Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia

Highlights from the Inaugural Meeting of NTS-Asia
8th – 9th January 2007
Marina Mandarin, Singapore

NTS-Asia Network Members with Ford Representatives Mr Andrew Watson (seated 3rd from left) and Dr Meiwita Budiharsana (seated extreme right) Guest Speaker, Dr Surin Pitsuwan (seated, 3rd from right) and Dean of RSIS Amb Barry Desker (seated 4th from left)

The Inaugural Meeting of the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia) on the 8th to 9th of January 2007 was a milestone in the progress of NTS studies. The meeting not only officially launched the Consortium but also brought together its regional network members – comprising 14 research institutes and think tanks from across Asia – to discuss current NTS challenges facing the region, and possible policy responses to address these problems.

Former Thai Foreign Minister and Member of the International Human Security Commission, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, presented a highly motivating keynote address, which was then followed by speeches from the Ford Regional Representative, Prof. Andrew Watson; Dean of RSIS, Amb. Barry Desker; and the NTS-Asia Secretary General, Prof. Amitav Acharya.

Representatives from all 14 Consortium members took turns in presenting major NTS concerns affecting their regions and proposed measures to address them. Sessions of these presentations were based on Asian sub regions.

In this edition
- Special Feature: Highlights from the Inaugural Meeting of NTS-Asia
  - Summary of Keynote address
  - Snapshots from the Meeting
- NTS Members Commended for their Achievements
- NTS-Asia a member of GDN
- Establishment of the Center for Non-Traditional Security and Peaceful Development (NTS-PD)
- WISCOMP Project on Gender and Non-Traditional Security – Final Regional Meeting

South Asia

- Major General ANM Muniruzamman, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
- Dr Meenakshi Gopinath, Women In Security, Conflict Management and Peace, India
- Prof Peter DeSouza, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, India
- Dr Chowdhury Abrar, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, Bangladesh
- Prof Syed Rifaat Hussain, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Sri Lanka

North East Asia

- Prof Han Feng, Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
- Dr Ahn Se Hyun, Ilmin International Relations Institute, Korea University
- Mr Bui Truong Giang, Center for International Security and Strategic Studies, Institute of World Economics and Politics (IWEP), Vietnam
- Assoc Prof Li Yingtao, Beijing Foreign Studies University (representing IWEP China)
- Assoc Prof James Tang, Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hongkong

South East Asia

- Dr Edy Prasetyono, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia
- Prof Carolina Hernandez, Institute for Strategic and Development Studies
- Mr Len Garces, The Worldfish Center, Malaysia
- Dr Mely Caballero-Anthony, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore

Policy papers of these presenters are available on the NTS-Asia website at http://www.rsis-ntsasia.org/publications/conf_report.htm

Discussions also focused on advancing the Consortium's activities, in particular its annual convention, regional workshops, research fellowship programme and curriculum development. A great source of ideas had been generated in improving the activities as well as in furthering their dissemination of awareness on NTS issues to the wider public.

All in all, members of the Consortium left the meeting feeling a greater sense of achievement having forged a community committed to addressing non-traditional security issues in the region.

NTS-Asia Members Commended for their Achievements

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Honorary Director, WISCOMP, has been awarded the Padma Shri Award for her distinguished contribution in the field of Literature and Education in India.

The fourth highest civilian award in the country, the Padma Shri Award is conferred by the Government of India to eminent citizens for their commitment, leadership and notable contribution in various fields including the Arts, Literature, Education, Science and technology, Sports, and Social Work. Dr Gopinath expresses her heartfelt thanks to her students and colleagues whose dedication and support have been instrumental for her in achieving the award.

Prof. Carolina Hernandez, Chair of the Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS) Philippines has been awarded the title of Emeritus Professor at the University of Philippines.

NTS-Asia congratulates both Dr Gopinath and Prof Hernandez for their outstanding achievements.

NTS-Asia a member of the Global Development Network (GDN)

As of 25 October 2006, the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia is a member of the Global Development Network. The Global Development Network (GDN) is a worldwide network of research and policy institutes working to provide a fresh and relevant perspective to the development challenges of our time.

The Global Development Network aims to do the following:-

- Encourage multidisciplinary research in the social sciences
- Producing policy-relevant knowledge on a global scale
- Building research capacity to advance and alleviate poverty
- Facilitate knowledge sharing among researchers
- Disseminate knowledge on development issues to the public and policymakers

To view NTS-Asia GDN profile, visit http://www.gdnet.org/middle.php?oid=211&zone=org&action=org&org=3383

Dr Surin Pitsuwan's articulate keynote address provided a great source of inspiration for many in the room with regards to the significance of non-traditional security (NTS) studies in Asia. He commended the network members of the Consortium for their contributions of an Asia-wide NTS network. He was also pleased that human security – which he actively advocates as part of the International Human Security Commission – is one of the guiding concepts of NTS-Asia.

Dr Pitsuwan giving the keynote address

While NTS threats are, in the words of EU Commissioner for Foreign Policy Javier Solana, "diverse, unexpected in the main, and multifaceted," Dr Pitsuwan made the point that non-traditional security threats can be considered as essentially traditional threats before the establishment of the state. He explained that based on the social contract theory, the state was established in order to provide security for its people and members of civil society.

However, traditional security measures are increasingly perceived as undermining the sovereignty of the state as integration and globalization have made the capacity of the state less relevant to the challenges and problems faced today. States' failures and short-comings, or inadequacies in the functioning and their obligation, human or natural, would certainly lead to human insecurity and spills over to neighbouring states. As such, non-traditional security is really traditional when viewed from the state's original obligation to protect its own people.

This lack of adherence to state's obligations was highlighted by the antiquarian principle of absolute state sovereignty and non-interference among states in internal conflicts fuelled by regional, tribal, racial and economic differences and disparities. New states are often insecure and hide behind the sacred principle of state sovereignty to fend of external involvement, even when the situations are severely threatening to citizens' welfare and livelihood.

It is therefore important, he notes, to increase the levels of trust and cooperation with neighboring states,

which is a new conceptual tool that NTS is working on. He added that while human security is certainly not the only conceptual tool, it is one that would assist in understanding how to deal with new emerging threats outside the parameters of the state. Moreover, rather than relying on the nation states which has been the principle of analysis of operation, integration and globalization has made the concept of state security and nation state security irrelevant. One has to therefore revisit the sanctity of the principle of sovereignty.

Human security refers to protecting fundamental freedom that is the essence of life, promote and protect people from critical, severe widespread threats. Protecting of such freedoms are via building on people's strengths and aspirations and creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that provide people with the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity. There are two schools of thought of the Human Security concept, which have been incorporated into the mainstream Human Security debate today – one based on the fundamentals of the freedom from fear (Western) and the other based on development and fulfillment of human potentiality (Eastern). In order to deal with today's security challenges, this tool of human centered security must be adopted to analyse and conceptualise the increasingly diverse and less visible and less predictable non-traditional security threats.

Dr Pitsuwan noted that the nature of NTS threats cannot be managed, solved, eradicated or reduced by anyone particular state alone, has to be regional/multinational approached, has to pull all resources including the pooling of sovereignty. It was heartening, he added, that at least in this region, ASEAN countries are now putting aside the absolute principle of non-interference and/or state sovereignty and adjust rules and regulations that will govern us as a community.

Given that absolute sovereignty stands in the way in dealing with NTS, it would also be the task of the Consortium to consider how the region as a community can coordinate and cooperate with a view to contain and to minimize the impact of NTS. Dr Pitsuwan further highlighted that by living in a global village as we do today, NTS threats are not limited to the ASEAN region but rather the entire globe. If unaddressed, it is not only the security and survival of the peoples of Asia but the security of the entire human race. The efforts of NTS-Asia would therefore not only benefit Asia but the whole world.

To read Dr Pitsuwan's full keynote address, please visit www.rsis-ntsasia.org

Snapshots from the NTS-Asia Inaugural Meeting

For more coverage of this meeting, please visit
http://www.rsis-ntsasia.org/activities/annual_conventions/inaugural_meeting.htm

Establishment of the Center for Non-Traditional Security and Peaceful Development
30 November 2006
Zhejiang University, China

The establishment of the Center for Non-Traditional Security and Peaceful Development (NTS-PD) marks China's first research and instructional center that provides in-depth analysis on non-traditional security studies. The center was formally established at Zhejiang University (ZJU) on the 30th of November 2006. Professor Wang Yizhou, Vice-Director of the Chinese Social Science's World Political Economy Institute, is its honorary director, and Professor Yu Xiaofeng, of Zhejiang University's School of Public Administration, has assumed the position of director.

The event also marked the release of a new publication - "An Outline of Non-Traditional Security Studies". The institute plans to convene an academic conference on the topic of non-traditional security and peaceful development studies in due time.

From left to right: Prof Ni Mingjian, Vice President of ZJU, Prof Li Jinshan, Vice-director of NTS-PD, Prof Zhangxi Secretary of ZJU's Party Committee, Prof. Yu Xiaofeng, Director of NTS-PD, Prof Chen Zichen Vice Secretary of ZJU's Party Committee

WISCOMP Project on Gender and Non-traditional Formulations of Security
Final Regional Meeting

24- 25 September 2006
Foundation for Universal Responsibility of his Holiness the Dalai Lama, India

A final meeting of the core research team of the Gender and Non-Traditional Formulations of Security was held in September 2006 under the auspices of Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP), Foundation for Universal Responsibility   The purpose of this interaction was to bring together about 30 researchers, practitioners and policy makers to generate a discussion around the seminal ideas generated by the seven research monographs generated from this project and how this may have altered our thinking on issues of security. The researchers who had formed part of the core research team of this project drawn from across South Asia focused their presentations on three central questions: the basic findings and conclusions of the study; how these had altered their perceptions on security: and some of the recent developments in the field following the completion of the study.

Dr. Sudha Ramachandran (center), co-author of Gender and Armed Conflict in Kashmir *participating in the deliberations with Ms. Urvashi Butalia and Ms. Manimala*

Since 2003, the WISCOMP project *Gender and Non-traditional Formulations of Security in South Asia* had sought to analyze conflicts across the gamut of non-traditional security sectors through a gender lens. The project looked to contribute to a corpus of knowledge, both empirical and theoretical, while focusing on the manner in which gender and non-traditional variables of security intersect in sites of conflicts in South Asia.

Dr Paula Banerjee (extreme right) and Dr. Ranabir Samaddar (center), authors of Migration and Circles of Insecurity

In particular it sought to do the following:

❑ Explore the conceptual parameters of the security-gender problematique, and in this context, examine the emerging discourses on security and new feminist sensibilities to identify how they might mesh.

❑ Survey in brief the empirical findings of a series of field studies across South Asia (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka), and one from South-East Asia, undertaken by WISCOMP, on gender and security in situations of manifest or latent conflict.

❑ Make some recommendations and survey new research pathways particularly for the field of conflict resolution, emanating from the findings of the studies in this project.

❑ Periodic roundtable meetings, review conferences and regional meetings played a significant role in seeking to create new epistemic communities engaged in rethinking security in manner that is gender sensitive, inclusive and holistic. These formed an important part of WISCOMP's attempt to not just involve researchers, policymakers and activists in this exercise, but also sensitize young scholars and university students on this emerging discourse.

Ms Retta Reddy (left), author of the study on Gender and Peacekeeping: Experience from Southeast Asia

The research studies have taken the form of tangible monographs, culminating in the *Engendering Security* series, and are currently being considered for publication by an international publisher. The final studies include:

❑ Gender and Peacekeeping: Experiences from South East Asia

❑ Ownership or Death: Women and Tenant Struggles in Pakistani Punjab

❑ Women and Armed Conflict in Nepal

❑ *Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want?* Re-thinking Security in Bangladesh

❑ Gender and Armed Conflict in Kashmir

❑ The Centrality of Gender in Securing Peace: The Case of Sri Lanka

❑ Migration and Circles of Insecurity

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath (right), Honorary Director, WISCOMP, and Dr. Sumona DasGupta , Assistant Director, WISCOMP

At the final meeting it was acknowledged that the WISCOMP project has contributed to a process of empirically mapping the area of gender and non-traditional approaches to security in sites of active and latent conflict in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh in a manner that highlights both the differences and similarities of experiences across cultures and national boundaries. The project has used gender as a facilitative concept to evolve a notion of South Asian security. The alphabet of gender has been able to devise a vocabulary of conflict transformation and peace building that finds a resonance in the cultural experiences of South Asia.

Dr Hameeda Hossain, Dr. Meghna Guhathakuta and Ms Malini Sur present their study 'Freedom from Fear, Freedom from Want? Rethinking Security in Bangladesh with Prof Ashwini Ray (2nd from left) facilitating the discussion

In particular the studies have fore grounded spaces for the women of South Asia to locate themselves in the politics and processes of peace building. Young entrants to the field have been equipped with the basic research tools and materials needed to carry out research in this field. This was done through a system of partnership in which younger scholars and senior specialists working collaboratively on projects in a non-hierarchical and enabling space. In fact the project provided an excellent context whereby young, mid career and senior professionals could cooperate and form networks that could sustain the initiative in the long run.

The project has flagged how gender perspectives can address the need for inclusivity in the theory and praxis of conflict resolution. It has helped reach out to engaged South Asian elites in the discourse at the interface between gender and non-traditional variables of security and work towards making the national security decision making apparatus more transparent, responsive and gender aware.

In the long run, the project also aimed at seeing gender as a crucial lens from which to bridge the distance between state security and human security. It has emerged as an integral research component of WISCOMP's focus on the notion of Engendering Security, which has helped generate sufficient interest in the area of gender and non-traditional security to enable this research initiative to become sustainable within the larger research community even after the end of the immediate program. At the closing meeting participants expressed the hope that despite the fact that the project has formally come to an end, the rich repertoire of ideas and best practices generated would continue to find multiple foras for further expression and development.

Calling for NTS- related Papers

NTS-Asia is constantly on the lookout for NTS- related resources, in particular articles and commentaries. If you have short articles (max 1,500 words) and wish to contribute them to our expanding NTS database, do email them to issofiah@ntu.edu.sg.

Your contribution will also be in the running to be the featured article on either our bimonthly newsletter or website.