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Networks of Experts and Non-Traditional Security in Asia

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From the 'migrant crisis' to transboundary haze pollution and the Avian Influenza virus, Asian countries continue to face multiple new security threats which require international cooperation. These non-traditional security (NTS) threats have affected the security of individuals, ethnic groups, women, and local communities. As a result of these multiple impacts, governments, businesses and non-governmental organisations increasingly turn to technical experts who can assess these issues, determine their effects on the general public, and suggest ways to address them.

Epistemic communities: Communities of experts shaping state and global affairs

The ways experts view and analyse a particular problem are highly influenced by their individual world views, cultural backgrounds, training and personal experiences. Experts may also support one another by forming **epistemic communities**, which are networks of knowledge-based experts to discuss policy ideas to address these challenges.

Apart from enriching the information base for decisions, epistemic communities may also contribute to changing the way a problem is seen, and the way governments perceive and act on them. For example, at the global level, underdevelopment has been reformed from a purely economic view. Through close collaboration among economists Muḥḥub ul Haq, Paul Streeten and Amartya Sen, this is now seen as human security. Paul Streeten argued to put people at centre-stage; Amartya Sen provided empirical evidence on how human capabilities contribute to economic growth; and Muḥḥub ul Haq developed the Human Development Index (HDI) which measured, tracked and published key aspects of human development such as literacy and life expectancy at the country-level. The HDIs have since been adopted by states, in the form of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and non-state actors such as non-governmental organizations are now providing support towards achieving these goals.

Epistemic communities and Non-Traditional Security in Asia

In the same way that ul Haq, Sen and Streeten brought a new way of seeing underdevelopment, epistemic communities in Asia are breaking barriers and developing new perspectives for addressing NTS threats. The ASEAN Institutes for Strategic and International Studies (AISIS), a think-tank network, for instance, has provided venues for discussions that contributed to the institutionalisation of ASEAN as a regional governing

body, and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) has pushed for the institutionalization of regional security structures.

Moving forward, more work needs to be done. Epistemic communities are pushing for getting human security assessments to focus on disparities across subgroups such as indigenous peoples and communities, as well as in the representation of women in politics, food, and even disasters. They are likewise helping to strengthen regional cooperation structures, such as through the development of a comprehensive, whole-of-ASEAN approach that addresses health hazards at the point of entry; frameworks for facing new migration challenges and identifying the risks and responsibilities of states; and directions for strengthening military capabilities for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Relaunch of NTS Asia Consortium

Epistemic communities will continue to have an important role to play in finding solutions to NTS issues, both globally and within Asia. This month, we relaunch the NTS Asia Consortium, with the goal of strengthening and expanding this network. The Consortium will bring together regional NTS experts for knowledge exchange, to collaborate on research, and to capacity-build future experts so as to better update and direct regional and thereafter global NTS agendas.

Recommended Readings

- Erin Zimmerman, 2015, Think tanks and Non-traditional security: Governance entrepreneurs in Asia. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Peter M. Haas, 1992, Epistemic communities and international policy coordination, *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, Knowledge, Power, and International Policy Coordination, pp. 1-35.
- Mai'a K. Davis Cross, 2013, Rethinking epistemic communities twenty years later, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 39, Issue 01, pp. 137 – 160.
- Mely Caballero-Anthony and Alistair D.B. Cook, 2013, Non-traditional security in Asia: Issues, challenges and framework for action, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Singapore.
- Elizabeth A. Stanton, 2007, The Human Development Index: A history, Political Economy Research Institute (PERI), Working Paper Series No. 127, University of Massachusetts.

Link to NTS Consortium Relaunch Event Announcement

- NTS Asia Consortium Relaunch/Inter-Regional Comparisons of Humanitarian Action, 22-23 February 2016, Grand Park City Hall, Singapore.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- FAO reviews risks and responses to climate impacts on food security, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 15 January 2016.
- WHO Predicts Increased Global Health Impacts Due to El Niño, World Health Organization, 22 January 2016.
- Alex Pashley, France, India Inaugurate International Solar Alliance, Climate Change News, 25 January 2016.
- 2015 is hottest year in record, World Meteorological Organization, 25 January 2016.
- The Paris Agreement: Next steps, United Nations Climate Change Secretariat, 28 January 2016.
- FAO presents tools for gender integration into climate-smart agriculture, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, January 2016.
- Paris Agreement 'decisive turning point' on climate change, says new UN senior adviser, United Nations News Centre, 29 January 2016.
- Ban welcomes proposal for first binding limits on airlines' carbon emissions, United Nations News Centre, 9 February 2016.

Selected Publications

- Alina Averchenkova & Samuela Bassi, 2016, Beyond the targets: Assessing the political credibility of pledges for the Paris Agreement, LSE Policy Brief.
- Antoine Dechezleprêtre, Ralf Martin & Samuela Bassi, 2016, Climate change policy, innovation and growth, LSE Policy Brief.
- Solomon Asfaw & Giuseppe Maggio, 2016, Gender integration into climate-smart agriculture: Tools for data collection and analysis for policy and research, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome.

Events & Announcements

- ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity 2016: Biodiversity for Sustainable Development; 15 - 19 February 2016, Bangkok, Thailand
- International Symposium on Agricultural Biotechnologies, 15 - 17 February 2016, Rome, Italy
- Bonn Climate Change Conference, 16 - 26 May 2016, Bonn, Germany

ENERGY SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Stefan Schmid, Wind energy output shows spark of renewables sector, The National, 11 January 2016.
- Marc Goichot, Damned if they don't: Mekong countries face crucial choice today, The Nation, 13 January 2016.
- Chris Mooney, Why clean energy is now expanding even when fossil fuels are cheap, The Washington Post, 14 January 2016.
- Chino Leyco, Energy security needed to sustain growth NEDA chief says, Manila Bulletin, 20 January 2016.
- Reuters, India eyes Africa's vast resources to meet rising energy demand, The Economic Times, 23 January 2016. .
- Mohamed Abdel Raouf, Renewable energy in GCC, Arab News, 23 January 2016.
- AFP, China planning to build floating nuclear power plant, The Straits Times, 27 January 2016.

Selected Publications

- Roozbeh Karadooni, Sumiani Binti Yusoff, Fatimah Binti Kari, Renewable energy technology acceptance in Peninsular Malaysia, Energy Policy, Vol. 88, pp. 1–10.
- P.N.K. De Silva, S.J.R. Simons, P. Stevens, Economic impact analysis of natural gas development and the policy implications, Energy Policy, Vol. 88, pp. 639–651.

Events & Announcements

- Energy Efficiency & Sustainability in Local Government, 16–17 February 2016, Melbourne, Australia.
- Sixth International Conference on Water Sources and Hydropower Development in Asia: Conference and Exhibition, 1–3 March 2016, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

FOOD SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Alan Matthews, British farmers face complex questions in 'Brexit' debate, The Independent, 20 January 2016.
- Brent Eng and José Ciro Martínez, Why international food aid can actually make conditions worse for starving Syrians, The Washington Post, 26 January 2016.
- US to encounter avian influenza again? World Poultry, 27 January 2016.
- Sebastian Biba, China drives water cooperation with Mekong countries, China Dialogue, 1 February 2016.
- Zimbabwe declares 'state of disaster' due to drought, The Guardian, 5 February 2016.
- Feeding the dragon: ChemChina, an acquisitive state enterprise, buys Switzerland's Syngenta, The Economist, 6 February 2016.
- Robin McKie, Gene editing could create medicines and self-fertilising crops. But are we facing another GM food-style furore?, 7 February 2016.
- Rosie Burguin, Business news: Mergers in sector continue, World Poultry, 8 February 2016.

Selected Publications

- Jong Ahn Chun et al., 2016, Assessing rice productivity and adaptation strategies for Southeast Asia under climate change through multi-scale crop modeling, Agricultural Systems, Vol. 143, pp.14-21.
- Klaus von Grebmer et al., 2016, 2015 Global Hunger Index: Armed conflict and the challenge of hunger, International Food Policy Research Institute.

Events & Announcements

- Symposium on climate change adaptation in Africa, 21-23 February 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- International Conference on Eurasian Food Security and Nutrition Network and Eurasian Soil Partnership, 29 February – 1 March 2016, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

HEALTH SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Sarah Ferris, Clinton: ObamaCare was originally 'HillaryCare', The Hill, 21 January 2016.
- Dr. Seth Berkley, Infectious disease vaccines: A new approach to global health security, Fox News, 29 January 2016.
- Christina Farr, Why health care is the "absolute worst" at security (Q&A), Fast Company, 2 February 2016.
- Special Report - The World Health Organization's critical challenge: healing itself, Channel News Asia, 8 February 2016.
- Mandwi Singh, What the Zika crisis can teach India, indiatoday, 9 February 2016.
- Managing the health of an ageing population in Poland, Euronews, 10 February 2016.
- David Morgan, U.S. health officials tell lawmakers Zika funding is urgent, Reuters, 10 February 2016.

Selected Publications

- Modjarrad, Kayvon et al, 2016, Developing Global Norms for Sharing Data and Results during Public Health Emergencies, PLOS Medicine 13 (1).
- Fonjungo, Peter N., et al, 2016, Access and Quality of HIV-Related Point-of-Care Diagnostic Testing in Global Health Programs, Clinical Infectious Diseases, Vol 62, 3.

Events & Announcements

- Global Health & Innovation Conference, 16-17 April 2016, Yale University, New Haven.
- Communities Deliver: The Critical Role Of Communities In Ending The Aids Epidemic, 24 February, Washington, DC USA.

PEACE, HUMAN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

News & Commentaries

- Gabriel Domínguez, What drives South Asians to peacekeeping? , Deutsche Welle, 11 January 2016.
- Amjad Saleem, Making sense of future conflicts, Fair Observer, 21 January 2016.
- Warren Fernandez, US-China conflict not inevitable: Pentagon head, The Straits Times, 24 January 2016.
- Samuel Thrope, Israel-Palestinian conflict: Is one homeland the solution? , BBC News, 29 January 2016.
- Syrian opposition threatens withdrawal from peace talks, Channel News Asia, 31 January 2016.
- Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, William Reed and Katherine Sawyer, What really stands in the way of a negotiated end to Syria's war? , The Washington Post, 4 February 2016.
- Walter Lohman, Top five political-security priorities for the Asia-Pacific in 2016, The Heritage Foundation, 5 February 2016.
- Seyhmus Cakan, Kurdish conflict overshadows cup quarter-final in southeast Turkey, Reuters, 9 February 2016.

Selected Publications

- Michael Jonsson, Elliot Brennan & Christopher O'Hara, 2016, Financing war or facilitating peace? The impact of rebel drug trafficking on peace negotiations in Colombia and Myanmar, Studies in Conflict & Terrorism.
- International Crisis Group, 2016, Yemen: Is peace possible?, Middle East Report No. 167, Brussels, Belgium.

Events & Announcements

- 7th ADB Business Opportunities Fair 2016, 16-17 March 2016, Asian Development Bank Headquarters, Manila, Philippines.
- 11th International Security Forum (ISF), 13-15 June 2016, Geneva, Switzerland

TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

News & Commentaries

- New multi-year initiative launched to step up global response to trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 21 January 2016.
- Agencia EFE, Police dismantle arms trafficking ring in Colombia's capital, Fox News Latino, 4 February 2016.
- Press Association, Pilot 'Biggles' jailed over £33m cocaine smuggling ring, The Guardian, 9 February 2016.
- UN officials call for strengthened global partnerships to combat human trafficking, UN News Centre, 9 February 2016.
- Tim Wallace, Murder victims' families sue HSBC over drug gang money laundering, The Telegraph UK, 10 February, 2016.
- Drazen Jorgic, How to trap elephant poachers with their own technology, Reuter, 11 February 2016.

Selected Publications

- Rob White, 2016, Building NESTs to combat environmental crime networks, Trends in Organized Crime, pp.1-18.
- Transcrime – Research Centre on Transnational Crime, 2016, A European outlook on the illicit trade in tobacco products, Trends in Organized Crime, pp. 1-29.
- UNODC, 2016, Sahel Programme 2013-2017: Strengthening the Sahel against Crime and Terrorism. Senegal: UNODC.

Events & Announcements

- SANS McLean 2016, 15-20 February 2016, McLean, United States.
- ICISSP 2016: 2nd International Conference on Information Systems Security and Privacy, 19-21 February 2016, Rome, Italy.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF

News and Commentaries

- Gopal Sharma, Nepal earthquakes: Work begins on homes shattered by the natural disaster, Independent, 10 January 2016.
- Jared Ferrie, How politics delayed Nepal reconstruction, IRIN, 14 January 2016.
- UN agricultural agency helps Pakistan cope with natural disasters such as floods, quakes, droughts, UN News Centre, 24 January 2016.
- Addressing disaster risks critical for sustainable development: UN, Jakarta Post, 26 January 2016.
- Heather Leson, How digital humanitarians are closing the gaps in worldwide disaster response, Huffington Post, 28 January 2016.
- Six months after the Myanmar floods, hundreds of thousands assisted as Red Cross continues to support affected communities, IFRC, 29 January 2016.
- Emperor, Empress to visit 2011 disaster-hit Fukushima, Miyagi in March, The Japan Times, 5 February 2016.

Selected Publications

- Rossow, Richard M., C. Raja Mohan and Vindu Mai Chotani, 2015, Deepening India-U.S. cooperation on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific Regions. Washington DC: Centre for Strategic and International Studies.
- Overseas Development Institute, 2015, Doing cash differently: How cash transfers can transform humanitarian aid. Report of the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Events and Announcements

- NTS Asia Consortium Re-launch/Inter-Regional Comparisons of Humanitarian Action, 22-23 February 2016, Singapore.
- AIDF Global Disaster Relief Summit, 7-8 September 2016, Washington DC, US.

WATER SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Thailand scrambles to drill wells amid drought and water shortages, Jakarta Globe, 21 January 2016.
- Robyn Dixon, In South Africa, volunteer water deliveries bring relief to drought areas, Los Angeles Times, 22 January 2016.
- Fazli Mert, No precautions taken despite ISIL plans to poison water sources, Today's Zaman, 22 January 2016.
- Jean Chua, Breaking barriers: How California tackled its water challenges to become a global leader, Eco-Business, 25 January 2016.
- Anthony Wallace, Securing Australia's food and water security from space, Spatial Source, 26 January 2016.
- Alec Forss, Can Myanmar avoid conflict pitfalls in its hydro blitz?, New Security Beat, 27 January 2016.
- Sandra Postel, Water risks are growing; here's a tool to help us prepare, National Geographic, 28 January 2016.
- Teesta, security on agenda, The Daily Star, 1 February 2016.
- Peter Neill, Drowning in danger: worldwide water crisis deemed biggest global risk, New York Daily News, 1 February 2016.
- Riad Al-Khouri, One drop at a time, Executive, 4 February 2016.

Selected Publications

- Stefania Tamea, Francesco Laio, and Luca Ridolfi, 2016, Global effects of local food-production crises: A virtual water perspective, Scientific Reports 6. Article No. 18803. Nature.
- Tobias von Lossow, 2016, Water as weapon: IS on the Euphrates and Tigris, SWP Comments No. 3. Berlin.

Events & Announcements

- Call for Papers: The 7th International Conference on Water Resources and Environment, Kyoto, Japan. Deadline: 31 March 2016.
- Asia Water 2016, 6–8 April 2016, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.