

Preface

In 2008, the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, convened a conference on *Energy and Non-Traditional Security*. This volume represents selected papers from the conference, updated by the authors to reflect recent developments.

The volume was first conceptualised against the backdrop of the world oil crisis of 2007–2009 and the impacts of the steep price rises on human collectivities. The period of the global oil crisis also saw the world experiencing a number of other security concerns: food security, infectious diseases, water scarcity, to name just a few. At the same time, the global community also began to grapple with the complex threats brought on by climate change—rising temperatures, increasing frequency of torrential rains, as well as flooding and devastating natural disasters that inflicted large-scale damage to property and infrastructure, and displaced thousands of people.

These threats compel us to rethink security: what is security and for whom? These questions are not new. It has been recognised that security as a concept within the field of international relations and international security has evolved over time especially following the end of the Cold War. Today, security can no longer be primarily viewed through the traditional lens, that is, military threats to the sovereignty of the state alone. Instead, the international community has recognised that threats to the state are mostly non-military in nature.

The global food price crisis and the international financial crisis from 2008 to 2010, and global outbreaks such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and H1N1 pandemic influenza in 2009, are recent examples of how non-military threats could inflict more harm to states and people than traditional threats such as inter-state wars and conflicts. The recent case of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan in 2011, which was triggered by a stronger-than-usual earthquake and tsunami, illustrates how even the most prepared societies can be overwhelmed by the onslaught of complex disasters.

Yet, these types of threats—now referred to as NTS threats—had often been regarded as less important than the threats of inter-state wars, conflicts and

violence. These threats had commanded less attention, and had thus had less resources allocated to dealing with them, than traditional military threats. Notwithstanding the disparity in importance that these issues may have received in the past, NTS concerns such as energy security and the complexity of challenges that they present are now starting to change security debates and are galvanising efforts to come to a greater understanding of how they threaten the welfare and security of peoples and states.

Recent work in this field defines NTS threats as “challenges to the survival and well-being of people and states that arise primarily out of non-military sources ... these dangers are often transnational in scope, transmitted rapidly due to globalisation and technological advances” (Caballero-Anthony 2007, p. 1). A key element in the study of NTS is the need to re-examine traditional approaches to dealing with these issues and to analyse how new, innovative approaches can be adopted in dealing with transnational challenges. The NTS lens also examines the role of the state and other actors and stakeholders in dealing with NTS challenges. The NTS perspective in dealing with emerging security challenges therefore requires one to revisit assumptions and to question the premise on which an issue becomes a security threat. This exercise is most useful in the case of understanding energy security and teasing out the security dimensions that come along with it.

This volume begins with the chapter by Mely Caballero-Anthony, Swee Lean Collin Koh and Sofiah Jamil in “Rethinking Energy Security: A Non-Traditional View of Human Security”. The chapter synthesises and highlights the importance of bringing in non-traditional perspectives on energy security. Today, energy security is no longer just about the security of supply. Environmental concerns and socioeconomic development have now become inextricably linked to questions of energy security. The authors argue that the new energy security landscape demands a comprehensive approach that includes multi-actor engagement.

Lina A. Alexandra in “The Role of Indonesia’s Civil Society in Energy Security” explores how non-state actors such as civil society could be a vital component in dealing with energy crises. She observes that there is awareness among government and civil society actors in Indonesia of the importance of working together in the planning and implementation of the country’s national energy policy. However, collaborations do not always materialise as envisioned, with the result that civil society organisations are left at the periphery in terms of their role in any government initiatives. Alexandra concludes by suggesting several strategies that could help civil society organisations improve their political clout and efficiency.

Youngho Chang and Nur Azha Putra in “The Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Perspective on Energy Security Policies in Singapore” examine the way in which Singapore’s policies have been shaped more by the imperatives of economic development than human development. They argue that the country’s energy policies could be enhanced to improve human security by transforming consumers into active participants in the country’s newly liberalised national energy market. They suggest that provisions, in the form of technological capabilities and changes to legislation, should be made by the authorities to allow households to trade their

surplus electricity in the open market, which would have the effect of empowering these households and increasing energy efficiency.

In the chapter on “Perspectives on India’s Energy Security”, Krishnan Rekha unpacks India’s energy security policies by analysing the country’s strategic response to the energy challenges arising from its rapidly expanding economy and population. The situation is exacerbated by India’s growing reliance on fossil fuel imports and a decline in its national natural gas production. Rekha observes that India’s response has been focused on transforming its domestic energy consumption and production to achieve greater efficiency; streamlining its energy-related bureaucracies with the intent of fostering greater communication, cooperation and understanding with one another; and also improving India’s participation in the global energy system.

Yuxin Zheng and Sofiah Jamil in “Beyond Efficiency: China’s Energy-Saving and Emission Reduction Initiatives vis-à-vis Human Development” examine China’s efforts in addressing its energy challenges, and its achievements. The authors suggest that more has to be done to realise energy savings and emissions reductions. A deepening and broadening of the concept of energy intensity would be needed. The government would also have to review and amend existing regulations on energy use, and extend energy-saving measures. Further, the country has to explore development paths other than industrialisation.

In sum, this volume on *Rethinking Energy Security: A Non-Traditional View of Human Security*, together with its companion volume on *Energy and Non-Traditional Security (NTS) in Asia*, has aimed to widen the debate on energy security beyond the conventional views of what energy security means to the security and well-being of states and societies. We hope that with these two volumes, a more robust debate can be encouraged to allow for a more comprehensive approach in dealing with energy security challenges. We also hope that in advancing an NTS perspective to this complex security challenge, we can meaningfully contribute to the promotion of human security in Asia and beyond.

Mely Caballero-Anthony

Bibliography

Caballero-Anthony M (2007) Non-Traditional Security and Multilateralism in Asia: reshaping the contours of regional security architecture?, Policy Analysis Brief. The Stanley Foundation, Muscatine, June 2007

Abbreviations

NTS Non-traditional security
SARS Severe acute respiratory syndrome

Rethinking Energy Security in Asia: A Non-Traditional
View of Human Security

Caballero-Anthony, M.; Chang, Y.; Putra, N.A. (Eds.)

2012, IX, 103 p. 6 illus. in color., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-642-29702-1