necessarily failing) states" in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kampuchea, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Nepal, North Korea, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. While China and India are more effectively governed, they too face significant levels of domestic unrest, sporadic terrorism, and daunting challenges to deliver public goods and quality social services to their people. Only the developed societies and states of Asia—Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore—do not pose a potential challenge to regional

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[1] See Andrew T.H. Tan and J.D. Kenneth Boutin (eds.), *Non-Traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: IDSS, 2001); Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[2] See http://www.idss-nts.org.

[3] See http://www.rsis-ntsasia.org.

[4] See Ralf Emmers, Mely Caballero-Anthony, and Amitav Acharya (eds.), *Studying Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Trends and Issues* (Singapore: Marshall Cavendish Academic Press, 2006); Mely Caballero-Anthony, Ralf Emmers and Amitav Acharya (eds.), *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: The Dynamics of Securitization* (Singapore: IDSS, 2004); Maely Caballero-Anthony, Ralf Emmers and Amitav Acharya (eds.), *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Dilemmas for Securitization* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

[5] See Joachim Krause, *The OSCE and Co-operative Security in Europe: Lessons for Asia* (Singapore: IDSS Monograph No. 6, 2003).

[6] See www.transatlantictrends.org, p. 9.

stability. Taiwan is a special case: while a modern society, its domestic political system and "national" identity are highly volatile and could easily trigger a war with China (and between China and the United States)—thus destabilizing the entire East Asian region. But in *all* of these other cases, domestic instabilities could easily erupt and flow outside national borders—thus disrupting regional stability and severely challenging the under-developed regional security architecture to cope effectively. The existing regional security architecture is not well equipped to deal with "traditional" "hard security" issues, but it is becoming better equipped to tackle non-traditional security challenges.

Since colleagues will likely highlight the governance problems and domestic instabilities in these societies in subsequent sessions, I therefore wish to focus my discussion on transnational non-traditional security (NTS) issues and the potential for multilateral organizations to address them

What is the Menu of Non-Traditional Security in Asia?

The NTS menu in Asia is as complex as the region itself. It includes a prolific list of existing and potential threats: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and toxic agents; pandemics and the spread of infectious diseases (e.g. SARS, HIV/AIDS, avian flu); internal and illegal cross-border migration; trafficking in illegal drugs and legal pharmaceuticals; various forms of human security, including kidnapping and trafficking in women (for prostitution and forced marriage) and children; financial contagion and economic insecurity; environmental degradation (including acid rain, air pollution, haze, toxic spills, etc.); terrorism of all kinds; Islamic fundamentalism; natural disasters (earthquakes, tsunamis); arms smuggling; sea piracy; ethnic separatism and communal conflicts; armed militias and insurgencies; religious and millenarian movements (like Falun Gong); poverty and social inequality; energy security; disputes over water resources (e.g. Mekong, Ganges); illegal fishing; piracy; organized crime; cyber crime; etc.

This is a rich menu of potentially serious challenges. What they all have in common is the fact that they ignore national borders and thus require: (a) a recognition that state sovereignty is not immutable, and (b) collective action by both national states and local authorities is required to effectively deal with the issues. *Internal issues become external issues*. The following areas have attracted priority attention among NTS specialists in Asia.

Environment. Environmental threats have risen to the top of the NTS regional security agenda in recent years.[7] Acid rain emanating from Chinese factories contaminates the air and threatens lives on the Korean peninsula, in Japan and Hong Kong, and as far away as British Columbia and California. Despite the 2002 ASEAN Transboundry Haze Pollution Agreement, more than 6000 smoldering fires (2006) in Indonesia continue to spread haze through the air of Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, even western Australia, and threaten the lives of people there.[8] Upstream toxic contamination from China (Guangxi and Guangdong) pollutes the downstream Mekong

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[7] See In-Taek Hyun and Miranda Schreurs (eds.), *The Environmental Dimension of Asian Security: Conflict and Cooperation over Energy, Resources, and Pollution* (publisher? 2007).
[8] See Sofiah Jamil, "Clearing up ASEAN's Hazy Relations," *NTS-Asia*, No. 2 (November-December 2006).

basin in Vietnam and Laos,[9] while heavily polluted rivers and the water table in northern China poison people and make irrigation unusable. Chinese cities are blanketed by air pollution (seven of the world's eleven most air polluted cities are in China), while cities in India and Southeast Asia also suffer from dangerous levels of air pollution.

While of a different nature, environmental security also includes natural disasters such as tsunamis, typhoons, cyclones, and earthquakes. South and Southeast Asia have suffered more than their share of these recently. The devastating 2004 Christmas tsunami in the Indian Ocean and Andaman Sea, and the earthquake that struck northern Pakistan in 2005 were of unprecedented magnitude. China also remains prone to severe flooding every year.

Terrorism and Armed Insurgencies. Islamic terrorists based in Indonesia linked to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), and al-Qaeda, have bombed several targets in Bali and central Java—they threaten not only Indonesia, but neighboring countries as well. JI operatives have been arrested in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Australia.[10] Senior al-Qaeda operatives have also been arrested in the Philippines and Singapore, prior to executing major attacks. The Philippines has also been the home and victim of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist organization, which has killed about 150 in bombings on ferries and in markets near Manila, and has been pre-empted prior to bombing shopping malls and the U.S. Embassy. Pakistan continues to harbor a variety of terrorist groups within its borders, particularly in Waziristan and along the Afghan frontier. India has also experienced unprecedented attacks (allegedly emanating from Pakistan) in central Delhi, the Punjab, and Kashmir. China has also fallen victim to Islamic terrorists, linked to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and East Turkestan Liberation Organization (ETLO). There have also been links to al-Qaeda, evidence by the fourteen Uighurs picked up after 9/11 in Afghanistan. The terrorist problem in Xinjiang is linked to pan-regional networks across Central Asia and the Caucuses—which the Shanghai Cooperation Organization has managed to collectively confront. In this regard (counter-terrorism) the SCO seems more effective than its East Asian counterparts.

The Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand has caused 600 violent incidents and killed 2000 people since 2004.[11] The festering Maoist insurgencies in the southern Philippines and Nepal have resulted in the collapse of local government in the former and national government in the latter. Several ethnic insurgencies fester in northern Myanmar, while Sri Lanka continues to suffer from the prolonged Tamil insurgency.

Public Health and Pandemics. Pandemics in Asia are not a new phenomenon. The region has experienced outbreaks of malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, smallpox, meningitis, encephalitis, influenza, and various air and water-born diseases for many years. More recently and of a larger threat, HIV/AIDS, SARS, Avian bird flu (H5N1), and Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (HFMD), have spread through East and Southeast Asia. Regional governments and ASEAN have worked effectively together to control the spread of these potential pandemics to date.

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[9] See Evelyn Goh, *Developing the Mekong: Regionalism and Regional Security in Southeast Asian Relations* (London: IISS Adelphi Paper No. 387, 2007).

[10] See Council on Foreign Relations, "Terrorism havens: Indonesia": http://www.cfr.org/publication/9361/.

[11] Seth Mydans, "Muslim Insurgency Stokes Fear in Southern Thailand": http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/02/25/news/thailand.php.

Transnational Crime. Asia is hardly immune to organized and transnational crime.[12] This takes a variety of forms: money laundering; loan sharking, extortion, racketeering; drug manufacturing, smuggling, and trafficking; small arms smuggling; luxury car theft and smuggling; kidnapping and human smuggling; sex trade networks; gambling; trafficking in ivory and other endangered species; gang violence; pirating and distribution of software, CDs, DVDs, bank robberies; piracy on the high seas; etc. No country in Asia is immune form these phenomena—although Japan, China, Macao, Taiwan, and Thailand are the worst affected.[13] Chinese triads and tongs, and Japanese *Yakuza* are legendary, and continue to dominate the organized crime scene in Asia, but new transnational networks have also sprung up in Northeast and Southeast Asia.

As a consequence, transnational cooperation among law enforcement is more critical than ever. ASEAN, often working together with American, Japanese, and Chinese law enforcement and intelligence agencies, has spearheaded efforts at regional cooperation.[14] In some cases—particularly piracy on the high seas—regional militaries, coast guards, and navies play an important role.[15]

Prospects

Many of the region's non-traditional security challenges cluster into these four categories. To be sure, not all are adequately captured. Various forms of human security, for example, are probably best not dealt with as a transnational crime problem. WMD proliferation is a peculiar challenge that must be dealt with at a combination of levels—national, sub-national, regional, global. The same applies to financial and economic security issues. Energy security policy is really the domain of national governments, although private companies do the exploration, extraction, and delivery. Poverty and inequality is fodder for many other NTS challenges—including human security, migration, and organized crime—and requires joint attention of national and sub-national governments, regional institutions like the Asian Development Bank, and global institutions like the World Bank.

Thus, one arrives at two principal conclusions. First, NTS issues are rapidly rising on the regional (and global) security agenda, and are becoming more complex and increasingly interdependent. Second, given their transnational nature, effectively dealing with these challenges requires Asian governments to cooperate together and begin to rid themselves of their long-cherished principles of non-interference in other's internal affairs. By its very nature, NTS knows no national boundaries—thus effective efforts to tackle these problems must also be transnational in nature.

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[12] See James O. Finckenauer and Ko-lin Chin, "Asian Transnational Organized Crime and its Impact on the United States," Final Report submitted to the National Institute of Justice, 2004. Available at: http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/213310.pdf.

[13] Ibid, pp. 22-24.

[14] See Un Sovannasam, *The Association of Southeast Asian Nation's (ASEAN) Efforts in Dealing with Transnational Crime* (university of Hong Kong Center for Asian Studies, 2005).

[15] See Martin Murphy, *Contemporary Piracy and Maritime Security: The Threat to International Security* (IISS Adelphi Paper No. 388, 2007); Swedianto Sumardi, *Maritime Security in the Straits of Malacca* (University of Hong Kong Center for Asian Studies, n.d.).