



Conference Synopsis: Emerging Nontraditional Security Challenges in Asia March 6, 2007 CSIS

Introduction:

On March 6, 2007, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia) held a joint conference in which senior U.S. and Asia experts offered constructive analysis, insights, and critiques on the emerging security debate in Asia. The conference focused on how governments in the region can best respond to such transnational problems as terrorism, piracy, migration pressures, and the spread of disease by addressing the following questions: Can “traditional” alliance relationships be fully responsive to transnational challenges? Are other, multilateral approaches best suited? What are the prospects going forward for governments to effectively cooperate in meeting these emergent challenges? What will be the likely U.S. approach to these questions?

Panel 1: Infectious Disease and Migration

Dr. Mely Caballero-Anthony discussed the non-traditional security threat of infectious diseases, and expressed the importance of applying the language and framework of security issues to infectious diseases. More needs to be done, particularly in the way of coordinating national, regional, and global response mechanisms to address this issue. Infectious diseases require no less than a global response. Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui shared her views on the impact of the securitization of migration in Southeast Asia and its role as a potential non-traditional security threat arising from the negative impact immigrants. To counteract this trend, she recommended “de-securitizing” migration, as well as increasing efforts to highlight the contributions through civil society organizations, and forums such as the United Nations body and the International Labor Organization (ILO). She also believes there should be a push focusing on migration governance in South Asia.

Panel 2: Piracy and Terrorism

Dr. Syed Rifaat Hussain spoke about his work on understanding terrorism in South Asia. He discussed its causes and possible solutions to the nontraditional security threat that terrorism poses. He argued that the state and the law were crucial to eradicating terrorism, and called for a strengthened role of civil society, regional collaboration on these issues, an examination of comparative regional perspectives, and a larger analysis of the demographics of terrorism. Similarly, Dr. Rizal Sukma discussed the factors leading to terrorism in South Asia, noting a similarity between those factors and an increase in piracy in

South Asia, citing an increase in poverty, lack of security on ships, lack of state capacity, law enforcement's low prioritization of the issue, and an overall increase in shipping traffic. Dr. Sukma expressed his belief that there is a limit to what can be done multi-laterally to address these issues, and the efforts to increase national capacity are critical to addressing the issues of piracy and terrorism.

Panel 3: China's Approach to Non-traditional Security

Dr. Jia Duqiang presented his paper concerning extremism and its implications to China. He mentioned that NTS has not been discussed in China until 1997 Asia financial crisis and argued that the traditional military approach isn't applied well in handling these issues. He also suggested using social and economic development approach as a long-term strategy to tackle extremism in China. Dr. Mely Caballero-Anthony presented Dr. Li Dongyan's paper on China's approach to NTS. In this paper, Dr. Li reviews the trend of security studies in China and stresses that China's NTS research does not have a strong political meaning. Three approaches are taken in NTS research: the realism approach of calling the need for international cooperation and non-military means; the dual-security approach by looking at securities at international, global and individual level; and the human security approach of including political and social security with the ultimate goal to fulfill human needs.

Panel 4: Roundtable on the Role of the United States

Ms. Bonnie Glaser shed light on the role of the U.S. in NTS by analyzing three different approaches the U.S. has taken: government and non-governmental organization, technical support as well as military support. Dr. Evan Medeiros talked about how the U.S. allies responded to the rise of China by looking at the U.S. role in Asia-pacific region and how this relates to NTS. Dr. Robert Hathaway discussed the problem of elevating the issue of non-traditional security in the U.S. Dr. Amitav Acharya, using the example of Hurricane Katrina, expressed the view that NTS challenges can severely affect the international legitimacy of the U.S.