



Broadening Asia's Security Discourse and Agenda

**Political, Social, and
Environmental Perspectives**

**Edited by
Ramesh Thakur and Edward Newman**

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Introduction: Non-traditional security in Asia

Ramesh Thakur and Edward Newman

In recent years both the theory and practice of national and international security have undergone evolution. While basic physiological human needs have changed little, our conceptualization of security and our approaches to achieving and maintaining security have changed considerably. International security is no longer conceived of solely as defence of national territory against “external” military threats under state control. The security agenda, as this volume demonstrates, incorporates political, economic, social and environmental dimensions as well as the many linkages between them. An established literature now exists to support this broad approach, and non-traditional security perspectives have taken their place in academic and, to an extent, policy circles.¹ But this has not been without controversy in terms of academic rigour and policy relevance. This volume applies non-traditional security perspectives – an approach that goes beyond military threats and state centric analysis – to a range of human challenges across the Asian continent. It explores the potential practical and conceptual benefits of non-traditional security thinking in a region beset by both conventional and non-traditional security challenges.

The underlying premise and starting point of this volume is that traditional security has failed to deliver meaningful security to a significant proportion of the people of Asia – who between them comprise more than half the world’s total population. This is an empirical reality. For most people in the region, the greatest threats to security come from

disease, hunger, environmental contamination, crime, and unorganized violence. For many indeed a still greater threat may come from their own state itself, rather than from an “external” adversary. Attitudes and institutions that privilege “high politics” above disease, hunger, or illiteracy are embedded in international relations and foreign policy decision-making. This volume aims to present a fresh approach to human security in a region that is beset by critical welfare concerns but is often pre-occupied with orthodox notions of national security at the policy level. In combining empirical and normative approaches, this volume aims to highlight the magnitude of security threats in Asia and the impact that these threats have upon individuals and communities in the region. It also attempts to demonstrate the analytical advantages that non-traditional security approaches can offer, while attempting to highlight policy implications where possible.

Non-traditional security and the state

The non-traditional security approach is not necessarily in opposition to state sovereignty and national security; the state remains the central provider of security in ideal circumstances. The approach does, however, suggest that international security as traditionally defined – the defence of territorial integrity by military means – does not necessarily correlate with all the dimensions of the security of people, and that an over-emphasis upon statist security can be to the detriment of human security needs. Therefore, while traditional conceptions of state security may be a necessary condition, they cannot be a sufficient one of human survival. The narrow definition of security also presents a falsified image of the policy process. The military is only one of several interest groups, alongside environmental and social groups, competing for a larger share of the collective goods being allocated by the government. Rational policymakers will allocate resources to security only so long as the marginal rate of return is greater for “security” than for other uses of the resources. The citizens of states that are “secure” according to the abstract and remote concept of traditional security can be perilously insecure in terms of the threats to the lives of individual human beings in everyday reality. A number of countries in Asia are cases in point. A non-traditional security approach attempts to redress this asymmetry of attention and resources.

The fundamental purpose of a state is to protect the security and promote the welfare of its citizens. In return, the state and state sovereignty are given primacy as the ordering unit and organizing principle of world affairs.² But the capacity of many states to fulfil this double purpose is

often severely limited. The changing security discourse has thus moved beyond protection of a state's territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty to embrace such issues as plight of children in armed conflict; terrorism; trafficking in arms, narcotics and people; the spread of infectious diseases; and cross-border environmental depredations. Security analysts today have to grapple simultaneously with problems of external threats, internal social cohesion, regime capacity and brittleness, failed states, economic development, structural adjustment, gender relations, ethnic identity, and transnational and global problems like AIDS, drug trafficking, terrorism, and environmental degradation.

The human and non-traditional security agenda is clearly both broad and deep. These issues are often neglected by traditional security thinking, but they shorten the life expectancy of millions and have repercussions beyond their immediate impact that are only now beginning to be understood. And when the degradations reach the point where they become life-threatening on a large scale, it would seem ridiculous to insist that this is not a "security" issue. These challenges are pressing concerns across Asia.

Applying the non-traditional security approach

The non-traditional security approach is necessarily a multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach to *critical* welfare issues and questions of survival. Challenges and solutions are not phenomena that can be addressed in isolation from each other; they are interconnected, and even sometimes interdependent. Non-traditional and human security must be approached in an inclusive and "holistic" manner – not only examining the symptoms or manifestations of human insecurity, but also seeking to produce recommendations that address root causes.

However, can there be a methodology for approaching non-traditional security challenges? What issues are included and which excluded from the approach, and on what basis is this determined? It is essential to develop a sound rationale for bringing a diverse range of issues together within a single, unifying theme of "non-traditional security" in order to demonstrate the meaningfulness and policy relevance of approaching diverse issues under a single conceptual umbrella. Non-traditional security must clearly demonstrate its distinctiveness from issues of welfare and governance. It does not include all health, welfare, and development challenges. But these issues *become* security concerns when they reach crisis point, when they undermine and diminish the survival chances of significant proportions of the citizens of society, and when they threaten the stability and integrity of society.

A further important analytical point: why are non-traditional security issues “international” issues? Deepening understanding of interlinkages helps to answer this. Non-traditional security challenges can and do spill over territorial borders and cause a range of wider security threats and sources of instability – such as refugee flows, illegal trafficking in narcotics and humans – or otherwise disrupt international markets. Human security threats are therefore interdependent and very much an international concern that require international cooperation among a range of actors. There are gaps in understanding and acceptance regarding this critical issue.

Adherents and analysts of non-traditional and human security are familiar with the difficulties of defining security and developing a sound methodology through which to approach non-traditional security concerns. Defining human security is conceptually and practically troublesome. But the field of International Relations is full of essentially contested concepts. And the very exercise of constructing boundaries of exclusion and inclusion can itself be problematized.³ The definition used by the United Nations University is:

Human security is concerned with the protection of people from critical and life-threatening dangers, regardless of whether the threats are rooted in anthropogenic activities or natural events, whether they lie within or outside states, and whether they are direct or structural. It is “human-centered” in that its principal focus is on people both as individuals and as communal groups. It is “security oriented” in that the focus is on freedom from fear, danger and threat.

Thus, the referent of human security must be *human beings*, whether as individuals or as social and political groups. Human security reflects the concern that contemporary security, if it is to be relevant to changing conditions and needs, must focus on the individual or groups. This does not exclude the importance of traditional ideas of security, but it does suggest that it may be more effective to reorient the provision of security around people: wherever the threat comes from.

The human security approach specifically holds the individual as the referent of security concerns and policies. The approach of the non-traditional security perspective of this volume is looser. A non-traditional security approach can be a human security approach, but it can also be a broader framework for analysis. In the approach of this volume, the non-traditional security element can refer to the source of security threats, the referent object of security analysis, or the means of achieving security. Thus, the source of security threats can be non-traditional (non-state centric and non-military), including poverty, environmental degradation, sectarian tension, and organized crime. The referent object can be non-traditional (i.e. non-state), such as the individual or the natural environ-

ment. Finally, whatever the source of the security threat and the referent object of security analysis, the response to security challenges can be non-traditional, for example, through non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international cooperation. Thus, the chapters in this volume imply a number of foundational questions concerning the security discourse: regarding the unit of analysis, or object, of security; the tools for achieving security; the relationship between development and security; and the place of ideas such as dignity and equity in security.

By way of illustration, health and security converge at three intersections. Being wedded still to “national security” may be one reason why half the world’s governments spend more to protect their citizens against undefined external military attack than to guard them against the omnipresent enemies of good health.⁴ First, faced with domestic economic crises and shrinking foreign assistance, many developing countries have had to make difficult budgetary choices to reduce the level of public services. But the failure of governments to provide the basic public health services erodes governmental legitimacy and encourages the spirit of “self-help” and “beggar thy neighbour” among citizens at the expense of the public interest. Often the competition degenerates into violence. Thus the withdrawal of the state from the public health domain can be both a symptom and a cause of failing states. Second, there has been an increasing trend in recent internal armed conflicts to manipulate the supplies of food and medicine. Indeed the struggle to control food and medicine can define the war strategies of some of the conflict parties. And third, the use of biological weapons represents the deliberate spread of disease against an adversary.

A further example is terrorism. Recent experience of Afghanistan, before 11 September 2001, showed how corrupt, unstable, ineffective, and repressive governance is a cause of misery for millions in that country: human rights, development, and education (amongst other things) all ranked around the worst in the world. At the same time, such a state of affairs can also be a breeding ground and haven for violent grievance and terrorism, the effects of which have a far wider impact upon international peace and security, both traditional and non-traditional. The war on terror has reinforced the need to go beyond the traditional security framework; terrorism must be dealt with at the nexus between development and security. This suggests a broad, multifaceted approach to security that embraces the social, economic, political as well as military dimensions.

Social and economic perspectives

The social and economic perspectives of human security and non-traditional security are now well established. Poverty and material depri-

vation – and related threats such as illiteracy, vulnerability to ill health, malnutrition – are a direct and clear threat to the security of individuals and communities. Furthermore, deprivation can represent a threat to states: poverty and inequality can undermine social cohesion and cause instability, undermining the provision of public services, and making societies vulnerable to a range of other threats. Alternatively, the persistence of traditional types of conflict, whether within or between states, can pose significant obstacles to the eradication of extreme poverty.

The chapter by Jennifer Bennett presents a worrying picture of human security threats in South Asia. She investigates the processes of globalization and its impact on social development, especially in poorer countries. She explores the major question of who will benefit from such transnational processes and focuses on Pakistan and India to determine the impact of globalization. According to Bennett, the expanding processes of globalization, administered through international financial institutions, are posing an alarming threat to the marginalized and poor. She argues that structural adjustment conditionalities have reduced the state's role in the economy, lowered barriers to imports, removed restrictions on foreign investment, eliminated subsidies for local industries, reduced spending for social welfare, cut wages, devalued the currency, and emphasized production for export rather than for local consumption. In this context the masses are clearly neglected, widening the gaps between the rich and poor, and between the most affluent and impoverished nations, in the interests of achieving competitiveness internationally. She draws a number of conclusions: applying a unitary set of policies across the entire developing world, regardless of an individual country's social and economic level of development or its local needs and priorities, is flawed; the assumption that higher growth rates will produce a trickle-down effect to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the general population of a nation has not been borne out; and the unequal international division of labour, wide disparities in wages and labour costs between developed and developing countries, and the wide technological gap between the two worlds do not allow the developing countries to be on a level playing field in the arena of global market system.

Kanishka Jayasuriya takes a different approach by focusing on the internal political economy dynamics of states. Jayasuriya argues that the foreign economic and security policies pursued in East Asia before the 1997 economic crisis depended on the existence of a set of domestic coalitions that enabled the protection of politically linked cartels and business groups. At the same time, this permitted the pursuit of an open economic policy which had the approval, until the crisis, of the international financial institutions. This domestic configuration – which the author calls “embedded mercantilism” – created the distinctive forms of

multilateralism in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF) in the Asia-Pacific. In the wake of the Asian crisis, the chapter argues, these domestic foundations have become more brittle and diverse, producing significant fissures between those states dominated by reform-oriented coalitions and others where nationalist coalitions still remain deeply entrenched. Thus, the form and structure of international economic policies and security policy in East Asia are contingent upon power and interests in the domestic and external economy. The breakdown of domestic coalitions therefore has important implications for the future course of East Asian multilateralism.

Melissa G. Curley and Qingxin K. Wang begin their chapter by making the case that poverty is a security issue in international relations. They observe that poverty is a clear human security challenge; but it can also be related to traditional security concerns by threatening and undermining regime legitimacy and stability, and thus threatening international peace. The consequences of poverty upon and within populations can also escalate to the international level to cause cross-border and interstate tensions. Upon this basis they explore the interaction between different actors in poverty alleviation by emphasizing the importance of forming partnerships between state actors and international actors. To illustrate their hypothesis, Curley and Wang analyse the case of China's cooperation with international organizations on poverty alleviation programmes. The case study shows that institutional cooperation between the state, international organizations, and NGOs has provided an effective solution to tackling poverty in China, and of improving the human security of millions of China's poor. But they conclude by arguing that effective collaboration between the state and multilateral donor organizations is central in the global campaign to eradicate poverty. In the case of China, at least, NGOs are not on an equal footing in terms of importance.

Governance

Part II addresses the role of governance in the non-traditional security debate. It is now widely accepted that domestic governance is related to security among and within states, as well as a broad range of human rights and welfare needs. There is also much support for the idea that democratic governance is conducive to sound development and stable, plural societies, and that it correlates to peaceful relations between and within societies (although democratic *transition* can increase instability). The corollary, of course, is that unstable, inefficient, undemocratic governance is the source of insecurity both to individuals and communities.

The provision of public services, the protection of human rights, the maintenance of a stable and productive economy all largely rest ultimately upon the shoulders of national governments. It goes without saying that when governments are unable or unwilling to meet these responsibilities, individuals are vulnerable to deprivation and human rights abuse. This can, in turn, have repercussions across national borders.

P.R. Chari addresses some of these issues and argues that South Asia is noteworthy for examples of poor governance: scarce resources are inefficiently deployed or frittered away, government administrations are getting increasingly divided on ethnic and sectarian lines, law enforcement is arbitrary and political leadership is obviously inadequate. According to Chari, this situation derives largely from a lack of a participatory government accompanied by – and connected to – a rapid erosion of government effectiveness. The common causes underlying this crisis of governance are the decay of political parties and democratic institutions; the indifference of the ruling elite to social needs; resistance to devolution and decentralization of powers to the people; and the nexus between criminals and corrupt bureaucrats, politicians, and businessmen. Therefore, there is a pressing need for greater transparency, access to information, and oversight mechanisms to regulate the functioning of the state.

Traditional security contains an inherent and unresolvable paradox at its very core. As every campaign for national self-determination by groups within existing states shows afresh, one “nation’s” security is another “nation’s” insecurity. While there is no solution to this particular security dilemma from within the analytical framework of the traditional security paradigm, there may be a solution through an emphasis on “good governance”. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu’s chapter illustrates the challenges of providing stable and efficient governance in Sri Lanka. In that country, the growth of a more assertive majority Sinhala nationalism after independence fanned the flames of ethnic division until civil war erupted in the 1980s with the Tamils pressing for self-rule. Saravanamuttu argues that the problem of governance in Sri Lanka stems in large measure from the failure to acknowledge the pluralism inherent in society through constitutional guarantees and through the propagation of this value in the political culture. Consequently, there is a crisis of legitimacy of the state. He observes that in Sri Lanka, and in South Asia in general, governmental structures still bear the hallmarks of the colonial legacy and social relations those of pre-colonial influences. At the same time, state and nation building processes are still underway. Consequently, in Sri Lanka the state, essentially the colonial state, preceded nation and has become the principal institutional agency in the creation of the nation through strategies of assimilation, integration, and coercion. These cen-

tralizing tendencies of the state have bedevilled the objectives of developing socio-political harmony and an overarching national consciousness. Rather, the inability and/or unwillingness of the state to accommodate social diversity and provide democratic “space” to a variety of groups has in turn nurtured and intensified centrifugal tendencies. Saravananuttu describes the painful history of negotiations and peace processes that culminated in the hopeful Norwegian initiative of 2002.

If we accept the thesis that the roots of armed conflicts in Indonesia and Sri Lanka can be traced to the lack of good governance that defines and mediates relations between the political centre and distinctive regions, then the logic of looking beyond the traditional security paradigm, even for threats to the territorial integrity of states, is compelling.

The natural environment

Part III demonstrates how the natural environment has multifold implications for security. Environmental degradation can represent a direct threat to individuals – through the effects of pollution, ill health, and vulnerability to natural disasters, for instance. It can represent a threat to the coherence and stability of communities – by undermining their capacity to operate as productive communities, or their capacity for the provision of public services. It can also potentially lead to conflict between communities and states, as a result of the spill-over effects of pollution and competition over resource scarcity.

Adil Najam’s chapter begins with an exploration of the non-traditional and human security debates. As he observes, exactly what is being “secured”, for whom, by whom and how, have long been in contention. Within this, environmental issues require new ways of thinking about policy, including security policy. At the same time, the environment is among the earliest and most pervasive sources of human conflict – and therefore of security concerns. Linkages between the natural environment and security are clear. Water has been and remains one of the most persistent sources of conflict at every level: international, national, community, and even individual. Energy is similarly one of the most potent motifs of environmental as well as security issues at every relevant level, from supranational to individual. Looking at environment and security links from a different perspective highlights the deep relationship between the deterioration of environmental quality – whether it is in the form of urban pollution, water contamination, soil degradation, deforestation, or biodiversity loss – and human well-being. Ultimately, a threat to human well-being can be seen as a threat to human security. Najam makes a number of observations: environmental stress can and does

translate to human insecurity, but it does not necessarily take the form of violent conflict; the absence of sustainable human development can lead to environmental degradation, thereby triggering social inequity and injustice; poverty is, and is likely to remain, the most important source of environmental vulnerability and insecurity in many Asian countries; an atmosphere of insecurity can be created when environmental stresses interact with societal vulnerability, disruptive development, and perverse markets – it is this volatile mix, rather than the environmental stress alone, that can become a trigger for insecurity or violence; the environment–security nexus is integrally tied to the cultural and institutional robustness of societies; structures of governance and policy – rather than natural endowments alone – are critical to enhanced energy security.

M. Shamsul Haque also argues that the natural environment should be considered as a (non-traditional) security issue and applies this reasoning to Northeast Asia. Haque examines the relationship between the environment and traditional security issues and presents his analysis in the context of broader political and security factors. The environmental challenges that confront Northeast Asia – such as greenhouse gas emissions, chlorofluorocarbons emissions, marine pollution, deforestation, diminishing biodiversity – are worsened by the “fetish for economic accumulation”, reckless industrialization, urbanization, population pressure, and poverty and inequality. Haque argues that there is the potential for conflict over environmental issues, in particular as a result of resource scarcity and the “spill-over effect” of one country’s environmental disorders on other countries. Finally, he argues that existing regional mechanisms for addressing environmental issues are inadequate: current environmental conventions and institutions at the international level often lack the authority and power of enforcement; traditional security perceptions based on state-centric and militaristic assumptions still dominate in the region; past legacies and history continue to obstruct meaningful cooperation, which is not made better by the hegemonic military presence of the US preventing regional cooperation. On this basis, Haque suggests that Northeast Asian countries need to rethink their current agenda of further economic growth based on environmentally hazardous industrialization, and the economically poorer countries in Northeast Asia, especially China, Mongolia, and North Korea, must address poverty and inequality. It is also essential to build interstate cooperation to achieve environmental security, which, in turn, requires states to overcome traditional conflicts and security perceptions. After completing this groundwork – examining negative perceptions, putting behind past rivalries, reassessing the US factor, and building mutual confidence – the stage may be set for Northeast Asian countries to get involved in adopt-

ing mutually binding conventions and treaties based on equality and transparency.

Ajaya Dixit and Dipak Gyawali's chapter illustrates how, in Nepal, natural disasters interact with societal vulnerability, disruptive development interventions, and perverse market exchanges to generate insecurity. Their chapter presents a cultural/anthropological approach to environmental issues in the context of deprivation. It identifies three scenarios of decision-making structures in this area. Hierarchies would seek additional security through procedural rationality; their technological and developmental choices are biased toward the large scale and therefore require additional expertise and control. Those in the individualistic mode would seek security through innovation and networking; their choices veer towards the path that provides the most substantive benefits. Egalitarians will seek social justice as the foundation of human security; they are suspicious of choices not easily controlled by the community.

Evelyn Goh explores the relationship between the exploitation and management of the Mekong River basin and the national and regional security of its riparian states. Interstate tensions may result from a number of problems. Conflicts over upstream/downstream interstate allocation, where upper-stream abstraction, impoundment or pollution reduces the quantity and quality of water available to downstream users; where land or water use in one part of the basin has unintended consequences on the resources in general; and socio-environmental conflict deriving from the direct and indirect impact of resource utilization and development. Goh argues that there are two key concerns here: *sustainability*, which is the ability of the ecological system to support indefinitely human development aims, and *security*, which refers to the relationship between the integrity of the environmental system and the integrity of human socio-political systems. Her analysis demonstrates that "environmental security" in the Mekong context represents a mixture of traditional and non-traditional security issues. In the process, it has thrown up three complex and difficult questions, which should guide the development of institutional capacity to ensure environmental security in the region: How can the asymmetries of power that exacerbate the innate geographical disadvantage of downstream states be redressed? How can the dependent, newly developing riparian states be strengthened against their economic vulnerability? How can socio-environmental "externalities" be incorporated into economic cost-benefit analyses in water development projects? Finally, Goh considers the prospects for building greater institutional capacity for cooperative approaches to managing the environmental resources of the Mekong River.

Institutional perspectives

The final section of the volume considers institutional perspectives and, in particular, prospects for the development of regional institutions for addressing non-traditional security challenges. William T. Tow's chapter analyses ASEAN and the ARF as non-traditional approaches to regional security politics. He suggests that they clearly function in a developing-regional context rather than in a European or Western setting, where centuries of diplomatic and legal precedent shape the form and parameters of institutional interaction. Unlike traditional security alliances, moreover, they try to advance strategic reassurance in the region through transparency and confidence-building rather than by perpetuating more traditional modes of security behaviour, such as power-balancing, deterrence, and crisis manipulation. Yet the security behaviour of ASEAN states often belies this idealistic image. Intra-ASEAN consultation is becoming more difficult to sustain as Southeast Asian polities are consumed with domestic political crises and economic survival. Tow employs three alternative security approaches, including *constructivism*, *securitization* and *human security*. He concludes by considering what "mix" of these alternative security models might be best applied to strengthen Southeast Asia's regional security future.

Helen Nesadurai discusses prospects for institutional cooperation in Southeast Asia. She observes that ASEAN is best known as a regional diplomatic community that works on the basis of a limited form of institutionalization, which stresses processes of socialization and consensus building and employs minimal rules. ASEAN member states arguably prefer such institutional forms owing to their preoccupation with national sovereignty and domestic policy autonomy, and ASEAN institutions are assumed to remain weak and informal. This chapter challenges these views and shows that partial institution building involving rule-based institutional forms has taken place throughout the 1990s in ASEAN in the field of regional economic cooperation through the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) project. Nesadurai suggests that the presence of politically and economically significant non-state constituencies, as well as distributional concerns between domestic social groups, will alter the dynamics of cooperation and could well make rule-based institution building necessary to advance cooperative processes. Institutions are as much about attempting to influence the behaviour of non-state actors, including business actors, as they are about influencing national governments to cooperate through the informational and distributional functions that institutions perform. Rules and procedures can play a significant role in this regard, and the chapter argues that there are prospects for institution building in non-traditional security issue areas in the region.

Tsuneo Akaha's chapter provides a wide-ranging analysis on non-traditional security cooperation in Northeast Asia. After discussing the relationship between human security and non-traditional security, the chapter opts to employ the concept of non-traditional security for three reasons. First, the distinction between traditional and non-traditional security is important in the context of contemporary Northeast Asia. Second, the state plays such a dominant role in both domestic and foreign affairs in this region – as both a source and target of security threats and as a means of combating those threats – that many security problems can more appropriately be defined and addressed through the dichotomy between traditional and non-traditional security. Third, an exclusive focus on “human security” would ignore many non-traditional security issues that affect in important ways the interests of the state and its institutions as well as their response to those issues. As Akaha observes, in Northeast Asia traditional and non-traditional security issues exist side by side, demanding parallel attention from the policy makers and analysts in all the countries of the region, both large and small. He offers an explanation for why multilateral cooperation has been limited in Northeast Asia by making some comparisons with regional economic cooperation in other parts of the world, namely, in Western Europe, North America, Southeast Asia, and Asia-Pacific. On this basis, the chapter explores the prospects of multilateral regional cooperation in non-traditional security matters. As examples, the chapter focuses on the Tumen River Area Development Programme, the Northeast Asia Economic Forum, the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue, the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and the ASEAN plus Three (China, Japan and South Korea).

The chapter concludes with an assessment of the prospects for multilateral regional cooperation in non-traditional security areas in the foreseeable future. The most realistic approach to multilateral decision-making in Northeast Asia would resemble the procedural rules practiced by ASEAN, i.e. consensual decision-making based on the least common denominator. Given the strong national sensitivities and political sensibilities in the region, security cooperation can only begin in areas that do not threaten national sovereignty but which offer promises of mutual benefits. Promising issues include environmental protection, resource conservation and development, coordination of migration policy, and effective management of cross-border flows of goods and people. Finally, cooperative schemes must employ non-threatening rules and procedures, allowing for gradual building of consensus, eschewing, at least initially, demanding political compromises or major resource commitments.

Richard Hu asks if there are sociological reasons for different ideas of

security in different regions. He starts with a number of key questions: How should nation-states address non-traditional security issues in their national strategies in the contemporary era? Have states changed their strategies to address non-traditional security issues? Have states begun to deal with non-traditional security issues in “non-traditional” ways or still in “traditional” ways? In addressing these issues Northeast Asian states still view security problems more “traditionally” than Southeast Asia and other developing countries. The external environment has a strong shaping effect on Northeast Asia’s security conception and threat perception. In Northeast Asia, the state is still considered the primary referent of security as well as the means to achieve security goals, including non-traditional security goals. This is because the state still plays the dominant role in society and people look to the state for solutions of security problems, traditional and non-traditional. This security practice is largely attributed to the external environment and its shaping effect on Northeast Asia’s security conception and threat perception, as well as cultural and societal factors such as state-society relations.

Conclusion

The three sets of unconventional security issues relevant to the security architecture can be summarized as follows:

- i. Damage to and destruction of peaceful relations, stability and order of the state-based system of international relations caused by the persistence of extreme poverty, environmental decay and resource scarcity, malgovernance and so on;
- ii. Threats to human security rooted in subhuman poverty, tyrannical government, environmental decay and resource scarcity, etc.; and
- iii. Damage to and destruction of livelihoods, ethnonational groups and environmental integrity caused by instability and conflict.

The multidimensional concept of security introduces extra elements of *complexity* (that is, a greater number and variety of elements and interactions) and *uncertainty* (due to lack of knowledge and information). The more complex the social reality, the greater the need for analytical parsimony in social science. The multidimensional approach to security sacrifices precision for inclusiveness. Realists could legitimately argue that only a “lean” conception of security can provide an honest and effective policy tool to cope with the “mean” enemies of the international jungle. For example, most of the Greens’ agenda, while entirely legitimate and proper items of public policy, is better conceptualized in economic rather than security frameworks. Broadening national security to include environmental concerns could have the effect, not of demilitarizing traditional security thinking, but the opposite one of militarizing the environment.

One possible solution to the dilemma is to focus on security policy in relation to crisis, short of which it is more accurate to assess the situation in terms of welfare gains and losses. Security policy can then be posited as crisis prevention and management, both with regard to institutional capacity and material capability. Even when so limited in meaning, many non-traditional concerns merit the gravity of the security label and require exceptional policy responses: environmental threats of total inundation or desertification, political threats of the total collapse of state structures, population inflows so large as to destroy the basic identity of host societies and cultures, structural coercion so severe as to turn human beings into de facto chattels, and such like. This volume documents, largely although not exclusively through voices from within the continent, the new emerging reality of many such non-traditional security concerns in Asia and the Pacific. What the volume does not do, but points to the urgency of the task as a future research project, is to grapple with the challenging question of the securitization of issues. By what processes and through which gate-keeping individuals and mechanisms do some issues get put on the table of national security planners while others are excluded? We hope this will mark a major start to the research agenda of non-traditional security debates – not, by any means, the end.

Notes

1. See, for example, *Human Security Now*, Report of the Commission on Human Security, New York, 2003; Kanti Bajpai, 'Human Security: Concept and Measurement', Kroc Institute Occasional Paper no. 19, August 2000; Astri Suhrke (1999) "Human Security and the Interests of States", *Security Dialogue* 30(3); Edward Newman (2001) "Human Security and Constructivism", *International Studies Perspectives* 2(3); Ramesh Thakur (2001) "Threats Without Enemies, Security Without Borders: Environmental Security in East Asia", *Journal of East Asian Studies* 1(2); Ramesh Thakur (1997) "From National to Human Security", in Stuart Harris and Andrew Mack, eds., *Asia-Pacific Security: The Economics–Politics Nexus*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin; William Tow, Ramesh Thakur and In-Taek Hyun, eds. (2000) *Asia's Emerging Regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security*, Tokyo, UNU Press; and S. Neil MacFarlane and Yuen Foong-Khong, *A Critical History of the United Nations and Human Security*, Indiana University Press for the UN Intellectual History Project, forthcoming.
2. For a powerful statement of state sovereignty deriving from and being conditional on the responsibility of states to protect the security and promote the welfare of their citizens, see *The Responsibility to Protect: Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre for ICISS, 2001). The report is available also on the website at www.iciss.gc.ca.
3. See R.B.J. Walker (1993) *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. See *Contagion and Conflict: Health as a Global Security Challenge*. A Report of the Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute and the CSIS International Security Programme, Washington DC, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, January 2000.

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Broadening Asia's Security Discourse and Agenda: Political, Social, and Environmental Perspectives

Edited by Ramesh Thakur and Edward Newman

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The security discourse is dominated by the traditional state-centric paradigm which privileges the territorial defence of a country against armed attack from foreign countries. For most people in Asia – a continent that counts for more than half of the world's population – the greatest threats to security come from disease, hunger, environmental contamination, crime and localized violence. For some, a still greater threat may come from their own government itself, rather than from an 'external' adversary. The citizens of states that are 'secure' according to the concept of traditional security can be perilously insecure in terms of their everyday life.

Going beyond military threats and state-centric analysis, this volume demonstrates the importance of a broad security agenda that incorporates political, economic, social and environmental dimensions as well as the many linkages between them. It applies non-traditional security perspectives to a range of human challenges across Asia, in the hope of encouraging a security discourse where humans are at the vital core. It also explores the potential conceptual and operational benefits of non-traditional security thinking in a continent confronted by both conventional and non-traditional security challenges.

"These essays explore in depth the security issues that will be critical in the decades ahead. It no longer suffices to talk about security solely in its traditional form. The pioneering research provided here will be invaluable to all students seeking to probe the nature of contemporary Asia."

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