

Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies *Fear in Review 2009*



CENTRE FOR
NON-TRADITIONAL
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CENTRE FOR NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY STUDIES YEAR IN REVIEW 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Numerous events of high significance occurred in 2009, highlighting the growing list of non-traditional security (NTS) challenges facing the region today. These included an unspooling global economy, ongoing political turmoil in China, Thailand and Myanmar, countless natural disasters such as droughts, floods, earthquakes and storms, for example, as well as diseases — including a novel strain of influenza virus — spreading widely. This year we have seen growing evidence that global warming is progressing even faster than anticipated, yet political will to address it remains sluggish.

As of 2009 there are an estimated 6.8 billion people inhabiting this one world; humanity is connected as never before, both directly through travel, the internet and telecommunications, and indirectly through the global networks of finance, trade and commerce. Distances have collapsed, barriers have disappeared and within our homes and our minds we are acquiring goods and ideas from all around the globe. These are complex times and they are changing fast. For this Year in Review, we bring you highlights of major NTS events that have affected states and societies in Southeast Asia.



ECONOMIC CRISIS AND MIGRATION



The global economic crisis, which came to the forefront in 2008, had significant repercussions in Southeast Asia, particularly for migrant workers, throughout 2009. Productivity in manufacturing and services declined as a result of the general contraction in international trade. This was coupled by increased unemployment, most noticeably among the youth, and among female and migrant workers in informal sectors. Unemployment rose significantly in the Asia-Pacific region, with women and youth unemployment being of particular note in the Philippines, where youth unemployment increased by 5.9 per cent to 1.4 million in January 2009. Furthermore, as noted by the International Labour Organization, the number of unemployed women rose by 5.7 per cent in 2009. In addition to these two vulnerable groups, the International Organization for Migration reported that low-skilled immigrants were particularly at risk of unemployment and wage deflation, resulting from the worldwide economic recession.

However, in contrast to the Asian financial crisis of 1997–98, government policies and regional initiatives have been somewhat more sensitive towards migrant workers this time. Throughout the year, much attention has also been paid to tackling the financial crisis, particularly the role of the Group of 20 (G20) Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors.

G20 London Summit

In April, the G20 convened a follow-up Summit to the previous one in held Washington, D.C. in November 2008, to tackle the global financial crisis. The G20 is comprised of the world's largest 19 economies plus the European Union (EU). It has now, informally at least, replaced the G8 as the most important global finance meeting. The

G20 not only includes numerous developing nations but, notably, also includes Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States — all important players in the Asia-Pacific — and accounts for 80 per cent of world trade (including EU intra-trade), as well as two-thirds of the world's population. Observer status was also afforded to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the key trading bloc in the Asia-Pacific. Prior to the London Summit, preparatory meetings were held in Berlin for European leaders and in Horsham for finance ministers. The former meeting called for more effective sanctions against tax havens, and the latter was held to bolster the objectives of the London Summit. The outcome of the London Summit was an agreement which provided a US\$ 1.1 trillion stimulus package to improve the international economy and provide stability. Notably, it did not include any allocation for environmental investment. The agreement also included increased regulation of hedge funds and credit-rating agencies, and a financial stability forum to provide an early-warning system for potential future financial crises. The most prominent observation that can be taken from the London Summit was that China is now a major power broker in the international system alongside the United States, especially with the relative weathering of its economy in the face of the current global financial storm.

G20 Pittsburgh Meeting

The G20 leaders agreed to meet again in Pittsburgh in September after the London Summit. The major outcome of this meeting was an affirmation that the G20 is now the most important forum of its kind, replacing the G8 as the new permanent council for international economic cooperation. In addition, the Pittsburgh Meeting saw a

specific commitment establishing a new World Bank Trust Fund to finance investments in food security for the most vulnerable states. The meeting also took stock of the measures that individual states had carried out since the previous G20 meetings. It saw the redistribution of votes of at least 5 per cent at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and 3 per cent at the World Bank, from over-represented states to under-represented states. As a result, the proposed reforms will redistribute quotas and votes, which will increase the share for several Asian economies, notably China, Korea, India, Japan, Singapore, and the United States appearing in the top ten. States also committed to phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies in the medium term and to oversee greater reporting of oil markets.

ASEAN Summit and Chiang Mai Initiative

In March, ASEAN leaders met in Cha-am, Thailand to discuss the global financial crisis and its effects on the region. During the meeting it was agreed that the region's economic foundations were in a strong position as a result of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis. However, the leaders recognised that the slowing of global trade had adversely affected trade and investment in Southeast Asia. In May, a ASEAN Plus Three Finance Ministers Meeting (APT-FMM) on the Chiang Mai Initiative on Multilateralization (CMIM) sought to pool regional foreign exchange reserves to be drawn on, in response to any future economic crises. Significantly, agreement on contributions was reached with Japan, as it was the largest single contributor to the fund, along with China and Hong Kong as co-equal contributors. Both China and Japan left the meeting with their objectives met: Japan secured its position to remain the largest single contributor, while China had effectively joined Japan as the most significant contributor at the same time. This development further illustrated the growing influence of China in regional Asia-Pacific affairs. It was agreed by the APT-FMM that the CMIM would be implemented by the end of 2009 and, in the interim, the existing bilateral swap

arrangements network would assist, should there be a liquidity shortfall and difficulties in short-term balance of payments. Furthermore, the meeting agreed to strengthen the regional surveillance mechanism by establishing an independent regional surveillance unit to implement the CMIM and monitor the global financial crisis.

Prospects for 2010

On 1 January 2010, the ASEAN free trade agreement will be fully implemented and will significantly contribute to increased integration of Southeast Asian states. Further to the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area, Japan has shown a significant interest in developing an East Asian Summit (EAS) Free Trade Area and EAS Community, which could lay the groundwork for a larger integrated community including ASEAN Plus Three members, as well as Australia, India and New Zealand. While the prospects of an East Asian Community are in the early stages, the notable policy change came from Japan's new government, which wants to redress its relationship with its neighbours and play a more active role in the region.

While the economic crisis has had devastating effects on countless lives, perhaps this might also be a moment of opportunity: Can we make our economic recovery smart? Will potential conflicts brought on by the financial crisis have an impact in the region? Numerous countries in the region have weaknesses which, by their very nature, make them more vulnerable to exogenous shocks such as the financial crisis.

The global financial crisis has highlighted the vulnerabilities of marginalised populations that are also equally exposed to the detrimental effects of conflict such as internal displacement and human rights abuses. In this vein, the review now turns to the recent developments in this regard.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS, CONFLICT AND HUMAN RIGHTS



Over the past year, issues surrounding internally displaced persons, conflict and human rights offered signs of both measured hope and despair. Renewed interest from the United States in the region offered prospects for progress on a number of issues of concern. From the ongoing political turmoil in Myanmar to the increased interest in regional institutional development, each issue found itself with greater international political capital as a cause for concern. In 2009, there were significant developments at the regional level regarding human rights. The ASEAN Summit was hosted by Thailand and included the establishment of the regional human rights body, discussion of regional conventions and informal diplomacy on a range of issues. In July, the United States signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, a largely symbolic move aimed to show that it understood and was willing to engage in the Southeast Asian regional code of conduct.

Myanmar — Bouncing Between Hope and Uncertainty

The internal political dynamics of Myanmar have been a cause for concern, particularly since the 1990 elections when the military refused to recognise the election results, imprisoned political dissenters and increased political and social control. Most recently, international attention has focused on Myanmar as a result of Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and the subsequent constitutional convention. The election of President Obama as United States president ensured that Myanmar re-entered mainstream international policy priorities.

In 2009 Myanmar has had several notable events, including American re-engagement, the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi, and the recent escalation of tension with Bangladesh over

maritime territorial waters, all of which have had significant implications for Southeast Asia. The most notable shift saw American re-engagement with Myanmar at the diplomatic level, whilst still maintaining sanctions. At the domestic level, Myanmar's military junta instigated a trial and found Aung San Suu Kyi guilty of breaking the terms of her conviction by offering an American man refuge after he had swum across the lake to her house uninvited. The international community saw the trial and the case brought against her as a means of extending her detention past the scheduled elections in 2010. At the end of 2009, Myanmar increased its military presence along the Bangladesh border by forcibly enlisting civilians to erect a barbed wire border fence. This will effectively cut the ability of the Rohingya refugees to cross the Bangladeshi border, heightening concerns that the Rohingyas' statelessness will become permanent. Along the Thai border, conflict between the ethnic nationalities and the military has re-surfaced as the military government renews its attempts to take control over the ethnic nationalities' areas.

Southern Thailand

Violence has continued in this ethnic Malay and Muslim-majority region, consisting primarily of the three southernmost provinces of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani, and parts of Songkhla. This violence has claimed approximately 3,500 lives over the past five years. 2009 has seen a spike in insurgent attacks, targeting ordinary people, high-level officials and military personnel. The overwhelmingly home-grown insurgency is led by a movement without clear structure or leadership.

In February, the Internal Security Operations Command issued a report which stated that insurgents 'were using

human rights groups to sow distrust and hatred.' Subsequently, army and police personnel raided the office of a local human rights organisation, the Working Group on Justice for Peace. There is a reported increase in militarization and proliferation of armed groups — mostly civilian defence militias — in the region, with human rights violations committed by all sides. There has also been an increase in the number of firearms distributed and circulated among these militias.

Thai Prime Minister Vejjajiva has repeated claims that the government was considering turning the provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat into a special administrative zone, and it would be compatible with the constitution. He also met with Malaysian Premier Razak to discuss the situation, which shares borders and communities with northern Malaysia. Vejjajiva stated that 'development is the long-term solution' and a special government development committee pledged nearly 20 billion Thai baht for this. Since August, however, there has been a marked rise in insurgent attacks on civilians and military personnel, continuing into the latter part of the year.

Xinjiang, China

A long history of conflict in Xinjiang characterises Uyghur and Han Chinese relations in western China. In July, riots by the Uyghur, followed by Han Chinese, caused 200 deaths, 1,500 injuries, and widespread property damage. This resulted in a security clampdown by the authorities. The immediate cause of the rioting appeared to be a false rumour implicating Uyghur factory workers of raping a Han Chinese woman. This led to a spiral of violence including riots by both communities in retaliation against one another's actions. The riots caused Chinese president Hu Jintao to shorten his participation at the G8 summit and return to China.

Beijing accused exiled Uyghur dissident and activist Rebiya Kadeer of planning and inciting the violence, and claimed that her relatives in China wrote to Kadeer to criticise her. In early August, Xinjiang authorities arrested over 1,500 suspected rioters. The Chinese government stated, in front of a visiting delegation of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, that the root causes included rapid economic development, which led to 'different levels in the standards of living among the populations'.

A fresh wave of protests occurred in September, when the Han community protested against the authorities for not offering sufficient protection. A number of people were stabbed with hypodermic syringes, allegedly by

Uyghurs. As a result of the beating of three Hong Kong journalists and the general security situation, both the Urumqi Communist Party chief and the head of the region's security department were sacked, although no official reasons were given, causing a British Broadcasting Corporation journalist in Xinjiang to remark that 'the sacking is unusual as it shows the authorities believe they may have made mistakes.' Following this, the Chinese government has since ordered the execution of 12 people over the July riots. Many observers of this ongoing conflict argue that Beijing exaggerates the threat of secession to justify extreme responses.

ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)

ASEAN leaders announced the launch of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights at the ASEAN Summit in Thailand in October. The member states endorsed the High Level Panel's Terms of Reference on the human rights body and announced the appointment of the new AICHR representatives, who then met at the Summit. As part of the announcement, member states pledged a \$200,000 start-up fund which will be topped up annually from member states and external sources. The new body will meet twice a year and as part of its oversight function, the ASEAN Summit will review the body's mandate every five years. The appointed member state representatives will serve three-year terms with a maximum appointment for two terms. However, the member states did not establish a formal role for civil society and confusion surrounded civil society involvement at their meetings in Cha-am and Hua Hin, Thailand.

Prospects for 2010

Next year there are several notable projections regarding internal displacement, conflict and human rights, which offer both measured hope and sustained cynicism in equal measures. For the people of Myanmar, 2010 will be the first time that an election for the national government has been held since 1988. While international efforts, most notably from the United States, continue to secure the release of political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi, prospects for a full, free and fair election appear remote.

While such internal conflict issues clearly affect human security and human rights in the region, it is becoming increasingly apparent that climate change will also have implications on human rights, posing a threat to a wide range of universally recognised human rights. This brings us to evaluate progress and challenges of climate change and climate politics in the region.

CLIMATE SECURITY — BEYOND COPENHAGEN



The global climate policy debates in 2009 have been mostly driven by the anticipation of the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties, or COP-15, at Copenhagen in December. A number of official meetings are being held in the run up to the Copenhagen meeting, demonstrating that progress has been made in sensitising the issue of climate change within the realm of international relations. The debates on reaching consensus for a post-2012 climate agreement are largely characterised by establishing a framework for binding emission targets. Global attention is mainly directed towards the shift in climate policy expected from the Obama Administration. The focus on United States climate policy has also brought all eyes to two major developing economies, namely China and India. On an optimistic note, pledges to commit to emission reductions by President Barack Obama and President Hu Jintao, at the United Nations (UN) High-Level Summit on Climate Change in New York in September 2009, marked significant progress in the debate. In this context, China and India signed a five-year pact on climate change in October 2009. Yet it remains to be seen whether persistent opposition to binding reductions from these major polluters will render the post-Kyoto climate regime ineffective.

Mitigation, Adaptation and Social Resilience

At the heart of the climate change debates has been the focus on mitigation, with less attention paid to the importance of adaptation and building social resilience to the impact of climate change. Developing countries have repeatedly called for international assistance to support adaptation. The adaptation section of the negotiating text was discussed in Bonn at the Climate Change Talks held in June 2009, yet the meeting revealed that there remains a

wide gap between rich and poor countries in addressing the impact of climate change, in adaptation measures in particular.

The increasing realisation of the importance of adaptation is finding traction among world leaders at the UN climate summit in New York. They called for a climate change deal in December that would ensure enhanced action to assist adaptation measures for the most vulnerable and poorest communities. Nevertheless, at the G20 meeting in Pittsburgh, held during the same week of the UN climate summit, the same leaders failed to pledge a new financial commitment for adaptation, mitigation and technology-sharing for developing and poor nations. The Bangkok Climate Talk in October 2009 was the second-to-last meeting before Copenhagen, and it failed to produce any significant progress on funding adaptation.

On its Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia report published in April, the Asian Development Bank contributed to this debate by assessing the overall vulnerability of the region, and it highlighted the policy options available for countries to best adapt to climate change. The Manado Ocean Declaration adopted by the High-Level Meeting on World Ocean in May also underlined the importance of comprehensive adaptation measures to address climate change impacts on coasts and oceans, as well as communities whose survival and livelihood depended on these resources.

This recent increased push for adaptation has highlighted the need to view climate change through a human security lens. This approach balances the centrality of the impact

of climate change on state security against its impact on the security of individuals and communities. It seeks to analyse various implications of climate change — including issues of water scarcity, ill-health, energy and food security, migration and environmental disasters — on the vulnerability of communities most affected.

Climate Change and Human Rights

Complementing the human security approach that places the human dimension at the centre-stage of climate security debates, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published a report on the human rights impact of climate change (A/HRC/10/61) in January. The report presents an analytical study of the relationship between human rights and climate change that was mandated by the Human Rights Council Resolution 7/23. Using a rights-based approach, this report focused on people and communities who would be most adversely affected by climate change, for example women, children and indigenous people. It recognises that the vulnerability of communities to the impact of climate change is also aggravated by non-climatic factors such as discrimination, poverty and unequal power distribution. Therefore, the protection and promotion of human rights, ranged across civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, are pertinent to increase community resilience to the impact of climate change. The report also argues that under international human rights law, states have the legal obligation to protect individuals whose rights would be affected by climate change implications as well as by the policies to address them. Complementing this effort would be an obligation to undertake international cooperation and provide assistance.

11th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment

Looking at regional level cooperation in Southeast Asia, ASEAN member states have increasingly placed greater importance on the issue of climate change throughout the year. The ASEAN Working Group on Climate Change (AWGCC) and Terms of Reference of the ASEAN Climate Change Initiative (ACCI) have been endorsed to be proposed during the 11th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Singapore in October. ACCI will serve as a platform to build regional coordination and cooperation in addressing climate change implications. The scope of collaboration of the ACCI will include policy and strategy formulation, information-sharing, capacity building and technology transfer. It would be the duty of the AWGCC to implement these initiatives.

Despite these promising avenues, cooperation in the area of climate change in ASEAN remains far behind existing environment initiatives in the region. In spite of being one of the priority areas under the environmental sustainability element of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2009–2015, the issue of climate change lacks concrete action and seemingly only follows a global trend. Instead of producing a declaration as endorsed by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in September, the 15th ASEAN Summit in October issued an ASEAN joint statement on climate change that lacked clarity. The joint statement indicated support for the December Copenhagen meeting and urged developed countries to make deeper emission cuts and provide support for adaptation and mitigation efforts through effective mechanisms and new institutional arrangements. Yet, it failed to provide a political statement to foster a regional role and direct regional cooperation in addressing climate change through the ACCI and AWGCC.

Prospects for 2010

It is imperative to mainstream climate adaptation into various elements of development policies. In the region, advancement of an ASEAN-wide approach is expected to foster a more proactive role in support of national climate strategies of the member states. The development of an international agreement on climate change over the next year could well see a more coordinated regional approach on adaptation, mitigation, funding, disaster preparedness and sustainable development. This framework should put climate declarations and international frameworks into action on the ground. The AWGCC will likely attempt to enhance regional cooperation in emission reduction, sharing of green technology, disaster prevention and management, water management, forestry, cross-border resource management and ensuring energy and food security. Additionally, it could also seek to engage ASEAN dialogue partners, such as the ASEAN Plus Three, European Union, US and Australia, in order to support various climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in the region. Indeed, as the effects of climate change become ever more apparent with the increased numbers of extreme weather patterns in the region, there is a need to ensure that appropriate early-warning systems are in place to provide the information needed to respond to natural disasters, as illustrated by the following section.

NATURAL DISASTERS AND PREPAREDNESS



The recent series of devastating natural disasters to hit Southeast Asia in September and October once again tested disaster preparedness in the region. In 2009, the most notable events were Typhoon Ketsana and the earthquake in Indonesia. These two disasters have caused over 1,300 deaths and affected over one million people in total. Despite their unprecedented magnitude, they are not uncommon in the disaster-prone region. However, building on lessons learnt from past experiences, governments are expected to be better prepared in anticipating disasters and averting such dire consequences.

Philippines

In the Philippines, Typhoon Ketsana and Typhoon Parma reportedly caused up to 700 deaths, damaged hundreds of houses and infrastructure, and affected the lives of more than 7.4 million people. The Philippines government was criticised for being overwhelmed by the situation which unfolded. The Philippines' National Disaster Coordinating Council was inadequately prepared to respond concurrently to several affected provinces. The gravity of situation was compounded in Metro Manila by chronic under-investment in infrastructure, ensuring widespread damage. The disaster showed an undeniable need to identify and address the infrastructure shortcomings through sustained political, local and international action to avert occurrences on this scale in the future.

Indonesia

In Indonesia, several earthquakes occurred in various provinces, including Maluku, North Sulawesi, West Papua, West Sumatra and West Java. While most have been of relatively low intensity, or causing minimal damage, two

events in particular stand out: A 7.2-magnitude earthquake in West Java Province, and another measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale in Padang, West Sumatra. In Indonesia, disaster response coordination functioned effectively despite the multitude of disasters that struck the country within the same week. The designated agency in Indonesia, the National Agency for Disaster Management, was decisive and played an effective coordinating role between government agencies, civil society and international assistance initiatives. The Indonesian government and civil society have been working together to incorporate a community-based disaster risk reduction strategy into various local and national policies.

Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

Typhoon Ketsana also left a trail of death and destruction in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, killing more than 50 people in Vietnam and Cambodia and displacing nearly 200,000 people overall. The early-warning system and evacuations conducted by the Vietnamese government were successful in minimising casualties. The designated agency in Vietnam for disaster preparedness was the Ministry of Defence; it was decisive and played an effective coordinating role between various government agencies, civil society and international aid entities. While the role of the military in disaster response remains a question of debate, it appears clear that in the absence of better coordinated preparations across sectors of society, its role was crucial in responding to the disaster. As the Southeast Asian region is prone to such extreme weather patterns, it appears essential that a more robust regional system is designed and implemented to provide information-sharing and relief coordination during such disasters.

2009 ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response

With the increasing frequency and scale of disasters occurring in Southeast Asia, it is imperative for ASEAN to strengthen its role in supporting the national disaster management of its member states. It is a perfect moment for ASEAN to review its role, as the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) will be entering into force by the end of 2009. The AADMER is designed to put into place structures, mechanisms and strategies for regional cooperation on disaster management. It also includes provisions for setting up an ASEAN disaster relief fund. Full ratification of this agreement by all member states reflects a collective will to have a more rigorous regional disaster response and a commitment to build disaster-resilient communities, as stipulated in the Hyogo Framework for Action. Being a platform for a comprehensive approach to regional disaster management, the five components of the ASEAN Regional Programme on Disaster Management (ARPDM) 2004-2010 could be utilised to support the realisation of the AADMER. It is worth noting that the existing framework has been under-used despite a number of activities that have been implemented.

The AADMER also stated the need to establish the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management. It would be timely for ASEAN to establish this Centre, which could serve as a focal point to build an integrated disaster management mechanism, ranging from risk reduction to relief and rebuilding. It could extend the function that has been taken by a specialised ASEAN body called the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management. It could support ASEAN in playing its intermediary role in disaster management among its member states, dialogue partners and other international institutions that have been initiated by the ARPDM, which will expire after 2010.

Prospects for 2010

To mitigate the impact of natural disasters, ASEAN should support efforts at the grassroots levels. This means reducing human vulnerabilities and enhancing local capacity in disaster management, as was aspired to in the Cha-am Hua Hin Statement on East Asia Summit Disaster Management, adopted during the 2009 East Asia Summit. At the regional level, the strengthening of disaster management may enable greater cooperation and improved relations between ASEAN civil authorities and militaries, and among civil society, as well as greater cooperation to jointly tackle climate change, environmental issues and sustainable development, cutting across the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. It remains to be seen, however, the extent which ASEAN will be able to fulfil the provisions it has adopted in its agreements and joint statements. It is imperative that ASEAN and its member states build momentum to strengthen national and regional disaster preparedness before another major series of disasters strike.

Overall, there is no single dominant factor responsible for disasters. It is a complex combination of poor urban planning, development inequalities, poverty, deforestation, environmental degradation and climate change. Climate change itself is projected to aggravate the intensity and frequency of these disasters, leaving states and communities in the region even more vulnerable. In future, failure to think over the long term and acknowledge the relevance of scientific evidence will likely result in haphazard responses. Disaster risk reduction therefore has to be mainstreamed into national and local development, as well as climate adaptation policies. This kind of effort should be developed region-wide, particularly since the region has suffered such major disasters in recent months. A comprehensive, human security approach is imperative, because technology alone will not save lives or livelihoods. Such an approach should also factor in issues of health insecurity, which is frequently exacerbated by both climate change and the occurrence of disasters, bringing us onto the final part of our review.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES



Over the past year, health issues have appeared frequently on world and regional news headlines, at security policy dialogues and in people's daily lives. Numerous events have highlighted the importance of such issues and the deep-rooted and complex ways in which health is linked to the economic crisis, human rights, climate change and natural disasters. The year began with the publication of a report from a World Health Organization (WHO) High-Level Consultation, entitled 'Financial Crisis and Global Health', a theme which set the scene and ran through many of the remaining events of the year. The report recommended a five-point framework for action, namely:

- Leadership;
- Monitoring and analysis;
- Pro-poor and pro-health public spending;
- Policies for the health sector; and
- New ways of doing business in international health.

Concurrently, in the area of pandemic preparedness, regional government ministries, civil society organisations and academics were searching for ways to deal with the challenges posed by 'flu-fatigue' and 'donor-fatigue', including dwindling political will and resources devoted to pandemic preparedness. At the start of 2009, the dominant threats were still largely perceived to be the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. However, numerous voices were calling for a widening of the spectrum to include other emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, as well as to tackle population-level causes and underlying determinants of disease outbreaks.

Influenza 'Swine Flu' Pandemic

Within the first third of the year however, the world witnessed the emergence of a novel influenza virus (H1N1), which originated in Mexico in March. By mid-April, the WHO raised its pandemic alert to level 4, having confirmed human-to-human transmission and community-level outbreaks, and in June the influenza pandemic alert level was raised further from 5 to 6, as a full-scale pandemic influenza outbreak was declared for the first time in over 40 years.

Following the outbreak of H1N1, pandemic preparedness received a revival of interest; the outbreak underlined the importance of pandemic preparedness and left a majority of policymakers convinced of the need to be better equipped in the future. H1N1 has, thus far, been a relatively moderate strain, but has nevertheless tested the effectiveness of national preparedness plans in action. One significant development has been that governments in the region, and globally, no longer question whether the threat of a pandemic is real, and focus is instead placed on the best ways to prepare for a future outbreak in order to minimise both human and economic costs. Guidance on specific protective and precautionary measures was sent to ministries of health in all states from April onwards, and countries where outbreaks appeared to have peaked have now prepared for a second wave of infections, whilst those with no, or only few, cases are remaining vigilant.

With the impending threat of a second wave of H1N1 in the northern hemisphere, many countries have been improving their pandemic preparedness plans based on lessons learnt from the first wave of the disease. These observations include the following:

- Protective Personal Equipment are unsuitable for use in the region's tropical climate and would likely cause severe dehydration due to the suits' thick insulation;
- Business continuity planning and multi-sectoral planning will greatly minimise economic costs;
- Effective communication with the public and coordination among line ministries is crucial in managing disease spread; and
- Developing countries must be given access to vaccines, and access to improved health services, to facilitate containment of the disease.

HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis

Meanwhile, HIV/AIDS epidemics in Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand continued to show declines in HIV prevalence this year, and in July results published from the first Cambodian national population-based survey estimated HIV prevalence at 0.6 per cent. It is likely that interventions with sex workers, which were carried out by the government and by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), played a role in this decline, as did the recent adoption of a '100 per cent condom' policy in brothels. However, epidemics in Indonesia (especially Papua province) and Vietnam have continued to grow rapidly due to several factors, including extensive growth in the sex industry, limited testing and treatment clinics, a highly mobile population, a rapidly growing population of people who inject drugs, and the challenges created by the major economic and natural crises that Indonesia has recently experienced. Furthermore, among people living with HIV in the region, tuberculosis — a preventable and treatable disease that thrives amid poverty and weak health systems — remained the leading cause of death.

Malaria Drug Resistance Developing?

Significantly, in April routine surveillance for drug efficacy revealed indications of malaria drug resistance developing in northern Cambodia and Thailand, with potential for global spread. Such resistance may be spurred on by the frequent use of sub-standard, or counterfeit, medicines in Southeast Asia. The news is of concern because the drug to which resistance may be developing is at the forefront of malaria control worldwide. However, a huge effort is currently underway along the Thai-Cambodian border to contain the spread of such drug-resistant malaria.

Health and Disaster Preparedness

In September, at the 62nd session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia, health ministers from 11

member states in the region adopted the Kathmandu Declaration on Protecting Health Facilities from Disasters, which commits them to make health facilities better prepared for health emergencies. The aim is to address the need for critically injured people to obtain 'immediate medical attention after natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, floods and cyclones'. The declaration has highlighted the fact that a health facility which can withstand a disaster and continues to function throughout the critical period could be the difference between life and death for many. The health ministers also highlighted the need to focus on diarrhoea and pneumonia in national health programmes, particularly diarrhoea, which is seriously under-reported in the region.

Prospects for 2010

Potential developments for 2010 include the creation of clearer guidelines on the use of vaccines and anti-virals to treat suspected influenza cases, as well as improved communication lines between all countries and the WHO. There needs to be an increased focus on building up the health systems of developing countries as an approach towards the management of infectious diseases, with increased attention given to building global health equity and greater emphasis on local knowledge and local involvement. Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has already stressed his commitment to reform the health sector in his five-year second term of 2009-2014. He also mentioned the importance of health system strengthening to allow all people to gain access to health services. This will undoubtedly require increased partnerships and linkages between the authorities and the local communities at the ground level.

It is now clear that a multi-sectoral approach is needed, moving beyond the traditional public health focus and increasing involvement of social, management, civil society, political and economic expertise. Moreover, policies should be evaluated for their impact on health equity. Such a commitment to health equity requires good global governance, including key issues of stewardship, leadership, collaboration, communication and increased financing, as well as a deeper understanding of complex phenomena and interactions between multiple actors at various levels. Importantly, as the struggle out of the financial crisis continues, policymakers must make sure that disease prevention and control efforts are not interrupted or slowed, as this would be a disaster in itself and would undermine the huge investments made over the past years, some of which we are seeing the returns only as of now.

CONCLUSION

Throughout 2009, many different NTS challenges both new and ongoing highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of international, national and local responses to them. As the year closes, the different crises that confronted the region point to a number of key points and lessons learnt which we hope can be picked up by the international community to mitigate the impact of many of these NTS threats in the immediate future. These lessons learnt are subsumed in the three key themes highlighted below.

No Substitute for Preparedness

As the region continues to grapple with a host of NTS challenges, be it another outbreak of an infectious disease, natural disasters or an unexpected economic downturn, there is no longer any excuse for lack of preparedness. Within the ASEAN and ASEAN Plus Three frameworks, there are already enough initiatives to enhance regional cooperation in pandemic preparedness and disaster relief. It is time to put more effort in implementing many of these plans and critical to this is the political will by governments to put in place systems and resources to translate many of these plans into actionable deeds.

Coordinating Responses is Not Just Multi-Sectoral but Also Multi-Level

Whether the region faced challenges in health or disaster preparedness, it is evident that working with other partners, governments, NGOs, civil society and other stakeholders is important. Many of these NTS issues do not only have transnational reach but have also become more complex. Thus, conventional responses to address many of these issues are no longer adequate. While inter-agency coordination is indeed important to deal with complex emergencies within a national domain, more often than not, government resources are limited. In dealing with human insecurities brought on by climate change, an economic downturn, natural disasters and disease outbreaks, there is an increasing realization that global and regional institutions should work closely with national and local partners. This is to ensure that decisions are made at the most appropriate level and the necessary human and financial resources are channelled effectively.

Governance Matters

Many of the issues raised here illustrate that what happens in one area of the world, can have devastating effects in another part of the world. In dealing with NTS issues,

the international community needs to re-examine its governance approach to global economic issues, climate change, global health, human rights and human security. The picture that has emerged so far is a global community that is mostly reactive, and sometimes even divided in how to deal with NTS challenges. The latter is clearly illustrated in the lack of progress in international negotiations for a post-Kyoto protocol to deal with climate change.

Thus, the year 2010 will pose significant challenges to the world in whether it can come together collectively to solve its problems. Any global compact however must also take into account the significant power shifts that are taking place in Asia. Most notably, this shift saw a movement away from the dominance of European nations towards recognition of Asia as a rising power, which will provide the basis of a more equitable decision-making system. This was manifested in several significant events, which were held as a direct result of the global financial crisis. This saw China emerge as the leader of an East Asian rebound from the global financial crisis, seeing the World Bank's economic growth forecast for China's economy increase to 8.4 per cent from 7.2 per cent, and the overall East Asian GDP projection go from 5.3 per cent to 6.7 per cent. However, the World Bank highlighted that excluding China's growth, East Asian growth would be limited to around 1 per cent. In institutional terms, the redistribution of IMF quotas and votes recognised the increasing importance of the Asian economies, with six out of the top 10 beneficiaries of the redistribution being in Asia. Furthermore, the outcome of the Pittsburgh Meeting — that the G20 is now the most important international economic forum rather than the G8 — also saw Asian influence increase. As a result of these economic governance changes, it is reasonable to predict that there will be wider implications for global governance.

Indeed, 2009 has shown that there are many strands of governance the world over, lacking a golden thread to weave it together into a coherent and coordinated whole. Against the emergence of NTS challenges which are complex and multifaceted, there should be renewed interest in working across, and between, the different levels of governance to produce the most informed and flexible policies in order to adapt to ever-changing circumstances — as the world, which is getting ever more connected, enters a new decade.

ABOUT THE RSIS CENTRE FOR NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

The RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies conducts research and produce policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building capacity to address NTS issues and challenges in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

To fulfil this mission, the Centre aims to:

- Advance the understanding of NTS issues and challenges in the Asia-Pacific by highlighting gaps in knowledge and policy, and identifying best practices among state and non-state actors in responding to these challenges;
- Provide a platform for scholars and policy-makers within and outside Asia to discuss and analyse NTS issues in the region;
- Network with institutions and organisations worldwide to exchange information, insights and experiences in the area of NTS;
- Engage policy-makers on the importance of NTS in guiding political responses to NTS emergencies and develop strategies to mitigate the risks to state and human security; and
- Contribute to building the institutional capacity of governments, and regional and international organisations to respond to NTS challenges.

Our Research

The key programmes at the RSIS Centre for NTS Studies include:

- Internal and Cross-Border Conflict Programme
 - Dynamics of Internal Conflicts
 - Multi-level and Multilateral Approaches to Internal Conflict
 - Responsibility to Protect (R2P) in Asia
 - Peacebuilding
- Climate Change, Environmental Security and Natural Disasters Programme
 - Mitigation and Adaptation Policy Studies
 - The Politics and Diplomacy of Climate Change
- Energy and Human Security Programme
 - Security and Safety of Energy Infrastructure
 - Stability of Energy Markets
 - Energy Sustainability
 - Nuclear Energy and Security

- Health and Human Security Programme
 - Health and Human Security
 - Global Health Governance
 - Pandemic Preparedness and Global Response Networks

The first three programmes received a boost from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation when the RSIS Centre for NTS Studies was selected as one of three core institutions leading the MacArthur Asia Security Initiative* in 2009.

Our Output

Policy Relevant Publications

The RSIS Centre for NTS Studies produces a range of output such as research reports, books, monographs, policy briefs and conference proceedings.

Training

Based in RSIS, which has an excellent record of post-graduate teaching, an international faculty, and an extensive network of policy institutes worldwide, the Centre is well-placed to develop robust research capabilities, conduct training courses and to facilitate advanced education on NTS. These are aimed at, but not limited to, academics, analysts, policy-makers and NGOs.

Networking and Outreach

The Centre serves as a networking hub for researchers, policy analysts, policy-makers, NGOs and media from across Asia and farther afield interested in NTS issues and challenges.

The RSIS Centre for NTS Studies is also the Secretariat of the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia), which brings together 14 research institutes and think-tanks from across Asia, and strives to develop the process of networking, consolidate existing research on NTS-related issues, and mainstream NTS studies in Asia.

More information on our Centre and NTS-Asia is available at www.rsis.edu.sg/nts and www.rsis-ntsasia.org respectively.

* The Asia Security Initiative was launched by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in January 2009, through which approximately US\$ 68 million in grants will be made to policy research institutions over seven years to help raise the effectiveness of international cooperation in preventing conflict and promoting peace and security in Asia.



ABOUT THE S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) was inaugurated on 1 January 2007 as an autonomous School within the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), upgraded from its previous incarnation as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), which was established in 1996.

The School exists to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of Asia-Pacific security studies and international affairs. Its three core functions are

research, graduate teaching and networking activities in the Asia-Pacific region. It produces cutting-edge security related research in Asia-Pacific Security, Conflict and Non-Traditional Security, International Political Economy, and Country and Area Studies.

The School's activities are aimed at assisting policymakers to develop comprehensive approaches to strategic thinking on issues related to security and stability in the Asia-Pacific and their implications for Singapore.





S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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