**CSCAP**
# Regional Security Outlook

**CSCAP**

**COUNCIL FOR
SECURITY COOPERATION
IN THE ASIA PACIFIC**

2011

The **Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP)** is the region's leading Track Two (non-official) organization for promoting cooperation and dialogue on regional security issues. CSCAP was established in 1993, and now has 21 national Member Committees and one Observer. (For more information about CSCAP, please visit **www.cscap.org**.)

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Access to the CRSO is available at **www.cscap.org**.

Designed by Nancy Boyes at *Five Stones Creative*
(Vancouver, Canada)

Printed by *Booksmith Productions*
(Singapore)

Cover photographs:
A man carries his younger brother during the floods in Pakistan;

A North Korean soldier at the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

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# 2011

## CSCAP
# Regional Security Outlook

# Message from the Editors

On behalf of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP), we are pleased to present the *CSCAP Regional Security Outlook 2011 (CRSO 2011)*. Inaugurated in 2007, this is the fourth annual CRSO volume.

This year's *CRSO 2011* is being released in two versions—a preview online version available at www.cscap.org in early April, and a hard-copy version to be distributed at the 25th Asia Pacific Round Table and CSCAP Steering Committee meetings, May 30-June 1, in Kuala Lumpur.

The *CRSO* is directed to the broad regional audience encompassed by CSCAP itself. The CRSO mandate is to survey the most pressing security issues of today and to put forward informed policy-relevant recommendations as to how Track One (official) and Track Two (unofficial) actors together can advance multilateral, regional security cooperation.

The editor appreciates the editorial independence granted to him by the CSCAP Steering Committee. The views expressed in the *CRSO 2011* do not represent those of any Member committee or other institution and are the responsibility of the editor. The charts, figures and tables within each chapter do not necessarily represent the views of the chapter authors.

Special thanks are due to this year's authors, to Carolina Hernandez and Tsutomu Kikuchi (CRSO Editorial Advisers), and to Alex Bookbinder and Tommi Rebien.

The *CRSO 2011* was completed prior to the unfolding of Japan's triple disaster (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown) in March 2011. The present volume therefore does not contain analysis of that disaster and its implications. All CSCAP members of course recognize the disaster's profound impact, particularly on their Japanese colleagues. The *CRSO 2012* will thus devote considerable space to assessing the long-term fallout from that disaster, including its wider significance for regional security. The *CRSO 2012* will be distributed at CSCAP's General Conference in November 2011.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE *CRSO 2011*

- Tensions remain high in the aftermath of the *explosive bilateral disputes of 2010*. The rhetoric of major power relationships has calmed but without positive steps towards resolution of key disputes. While *Asian economies* have rebounded from the 2008 financial crisis, recovery remains fragile with disparities within and among states increasing. (Chapter 1)

- The oceans have become the primary security theater for the region as their importance in terms of resources and transport intensifies. Enhancing maritime cooperation is a priority. (Chapter 4)

- Conventional military buildups continue apace, threatening to destabilize regional crisis points. Existing and potential nuclear weapons programs pose great concern. (Chapter 5)

- The *security footprint* continues to expand as conflicts in East Asia's peripheral regions of Southwest and South Asia continue to spill across borders. (Chapters 3 and 7)

- The *human security of Asian populations* remains under great stress as poverty and food security, ongoing intrastate conflicts, and repressive governments continue to exact their toll. Specifically, both *sudden-onset* and longer-term *slow-onset disasters* deserve greater attention. (Chapter 2 and 6)

- *Existing multilateral, regional security institutions continue to under-perform.* Preventive diplomacy remains in stasis. Track Two institutions such as CSCAP are making limited, yet useful contributions. (Chapters 1 and 8)

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*Editor's Note:* This version of the CRSO 2011 replaces a prior online version posted on the CSCAP website in April 2011.

**CHAPTER 1**

**BRIAN L. JOB AND ERIN WILLIAMS**

# 2011: A Turning Point in Regional Security Co-operation?



*The Asia Pacific's stability and prosperity requires more robust frameworks for managing the global and regional commons.*

*Editor's Note: The CRSO 2011 was completed prior to the unfolding of Japan's triple disaster (earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown) in March 2011. The present volume therefore does not contain analysis of that disaster or its implications. The CRSO 2012 will thus devote considerable space to assessing the long-term fallout from that disaster, including its wider significance for regional security.*

**THE EVENTS OF 2010 MAY HAVE** brought us to a turning point in Asia Pacific security cooperation. Seoul's hosting of the G20 summit gave important symbolic reinforcement to the expectation that Asia will have—indeed, must have—a larger voice in managing the global commons. Furthermore, the multilateral security architecture that is necessary to underwrite the region's continued growth and stability shows signs of beginning to solidify, evolving "outwards" from an ASEAN core. With these two winds at its sails, Asia Pacific states should have greater confidence in their ability to constructively engage and resolve the region's security challenges. Yet in light of the tensions and crisis points of last year, regional multilateral bodies seem to be stuck in neutral or moving sideways and

Asia appears to be growing less, rather than more secure.

In the past year, two of Northeast Asia's bilateral disputes that had been held to manageable levels suddenly erupted with the heated skirmish between China and Japan over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, and the North Korean sinking of the South's *Cheonan* vessel in March, followed by the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in November. These events engendered a wave of diplomatic posturing, sharp-edged rhetoric, and intimidating military displays by the US and other parties involved.

Throughout Asia traditional security concerns topped the list of various states' national security priorities. Defense spending accelerated and militaries continued to modernize, acquiring new and more sophisticated

equipment ostensibly to bolster their competing sovereignty claims and to project power to greater distances. Longer-term human security priorities remain on the back burner, leaving many of the region's less fortunate to cope with the increasingly deleterious impacts of unsustainable development practices, the compounded effects of climate change, and in key instances, deadly armed conflict. The question is whether Asia Pacific leaders will take the uncomfortable but necessary steps to narrow this mismatch between the region's rising status and capabilities and the limited role that it currently plays in managing the global and regional commons.

The security outlook for 2011 will hinge in part on how the region's major players come to terms with each other on economic and political dimensions, and in part on whether or not the broader regional state membership mandates and equips the Asia Pacific's multilateral organizations to "break out" and engage in preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution. While still in flux, regional security architecture is starting to coalesce around an ASEAN-centered framework with widening and more inclusive institutional circles (see Figure 1). Individual states or groups of states have also added new institutional layers in the form of the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting (ADMM)-Plus, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and the newly expanded East Asia Summit (EAS) (see Box 1).

But as this chapter argues, institutional formation *per se* does not necessarily produce effective results. None of the established or newly formed groupings noted above, including Track Two bodies such as

> " …regional security architecture is starting to coalesce around an ASEAN-centered framework with widening and more inclusive institutional circles."

CSCAP, has voiced a position on sensitive security matters or been proactive in assuming an early warning, mediation or preventive diplomacy role. And as the chapters in this volume demonstrate, this deficit in governing the regional commons is highlighted by the surfacing and resurfacing of both traditional and non-traditional security issues.

### THE SOURCES OF ASIA PACIFIC INSECURITY

In one powerful sense, the news coming out of Asia is very positive: the region continues to enjoy steady and robust economic growth, and the financial crisis that has enervated European and US economies has accelerated the shift towards Asia as the gravitational heart of global economic dynamism. This shift has strengthened the case for a larger role

for China and India in global and regional governance. But unfortunately, economic growth has tended to exacerbate certain factors that undermine regional stability and security, including in the four key areas noted below.

**Intensifying maritime competition:** Asia Pacific economies' future growth depends critically on their access to natural resources and their ability to transport these resources through free and open waters. Not surprisingly, disputes over national title to isolated islands along the region's eastern rim have come to the fore in recent years because of distant islands' potential oil and natural gas reserves, as well as the rich fishing resources in their surrounding waters. Otherwise minor incidents involving naval and/or commercial vessels provide opportunities for leaders to gain domestic stature, but at the same time risk the backlash of inflamed nationalist sentiments in other countries. Two recent examples include the events around the Senkaku/ Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea, the disputed Northern Limit Line separating North and South Korea, and the Kurils/Northern Territories, claimed by both Russia and Japan. (Other ongoing territorial disputes are presented on the Unresolved and Ongoing Conflicts in the Asia Pacific map, pp. 33-34.)

But the Spratly and Paracel Islands in the South China Sea were the most contentious maritime issue this past year (Chapter 4), not only because of their multiple claimants in China and Southeast Asia, but also because non-claimants in Northeast Asia rely on energy imports that pass through these seas. Hilary Clinton's assertion

of a US "national interest" in a peaceful settlement of South China Sea disputes was seen as a departure from Washington's long-standing hands-off stance. Beijing denounced the changing position as challenging China's "indisputable sovereignty" over the islands and as a threat to one of its "core interests."[1] Relations between the US and China were further cooled by Beijing's apparent efforts to deflect criticism and international action away from North Korea following the *Cheonan* and Yeonpyeong Island episodes. Analysts and policy makers across the Asia Pacific were caught off guard by what they perceived to be a more assertive and less cooperative China. In response the US and its Asian allies and partners have moved to reinforce and upgrade their cooperative defense and security relationships.

**Potentially destabilizing new military capabilities:** Economic growth in Asia has bankrolled the substantial build-up of regional military capabilities. In the last five years, arms deliveries to Southeast Asian militaries, in particular, have been rising dramatically. China's, and more recently India's, enhancements to their respective navies have been even more dramatic (see Update on naval modernization, this volume).[2] As Richard Bitzinger posits, the introduction of the types of capabilities being amassed threatens to "change the way future war is conducted,"[3] with states able to project power further and more lethally, and with the advantages of sophisticated technologies that facilitate asymmetric strategies. Although some positive steps on non-proliferation were taken in 2010

(Chapter 5), the security of technologies and facilities in nuclear states such as Pakistan and North Korea, and the prospects of acquisition by states such as Iran and Burma, remain of serious concern. Ambiguities about military doctrines, such as "no first use," and a lack of transparency, perpetuate security dilemmas.

**Immediate and looming environmental and ecological disasters:** Regional efforts to respond to *sudden-onset disasters* such as floods, hurricanes, cyclones and earthquakes, have accelerated in recent years. In contrast, cooperation around the region's *slow-onset disasters* has been lagging. As Chapter 2 notes, two such disasters—melting glaciers in the Himalaya-Hindu Kush Mountains and the damming along the Mekong River—could be ruinous for more



FIGURE 1: ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE
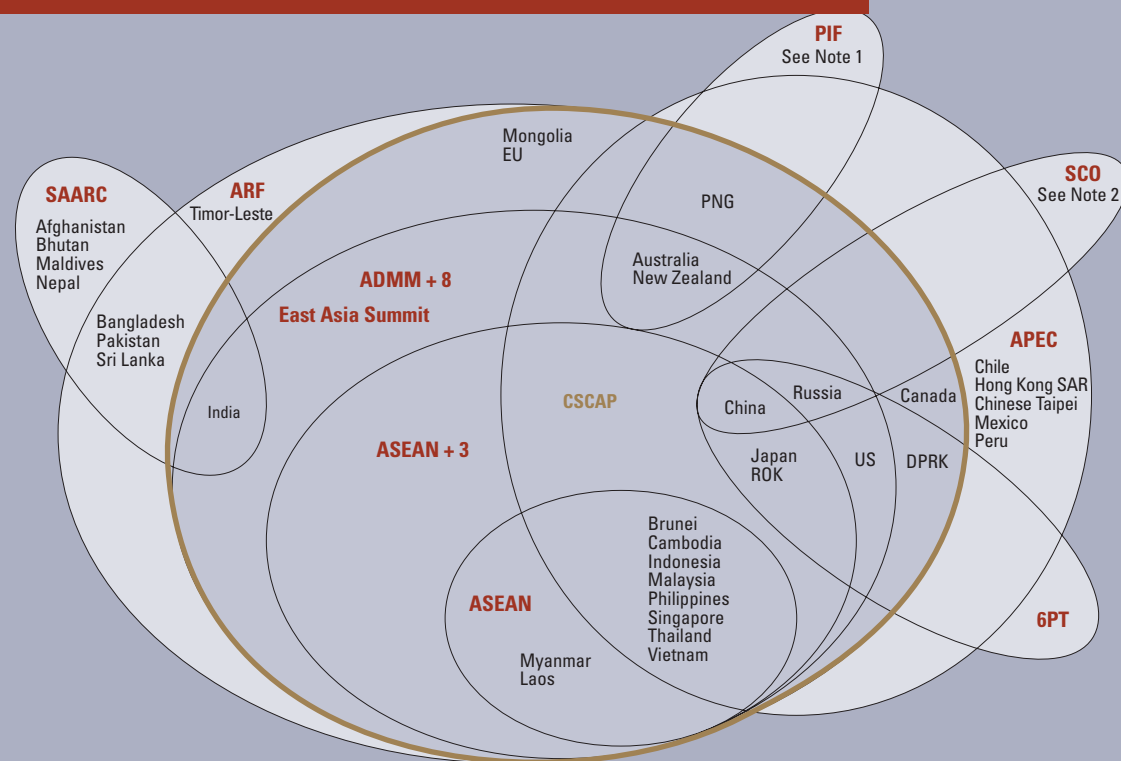
Note 1: The other countries in the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) include Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Note 2: The Central Asian members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) include Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Source: Adapted from earlier editions of the CRSO.

than a billion people in China, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Yet despite the potentially severe consequences, a key obstacle preventing regional governments from being more proactive in slowing or reversing these trends is that they must come to terms with the necessity of altering national development and growth policies.

**Neglect of human security:** Persistent and deadly civil conflicts in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the western periphery, specifically Pakistan and Afghanistan (Chapter 3), continue to foster crises of civilian protection and well-being. Populations that are subject to repressive, isolationist governments suffer directly and immensely from state-sanctioned violence, but also indirectly from malnutrition, lack of education and a near complete absence of economic opportunity. North Korea is an all too familiar case in point (Chapter 7). By clinging to, or hiding behind, norms of non-interference Asian states effectively keep these issues off the agendas of regional multilateral institutions, both Track One and Track Two. They also hinder the development of early warning and preventive diplomacy strategies (Chapter 6), and give tacit support, for geopolitical, ideological, or economic reasons, to regimes that abuse their populations.

One bright spot is the increased attention in the region's major regional forums to non-traditional security (NTS) threats. The ASEAN Regional Forum's (ARF) *Annual Security Outlook 2009*, for example, catalogued over a dozen such threats, ranging across a spectrum of terrorism, piracy, various forms of illegal trafficking, infectious diseases and climate change[4] (see related Updates, pp. 30-33).

The bottom line, however, is that advancement of regional security

> " *If key Asian states wish to see less dominant influence by the US… they are going to have to assume contributing roles…* "

appears to be largely stalled, with short-term, hard security issues diverting attention from the longer-term non-traditional and human security issues of greater fundamental consequence to Asian populations.

## MANAGING THE COMMONS: GLOBAL AND REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Asian states have a critical stake in the management of the "global commons": the oceans, atmosphere, space, and cyberspace. Failure to establish and support effective frameworks for their control threatens long-term regional stability and prosperity. However, successful management of the commons depends upon one or more states' willingness to provide the public goods of leadership and institutional maintenance, thus raising the collective goods conundrum for states torn between responsibilities to cooperate and competitive interests that lead to free-riding and unrestricted exploitation.

Current debate over burden-sharing and assigning responsibilities for managing the commons has been complicated by contention over the US role as a regional and global hegemon. If key Asian states wish

to see less dominant influence by the US, then in order to sustain security regimes and create environment, space, and cyberspace commons regimes relevant to their own long-term interests, they are going to have to assume contributing roles, just as the US will have to accept that it can no longer assume a right to dominate the management of the commons.[5] There have been some slow steps towards transforming the institutions of global governance—the UN, IMF, and World Bank—to facilitate change. In the G20, now becoming the world's key financial forum, Asian states are playing an increasingly prominent role.

## REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Regional multilateral institutions could not avoid the security disputes of 2010 landing on their tables, even as they looked to keep them off their official agendas. Thus, for example, the situation in the South China Sea received an airing at the ARF's July meeting in Hanoi. However, apart from references to general principles and declarations such the 2002 Code of Conduct, the ARF characteristically mandated no action.[6] Overall, regional institutions (ASEAN, the ARF, APT, ADMM+, and the 6PT) mounted no proactive mediation or preventive diplomacy initiatives in response to the region's recent short-term crises.

While progress may be claimed for multilateral coordination of functional cooperation on non-traditional security threats, such as search and rescue and transnational crime, the current institutional architecture cannot cope comprehensively with the challenges posed by the major trends in regional security.

In hindsight, 2010 may be seen as a benchmark year in the evolution towards a next-generation regional

security architecture. Competing tendencies of regionalism—East Asian vs. trans-Pacific—appear to have abated, with the US having accepted ASEAN's invitation to join the EAS and the ADMM-Plus. For its part, the Obama administration signaled a renewed engagement with Asia through high-profile leaders' meetings with Chinese and Indian counterparts and with ASEAN states, through its appointment of an ASEAN ambassador and Obama's hosting of ASEAN leaders in fall 2010.

What is emerging is an ASEAN-oriented institutional framework extending, with the EAS and ADMM-Plus, to encompass India, Russia, and the US. ASEAN leaders have moved adeptly to try to ensure control over membership, agenda-setting, and institutional forms and operating modalities. The parallel membership of the EAS (economically and politically focused) and the ADMM-Plus (offering a regular table for defense ministers) is the attractive value-added in this evolving architecture.[7]

However, there is a potential downside. The "comfortable to all" pace and consensus-decision making process while ensuring the participation of all players, may simply see the addition of new forums that essentially reinforce past tendencies of multilateral institutional stasis and issue avoidance.

## TRACK TWO MULTILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE

The decade since 2001 has been marked by paradoxical trends in regional Track Two activity. On one hand, there has been a dramatic rise in the numbers of forums and meetings, many in response to traumatic events such as the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the virulent spread of SARS and the avian flu, and natural disasters such as the 2004 tsunami. Others have resulted from the increased momentum of ASEAN-related agendas.[8]

On the other hand, the role and "space" for institutionalized, regional Track Two dialogue mechanisms appears to have diminished, fostering

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## BOX 1: EMERGING INSTITUTIONS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

### EAST ASIA SUMMIT (EAS)

The EAS is broadly conceived as a forum for dialogue across the spectrum of strategic, political and economic issues. Its membership has expanded beyond the ASEAN + 3 states to include Australia, New Zealand, and India. It held its first meeting in late 2005, and is gaining momentum as a regional forum with the US and Russia having accepted invitations to join in the coming year. Whether or not it eclipses APEC and/or the ARF—the membership of both seen as too large and geographically over-stretched—remains to be seen in next several years.

### TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (TPP)

The TPP is a multilateral, comprehensive free trade agreement aimed at integrating economies across the Pacific. Its first agreement in 2005 was modest in its reach, with Brunei, Chile, New Zealand, and Singapore as its only members. However, Australia, Malaysia, Peru, the US and Vietnam are currently negotiating to join the TPP, and Canada and Japan have observer status.

### ASEAN DEFENSE MINISTERS (ADMM-PLUS)

The extension of the ADMM beyond ASEAN to include the defense ministers of China, Japan, Korea, India, Australia, the US and Russia, i.e, ADMM+8, has been described as a "milestone" in regional security multilateralism. Whether or not this forum will transcend regional norms to take up sensitive topics such as great power rivalry and sovereignty disputes remains in question.[1] Thus, the South China Sea was kept off the agenda for the recent 2010 inaugural meeting. Furthermore, the ADMM+8 is to meet only every 3rd-year, perhaps in deference to the annual Shangri-la Dialogue hosted in Singapore.[2]

### ASEAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (AICHR)

Created in 2008, the AICHR commits each of ASEAN's ten member states to "further develop cooperation to promote and protect human rights in the region." Many of Southeast Asia's leading intellectuals have questioned the AICHR's ability to be a true force for change, as its mandate excludes investigation, let alone sanctioning of, individuals or governments.

### LOWER MEKONG INITIATIVE (LMI)

The US launched the LMI in July 2009 to enhance cooperation with Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam on issues related to health, education, and infrastructure development. The US is placing particular emphasis on the LMI's environmental program by assisting Lower Mekong countries in coping with climate change and related issues of water and food security.

### G20

The presence of nine Asia Pacific countries on the G20 (Australia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Russia and the United States) gives the region a heightened prominence in global economic management. There have been calls for a more coordinated form of Asian regional representation at both the G20 and other important global bodies.[3]

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[1] Barry Desker, "ASEAN Plus Eight Defence Cooperation: Rise of a New Player," RSIS Commentary, No. 132, 15 October 2010.
[2] Ron Huisken, "ADMM + 8: An Acronym to Watch," East Asia Forum, 8 October 2010, http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2010/10/08/admm8-an-acronym-to-watch/.
[3] Ralf Emmers and John Ravenhill, "Asian and Global Financial Crises: Implications for East Asian Regionalism," RSIS Commentary, No. 112, 14 September 2010, http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS1122010.pdf; Pradumna B. Rana, "G20 Summit: How Asia Can Strengthen Its Voice," RSIS Commentary, 17 June 2010.

identity crises for institutions such as CSCAP (Chapter 8). There are two reasons for this. The first is an erosion of autonomy. Track Two participants are increasingly representative of, and reliant upon, their governments. The result has Track Two trailing behind rather than running ahead of Track One, thereby diminishing the value-added of un-official Track Two processes. In part, this arises from the inherent tension within Track Two between two competing instincts: one of exercising an independent voice and advancing innovative ideas that challenge current comfort levels in foreign ministries; and the other of paralleling government and institutional agendas in order to be seen to be relevant. Increasingly opting for the latter strategy, as Hernandez and Cossa point out in chapter 8, has solidified the impression that established Track Two mechanisms are becoming redundant.

Second, the upsurge in and resultant attention to cooperation to thwart non-traditional security (NTS) threats has had a dual reinforcing impact. Many NTS issues, including terrorism and various transnational criminal activities such drug trafficking, human trafficking, and money laundering-information, involve national security information that is closely held by national governments. Thus, knowledgeable officials will not speak in unsecure Track Two forums, but will commission expertise from outside their ranks for classified meetings and studies. Furthermore, in many countries the best or only expertise on NTS issues, such as response to natural disasters and environmental management, may only reside in government ministries. For others, consultation with academic experts and NGO representatives is ongoing, thus alleviating the relevance of supporting or participating in separate institutional arrangements

## AN OPPORTUNE MOMENT FOR TRACK TWO

The competing dynamics of cooperation and competition today are not unexpected. The natural impulse of states is to look to hedge their interests in light of uncertainty. Seeking to restore order and regulate regional and global commons, historically (as at the end of WWII and the Cold War), there has given rise to process of ad hoc multilateral engagement and maneuvering leading to institutional experimentation and eventually to the achievement of agreement on the parameters and responsibilities of new political/security and economic regimes. Thus, the Asia Pacific of the early 1990s was a period energized by active interchange across official and unofficial (Track Two) dimensions and a search for new and renewed institutional mechanisms to advance cooperative and human security.

Viewed from this perspective, the remarkable upsurge in Track Two activities[9] is not surprising, but instead an expected, anticipatory counter-point to the evolving dynamic of Track One institutional developments. The challenge for Track Two is two-fold: to ensure that vital, regularized Track Two processes survive and thrive; and to ensure that regional governments' preoccupations with short-term, traditional security concerns do not preclude attention to the longer-term and more fundamental priorities of the human security of Asia Pacific peoples.

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[1]  John Pomfret, "Beijing Claims 'Indisputable Sovereignty' over South China Sea," *Washington Post*, 31 July 2010, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/07/30/AR2010073005664.html.

[2]  The US has spent more than 4.5% of GDP on defence from 2006-2009.  Also, US defence expenditures of $712.8 billion in 2010 amount to more than 1.6 times the expenditures of the remaining countries in the top ten global defence budgets.  These figures can be found on pgs. 44, 56, and 469 of *The Military Balance 2011*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.

[3]  Richard A. Bitzinger, "Military Modernization in the Asia-Pacific: Assessing New Capabilities," in Ashley J. Tellis, Andrew Marble, and Travis Tanner, eds., *Strategic Asia 2010-11: Asia's Rising Power and America's Continued Purpose*, Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2010.

[4]  See ARF *Annual Security Outlook 2009*, 16th ASEAN Regional Forum.

[5]  Abraham M. Denmark, "Asia's Security and the Contested Global Commons," in Tellis, Marble and Tanner, eds. *Strategic Asia 2010-11*, pp. 171 – 202.

[6]  See 43rd AMM/PMC/17th ARF 2010 Chairman's Statement 17th ASEAN Regional Forum, Hanoi, 23 July 2010, available at http://www.aseansec.org/24929.htm.

[7]  The ADMM-Plus is scheduled initially to meet only every third year, perhaps in deference to the Singapore-hosted, IISS-organized, Shangri-la Dialogue. See, for example, David Capie and Brendan Taylor, "Two Cheers for ADMM+," PACNET, No. 51, October 20, 2010, available at http://csis.org/files/publication/pac1051.pdf.

[8]  See Brian L. Job, "Track 2 Diplomacy: Ideational Contribution to the Evolving Asian Security Order," in Desmond Ball and Chong Kwa Guan, *Assessing Track 2 Diplomacy in the Asia Pacific Region: a CSCAP Reader*, Canberra: Australian National University, and Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2010.

[9]  See, for example, the record charted in *The Dialogue and Research Monitor*, http://www.jcie.or.jp/drm/.

STACEY WHITE

# Slow-Onset Disasters in Asia*



*Slow-onset disasters could profoundly affect the lives of over a billion people in Asia. Successfully managing the risks will require stronger regional collaboration.*

**THERE ARE SCHOLARS WHO REFER** to the 21st century as the Asian Century; there are others who designate it the Age of Nature. It is the thesis of this chapter that the Asian Century and the Age of Nature are about to interface in ways that will have a profound impact on the world's future. Of particular note when studying this interface will be the growing threat posed by slow-onset disasters. Distinct from their sudden-onset equivalents, slow-onset disasters represent the kinds of disasters that evolve over time through dynamic and slowly-evolving interconnections between the adverse effects of climate change and short-sighted development policies.

Unlike the focus and relatively positive cooperation that has characterized Asian regional efforts to deal with sudden-onset disasters over the last decade, slow-onset disasters have garnered much less attention and interstate cooperation, in part because their remedy is often viewed as a direct challenge to national economic growth and because controversy over the scientific certainty of their adverse impacts hinders decisive action by national policymakers.

This article will highlight the dilemmas that slow-onset disasters present to Asian nations and their regional institutions through the brief analysis of two particularly troubling transnational slow-onset disasters in the making: the first is the melting of glaciers in the "Third Pole" area of the Hindu-Kush Himalayan Mountains; the second is the deterioration of the complex river ecosystem of the

Mekong River basin. This chapter will then present a number of recommendations to build the capacity of regional institutions to deal with these slow-onset crises more coherently and effectively in the future.

## SLOW-ONSET DISASTER MANAGEMENT IN ASIA

One of the trickiest aspects of addressing slow-onset crises both within and across states is that measures to tackle the effects of human activity on longer-term natural processes involve a more direct review of national economic development policies than emergency disaster response. Discussions about these issues raise difficult political questions associated with government prioritization of resources and commitment to equity among their own populations. As a result, regional approaches, when considered at all, have met with significant resistance.

Still, the future may prove less bleak than the present, at least as far as progress on interstate cooperation on these issues goes. Advancements in science are not only improving the overall understanding of how these slow-onset processes affect populations but are also highlighting the link between slow-onset threats and sudden-onset disasters. As a result, there are some encouraging signs that regional governments are feeling a heightened sense of urgency about the potential impacts of slow-onset processes. Whether these growing worries translate into greater momentum for regional collaboration or more intense interstate competition is yet to be seen. A closer look at activity surrounding the Third Pole and the Mekong River basin crises will illustrate where things stand today.

*" Unlike the focus and relatively positive cooperation that has characterized Asian regional efforts to deal with sudden-onset disasters… slow-onset disasters have garnered much less attention and interstate cooperation"*

The **Third Pole** refers to an area of receding glaciers and diminishing snow packs in the mountains of the Hindu-Kush Himalayan (HKH) Mountains. The complex ecosystem of these mountains source 10 major river systems across Bangladesh, China, India and Pakistan. It is also home to some 9,000 glaciers, most of which are located in China, Nepal, and Pakistan and provide irrigation, power, and drinking water for more than 20 percent of the world's population.[1] The natural flow of water from this complex natural water system is being threatened by the effects of global warming, resulting in

adverse consequences for both the near- and long-terms.

The **Mekong River** basin is a complex river ecosystem that runs through Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam. It has been facing increasing risk over the past decades because of intensified construction of hydroelectric dams and river dredging for commercial navigation.[2] International scientists now suggest that the adverse impacts of these man-made activities are being exacerbated by natural phenomena related to climate change. Of particular note for the Mekong River basin ecosystems is diminishing glacial and snow pack runoff from upper Himalayas as well as increased flooding and salt intrusion at the delta due to the rising sea levels.

### THE THIRD POLE

The Third Pole region is now said to be under considerable stress as a result of a combination of natural and man-made processes.[3] The HKH region has traditionally represented a complex natural water-producing and water-storage system upon which some 1.3 billion have come to rely. According to international climate experts, however, the natural flow of water from this system is now under extreme duress. With warming temperatures resulting from climate change, scientists purport that river discharges from this area are expected to diminish permanently due to a decreasing capacity of the glaciers to store water.[4] Ironically, they explain that this water shortage will occur after a limited period of increase due to short-term glacier and snow pack melt, both of which increase the risk of glacial lake outburst floods. An inventory recently compiled by the

International Center for Integrated Mountain Development identified some 8,790 glacial lakes within selected parts of the Hindu-Kush Himalayas, some 204 of which are considered potentially dangerous.[5]

Few regional initiatives exist either to study or to develop inter-state policy around the greater Himalayan region. Apart from the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, Asian states affected by changes in the Third Pole have generally conducted their own scientific studies with little exchange of information across borders.[6] As a consequence, data about what is happening to the glaciers is patchy at best (see Map 1).

Most recently, there are some initial indications that two regional giants, India and China, are mobilizing to tackle the scientific dimension of the Third Pole crisis. Of particular note is India's recent plans to establish two separate but interrelated scientific bodies to deepen understanding of how fast the glaciers are melting and how the

*" Advancements in science…are also highlighting the link between slow-onset threats and sudden-onset disasters."*

melt is actually affecting HKH hydrology. In February 2010, the Indian government was considering plans to establish a National Institute of Himalayan Glaciology to monitor the effects of climate change in the Third Pole with the potential for sharing scientific information with similar institutions in Bhutan, China, Nepal and Pakistan. Around the same time, India announced plans to put in place an Indian Climate Resource Network to assess the overall impact

of global warming on the country and the broader region.

In addition, the Chinese Academy of Sciences recently established the Third Pole Environment project to "pool international efforts" and to "make use of the multi-national resources" for studying the ecology of this sub-region. The Third Pole Environment project—born out of a workshop held in Beijing in August 2009 that attracted some 70 scientific and technical staff from 15 countries—is now set to carry out joint studies focusing on the changing processes in the region.[7]

### THE MEKONG RIVER BASIN

The Mekong River basin has been under stress since the early 1980s when the Chinese began an aggressive dam construction program in the Upper Mekong basin. Since that time, the Chinese have completed three hydroelectric dams and begun construction on two more (due to be finished in 2012 and 2017). Plans reportedly exist for at least two additional dams, and by 2030, it is said there could be as many as seven dams in China's Yunnan Province.[8] In addition, memoranda of understanding have apparently been signed for 11 more dams in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand. Investors in the proposed dams are thought to include Chinese-backed firms and other foreign private capital[9] (see Map 2).

Apart from the issue of dam construction on the Upper Mekong, the river is under acute stress at its lower delta as well. The delta, which is home to 22 percent of Vietnam's population, produces half the nation's rice output, 60 percent of seafood, and 80 percent of fruit crops and accounts for 90 percent of total

**MAP 1: THE HINDU KUSH-HIMALAYAN REGION**



Amu Darya
Tarim
Yellow
Indus
Yangtze
Ganges
Brahmaputra
Irrawaddy
Salween
Mekong

● Downstream river basins
● Hindu Kush-Himalayan region
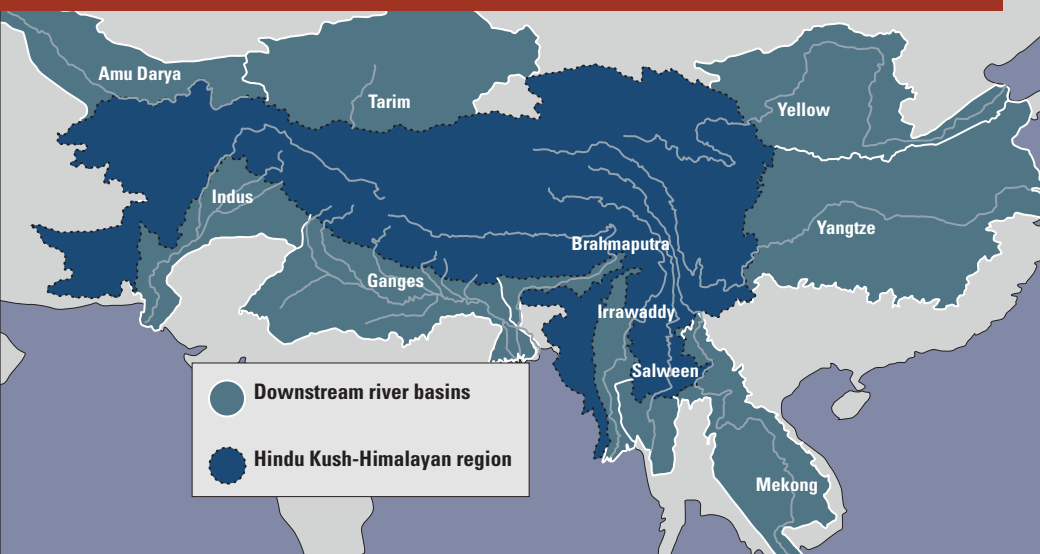
Source: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), http://www.icimod.org/?page=43.

national rice exports.[10] In a worse-case projection, the Vietnamese government reports that more than one-third of the delta, where 17 million people live, could be submerged if sea levels were to rise by three feet in the next decades.[11] Delta residents are already struggling with the changing flood patterns and salt intrusion that are destroying the river basin surrounding agricultural land. This is said to be due both to sea-level rise and to increased precipitation, both of which stem from climate change.

Given the multiple stresses on the river, it is dismaying that no international body is able to mandate or control what individual countries choose to do on their sections of it. The agreement establishing the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in 1995—the only regional institution even talking about these issues—does not include China, except as a "dialogue partner," and the fact that China has refused to become an MRC member means that the commission has no real power and little actual meaning. In fact, the role of the MRC in dealing with the impacts of dam construction in the upper reaches of the Mekong has been ineffectual since its inception, and relationships among the five countries—determined by present water use and alleged future needs of upstream and downstream countries—have remained politicized.[12]

In fact, regional pressure to safeguard the river has been so impotent that China has never consulted downstream countries in its unilateral construction and planning of dams on the river. At the same time, downstream countries, feeling increased anxiety over national energy sources, are now following China's lead, solidifying a political environment where national self-

interest trumps any efforts for collaborative action.

In April, the members of the MRC (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam) signed a declaration signaling their commitment to intensify cooperation in managing the Mekong and reducing the risks of floods. The declaration was prompted by unusually severe drops in water levels in MRC countries. In fact, water levels were at their lowest level in decades over this last year. Some

environmental organizations in the MRC countries suggested that dams in China were to blame, but China denied that claim and instead stated that downriver drought is attributable to causes such as abnormally dry weather. Beijing offered to share more data with MRC countries, but it remains to be seen whether relevant governments will be totally cooperative and transparent in sharing future data, and, at the same time, whether the spring 2010 drought will generate



**MAP 2: DAM-BUILDING ALONG THE MEKONG**

Source: Michael Richardson, "Dams in China Turn the Mekong Into a River of Discord: Rivers Know No Borders, But Dams Do," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 35-1-09, 31 August 2009, http://japanfocus.org/-michael-richardson/3210; See also Milton Osborne, "The Mekong: River under Threat," Lowy Institute Paper 27, 2009, p. 14.

enough worry to inject MRC transnational efforts with sufficient political will to make substantial changes to current river management systems there.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

While these initiatives are encouraging, their long-term effectiveness will depend on how well stakeholders are able to forge stronger commitments to preserving these natural water management systems. For examples on how Asian countries and their institutions might move forward, insights can be drawn from the recent reports of the Asia Society's Leadership

> *"The Third Pole region is now said to be under considerable stress as a result of a combination of natural and man-made processes."*

Group on Water Security in Asia and the Strategic Foresight Group's Consultative Dialogue Process on the Challenges of Water Stress and Climate Change in the Himalayan River Basins.[13] Both reports contain recommendations which could be adapted and tailored to manage slow-onset crises in the Third Pole and the Mekong River basin. Some such recommendations include

1) **A greater commitment to putting science at the forefront of the agenda.** Successful management of these crises requires both high quality data and greater transparency and scientific data-sharing.

2) **The creation of early-warning systems to make water and food (fish) availability more predictable.** Such information could be made readily accessible from bodies already engaged in gathering data, such as national and local governments, multilateral bodies such as the UN and large development banks, and environmentally-focused NGOs.[14]

3) **More opportunities for education and technical training on emerging technologies.**

4) **An emphasis on regional accountability and member state ownership.**

### POSSIBILITIES FOR TRACK TWO INVOLVEMENT

CSCAP has established a Study Group on Water Resources Security in Mainland Southeast Asia, scheduled to meet four times between December 2010 and June 2010. This Study Group should be encouraged to work with scientific and other development-oriented experts, including from the World Bank and

## TABLE 1: WATER DEPENDENCY RATIOS WITHIN ASIA

The water dependency ratio measures the extent in percentage terms to which a country relies on external sources (beyond its national borders) for renewable water. The dependency ratio thus provides a basic indicator of where inter-state tension over water-sharing and water use might occur.* Within the Asia Pacific, water dependency varies considerably, with Mekong River Basin countries and South Asian countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan especially vulnerable.

| Country | Renewable Water Resources – Internal[†] | Renewable Water Resources – External | Dependency Ratio % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Afghanistan | 55 | 10 | 15 |
| Bangladesh | 105 | 1,106 | 91 |
| Cambodia | 121 | 356 | 75 |
| China | 2,812 | 17 | 1 |
| India | 1,261 | 636 | 34 |
| Indonesia | 2,838 | 0 | 0 |
| Japan | 430 | 0 | 0 |
| Laos | 190 | 143 | 43 |
| Malaysia | 580 | 0 | 0 |
| Mongolia | 45 | 0 | 0 |
| Myanmar | 881 | 165 | 16 |
| Nepal | 198 | 12 | 6 |
| Pakistan | 55 | 170 | 77 |
| Philippines | 479 | 0 | 0 |
| South Korea | 65 | 5 | 7 |
| Thailand | 210 | 200 | 49 |
| Vietnam | 366 | 525 | 59 |

\* See GRID-Arendal at http://www.grida.no/publications/vg/water2/page/3242.aspx.
† Measured in cubed kilometers.

**Source:** This table is adapted from "Asia's Next Challenge: Security the Region's Water Future," A Report by the [Asia Society] Leadership Group on Water Security in Asia, http://asiasociety.org/files/pdf/WaterSecurityReport.pdf, Figure 2, p. 44. The data were derived from the UN Food and Agricultural Organization, *Aquastat Database*, 2008.

Asian Development Bank. It should also ensure active participation of Chinese interlocutors and regional NGOs who have expressed concern about the Mekong issue.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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*"Given the multiple stresses on the river, it is dismaying that no international body is able to mandate or control what individual countries choose to do on their sections of it."*

\* For a fuller discussion, see Stacey White, "Disaster Management in Asia: The Promise of Regional Architecture," in Robert S. Wang and Jeffrey D. Bean, eds., *Asia's Response to Climate Change and Natural Disasters: Implications for an Evolving Regional Architecture*, A Report of the CSIS Asian Regionalism Initiative, July 2010, pp. 61-90, available at http://csis.org/files/publication/100708_Freeman_AsiasResponse_WEB.pdf.

1 The river systems include the Tarim, Amu Darya, Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irawaddy, Salween, Mekong, Yangtze, and the Yellow. See Randolph Kent et al., *Humanitarian Crisis Drivers of the Future: The Waters of the Third Pole*, London: Aon Benfield UCL Hazard Research Center, China Dialogue, Humanitarian Futures Programme, forthcoming; See International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, http://www.icimod.org/.

2 Although Myanmar forms part of this basin, it is not impacted by these developments nearly to the extent that as other Mekong River Basin countries.

3 Kent et al., *Humanitarian Crisis Drivers of the Future*, p. 15.

4 These claims are consistent with the information presented in the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (for more information, see http://www.ipcc.ch/). However, some of these assertions are contested by regional climate experts.

5 International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, *Climate Change in the Himalayas: Information Sheet #3/09*, Kathmandu, 2009.

6 Some such initiatives include the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, which has developed one of the most comprehensive climate change projection studies for the region, as well as the Himalayas Interdisciplinary Paleoclimatic Projects, GEWEX Asia Monsoon Experiment on the

Tibetan Plateau (CAPM/Tibet), the Pyramid Laboratory, and Monsoon Asia Integrated Regional Study, among others.

7 "Int'l Scientists to Launch Environmental Studies on 'Third Pole,'" Xinhua, 9 March 2010, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90001/90776/90881/6913151.html.

8 Milton Osborne, "River at Risk: The Mekong and the Water Politics of China and Southeast Asia," Lowy Institute Paper 02, 27 November 2009, pp. 11-12.

9 Although it is unclear which of the dams will actually be built or when, the bulk of environmental concern is focused on two sites: Don Sahong at the Khone Falls in southern Laos and Sambor in northeastern Cambodia. If built, they will block the fish migrations that are essential to food security in both Lao PDR and Cambodia. See Milton Osborne, "River at Risk," pp. 11-12.

10 See Seth Mydans, "Vietnam Finds Itself Vulnerable If Sea Rises," *New York Times*, 23 September 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/24/world/asia/24delta.html?_r=1.

11 Mydans, "Vietnam Finds Itself Vulnerable If Sea Rises."

12 Asia Society, *Asia's Next Challenge: Securing the Region's Water Future*, A Report by the Leadership Group on Water Security in Asia, April 2009, p. 16, available at http://asiasociety.org/files/pdf/WaterSecurityReport.pdf.

13 Asia Society, *Asia's Next Challenge: Securing the Region's Water Future*; See also Strategic Foresight Group Consultative Dialogue Process Experts Call for Himalayan Sub-Regional Cooperation to Promote Water Security and Peace in Asia, Challenges of Water Stress and

Climate Change in the Himalayan River Basins, available at http://www.strategicforesight.com/Kathmandu%20Report.pdf.

14 See Asia Society, "Asia's Next Challenge," pp. 11 and 41.

WILLIAM MALEY

# Security and Instability in Afghanistan



*Regional stakes in the Afghan conflict could not be higher. A Taliban success could embolden extremists both in neighboring Pakistan and further afield in Southeast Asia.*

**AFGHANISTAN CONTINUES TO BE** one of the most combustible trouble-spots in contemporary world politics. The high hopes that accompanied the overthrow of the Taliban regime in 2001 have evaporated, and have been replaced by an enduring sense that the challenges posed by instability in Afghanistan and its vicinity are profoundly intractable. This sobering assessment, rather than energizing international responses, has weakened public support in the Western democracies that have been the mainstay of the stabilization effort. There is a growing sense that the task now is to find ways not of building something better for the Afghan people, but of minimizing the fallout from a failing and overoptimistic project.

Yet the consequences of failure, or even perceived failure, in Afghanistan are quite profound. First, a Taliban success in Afghanistan could boost the position of the Pakistan Taliban vis-à-vis the Pakistani state, a particularly acute concern in the aftermath of the 2010 flood catastrophe. Second, it could re-inspire radicals elsewhere by signalling that religious militancy can defeat even a superpower, a view that was vigorously propagated following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. Third, it could prove specifically destabilizing for the Asia Pacific region: one nightmare scenario, not wildly implausible, is that the Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e Taiba might be emboldened to attempt a further attack on India, along the lines of the November 2008 Mumbai attack, and it is far from certain that an Indian Prime Minister

could resist domestic pressure to respond forcefully, with potentially huge ramifications for the wider region.

The 2001 NATO intervention was warmly welcomed in Afghanistan and fostered a widespread sense of optimism that persisted for some years. Indeed, a 2004 Asia Foundation survey found that 64 per cent of respondents felt that the country was moving in the right direction.[1] But a combination of factors has since undermined this optimism.[2] The momentum of change began to be lost as early as March 2002. The Bush Administration, eager to conserve airlift assets for future use against Iraq, blocked the expansion beyond Kabul of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) which had been requested by Afghan signatories to an agreement signed in Bonn in December 2001 that sought to lay out a path for state-building and reconstruction.

Denied the benefits of ISAF expansion, the Afghan leader Hamid Karzai, who emerged as a consensus choice amongst the Bonn participants, moved to forestall a 'spoiler' problem at the provincial and local level by appointing armed leaders and their subordinates to positions in the state. This solved his short-term problem, but created a grave threat to the standing of his administration in the medium-to-long term. The Bonn Agreement also set the scene for dysfunctional elite politics by authorizing the establishment of up to 29 departments to be distributed between different Afghan groups, which led to an administration rent by ferocious rivalries where cooperation was sorely needed.

The 2004 Afghan Constitution, by

> *"One nightmare scenario…is that the Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e Taiba might be emboldened to attempt a further attack on India…"*

creating a presidential system of government, also set the scene for trouble, strengthening and indeed overloading the central executive office, and leaving many members of Afghanistan's ethnically diverse population with the feeling that the system was stacked in favor of ethnic Pushtuns, who comprised the largest single ethnic group, but probably not an absolute majority of the Afghan population. Those who benefited from this system often proved staggeringly corrupt.[3] Most threateningly of all, Pakistan's support for Taliban groups, and for extremists such as the *Hezb-e Islami* and the so-called 'Haqqani network,' took off again as Pakistan came to feel that the US was likely to quit Afghanistan sooner rather than later.[4] By 2010, there was alarming evidence that

Pakistani support for the Taliban was continuing at the highest levels.[5] It is this that lies at the heart of insecurity and instability in Afghanistan.

A danger for Afghanistan is that it could again become a theater for competition between rival regional actors, as it so often has been in the past. Apart from Pakistan, which has long sought to dominate Afghanistan as a way of minimizing Indian influence, Iran has interests in protecting Afghanistan's Shiite minority, in blocking the flow of narcotics from Afghanistan into Iran (see Map 1), in preventing the return of Taliban rule and in limiting America's role in Afghanistan— although to some extent these last two objectives are in perpetual tension. Furthermore, Russia has an interest in keeping the Taliban well away from Afghanistan's border with the states of Central Asia. And China has interests in preventing ties from developing between radicals in Southwest Asia and Uighur separatists in Xinjiang. It also has interest in the economic development of Afghanistan, in which the Metallurgical Corporation of China has begun to invest. These could potentially affect China's relationship with Pakistan, although the affinity between those two states is deep and enduring, and unlikely to change very much in the short term.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

Historically, there has been no shortage of multilateral engagement with the issue of Afghanistan. The United Nations became involved in mediation efforts shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. These efforts culminated in the signing of the April 1988 Geneva Accords that provided a

cover for Soviet withdrawal. The effectiveness of these efforts, however, is debatable. The Geneva Accords did not provide for a comprehensive settlement of the Afghanistan problem, but instead remitted further contestation to the battlefield. Nor were the UN's post-1989 efforts much more effective; too often, they were blighted by a reluctance to confront directly the issue of foreign meddling on Afghan soil.[6]
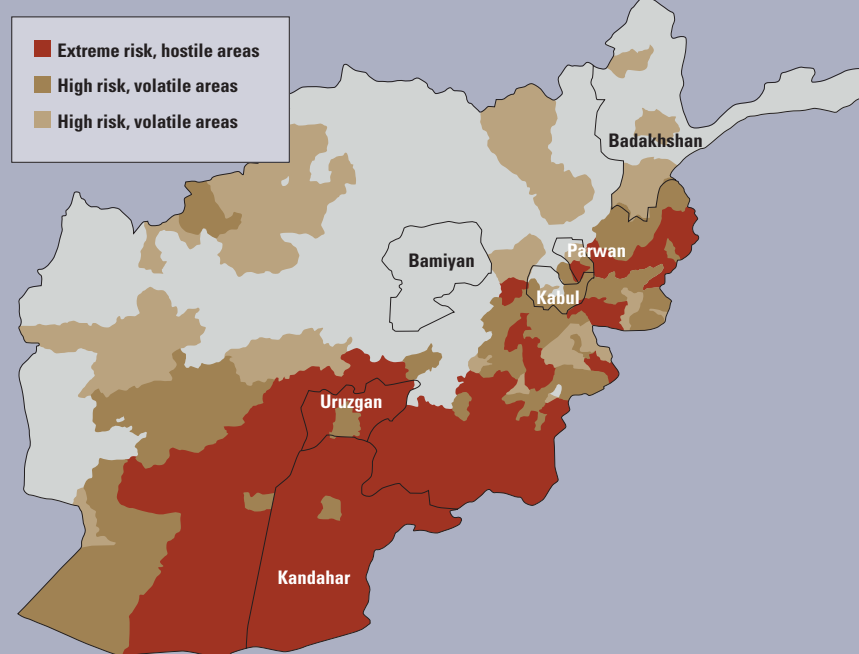
In 2002, things took a turn for the better when Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, one of the most dextrous mediators of his generation, was appointed to head the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). His successes included helping to foster an initial spirit of cooperation within Afghanistan's embryonic political elite. Unfortunately, not all of Brahimi's successors have been so effective, and by 2010, the UNAMA mission was in crisis. The UN's mishandling of Afghanistan's disastrous August 2009 presidential election, which was marred by blatant and widespread fraud, was largely to blame. By framing the problem to which this fraud gave rise simply as one of intra-elite rivalry rather than as a moment of truth on which the future legitimacy of Afghanistan's post-2001 transition might hinge, the UN compromised its own standing as a protector of norms of democratic governance.

The UN's diminished position in Afghanistan is especially pertinent in the light of mounting demands for engagement with the Taliban. Such calls fly in the face of past experience that suggests that talks with the Taliban are extremely unlikely to prove fruitful. Indeed, a 'peace' agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban would likely lead not to peace but to a renewed civil war, with states such as Russia, Iran and India lending renewed support to anti-Taliban forces. Calls for talks also have a lamentable effect in Afghanistan itself, where they stimulate hedging by different political forces by creating the impression that international actors are desperate for an exit strategy on almost any terms.[7]

All too often these calls confuse *re-engaging with disaffected tribal elements* with *talking with the Taliban leadership*. The former is a desirable objective, while the latter is shot through with dangers. The risk for the UN is that it might be pressured to

## MAP 1: CONFLICT AND COMMITMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN



Legend:
- Extreme risk, hostile areas
- High risk, volatile areas
- High risk, volatile areas

Source: "Indicators of Worsening Security in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/09/12/world/asia/20100912-afghan-indicators.html.

**International Security Assistance Force (ISAF): Current Troop Contributions from CSCAP Members (as of 15 November 2010)**

| Country | Troop Contribution | Location |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Australia | 1,550 | Uruzgan |
| Canada | 2,922 | Kandahar |
| Malaysia | 30 | Bamiyan |
| Mongolia | 47 | Kabul and Badakhshan |
| New Zealand | 234 | Bamiyan |
| South Korea | 246 | Parwan |
| Singapore | 38 | Uruzgan |
| United States | 90,000 | 10 provinces across south, western and eastern Afghanistan |

Source: International Security Assistance Force: Key Facts and Figures, 15 November 2010, http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/index.php

play an intermediary role in such talks. The Karzai government is unlikely to press such a demand, as it seems to prefer direct contacts that it alone orchestrates. However, if major Western powers continue to drift in the direction of engagement, they may seek to shape a role for the UN. In this eventuality, it is important that the UN appreciate just how controversial such a role could be in the eyes of Afghans outside Karzai's immediate circle. Many Afghans see the Taliban as being just as bad in the early 21st century as they were in the late 20th. Afghan women in particular figure prominently in the ranks of those who fear a Taliban recrudescence, and the UN would need to reflect very carefully on whether it could play a mediation role involving the Taliban

*" A danger for Afghanistan is that it could again become a theater for competition between rival regional actors…"*

without compromising its own key aspirational goals in the area of gender rights.

## PROSPECTS FOR 2011

Afghanistan's immediate future prospects are not promising. President Obama's December 2009 announcement that he would begin withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan by mid-2011 was designed to focus President Karzai's mind on the need for fundamental reform, while also reassuring his own Democratic Party that Afghanistan would not derail his White House tenure. The effect, however, has differed from the intended purpose in some rather unfortunate ways. For example, the prospect of Western withdrawal has galvanized the Taliban and their Pakistani backers to engage in higher levels of terrorist activity. And ordinary Afghans, given their scepticism about the durability of

**MAP 2: GLOBAL HEROIN FLOWS OF ASIAN ORIGINS**
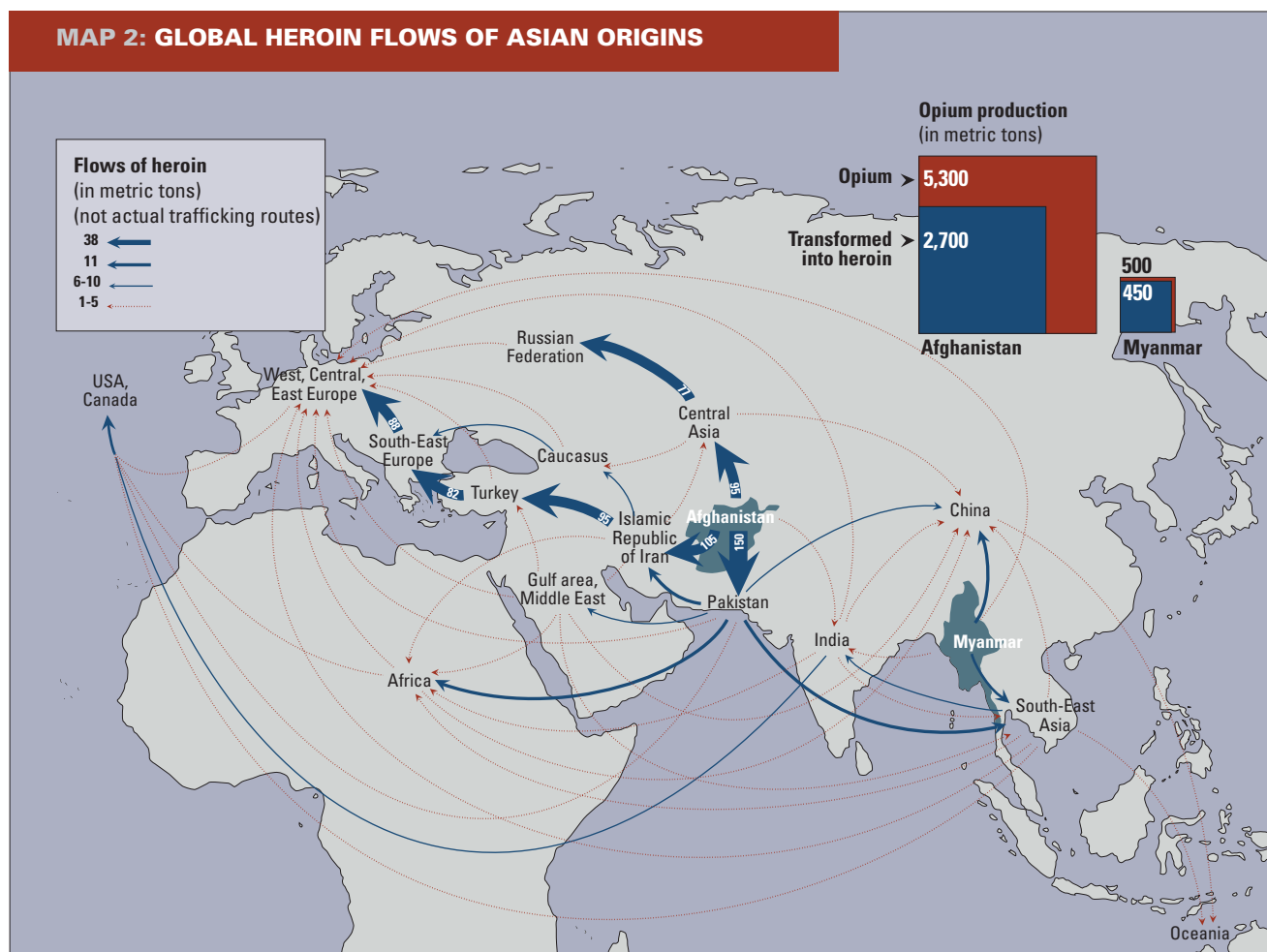


**Source:** UNODC, World Drug Report 2010: Heroin, http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/WDR2010/WDR10_Poster_Opium-Heroin.pdf

Western support, have become reluctant to come out publicly against the Taliban. Finally, the announcement has triggered from President Karzai a set of political initiatives designed to consolidate the position of the networks of cronies that helped to ensure his fraudulent 2009 victory. This third effect, to put it mildly, is inimical to any hopes that governance might be improved or corruption reduced on Karzai's watch.

One particular issue to watch in the coming months is the stability of Afghanistan's financial system. The panic that struck in early September 2010 over the stability of the Kabul Bank is a measure of the weakness of the country's institutions, and this panic could easily shift from the economic to the political sphere.[8]

In addition, Afghanistan's future will depend upon whether Western powers are prepared to confront Pakistan over its continued support

> " …ordinary Afghans, given their scepticism about the durability of Western support, have become reluctant to come out publicly against the Taliban. "

for the Taliban. In 2007, the then President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, admitted very candidly during a visit to Kabul that "There is no doubt Afghan militants are supported from Pakistan soil. The

problem that you have in your region is because support is provided from our side."[9] As a sovereign state, it is Pakistan's responsibility to prevent this from happening, and a range of pressures could appropriately be applied to ensure that this responsibility is discharged. Indeed, a recent RAND study has outlined a number of screws that could legitimately be tightened.[10]

One would nonetheless have to be an optimist to hold out much hope for progress. Pakistan's meddling is driven by a longstanding desire to exclude Indian influence in Afghanistan, and it will take considerable pressure to shift Islamabad from this position. Too much of Western policy has been based either on hand-wringing, or on the belief, confounded by virtually all experience, that positive incentives on their own can induce positive behavior by Pakistan. As long as the US remains logistically dependent on Pakistan for the transfer of materiel to landlocked Afghanistan, its room to maneuver may seem constrained. But if it does not soon address the issue of sanctuaries for the Afghan Taliban leadership, it may find that it is too late, with potentially devastating consequences for Afghanistan and regional stability in South and Southwest Asia more generally.[11]

If effective pressure were applied from the highest levels of the US Administration to the Pakistan military to roll up the Afghan Taliban leadership—something Pakistan could easily do—the insurgency in Afghanistan could lose momentum quite rapidly. Too many observers have forgotten how swiftly the Taliban regime collapsed in 2001, and it was not direct pressure that brought about its end so much as the cascading

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**BOX 1: BACKGROUND TO THE AFGHANISTAN CONFLICT**

Afghanistan's Thirty Years Crisis began with a communist coup in April 1978, which in turn led to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The decade of war which followed prior to the completion of the Soviet withdrawal in February 1989 was disastrous for ordinary Afghans, and brought about the collapse of the Afghan state, something that became palpable in 1992 when the termination of Soviet support from the end of 1991 led to the disintegration of the communist regime. The Afghan resistance forces (*Mujahideen*) inherited the symbols of a state, but not a functioning administration; and even then, radical groups such as the *Hezb-e Islami* of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar rocketed Kabul mercilessly with a view to denying more moderate forces the capacity to rule peacefully. With Western attention drifting from Afghanistan to other areas—the Middle East following Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, as well as the disintegrating USSR and Yugoslavia—Afghanistan became a theater for regional competition, with Pakistan, Iran, India and Saudi Arabia all involved to some degree. The Taliban movement, instrumentalized by Pakistan as a tool to assert its dominion over Afghanistan and minimize Indian influence, emerged on top, taking Kandahar in 1994, Herat in 1995 and Kabul in 1996. The Taliban, however, lacked generalized normative support, and the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, planned on Afghan soil by Osama Bin Laden, finally triggered a US intervention which held out the prospect of rescuing Afghanistan from its rut.[1]

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[1] For more detailed discussion of these events, see William Maley, *The Afghanistan Wars*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

through Afghanistan of the belief that the Taliban had met their match, something which disposed ordinary Afghans to shift their prudential allegiances away from the Taliban and towards other forces. With the right set of policy settings, this could happen again.

## SCOPE FOR TRACK TWO ENGAGEMENT

The unpromising character of the wider political environment of Afghanistan leaves relatively little scope for effective Track Two involvement. To the extent that the Pakistan military rather than the civilian political elite controls major decisions with respect to Afghanistan, the avenues for second track engagement are severely circumscribed. However, there is scope for using Track Two as a form of confidence building measure in the India-Pakistan relationship, which crucially shapes Pakistan's conception of its strategic interests in Afghanistan. Indeed, Track Two processes may hold out the only hope for moving forward on some of the contentious issues in Pakistan's dealings with its eastern neighbor. Such a process was set in motion over Kashmir issue in 1999, although the Kargil crisis then killed off the fruits of a constructive Track Two engagement.[12] That said, the region is an exceptionally tense and complicated one, and is more than likely to defy efforts to produce progress through such delicate instruments as Track Two diplomacy.[13]

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" …there is scope for using track two as a form of confidence building measure in the India-Pakistan relationship…"

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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[1] See *Democracy in Afghanistan 2004: A Survey of the Afghan Electorate*, Kabul: The Asia Foundation, 2004, p.21.

[2] For an instructive overview, see Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Central Asia*, New York: Viking Press, 2008.

[3] See *Corruption in Afghanistan: Bribery as reported by the victims*, Vienna: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, January 2010; *Afghan Perceptions and Experiences of Corruption: A National Survey 2010*, Kabul: Integrity Watch Afghanistan, July 2010.

[4] On these developments, see William Maley, *Rescuing Afghanistan*, London: Hurst & Co., 2006.

[5] See Matt Waldman, *The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship between Pakistan's ISI and Afghan Insurgents*, London: Discussion Paper no.18, Crisis States Research Unit, London School of Economics and Political Science, June 2010.

[6] See William Maley, "The Geneva Accords of April 1988," in Amin Saikal and William Maley, eds., *The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp.12-28; William Maley, "The UN and Afghanistan: 'Doing its Best' or 'Failure of a Mission?'" in William Maley, ed., *Fundamentalism Reborn?: Afghanistan and the Taliban*, London: Hurst & Co., 1998, pp.182-198.

[7] See Ashley J. Tellis, *Reconciling with the Taliban? Toward an Alternative Grand Strategy in Afghanistan*, Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.

[8] Dexter Filkins, "Depositors Panic Over Bank Crisis in Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, 2 September 2010.

[9] Taimoor Shah and Carlotta Gall, "Afghan Rebels Find Aid in Pakistan, Musharraf Admits," *The New York Times*, 13 August 2007.

[10] Seth G. Jones and C. Christine Fair, *Counterinsurgency in Pakistan*, Santa Monica: RAND National Security Research Division, 2010, p.xvii.

[11] See Michael E. O'Hanlon and Hassina Sherjan, *Toughing It Out in Afghanistan*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010, p.4-8.

[12] See Owen Bennett-Jones, *Pakistan: Eye of the Storm*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002, pp.95-96.

[13] See William Maley, "Afghanistan and Its Region," in J. Alexander Their, ed., *The Future of Afghanistan*, Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2009, pp.81-91.

**HASJIM DJALAL AND IAN TOWNSEND-GAULT**

# A Review of Recent Developments with South China Sea Issues



*Despite rising tensions and sharpening rhetoric at the official level, there are encouraging signs of Track Two-level progress in helping resolve competing claims in the South China Sea.*

**THE JURISDICTIONAL IMPASSE IN** the South China Sea shows no sign of abating. Any action, hint of action, or statement made by one country is quickly met by a familiar restatement of jurisdiction by another: "The Spratly Islands (or Paracel Islands, as regards Vietnam and China/Chinese Taipei[1]) are subject to our inalienable sovereignty." Such was the reaction of China and the Philippines to the 2009 joint submission by Malaysia and Vietnam to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf regarding part of the southern South China Sea (with the former appending its "nine-dashed" map to its *note verbale*). Then, in 2010, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton signaled a change in US policy by declaring that her country was interested in the peaceful resolution of disputes there.[2] This too

engendered a swift and sharp response from Beijing.

The rhetoric comes as no surprise. However, there are some signs for optimism as the ethos of cooperation at the expert level among the jurisdictions of the region continues to expand. Any objective assessment reveals that the value of the land territory itself over which sovereign title is so hotly disputed is minimal, but such considerations have never affected the symbolic nature of these types of disputes. At the same time, there appears to be a growing realization that while the resolution of such matters may lie in the distant future, there are matters of contemporary significance which must be addressed sooner rather than later. These include access to seabed hydrocarbons, protection of the

fisheries and fish habitat, preservation of marine biodiversity, and freedom of passage through the sea-lanes of the South China Sea. The latter is of the greatest significance to the dependant oil importing counties of East Asia, and in terms of global trade generally.

However, while the sovereignty disputes over South China Sea waters appear to be intractable, there are means whereby tensions can be lessened, particularly where maritime jurisdiction is concerned. This is starting to happen in the South China Sea, and is a welcome development to those who fear for regional stability and cooperation, and also those who have a genuine interest in the preservation and protection of the marine environment, fish habitat, marine biological diversity, and similar considerations. This chapter outlines these new developments, and advances suggestions for the future.

## THE SOVEREIGNTY/ JURISDICTIONAL DISPUTES

The main points of contention in the South China Sea concern two groups of islands, the Spratlys, and the Paracels. The Spratlys are contested wholly or in part between China/ Chinese Taipei, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam; the Paracels, solely between China/Chinese Taipei and Vietnam (see Map 1).

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea lays down the globally accepted rules of maritime jurisdiction. Briefly, each coastal state is entitled to a territorial sea of 12 nautical miles (subject to its sovereignty except for rights of innocent passage by foreign vessels). Beyond, rights of exploration and exploitation of living and non-living resources, and certain other economic

> *" Any action, hint of action, or statement, made by one country is quickly met by a familiar restatement of jurisdiction by another…"*

activities are exercised in the Exclusive Economic Zone/Continental Shelf, which extends no more than 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the territorial sea was measured. Where one zone overlaps with another, international law and practice sets forth rules for effecting maritime boundary delimitation.

The Convention, together with rules of customary international law based on state practice, further clarifies the circumstances under which states can make claims to zones of maritime jurisdiction from features that are undeniably islands. The third paragraph of Article 121 provides that rocks that cannot sustain human habitation nor an economic life of their own shall not generate either an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) or continental shelf. They

are entitled to a twelve nautical mile territorial sea, but that is all. There has been much debate as to the meaning of this provision. Hopes that the International Court of Justice would pronounce on it in the course of its judgment in the continental shelf boundary case between Romania and Ukraine were frustrated when the Court saw no need to do so.[3]

While some have argued that certain islands in the Spratly and Paracel groups cannot reasonably be held to be "rocks," it is clear from state practice, and the jurisprudence of the International Court of Justice and other tribunals, that the smaller the feature, the less significance it has with respect to its impact on the delineation of a maritime boundary. It follows from this that an enclave of twelve nautical miles (territorial sea jurisdiction) aside, it is hard to argue that any feature in either the Spratley or Paracel island groups will have any impact on a maritime boundary generated from either the mainland, or an archipelagic baseline. No country can make a legitimate claim to a submarine feature—only to mainland or an island.[4] The latter is defined by the Law of the Sea Convention as a naturally formed area of land surrounded by water and above water at high tide. Thus, a reef which is submerged at high tide is not an island, does not qualify as land, and therefore cannot be "claimed" as if it were.[5]

One aspect of the jurisdictional impasse has been that it has not always been possible to determine the precise nature of a particular claim, both regarding its nature and its extent. This may be due to the lack of clarity, intended or otherwise, exhibited by certain states.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The major development in the jurisdictional picture in the South China Sea in the recent past has been declarations made by the governments of the Philippines and Vietnam to the effect that, while they are not relenting in any way on their claims to sovereignty over the Spratly Islands, they do not believe their jurisdictional significance extends more than the twelve nautical mile territorial sea. These restated positions are wholly in accordance with contemporary international law, and there have been calls on China/Chinese Taipei to restate its position in similar terms.

The major significance of the restated policy of the Philippines and Vietnam lies in the abandonment of the concept of "historic waters." The existence of the regime of historic waters has been debated by scholars:

> " Conflict management in Southeast Asia is… weakly developed and third party mediation tends to be regarded as a threat rather than a mitigating tool."

the Law of the Sea Convention even refers to "so-called" historic waters, but does not define the term. The notion has some support from some countries which regard some bodies of water as historically dominated by them as essentially part of their home
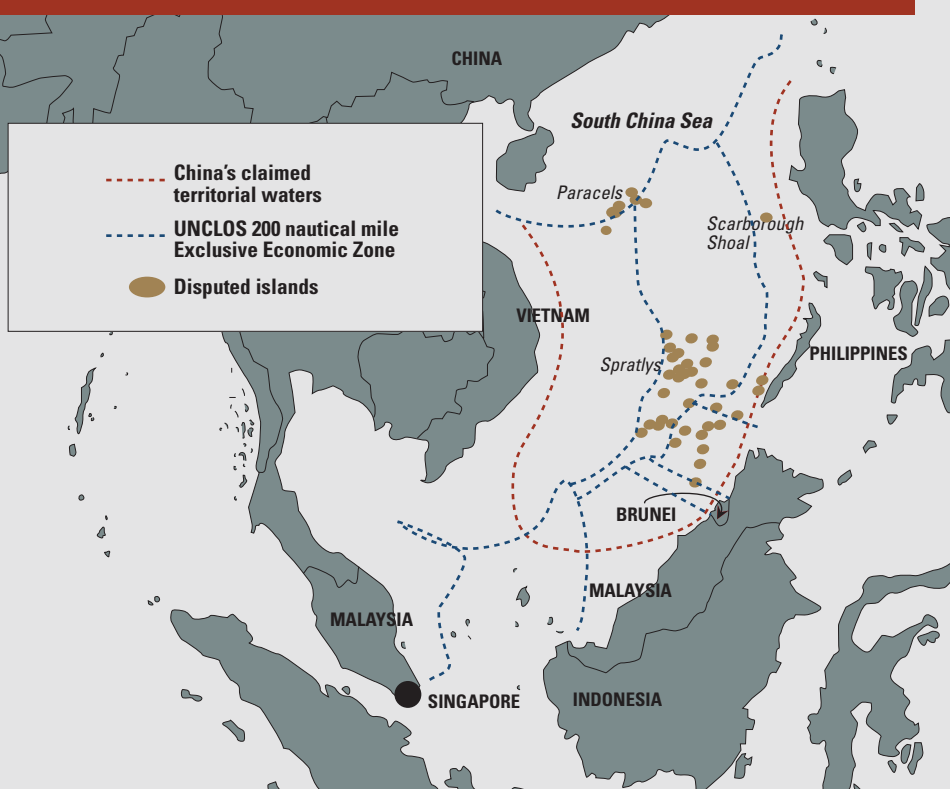
territory, and therefore subject to their domestic law. On the face of it, it is difficult for any littoral state to make this argument in the South China Sea as a whole. There are doubtless many ways in which in each littoral state can demonstrate that its nationals historically have fished, or navigated in these waters, but it is hard to see how one claim can possibly trump another. However, claims which are not supported by any rule of law are not improved or rendered lawful merely because they have been made repeatedly over considerable periods of time. There are examples of claims to historic waters which are legitimate because they are recognized as such by the countries concerned: the traditional waters of the Kingdom of Tonga are an example. If Tonga's maritime neighbors accept its rectangular-shaped claim area as legitimate, then it is not up to any other state to object. But these cases are rare.

The needs of the international community are best met by simplicity, clarity, and uniformity as regards maritime jurisdiction, rather than a profusion of diffuse claims proceeding from different points of origin, but sometimes dismayingly, all claiming to be in accordance with international law. Arguably, it may well be time for scholars to be more rigorous when presenting divergent national viewpoints, being somewhat less deferential and polite when a claim is made, allegedly in accordance with international jurisprudence, but which is clearly not according to the objective observer.

Somewhat less progress has been made on the subject of occupation of previously unoccupied features. Mere occupation is not, of course, innately harmful, although regarded as a sore



**MAP 1: WHY ARE SOUTH CHINA SEAS TENSION RISING?**

Legend:
- China's claimed territorial waters
- UNCLOS 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone
- Disputed islands

CHINA · South China Sea · Paracels · Scarborough Shoal · VIETNAM · Spratlys · PHILIPPINES · BRUNEI · MALAYSIA · MALAYSIA · SINGAPORE · INDONESIA

**Source:** Map based on BBC, "Who's Right in South China Sea Spat?" 13 March 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7941425.stm, which is based on information from UNCLOS and CIA.

provocation by rival claimants. One of the features of occupation in the Spratly group in particular has been the construction upon or enlargement of a rock feature. The aptly named Mischief Reef is only one of the examples of this. International law is clear regarding what does and does not constitute an island (a naturally formed and area of land). Thus, building on a reef so that its structure is above water at high tide and produces an artificial island is not an island within the meaning of Article 121 of the Law of the Sea Convention. In other words, no human activity can transform a feature into an island: Accordingly, occupying features and building on them does nothing to advance a claim, so far as international law is concerned.

There are other consequences to such practice. Building on a coral reef is inherently destructive, and can result—and in some cases has resulted—in what otherwise would be a fertile fish habitat to be rendered virtually useless. The cavalier manner with which features have been occupied and built on, with subsequent destruction of marine biological diversity and fish habitat, is impossible to justify. It is perhaps a measure of the growing maturity of the debate of South China Sea issues that these matters are being taken seriously, as opposed to being marginalized as secondary or tertiary compared to the all-important goal of securing rights to oil and gas deposits.

We see other signs of a welcome move to regard maritime zone generation in terms of the Law of the Sea Convention 1982, rather than sometimes somewhat vague claims to historic title. One can read the Joint Submission to the Commission on the Outer Limits of the Continental Shelf

> **" We see other signs of a welcome move to regard maritime zone generation in terms of the Law of the Sea Convention 1982. "**

submitted by Malaysia and Vietnam as implying that they do not believe any features in the area of their claim generate a maritime zone in excess of 12 nautical miles. The exception remains China/Chinese Taipei which, in a *note verbale* has objected to the Joint Submission. Leading regional scholars have called for China to state more clearly its claims for maritime jurisdiction, including clarifying the precise significance of its amendment to the 1948 map.[6]

## THE SOUTH CHINA SEA WORKSHOP PROCESS: TRACK TWO MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT

One successful conflict management initiative related to the South China Sea is the "Workshops on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea." Participants include members of government and military, as well as academics from both claimant and non-claimant countries, all acting in their private capacities. The First Workshop was convened in Indonesia in February 1990, and there have been annual meetings since then. In brief, the mandate of this "Workshop Process" is to identify and develop

proposals for cooperation over a wide area of maritime concerns shared by all jurisdictions of the region.[7] These include marine scientific research, environment and ecology, navigations and transportation, living resource development, and the like. The objective is not only to institute confidence building measures between the participants, but also to discharge obligations at international law arising in each of the above sectors—functional cooperation.[8]

The 20th Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea was convened in Bandung, Indonesia on 2-3 November 2010. Senior participants from all parts of the region paid tribute to achievements to date and renewed their commitment to the Workshop process itself. That commitment has included significant financial commitments on the part of China, Indonesia, Chinese Taipei, and Vietnam.

The agenda of the Process has developed over two decades and encompasses the following issues, with lead states noted in parentheses:

- Regional Cooperation in the Field of Marine Science and Information Network in the South China Sea including Database Information Exchange and Network Monitoring (China)
- Study of Tides and Sea-Level Change and he Coastal Environment in the South China Sea Affected by Potential Climate Change (Indonesia)
- Search and Rescue and Illegal Acts a Sea Including Piracy and Armed Robbery (Malaysia)
- South-East Network for Education and Training (SEA-NET) (China and Chinese Taipei)

## BOX 1: PIRACY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

*Sam Bateman and Yang Fang*

There have three phases of piracy attacks in Southeast Asia over the past 15 years (see graph). The first was the increase between the late 1990s and 2004; the second was the marked improvement after 2004; and the last was the increase since 2008.

No one factor explains these trends. The initial increase is partly explained by a surge in the number of attempted attacks and minor attacks as piracy reporting channels became better known and access to email more common. The situation in Aceh was a significant causal factor with the GAM rebels engaging in attacks off the island of Sumatra mainly to raise funds.

The improvement after 2004 may be attributed to several factors, including the peace settlement in Aceh; improved policing onshore in Indonesia; and increased patrolling by regional navies, including cooperative activities such as the Malacca Strait Patrols and the "Eyes in the Sky" program.

The global financial crisis and the associated downturn in international shipping partly explains the upward trend in attacks since 2008, with more ships laid up in vulnerable anchorages. Other explanations include the increased tug and barge traffic between Cambodia/Vietnam and Singapore carrying sand and gravel for the Singapore construction industry, and active pirate "gangs" preying on ships passing near the Mangkai and Anambas islands.

Further deterioration was evident in the first three months of 2011, with 25 actual and attempted attacks as compared with 17 in the same period of 2010. Half of the actual attacks were on vessels at anchor, and nine of the actual attacks on vessels at sea were on tugs and barges. However, some improvement was evident in the southern part of the South China Sea due to increased patrolling by Malaysian and Indonesian security forces.

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### PIRACY INCIDENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
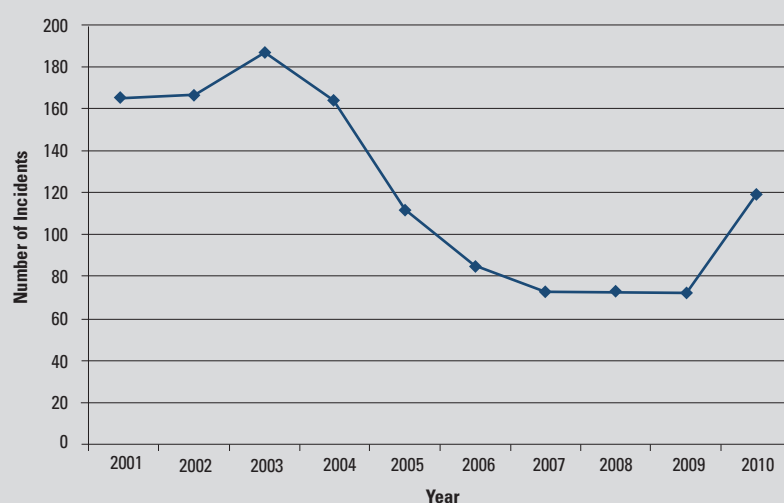


**Source:** IMB report and ReCAAP report

- Proposed Training Course on Coastal Management, Assessment and Monitoring (Philippines)

The roster of joint activities both underway and proposed continues to grow. In other words, the Workshop Process has moved well beyond the "talking-shop" stage into that of project manager. Some of the activities noted above require significant degrees of financial support from the authorities concerned: It is also worth noting that the work plan of the Process remains very much in the hands of the participants. This high degree of responsiveness must help to explain the level of support the initiative continues to enjoy.

### DISCUSSIONS IN OTHER FORUMS

In 2009, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam and that country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized an international workshop in Hanoi, attended by an impressive range of scholars, experts and officers from the region and elsewhere.[9] A second meeting will take place in November 2010 in Ho Chi Minh City. These meetings are intended to give yet another opportunity for the exchange of views of mutual interest, as opposed to reinforcing the claim of one littoral over another. The National Institute for South China Sea Studies in China's Hainan Island is another example of a regionally-based body that researches South China Sea-related matters.

In 2008 the National Bureau of Asian Research in Washington inaugurated an ambitious research project on energy security in the East China Sea, South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand. Researchers from regional countries drafted research

papers on a broad range of topics which have been considered critically at meetings convened for that purpose (the present authors are two of the Senior Advisors to this project). The results of the project will start to appear in print in 2011.

It is useful to note the contrast between the rhetorical clashes at the highest official levels and the tone of cooperation that pervades at the multilateral, Track Two, expert levels.

## CONCLUSIONS

These remarks were finalized at the early November Workshop noted above. We were struck then not only by the continuous maturing of the South China Sea debate, but also the complete absence of the suspicion and resistance which were the hallmark of some meetings in 1990-95. Today, maritime cooperation is not the strange and vaguely threatening fish it might have seemed more than a decade ago. The fact is that it is growing—witness papers given at successive CSCAP Maritime Security meetings and subsequent memos delivered to the ARF on maritime cooperation, as well as the increase in joint naval exercises between countries which are not close allies. This suggests that those who thought the prospects for positive developments concerning the South China Sea may have been somewhat wide of the mark. This is not to suggest that problems do not remain: they do. But the Workshop Process and the plethora of Track One and Track Two projects in the South China Sea suggest that solutions are nearer to hand than one might conclude if only being attentive to recent rhetorical claims and counter-claims.

" …the Workshop Process and the plethora of Track One and Track Two projects in the South China Sea suggest that solutions are nearer to hand than one might conclude if only being attentive to recent rhetorical claims and counterclaims."
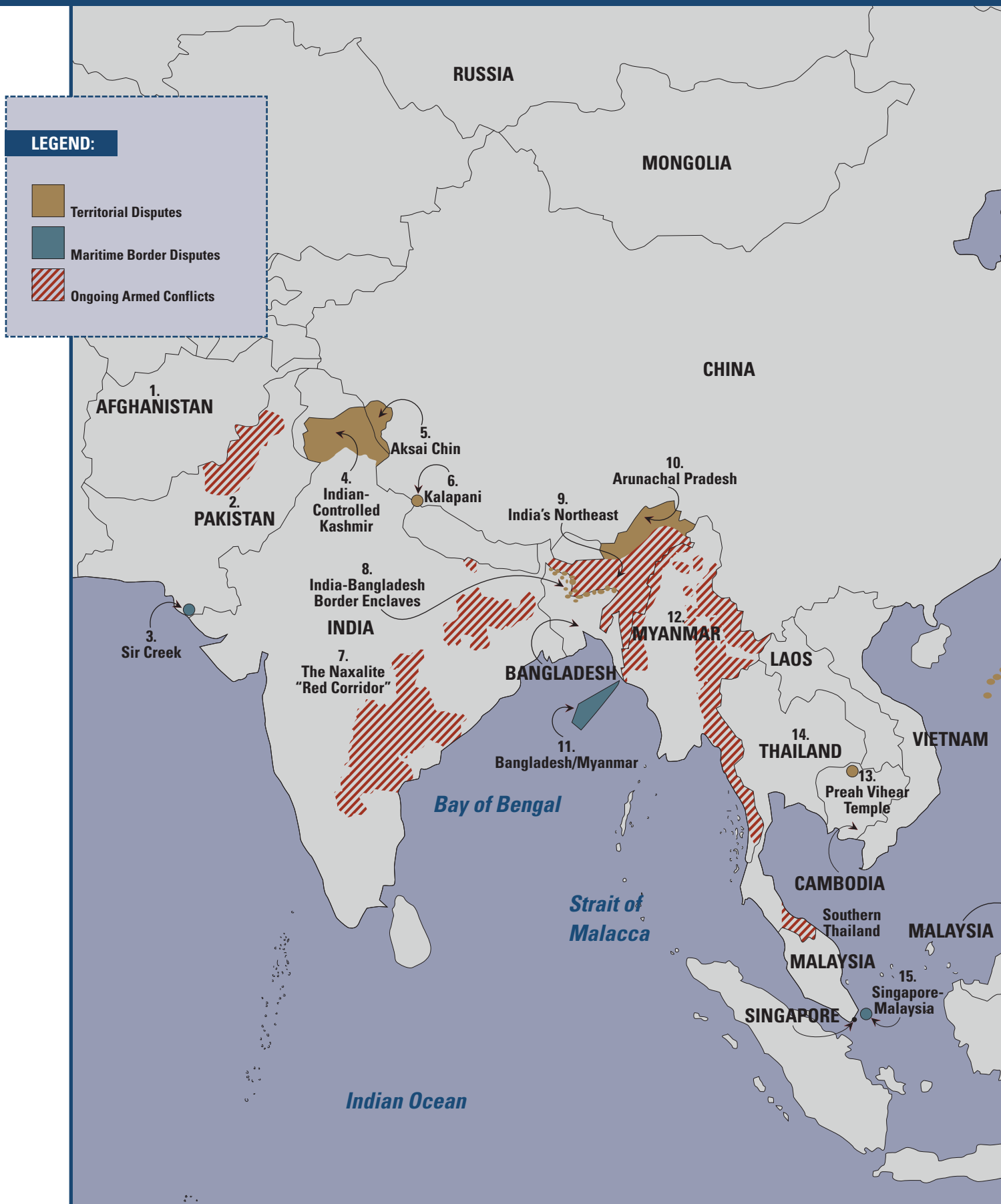
## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Hasjim Djalal was Indonesia's Ambassador-at-Large for the Law of the Sea and Maritime Affairs from 1994-2000. He has also been the President of the International Seabed Authority and member of the Indonesian National Maritime Council, Jakarta. Dr. Ian Townsend-Gault is a Professor of Law and the Director of Southeast Asian Legal Studies Program at the University of British Columbia. He was the Co-Director of Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea Initiative from 1989-2000, and remains active in it.

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[1] CSCAP practice is to use the term "Chinese Taipei."

[2] Similar disputes concerning sovereignty/over islands and associated maritime jurisdiction appear high on the agenda of countries in the East China Sea and the Yellow Sea, and China is party to several.

[3] The Court declined to avail itself of this opportunity, on the grounds that this was not necessary for it to render its decision. But certain interpretive approaches are surely inevitable. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties of 1969 reminds us that, unless there is an interpretation section in a treaty, words and phrases are to be given their ordinary meaning. The term "rock" is not defined by the Convention, so the everyday meaning is to be applied. The archetypal "rock" is the island of Rockall, in the northeast Atlantic. There can be little doubt if Article 121(3) obviously encompasses any feature which is unmistakably a rock, and this includes a sizeable number of the features in the Spratly group.

[4] Brunei is often added to the list of Spratly claimants, and it is not immediately clear what official grounds there are for this. It appears to be based on certain submarine features that lie within an area which Brunei might legitimately claim.

[5] It is not too difficult to see the rationale behind this: the international order would be in chaos if all submarine features, of whatever sort, were susceptible to sovereignty claims. In our view, the wording of the Law of the Sea Convention is clear that such claims cannot be advanced as a matter of international law.

[6] Beckman, "South China Sea: How China Could Clarify its Claims", RSIS No. 116/2010, 16 September 2010, accessible at http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS1162010.pdf.

[7] Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

[8] For further discussion of the Workshop Process see: Hasjim Djalal and Ian Townsend-Gault, "Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea: Informal Diplomacy for Conflict Prevention", in Crocker, Hampson and Aall, eds., *Herding Cats: Multiparty Mediation in a Complex World*, Washington, D.C., United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999 pp. 107-134; Hasjim Djalal, "The South China Sea: the long road towards peace and cooperation", and Ian Townsend-Gault, "The Contribution of the South China Sea Workshops—the importance of a functional approach",both in Bateman and Emmers, eds., *Security and International Politics in the South China Sea: Towards a cooperative management regime*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009, pp.173-206.

[9] These papers have now been published: Tran Truong Thuy, ed., *The South China Sea: Cooperation for Regional Security and Development*, Hanoi, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, 2010.

# Unresolved and Ongoing Conflicts in the Asia-Pacific

**LEGEND:**

- Territorial Disputes
- Maritime Border Disputes
- Ongoing Armed Conflicts

RUSSIA

MONGOLIA

CHINA

1. AFGHANISTAN

5. Aksai Chin

10. Arunachal Pradesh

4. Indian-Controlled Kashmir

6. Kalapani

9. India's Northeast

2. PAKISTAN

8. India-Bangladesh Border Enclaves

INDIA

12. MYANMAR

LAOS

3. Sir Creek

7. The Naxalite "Red Corridor"

BANGLADESH

14. THAILAND

VIETNAM

11. Bangladesh/Myanmar

13. Preah Vihear Temple

Bay of Bengal

CAMBODIA

Strait of Malacca

Southern Thailand

MALAYSIA

MALAYSIA

15. Singapore-Malaysia

SINGAPORE

Indian Ocean

**26.** Kuril/Northern Territories

**25.** China-North Korea Border

NORTH KOREA

**23.** Dokdo/Takeshima

JAPAN

SOUTH KOREA

Claimed by North Korea

**24.** North Korea/South Korea

*Pacific Ocean*

**22.** Senkaku/Diaoyutai

*South China Sea*

**19.** PHILIPPINES

**21.** Paracels

**20.** Spratley Islands

Mindanao

Basilan

Jolo

**16.** Indonesia-Malaysia

**18.** West Papua

INDONESIA

**17.** Oecusse Enclave

TIMOR-LISTE

AUSTRALIA

1. **Afghanistan:** Between Afghan government, NATO and ISAF forces, and Taliban and Al Qaeda.

2. **Pakistan:** Between Pakistani government and Pakistan Taliban and Al Qaeda.

3. **Sir Creek:** Between Pakistan and India.

4. **Kashmir:** Administered by India, claimed by Pakistan.

5. **Aksai Chin:** Controlled by China, claimed by India.

6. **Kalapani:** Controlled by India, claimed by Nepal.

7. **Maoist Corridor:** Between Maoists (Naxalites) and Indian government.

8. **India-Bangladesh Border Enclaves:** More than 100 Indian enclaves within Bangladesh, and 51 Bangladesh enclaves within India.

9. **Indian Northeast:** Between various separatist groups and the government of India.

10. **Arunachal Pradesh:** Controlled by India, parts claimed by China.

11. **Bangladesh-Myanmar:** Overlapping maritime claims (with implications for access to natural gas resources).

12. **Western and Eastern Myanmar:** Between various ethnic armed groups and the Myanmar government.

13. **Preah Vihear Temple:** Claimed by both Thailand and Cambodia.

14. **Southern Thailand:** Between various insurgent groups from the Malay Muslim minority and the Thai government.

15. **Singapore-Malaysia:** ICJ ruling granted Pedra Branca islet to Singapore and Middle Rocks to Malaysia, but new maritime boundary has not been demarcated.

16. **Indonesia-Malaysia:** Overlapping claims to Ambalat Oil Concession.

17. **Oecusse Enclave:** Two unresolved sections of the border between Indonesia and Timor-Leste's Oecusse enclave.

18. **West Papua:** Between Papuan separatists and the Indonesian government.

19. **Philippines:** Sporadic fighting between the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the New People's Army and the Philippines government.

20. **Spratley Islands:** Claimed by China, Chinese Taipei, Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines, and Brunei.

21. **Paracels:** Claimed by China, Chinese Taipei, and Vietnam.

22. **Senkaku/Diaoyutai:** Claimed by China, Chinese Taipei, and Japan.

23. **Dokdo/Takeshima:** Claimed by South Korea and Japan.

24. **North Korea/South Korea:** South recognizes Northern Limit Line; North recognizes Maritime Military Demarcation Line.

25. **China-North Korea border:** Disputes over various islands in the Yalu and Tumen Rivers, although the border is otherwise uncontested.

26. **Kuril/Northern Territories:** Controlled by Russia, but Japan claims four southernmost islands.

# Regional Food Security

The Asia Pacific was hit by the sharp rise in global food prices in 2008. Although prices have since re-adjusted, in at least two Southeast Asian cases, Thailand and the Philippines, they remain noticeably higher than their 2007 levels (Figure 1). The impact is most serious among these countries' poor, who spend roughly half their incomes on food.

In terms of overall regional food security, the Asia Pacific still claims well over half of the world's undernourished people (Figure 2),[1] a number which must be interpreted in light of the fact that Asia also accounts for over half of the world's population. Nevertheless, according to the UN FAO, Bangladesh, India and Timor-Leste have more than a 40% prevalence of underweight children.[2] And it is estimated that up to one-third of the Mongolian and North Korean populations suffer from undernourishment.[3]
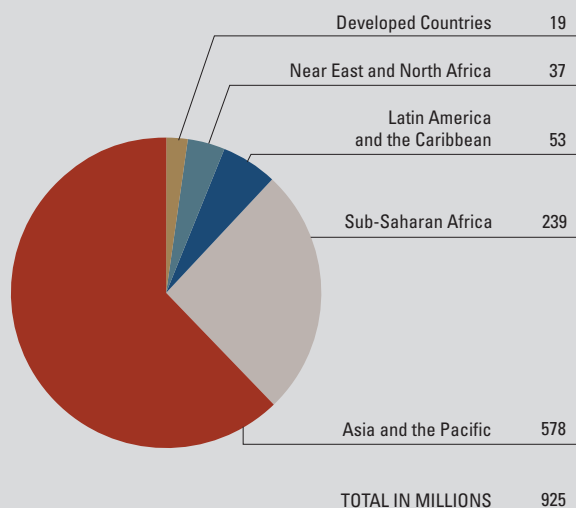
At the same time, Asia also boasts some astonishing success stories: China, Malaysia and Thailand have made remarkable achievements in dramatically reducing their hunger and malnutrition rates. There are also signs that regional experts are becoming more proactive about planning for future food security. The Food Security Expert Group, convened by the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Singapore, met in August 2010 to examine the effect of urbanization on food accessibility, particularly in Southeast Asian cities. They suggested that the 2008 crisis has had a galvanizing effect on Southeast Asian leaders, and there is now greater momentum for addressing regional food insecurities. They also recommended greater investment in the ASEAN Food Security Information System's (AFSIS) data collection and analysis capacities.[4]

## FIGURE 1: RICE PRICE VARIATION IN ASIA



Thailand: Bangkok (International Export)
Philippines, Iloilo
India, Mumbai
China, Hubei
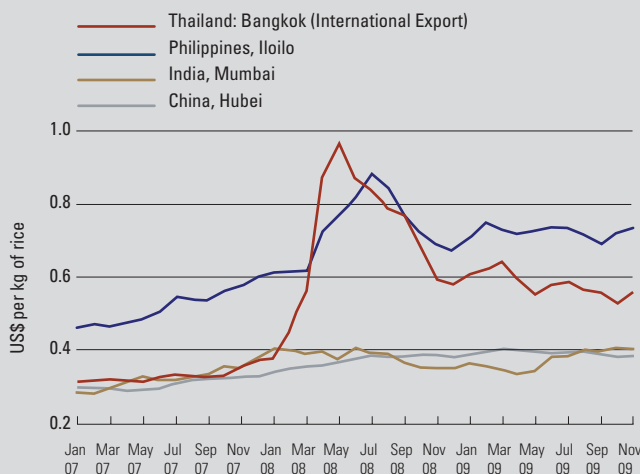
Source: Sharada Keats et al, "Food Price Transmission: Rising International Cereals Prices and Domestic Markets," Overseas Development Institute *Project Briefing* No. 48, October 2010, http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/5079.pdf.

## FIGURE 2: ASIA'S SHARE OF GLOBAL HUNGER



| | |
|---|---|
| Developed Countries | 19 |
| Near East and North Africa | 37 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 53 |
| Sub-Saharan Africa | 239 |
| Asia and the Pacific | 578 |
| TOTAL IN MILLIONS | 925 |

Source: UN Food and Agricultural Organization, "Undernourishment around the World in 2010, http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1683e/i1683e.pdf.

[1] UN Food and Agriculture Organization, "Undernourishment around the World 2010," http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i1683e/i1683e02.pdf, p. 3.
[2] International Food Policy Research Institute, "2010 Global Hunger Index: Facts and Findings: Asia," October 2010, http://www.ifpri.org/publication/2010-global-hunger-index-facts-and-findings-asia.
[3] See "Mongolia," in UN FAO Country briefs at http://www.fao.org/countries/55528/en/mng/; on North Korea, see World Food Programme, http://www.wfp.org/countries/korea-democratic-peoples-republic-dprk.
[4] Paul Teng et al, "Ensuring Urban Food Security in ASEAN: Food Security Expert Group Meeting," Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies *Policy Brief*, August 4-5 2010, September 2010, http://www.springerlink.com/content/032115610756p157/.

## BOX 1: THE FUTURE FIGHT AGAINST INDONESIAN TERRORISM

Analyst Sidney Jones offered several insights on the evolving nature of Indonesian terrorism. The following summarizes the main points from her March 11, 2010 article in *Tempo*.

- While many radical organizations have rejected violence, the group operating out of Aceh showed that some remain committed to terrorist tactics.
- The group's linkages with international terrorists are stronger than initially believed, including with Al Qaeda and Abu Sayyaf.
- Terrorist groups will continue to seek a secure base for operations.
- The group is not lacking in potential leaders or new members.
- Intelligence on these networks is still weak.
- The targets of jihad can change. Recent intelligence suggests that Indonesian officials are near or at the top of the terrorists' hit list.

**Source:** Sidney Jones, "Terrorism: What We Have Learned from Aceh?" *Tempo* (Indonesia), 11 March 2010.

## VIOLENCE IN SOUTHERN THAILAND: A MIXED PICTURE

The conflict in Southern Thailand has reached a stalemate. While military operations might have helped reduce the level of violence, analysts generally support the conclusion that the Thai government "has made little effort to tackle the political grievances that drive the insurgency."[1] Unofficial talks have failed, with one exception: in January, two insurgent groups agreed to seek a political process under an umbrella group known as the Pattani Malay Liberation Movement (PMLM). In June, PMLM implemented a unilateral one-month suspension of hostilities, but in effect, the suspension was limited to attacks on government targets while other types of attacks continued.[2] Although the number of deaths and injuries has declined, insurgents continue to target defenseless civilians through bombings and drive-by shootings. Arson and assassination attacks against schools and teachers have been a particularly disturbing hallmark of the violence.[3]

[1] International Crisis Group, "Stalemate in Southern Thailand," Asia Briefing No. 113, 3 November 2010, p. 1.
[2] Ibid., pp. 6-7.
[3] Human Rights Watch, "Targets of Both Sides: Violence against Students, Teachers, and Schools in Thailand's Southern Border Provinces," September 2010.

## FIGURE1: FATALITIES AND INJURIES IN SOUTHERN THAILAND, 2004-2010
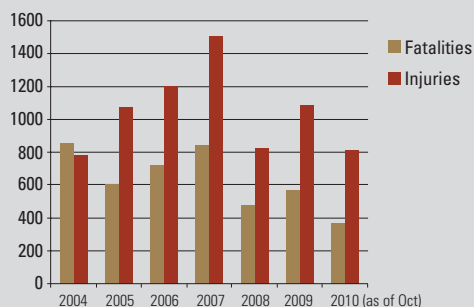


**Source:** Data from Deep South Watch, as presented in International Crisis Group, "Stalemate in Southern Thailand," Asia Briefing No. 113, 3 November 2010, available at http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-east-asia/thailand/B113-stalemate-in-southern-thailand.aspx, p. 2, fn 4.

# Terrorism and Insurgencies

In 2010, **Indonesia's** counter-terrorism approach took some discomforting turns. In February, authorities discovered a jihadi training camp for a "coalition" of disaffected members of various radical organizations. The previous success of its counter-terrorism operations notwithstanding, the discovery forced Jakarta to confront some difficult truths about the resilience and adaptability of radicals.[1] (See Box 1) In October, it enlisted the military in the counter-terrorism fight, a decision some human rights organizations have criticized.[2] And in March, police killed Dulmatin, who had been considered a possible successor to Noordin Mohammad Top as leader of Indonesia's jihadists. The killing of Dulmatin has given Jakarta little comfort; the extensiveness of the terrorist's international ties raised new concerns about local militants' links with Al Qaeda affiliates.[3]

In the **Philippines**, counter-terrorist operations have been directed primarily at the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). Many ASG leaders have been captured or killed, its ranks have dwindled to around 300, and its members now seem motivated more by profit from kidnapping and ransom than by radical Islam. The military recently changed its tactics by adopting a "fleet marine concept" that would transfer assault operations to amphibious units.[4] Manila has also been conducting peace talks in Kuala Lumpur with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), so far with disappointing results.

The violence in **Southern Thailand** has fallen in recent years, but sharp political divisions in the rest of the country will likely prevent Bangkok from devoting significant political energy to resolving the crisis. In the meantime, shadowy militant groups continue their attacks against "soft targets." (See Figure 1)

[1] International Crisis Group, "Indonesia: Jihadi Surprise in Aceh," Asia Report No. 189, 20 April 2010, p. 15,
[2] Aubrey Belford, "Indonesian Military Joins a Local Terrorism Fight," *New York Times*, 7 October 2010.
[3] Rob Taylor and Telly Nathalia, "Bomber's Death Fresh Blow to Indonesia Militants," Reuters, 10 March 2010.
[4] Jamestown Foundation, "Philippines Adopts More Mobile Sea-Based Strategy against Abu Sayyaf," *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. VIII, Issue 39, 28 October 2010.
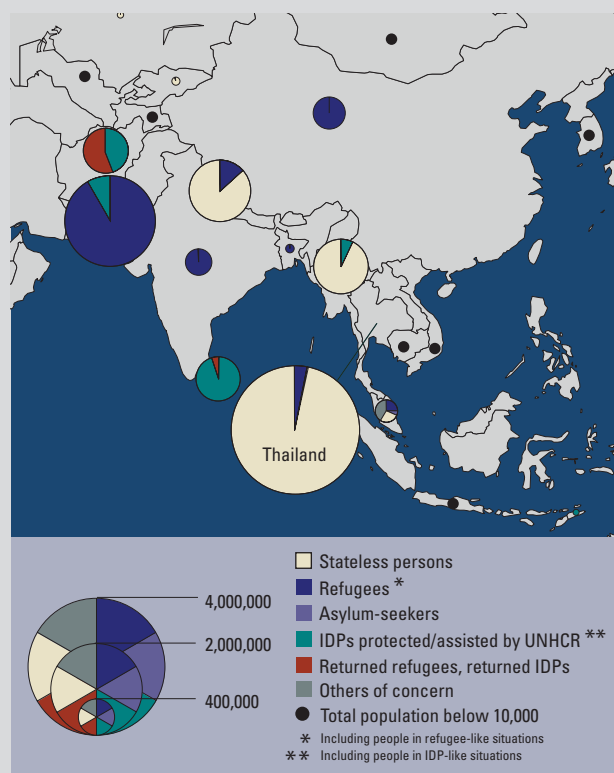
# Refugees, IDPs and Stateless Persons

The Asia Pacific scored some notable victories in refugee protection in the past year, but the overall numbers of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless persons remains very high. On the positive side, the UNHCR described as "groundbreaking" Vietnam's granting citizenship to 2,357 long-time refugees of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge. Japan welcomed ethnic Karen from a Thai refugee camp as part of a UN-supported program for third-country resettlement. And Mongolia became the latest Asia Pacific state to accede to the UN's 1951 Refugee Convention.

But there were also setbacks. Thailand began forcibly repatriating 4,000 ethnic Hmong, many of whom had fled persecution by the Lao government in the 1970s. In Bangladesh, aid workers reported the worst crackdown in memory on the Rohingya refugees, a stateless group originally from Myanmar.[1] And the UNHCR expressed disappointment at Australia's decision to re-open an offshore detention center for asylum seekers. Canberra floated the idea of opening a new center in Timor-Leste, but the idea was rejected by Timor-Leste's parliament.

The UNHCR commended China's progress in enacting refugee legislation, yet analysts still raise pointed concerns about China's lack of protection for North Korean refugees.[2] Others are more sanguine, noting China's efficient handling of the 2009 situation when Kokhang refugees fled fighting in northern Myanmar.[3] But observers worry that a North Korea refugee crisis would be larger and more complex, and would certainly require China to collaborate much more closely with the UN and international NGOs than was the case in the Kokhang incident.

## MAP 1: REFUGEES, IDPS, AND STATELESS PERSONS



**Source:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

## TABLE 1: REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND STATELESS PERSONS IN THE ASIA PACIFIC (AS OF JANUARY 2010)

| Country | Refugees | Asylum Seekers | Stateless | Others | Total Population of Concern |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Australia | 22,548 | 2,350 | - | - | 24,898 |
| Bangladesh | 228,586 | - | - | - | 228,586 |
| Cambodia | 135 | 29 | - | - | 164 |
| China | 300,989 | 43 | - | - | 301,036 |
| Indonesia | 798 | 1,769 | - | 311 | 2,878 |
| Japan | 2,332 | 2,935 | 1,525 | - | 6,792 |
| Korea (South) | 268 | 660 | 103 | - | 1,031 |
| Malaysia | 66,137 | 10,267 | 40,001 | 61,329 | 177,734 |
| Mongolia | 11 | 3 | 373 | - | 387 |
| New Zealand | 3,289 | 232 | - | - | 3,521 |
| Papua New Guinea | 9,703 | 3 | - | - | 9,706 |
| Philippines | 95 | 65 | - | 68 | 218 |
| Singapore | 7 | - | - | - | 7 |
| Thailand | 105,297 | 10,255 | 3,500,000[1] | - | 3,615,552 |
| Vietnam | 2,357[2] | - | 7,200 | 121 | 9,678 |

■ : Parties to the UN Refugee Convention

**Source:** UNHCR 2010 Regional Operations Profile – Asia and the Pacific, http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4a02d8ec6.html.

[1] Mostly hill-tribes and migrants from neighboring countries.
[2] Cambodian refugees granted Vietnamese citizenship.

[1] Seth Mydans, "Burmese Refugees Persecuted in Bangladesh," *New York Times*, 21 February 2010.
[2] "Robert Cohen, "Legal Grounds for Protection of North Korean Refugees," Brookings Institution, Fall 2010, http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2010/09_north_korea_human_rights_cohen.aspx.
[3] Drew Thompson, "Border Burdens: China's Response to the Myanmar Refugee Crisis," *China Security*, vol. 5, no. 3 (2009), pp. 13-23.

## Pandemic and Disease

**FIGURE 1: CONFIRMED HUMAN CASES OF AVIAN INFLUENZA A(H5N1)**

Figure 1 represents the number of human cases and deaths in the countries that reported infections: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam. In terms of cumulative number of confirmed cases, Indonesia and Vietnam were hit hardest, with 163 and 117 cases, respectively.
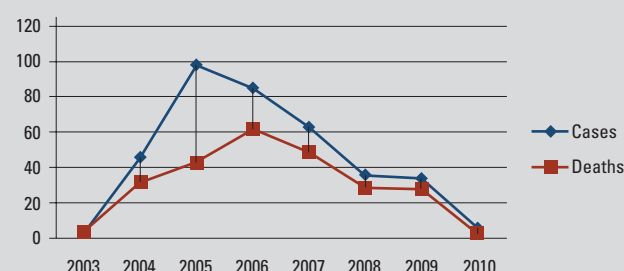


**Source:** World Health Organization, 9 April 2010

**TABLE 1: OBSERVED IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON HEALTH SECTOR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

| Climate Change | Indonesia | Philippines | Singapore | Thailand | Vietnam |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Increasing temperature and variability in precipitation** | Significant increase in dengue cases in La Nina years; illnesses and deaths due to heat stress | Increased dengue outbreak; illness and deaths due to heat stress | Increasing cases of dengue; spreading to areas not previously found | Impacts of dengue fever significant and increasing | Increased number of dengue cases |
| **Sea level rise** | Spread of water-borne infectious diseases | Spread of water-borne infectious diseases | | Spread of water-borne infectious diseases | Spread of water-borne infectious diseases |

**Source:** Asian Development Bank, *The Economies of Climate Change in Southeast Asia: A Regional Review*, April 2009, http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Economics-Climate-Change-SEA/PDF/Economics-Climate-Change.pdf, p. 51.

In 2005, governments and public health officials in the Asia Pacific were bracing for a possibly devastating outbreak of pandemic bird flu (H5N1). Since the mid-decade peak, infection rates have dropped dramatically (See Figure 1), but the World Health Organization (WHO) cautions governments to be prepared for the possibility of additional infection waves. The WHO also announced that although swine flu (H1N1) had reached the post-pandemic phase, outbreaks could still occur seasonally. After June 2010, there was a "surge" of H1N1 cases in southern and western India related to the monsoon season.[1]

However, a more disturbing longer-term regional health trend will be the effects of climate change, particularly in Southeast Asia. With its tropical climate, long coastlines, high population density, and concentration of poor people living in coastal areas and low-lying deltas, the region is especially vulnerable to outbreaks of serious vector-borne infectious diseases. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) warns that climate-related events such as droughts and flooding will raise the risk of diseases such as malaria, dengue, diarrhea and cholera. Dengue fever has been especially pernicious in recent years, with the ADB reporting a greater prevalence in Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam (See Table 1).

Elsewhere in the region, NGOs serving people from eastern Myanmar have noted that the health conditions of women and children are "dire" due to the effects of persistent conflict and state neglect."[2]

[1] World Health Organization, "Total Positive Test Reports of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Received in SEAR up to 01 August 2010," http://www.searo.who.int/EN/Section10/Section2562.htm.
[2] Irin News, "Myanmar: Health Crisis Amid Conflict – New Report," 19 October 2010, http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportID=90820.

# Myanmar

2010 was a year of change for Myanmar. The **November 7 elections** marked the culmination of the military junta's 20-year plan to legitimize its rule by giving it a superficial veneer of democratic legitimacy. Wary of permitting truly free and fair elections, such as that which allowed for **Aung San Suu Kyi's** upset victory in 1990, the SPDC ensured the victory of its proxy party by setting aside 25% of the seats for the military, implementing rigid electoral laws, intimidating voters and rival political parties, cancelling the election in ethnic-minority areas, and (alleged) vote-buying and ballot-box stuffing.[1] Unsurprisingly, the junta claimed its party won 80% of the vote. The results of the election were dismissed as fraudulent and invalid by western governments, but regarded as a "step forward in democratic development" by China—terms echoed by ASEAN's Chair (Vietnam).[2]

In April 2009, the military invited **ethnic armies**, subject to ceasefire agreements, to join a "border guard force" under Naypyidaw's direct control and thus lose much of their autonomy. The majority declined this offer, and deadly violence broke out between the military and at least two holdout groups immediately following the election. Tens of thousands of refugees fled over the Thai border, raising concerns of increased civil unrest.

The international community widely hailed Aung San Suu Kyi's release from house arrest on November 13 as a positive development, but it is uncertain what role she will be able to play in Myanmar's changed political landscape.[3]

**MAP 1:** OIL AND GAS PIPELINE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH MYANMAR



Source: Shwe Gas Project – Fact Sheet, September 2009, http://www.shwe.org/media-releases/Shwe%20Gas%20Project%20fact-sheet-small.pdf.

The Myanmar government's single largest source of revenue by far, natural gas extraction, is set to grow massively when the Shwe gas field comes online in 2013. A Daewoo-led consortium of Indian and South Korean companies is currently constructing offshore platforms in the Bay of Bengal, and China's largest oil and gas supplier, CNPC, has been granted exclusive purchasing rights. China is constructing a trans-Myanmar pipeline to transport the gas from the port of Kyauk Phyu on the Bay of Bengal all the way to Kunming in Yunnan province, a distance of some 1,100 kilometers. A crude pipeline is being constructed parallel to this, and will serve to facilitate the transport of African and Middle Eastern oil to China, bypassing the notoriously insecure Strait of Malacca and cutting transport time significantly. The existing Yadana and Yetagun pipelines in the south already provide Myanmar's military regime with an estimated 45% of its annual export revenues; the Shwe project is expected to add an additional $29 billion to the government's coffers over 30 years.[1]

[1] Shwe Gas Project – Fact Sheet, http://www.shwe.org/media-releases/Shwe%20Gas%20Project%20fact-sheet-small.pdf

[1] Jack Davies and Haroon Siddique, "Burma Election Observers Report Voter Intimidation," *The Guardian*, 8 November 2010, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/08/burma-election-voter-intimidation.

[2] "Regional Press Encouraged by Burma Election," BBC News, 9 November 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11719063; ASEAN Secretariat, "ASEAN Chair Issues Statement on Myanmar Elections," 11 November 2010, http://www.asean.org/25580.htm.

[3] "Newly Freed Suu Kyi Aims to Rebuild Weakened Party, *Bangkok Post*, 15 November 2010, http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/206497/newly-freed-suu-kyi-calls-for-non-violent-revolution.

## FIGURE 1: NAVAL CAPABILITIES 2010+
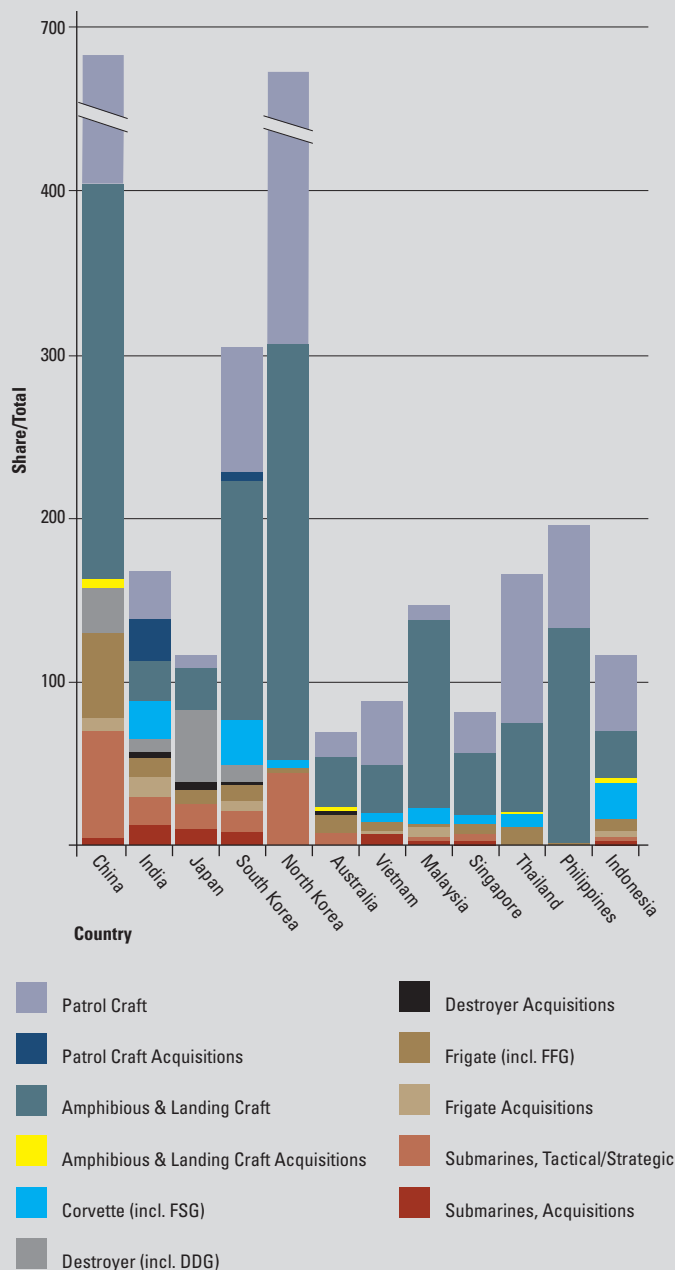


**Source:** Institute of International and Strategic Studies (IISS), *The Military Balance 2010*, London and New York: Routledge, 2010.

# UPDATE:

## Naval Modernization

The accelerating pace of naval transformation and modernization is raising concerns about a naval arms race in the Asia Pacific. The driving factors include the intensifying maritime territorial disputes in the South China Sea, competing sovereignty claims in the East China Sea, nervousness about Chinese military modernization, and transnational security challenges that require extended naval capabilities.

Enhanced naval materiel capacities have allowed for changes to deployment strategies, especially for China and the US. The PLA Navy (PLAN) missions now reach beyond the "First Island Chain" and into the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden. Additional deployments of nuclear submarines to Yulin and Hainan are interpreted as a long-term Chinese interest in extended and sustainable power projection. Japan has re-deployed its forces from the far north to the southern Yonaguni Islands, largely in response to China's recent naval activities related to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. And the US has improved its area-denial/anti-access capabilities by deploying 31 of its 53 fast attack submarines and three Ohio-class submarines to the Pacific.[1] Regional navies are placing greater emphasis and reliance on platforms and large surface combatants for force projection and expeditionary warfare,[2] coastal combatants for offshore patrolling, and acquisitions and upgrades of patrol and diesel submarines (tactical) with anti-submarine warfare (see Figure 1).

Overall, naval modernization in the Asia Pacific has made both cooperative and competitive engagements increasingly complex. While there is a need for effective and clear means of inter-military/naval communication, to date little has been achieved.

[1] Carlyle A. Thayer, "Southeast Asia: Patterns of Security Cooperation," Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 30 September 2010, http://www.aspi.org.au/publications/publication_details.aspx?ContentID=268&pubtype=5.

[2] Richard A. Bitzinger, "Military Modernization in the Asia-Pacific: Assessing New Capabilities," in Ashley J. Tellis et al, *Strategic Asia 2010: Asia's Rising Power and America's Continued Purpose*, Seattle: NBR, 2010, pp. 79-111.

# The Nuclear Landscape:

### Paper Tiger Progress and a Looming Crisis?



*Some nuclear weapons states have made progress on their disarmament commitments, but the Asia Pacific region still needs to focus on plugging holes in the nonproliferation regime.*

**THE EIGHTH REVIEW CONFERENCE** (RevCon) of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) concluded in May 2010 with the adoption of a substantive final document. The document, the product of four weeks of intense negotiations, frames the key objectives for the nuclear field for the next few years. It reflects consensus agreement on 64 recommended actions on nuclear disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the creation of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to be overly enthusiastic about the future of the non-proliferation regime. Although these developments demonstrate that the NPT bargain still holds, it is also clear that critical problems on all NPT pillars remain unsolved and will

require considerable efforts—and much time—to resolve. As discussed below, the Asia Pacific region will be pivotal in both the challenges it poses to the nonproliferation regime, and the solutions that it offers.

## THE REVCON'S SUCCESSES

The success of the 2010 RevCon, in sharp contrast with the previous (2005) RevCon, was made possible due to the constructive approach taken by many key states, notably Egypt. Of course, the success can also be attributed to the Obama Administration, whose approach to nuclear issues has focused on actively moving towards the peace and security of a nuclear-weapon-free world through continued pursuit of nuclear reductions, further reductions in the role of nuclear weapons in US national

security policy, entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the conclusion of a fissile material "cut-off" treaty (FMCT).

The RevCon was also energized by two additional developments. The first was the successful conclusion of a US-Russia follow-on agreement to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). The agreement, once fully implemented, will further reduce strategic nuclear arsenals in both countries. The second is the release of the new US Nuclear Posture Review (NPR), which clarifies and in many ways reduces the role of nuclear weapons in US national security policy. In addition, Washington also disclosed the number of nuclear warheads in its arsenal and announced that it would submit the protocols of the African and South Pacific nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) treaties for congressional approval, while also working actively with the parties of the Southeast Asian and Central Asian NWFZs to make progress towards their signature.

RevCon participants, however, did not reach a consensus on several key issues, including disarmament timelines, a nuclear weapons convention, and restrictions on the qualitative improvements of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the time spent negotiating on those issues, and the fact that they are mentioned in the Final Document, are clear signs of progress for nuclear disarmament. Also significant is the establishment of specific disarmament benchmarks requiring nuclear weapon states (NWS) to report on their undertakings at the 2014 Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting.

On the nuclear nonproliferation

*" …critical problems on all NPT pillars remain unsolved and will require considerable efforts— and much time— to resolve."*

and nuclear energy fronts, the RevCon endorsed strong language on North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT and its two nuclear tests. Because the Iranian nuclear issue was receiving attention outside the RevCon (the announcement of a fuel swap arrangement with Brazil and Turkey, and agreement on a new set of sanctions at the Security Council), the language on Iran was only indirect, with the Final Document calling on states to comply with Security Council resolutions and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) decisions. The Final Document, while encouraging states to bring the Additional Protocol into force, does not include agreement on making it the new verification standard or a condition of supply. Finally, while little attention was given to nuclear security issues and

proposals for fuel assurances and fuel cycle multilateralization, the Final Document suggests that the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement, which carved out an exemption for India (an NPT holdout) to engage in nuclear trade, should not be extended to Pakistan or Israel (the two other NPT holdouts).[1]

## THE OUTSTANDING CHALLENGES IN ASIA

In the Asian context, an issue of particular significance for the future of the regime is China's apparent plan to export two, perhaps three nuclear power reactors to the Pakistani Chashma nuclear power plant. Should this export proceed, it would violate international rules governing nuclear trade—and therefore undermine the regime—because Pakistan is an NPT holdout and has not agreed to IAEA comprehensive safeguards.

The issue surfaced at the beginning of 2010, when it became known that the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) had reached a final contract with the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) to export the two new 300-megawatt reactors. Although the transaction seemed poised to go ahead, no formal decision was announced, and Beijing did not raise the issue at the RevCon. It was also not an agenda item for the June meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), a multinational body of 46 country members representing virtually all the world's nuclear supplier states. Several NSG members requested that China explain the possible transaction, but China remained vague, and simply read a statement indicating that its current and future nuclear trade will be in compliance with its NPT and NSG

commitments. In late September, Beijing seemed to indicate that the deal would go ahead (and possibly include a third one-gigawatt reactor), but many questions remain unanswered.

Beijing has several options if it decides to proceed. First, despite its recent NSG statement, China could opt to ignore NSG guidelines (which are nonbinding), and claim that the transaction is a sovereign decision. There is certainly precedence for this. In January 2001, Russia transferred nuclear fuel to the Tarapur nuclear power reactors in India even though

> " [several] states are disturbed by the idea of Pakistan expanding its civilian nuclear program because it is a weak and unstable state."

32 of the then 34 NSG members declared that the shipment would contradict Russia's NSG commitments. However, ignoring NSG guidelines would subject Beijing to strong international criticism for undermining the nonproliferation regime.

Second, Beijing could claim that the export is grandfathered by an agreement it had sealed with Islamabad prior to joining the NSG. Such a "grandfather claim" would be problematic; when China joined the NSG in 2004, it explained that it had already agreed to provide Pakistan

## TABLE 1: 2009-10 REPORT CARD ON NONPROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

The Arms Control Association grades all nuclear weapons states (including non-signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) and "States of Concern" based on the following sources of information: states policies (including positions regarding treaties and agreements, participation in multilateral arrangements, and domestic laws enacted to address proliferation), assessment by international organizations, unclassified intelligence judgments, and recognized independent evaluations.

| ACA Standard | Nuclear Weapons States | | | | | Non-NPT States | | | States of Concern | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | China | France | Russia | UK | US | India | Israel | Pakistan | DPRK | Iran | Syria |
| Banning Nuclear Testing | B | A | A | A | B | D+ | C | D+ | F | B- | C |
| Ending Fissile Material Production for Weapons | B | A | A | A | A | F | F | F | F | N/A | N/A |
| Reducing Nuclear Weapons Alert | A | B | C | B | C | A | D+ | A | D | N/A | N/A |
| Nuclear Force Reductions | F | C+ | B- | D+ | B- | F | D | F | F | N/A | N/A |
| Negative Security Assurances | B+ | C | C | C | B | B+ | D+ | B | F | N/A | N/A |
| Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones | B | B | C | B | C | C- | C- | C- | F | C- | C |
| IAEA Safeguards | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | C+ | C | C | F | F | F |
| Nuclear Weapons-Related Export Controls | C- | A | C | A | A | A- | A | F | F | F | F |
| Multilateral Nuclear Security Commitments | B | B+ | A- | A | B+ | A | B | A* | D | D+ | D+ |
| Criminalization and Illicit Trafficking Commitments | B+ | B+ | A | A | B+ | A | B+ | B | D | C | D+ |
| **Overall Grade** | **B-** | **B** | **B-** | **B** | **B** | **C+** | **C-** | **C-** | **F** | **D** | **D** |

\* This assessment does not take into account steps Pakistan has taken to address risks related to its internal political instability and the security of its nuclear arsenal, facilities, and material. The scope of the ACA report does not address relative nuclear security needs or evaluate the strength of a country's nuclear security controls, only the scope of the controls in place as they relate to recognized international standards.
■ CSCAP Member.

**Source:** Peter Crail et al, *Assessing Progress on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament: 2009-2010 Report Card*, An Arms Control Association Report, October 2010, http://www.armscontrol.org/system/files/ACA_2009-2010_ReportCard.pdf.
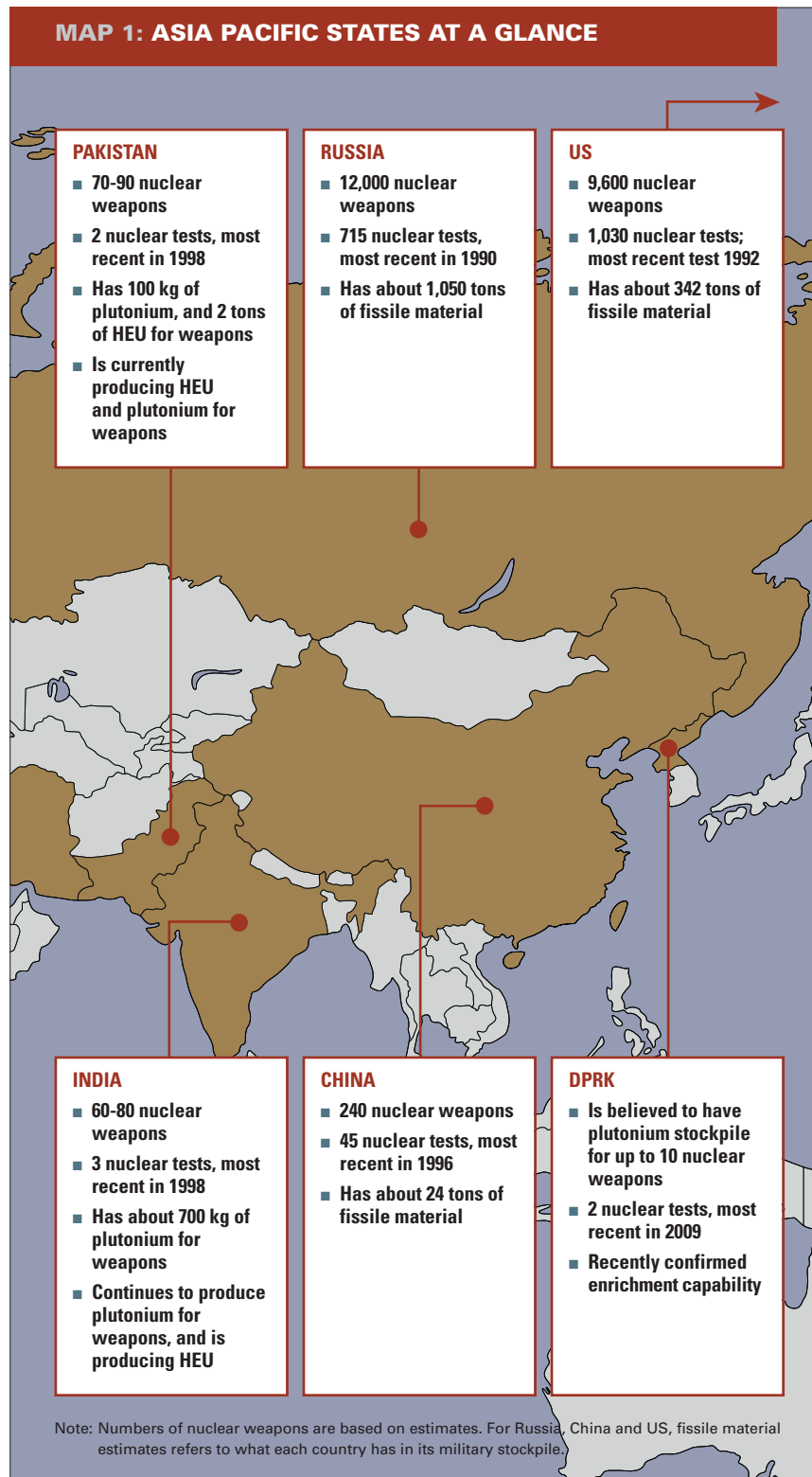
with a second power reactor, Chashma-2 (to add to Chashma-1 that it had built in the 1990s), additional research reactors, and fuel in perpetuity to power these units. However, Beijing never indicated that it had an agreement with Islamabad to also export additional reactors.

Finally, Beijing might seek a similar NSG exemption to the one granted to India in 2008. However, this too would raise problems because, as noted earlier, NPT state parties made clear at the 2010 RevCon that the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement should not open the door to similar deals with the other two NPT holdouts, Pakistan and Israel. As stated in the Final Document, "new supply arrangements […] to non-nuclear weapon states should require, as a necessary precondition, acceptance of the comprehensive IAEA safeguards and internationally legally binding commitments not to acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."[2]

Washington took its time defining its position on the possible Chinese transaction to Pakistan. Initially, it looked as if it would accept the export as a fait accompli. However, in July Washington indicated that it would block an NSG exemption request for Pakistan. Many states have supported this position, including India. In addition to concerns about the harmful effects on the nuclear non-proliferation regime, these states are disturbed by the idea of Pakistan expanding its civilian nuclear program because it is a weak and unstable state. They are also concerned because in the shadow of Japan's Fukushima nuclear accident, there are serious fears about nuclear safety, particularly as the reactors that China is posed to export to Pakistan date

back to the 1970s. Furthermore, experts have shown that adding new reactors is in no way the best option to solve its serious electricity problems.[3] These states are also troubled by the

fact that Pakistan has the world's fastest growing nuclear military program and that its nonproliferation record is poor, with many questions about the A. Q. Khan network still unanswered.

## MAP 1: ASIA PACIFIC STATES AT A GLANCE

**PAKISTAN**
- 70-90 nuclear weapons
- 2 nuclear tests, most recent in 1998
- Has 100 kg of plutonium, and 2 tons of HEU for weapons
- Is currently producing HEU and plutonium for weapons

**RUSSIA**
- 12,000 nuclear weapons
- 715 nuclear tests, most recent in 1990
- Has about 1,050 tons of fissile material

**US**
- 9,600 nuclear weapons
- 1,030 nuclear tests; most recent test 1992
- Has about 342 tons of fissile material

**INDIA**
- 60-80 nuclear weapons
- 3 nuclear tests, most recent in 1998
- Has about 700 kg of plutonium for weapons
- Continues to produce plutonium for weapons, and is producing HEU

**CHINA**
- 240 nuclear weapons
- 45 nuclear tests, most recent in 1996
- Has about 24 tons of fissile material

**DPRK**
- Is believed to have plutonium stockpile for up to 10 nuclear weapons
- 2 nuclear tests, most recent in 2009
- Recently confirmed enrichment capability

Note: Numbers of nuclear weapons are based on estimates. For Russia, China and US, fissile material estimates refers to what each country has in its military stockpile.

**Source:** Peter Crail et al, *Assessing Progress on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament: 2009-2010 Report Card*, An Arms Control Association Report, October 2010, http://www.armscontrol.org/system/files/ACA_2009-2010_ReportCard.pdf.

It is unclear how Beijing will react to these objections, particularly because it is currently in a position of strength. Indeed, when Islamabad pressed China, reportedly as early as in 2004, for the export Chashma-3 and -4, Beijing did not deliver. With an exception having been made for India, and the US, French, Japanese, and Russian companies ready to sell nuclear technology to New Delhi, Beijing expects reciprocity for Pakistan.

Some have argued that there is no direct causal connection between the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement and Chinese plans in Pakistan, and that Beijing is merely hiding behind this agreement to justify a transaction that had been planned for a long time.[4] Whether or not this is true, it is undeniable that the timing chosen by Beijing to play its cards greatly strengthens its position. This position is further strengthened by

the fact that Beijing, which could have blocked the NSG exemption request for India (because all NSG decisions require consensus), instead chose to support it, however reluctantly. It did so, moreover, even though the core purpose of the deal was precisely to balance China's power. Finally, although the specific terms of the Chinese transaction remain unclear, they seem to be much more benign than those of the US-India agreement: at the moment, the planned export will not add in any way to Pakistan's military nuclear production capability. Accordingly, however justified it may be to oppose China's export plans for the sake of the nuclear nonproliferation regime, it is nevertheless an extremely difficult case to make.

The ultimate risk is if China decides to retaliate by withdrawing from the NSG. The international community needs China's participation in the NSG more than ever because over 60 percent of the world's reactors currently under construction are in China, and experts have predicted that within ten years, China will become the world's second biggest nuclear power generator after the United States.[5] Simply put, in the twenty-first century, nuclear nonproliferation cannot be done without China.

At the same time, China also needs the NSG. Although it is becoming an important nuclear exporter, China still remains a major nuclear importer and thus needs cooperation both from nuclear technology vendors in the United States, Europe, and Japan to obtain reactors, and from uranium-rich countries like Australia or Canada to obtain fuel. What this means, as one scholar has pointed out, is that NSG members "are in a position to engage China to restrain its behavior."[6]

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## BOX 1: MYANMAR'S NUCLEAR ASPIRATIONS?

There is strong evidence to suggest that Myanmar is actively pursuing a nuclear weapons program, possibly with North Korean assistance. Myanmar is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ), and is signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), yet it seems to be unwilling to live up to the obligations entailed by these regimes. Myanmar has had its sights on acquiring nuclear technology since at least 1999, when the regime first entered into negotiations with Russia to construct a nuclear reactor. Moscow has refused to do so until Naypyidaw agrees to IAEA inspections. But recent evidence suggests that the Myanmar government is seeking other ways to acquire nuclear technology. Increasingly close relations with North Korea indicate an emerging axis of military cooperation between the two states; the countries signed a memorandum of understanding on military procurement in 2008, and officials from each country have subsequently made a number of high-level visits to the other.

In June 2009, leaked photos of secret North Korean-engineered tunnelling projects in Myanmar surfaced, and these developments have fueled speculation that Pyongyang is helping to further Naypyidaw's nuclear ambitions.[1] Although a handful of defectors in recent years have claimed insider knowledge of Myanmar's clandestine nuclear program, information provided by the defection of Major Sai Thein Win in February 2010 provided the most compelling technical and photographic evidence available to date of the country's intent to produce a nuclear weapon. Sai's evidence was analyzed in detail by former IAEA chief Robert E. Kelley, who produced a 30-page report that helped substantiate the validity of the defector's claims.[2] The evidence provided by Sai included blue-prints for missile engine parts and for specialized technical equipment that could only be used to enrich and weaponize uranium. After detailed analysis, Kelley concluded that Myanmar's nuclear program is still a long way from producing a working nuclear weapon, but warned that its intent to produce a nuclear weapon "is clear, and that is a very disturbing matter for international agreements."[3] As was the case with North Korea, nuclear weapons in Naypyidaw's hands would likely serve to shift international discourse on Myanmar towards issues of non-proliferation and the implications for regional security. Although Myanmar will not be able to produce a viable weapon in the near future, the government's nuclear ambitions and its allocation of resources to this end are extremely worrying.

[1] Jane's, "Clouded Alliance – North Korea's and Myanmar's Covert Ties," 22 September 2009, extract available at http://www.janes.com/news/security/jir/jir090922_2_n.shtml.
[2] Robert E. Kelley and Ali Fowle, "Nuclear Related Activities in Burma," May 2010, available on the Democratic Voice of Burma website, http://www.dvb.no/burmas-nuclear-ambitions/burmas-nuclear-ambitions-nuclear/expert-analysis/9297.
[3] Ibid.

## THE NEED FOR TRACK TWO ENGAGEMENT

Will it be possible to keep the nuclear nonproliferation regime intact (or prevent it from being undermined further) while making sure that China remains part and parcel of it? The situation will play out over the next few months and invites prompt Track Two engagement, for instance, within the CSCAP Study Group on Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Asia Pacific and possibly the CSCAP Export Controls Experts Group (XCXG). Indeed, considering that the situation seems to be developing rapidly, opening up a discussion about it at the Track Two level would help inform policy as to how the possible China-Pakistan nuclear deal is perceived, particularly in the Asian context.

Track Two forums should be thinking ahead of the current policy context and addressing some of the following questions.

- If the China-Pakistan deal goes ahead, what are the options for limiting damage to the nonproliferation regime? Could we do better than the US-India nuclear cooperation agreement and make sure that the transaction is accompanied by a significant nonproliferation or nuclear security commitment?
- Can we get commitments on CTBT or FMCT? While Islamabad is overtly blocking progress on FMCT negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament, Beijing appears to be doing so covertly, or is at least in favor of delaying the process. Could we envision a trade-off that would consist of a nod for the nuclear deal in exchange for a breakthrough on the FMCT?

> " …it would be extremely helpful to open up a discussion at the track two level to examine specific criteria under which nuclear cooperation could be conducted with NPT holdouts."

- If the FMCT is too much of a big-ticket item, could we agree to active Chinese involvement in improving the security of Pakistani nuclear installations, as some have suggested?[7] After all, at the April 2010 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, the Chinese government expressed deep concerns about the prospects of nuclear terrorism and stressed the need for swift cooperative action to prevent it.

More generally, it would be extremely helpful to open up a discussion at the Track Two level to examine specific criteria under which nuclear cooperation could be conducted with NPT holdouts. Indeed, if agreement could be found on such criteria, it would preempt problems like the one the international community has been grappling with for India and now seems poised to tackle for Pakistan.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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[1] The key issue of the RevCon, and really the condition for the adoption of a final document, was progress on the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which foresees the establishment of a WMD-free zone in the region. Although the Final Document contained language mentioning Israel by name, which at some point threatened to prevent US approval and derail negotiations, agreement was reached for a conference to be held in 2012 so as to make progress towards the establishment of the WMD-free zone.

[2] "Final Document," 2010 NPT Review Conference, NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)*, New York, 28 May 2010, p. 4.

[3] Mark Hibbs and George Perkovich, "Nuclear Suppliers in New Zealand: Global Trade Rules at the Crossroads," Workshop at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, 30 June 2010.

[4] Ashley Tellis, "The China-Pakistan Nuclear 'Deal': Separating Fact from Fiction," *Policy Outlook*, 16 July 2010.

[5] Hibbs, "Pakistan Deal Signals China's Growing Nuclear Assertiveness," *Nuclear Energy Brief*, 27 April 2010.

[6] Hibbs, "China Plans to Build Two Nuclear Reactors in Pakistan," *Radio Australia*, 22 June 2010.

[7] Hibbs, "The Breach," *Foreign Policy*, 4 June 2010.

KEVIN CLEMENTS

# Early Warning and Response Capability
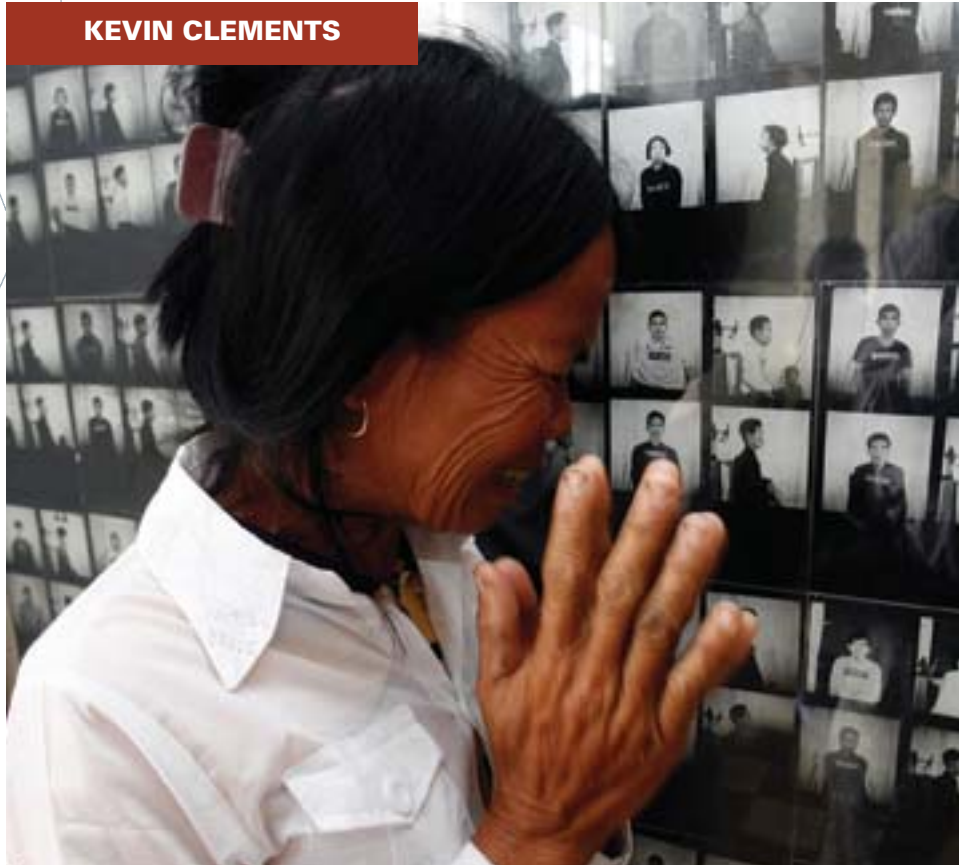


*There is an alarming gap between the region's continuing vulnerability to mass atrocity crimes and its ability to act swiftly and effectively to prevent their occurrence.*

**EARLY WARNING AND RESPONSE** (EWR) capability is a powerful tool for preventing the type of mass atrocity crimes associated with many violent conflicts. In brief, the task of early warning is to

1) evaluate the probability of large-scale political violence in a range of social, political and economic contexts; and

2) alert capable decision makers about these risks so that they may prevent and/or manage such violence in a timely and effective manner.

Early warning places equal weight on warning and response. Those tasked with early warning must identify the underlying political, social and economic factors creating division, polarization and enmification and also understand what might trigger violence. They do this in two ways. The first is through a structural analysis of conditions that predispose actors to violence, and the second is by tracking the more immediate causes of tension and division. The aim of these structural and proximate analyses is to provide as much early warning as possible to those who generate action that will reduce polarization and the risk of violence.[1] The value of a rigorous EWR capability is premised on the assumption that informed preventive action is much less costly, in both material and human terms, than reacting to a crisis *after* hostilities have broken out.

At the 2005 UN World Summit, all states, including those of the Asia

Pacific, verbally committed themselves to supporting early warning for the prevention of four types of mass atrocity crimes: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.[2] However, Asia Pacific regional organizations such as ASEAN and the ARF have shown little sign that they desire or are planning to establish such mechanisms anytime soon. Given that the preconditions for mass atrocity crimes are still present in several places in the region (see Map 1), it is highly desirable that the region makes early warning and preventive action a priority.

Without early warning mechanisms capable of providing timely analysis and evidence, regional organizations will proceed unaware of pending conflict outbreaks, and upon noting them will tend to make ad hoc opportunistic responses to problems that emerge. These might or might not be effective; moreover, they will be belated. If regional organizations are unwilling to devote resources to the task of early warning, then other interested parties could and should fill the vacuum.

In Europe and North America, much of the evidence for the early warning of impending conflict is generated within academic and civil society institutions. The International Crisis Group, (www.crisisgroup.org) for example, has generated many detailed national case studies analyzing the actors, issues and dynamics fuelling violent conflict, including case studies of contemporary situations in Asia. There are also many groups within multilateral institutions that are generating longitudinal data and case studies of national, regional and global

*"Those tasked with early warning must identify the underlying political, social and economic factors creating division, polarization and enmification…"*

conflict dynamics. In Southeast Asia, East Asia and Australasia there are a number of well placed institutions that could provide this kind of research and analysis. In ASEAN, for example, there are research institutions dedicated to peace and conflict studies and capable of providing structural and timely sources of information at the track one and track two levels. Because of its regional reach, CSCAP itself is also well placed to provide useful early warning of impending violence.

Effective early warning requires a capacity for systematic and reliable data collection, a capacity for risk assessment and information sharing about such risks, and a willingness to combine both quantitative and qualitative data. There is a debate in the field about what sorts of data are

most effective, but increasingly analysts and policy makers are looking for large data sets complemented by detailed case studies. Taken in combination, these two methodologies are capable of generating both timely and useful information for actors willing to prevent violent conflict.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the types of preconditions that have the potential to evolve into more serious conflict-related violence, followed by a brief discussion of the proximate causes or "paths of escalation" that usually signal an impending crisis situation. The chapter concludes with an argument for making better use of the region's existing bodies and mechanisms for a more active and robust early warning and response capability.

## ROOT CAUSES AND PRECONDITIONS FOR CONFLICT VIOLENCE

The preconditions for conflict-related mass atrocity crimes are surprisingly common across a wide range of states. These preconditions are of course not sufficient factors in predicting mass atrocities, but they are in most cases necessary conditions. There are some important economic drivers of conflict and numerous analyses of political instability and state fragility.[3] By at least one measure, a state's level of vulnerability can be assessed with reference to two measurements. The first is the degree of tension along a range of social, economic and political indicators, such as those noted in Map 1. The second is the degree to which national or local authorities are able and willing to assure physical security, to maintain the rule of law

and justice, and to provide basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens.[4]

Some of these preconditions are present in several Asia Pacific states. For example, the Fund for Peace's annual Failed States Index lists two South Asian states (Afghanistan and Pakistan) as "critical," and sixteen other regional states as "in danger." It should be noted that the early preconditions or indicators include seemingly nonpolitical structural factors such as "mounting demographic pressures" on diminishing supplies of food and other life-sustaining resources, as well as those of a more distinctly political nature, such as a "legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance or group paranoia.[5] Similarly, the 2010 Global Peace Index (GPI) ranks India, Sri Lanka, North Korea, Pakistan and Afghanistan as the five most unpeaceful Asian nations and these too must be on any watch list for signs of deeper division and polarization.[6]

## PROXIMATE CAUSES AND TRIGGER FACTORS

Country risk analysis provides a base-

*" If regional organizations are unwilling to devote resources to the task of early warning, then other interested parties could and should fill the vacuum."*

line capability for gauging whether pre-existing structural or other types of tensions are being exacerbated by intervening events or other proximate causes. These "trigger" factors also cover a wide range, including (but not limited to) the emergence of crime syndicates, a sudden drop in commodity prices or other type of economic crisis, a deterioration of public services and/or declining state
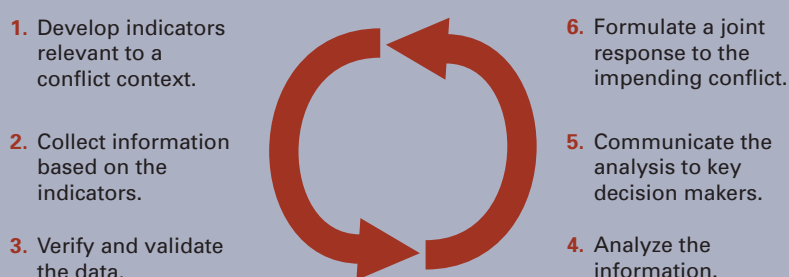
legitimacy.[7] If a particular precondition or combination of preconditions results in mobilization or upheaval, then the early warning mechanism would kick in to alert the appropriate domestic or external authorities of the importance of swift action. Furthermore, the early warning analysis would be made available to these authorities to help them determine the most effective type of response and ideally avoid further conflict escalation and violence (See Figure 1).

## CLOSING THE EARLY WARNING-EARLY RESPONSE GAP

The value of early warning and analysis will obviously be limited if it is not followed by an appropriate early response capability. As noted above, there appears to be little political will among many state and regional actors in the Asia Pacific for creating these mechanisms. One challenge is a lack of institutional capacity; currently there is no regional body designated to gather and assess the relevant data and issue warnings to the appropriate actors. Moreover, state policy makers are often torn between long-term structural prevention through, for example, focusing on poverty eradication, state effectiveness, and anti-corruption initiatives, and short-term crisis management operational responses.

A second challenge relates to suspicions about the motives and reliability of early warning systems. Many regional states consider this type of analysis to constitute interference in their internal affairs. In fact, the mandate of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) excludes any kind of related investigative functions. To be sure, early warning systems are not perfect, and it is often difficult for

**FIGURE 1: DEVELOPING AN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM**



1. Develop indicators relevant to a conflict context.

2. Collect information based on the indicators.

3. Verify and validate the data.

6. Formulate a joint response to the impending conflict.

5. Communicate the analysis to key decision makers.

4. Analyze the information.

Source: This figure is adapted from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), "Gender and Early Warning Systems: An Introduction," 2009, p. 6, available at http://www.osce.org/publications/odihr/2009/11/41377_1387_en.pdf.

analysts to figure out exactly what might precipitate small, medium and widespread violence and how to respond. The resulting uncertainty tends to generate cognitive and political paralysis.

A final challenge relates to disconnections between early warning analysts and early response decision makers within governing bodies. Most state and inter-governmental bureaucracies are organized with analysts much lower in the hierarchy than decision makers. Moreover, there are inter-institutional cross-sectoral gaps that need to be bridged in order to bring analysts and decision makers into a closer working partnership.
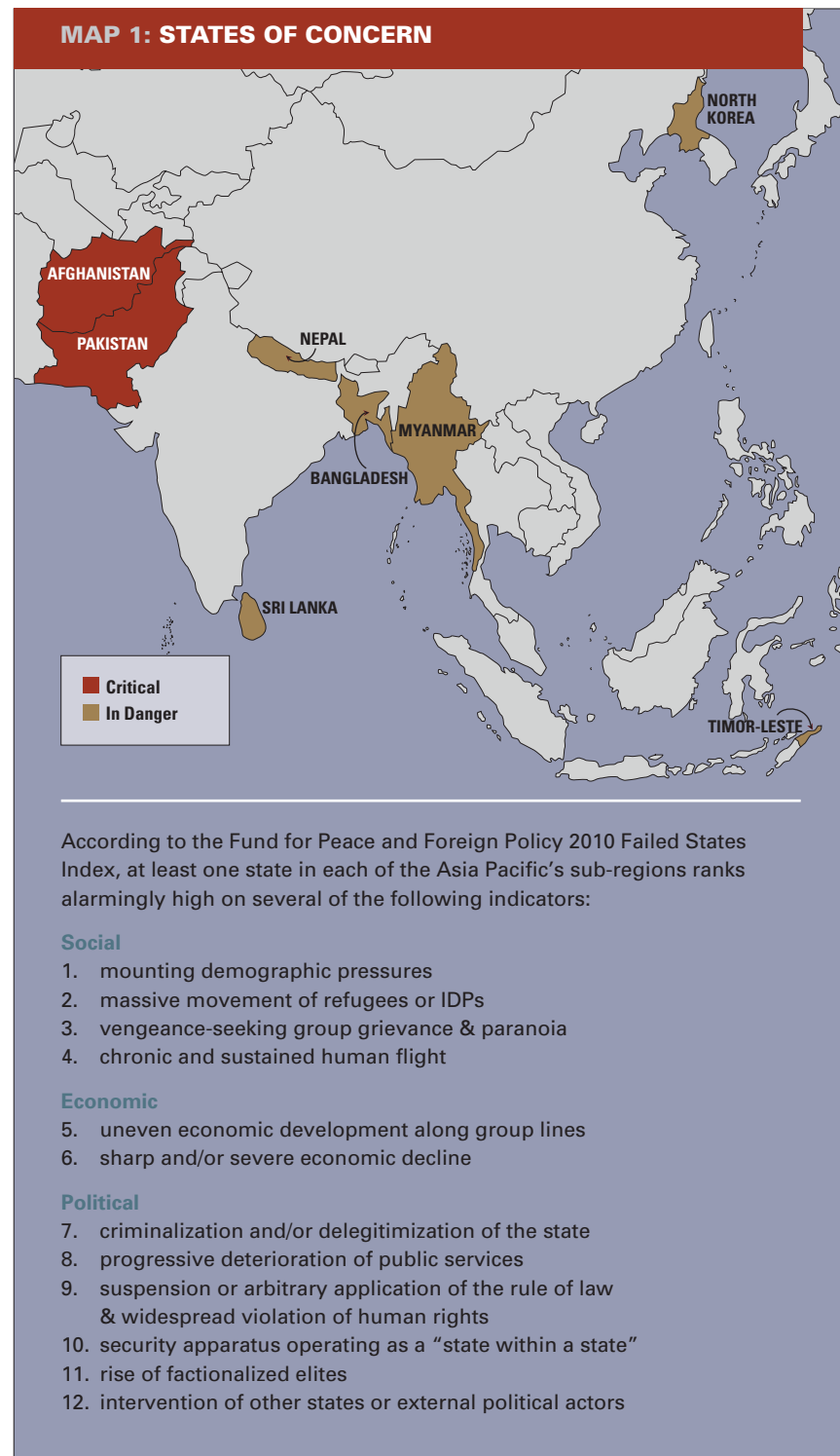
## BUILDING ON EXISTING CAPACITIES

The Asia Pacific is not totally devoid of the type of conflict prevention and mediation efforts that would constitute an early response. For example, the United Nations has had engagement in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific, including recently in Timor-Leste, Nepal, Bougainville, and Myanmar. Although regional states have generally been reluctant to request or accept UN assistance, when situations build to crisis points they historically have turned to the UN, rather than mobilize among themselves.[8] The main regional organizations such as ASEAN and the ARF have similarly avoided playing such a role, although there are some ad hoc exceptions, such as the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) through which the UN, ASEAN, and the Myanmar government began to negotiate humanitarian assistance in the wake of Cyclone Nargis. In addition, individual states have played a mediation role, sometimes behind the scenes, as was the case with Malaysia and Indonesia providing mediation support for the conflict in Mindanao, and more recently, with China trying to play a mediation role between the Myanmar government and many of its disgruntled ethnic minorities.[9]

There have also been some notable mediation efforts by other international and extra-regional groups, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference

**MAP 1: STATES OF CONCERN**

Legend:
- Critical
- In Danger

According to the Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy 2010 Failed States Index, at least one state in each of the Asia Pacific's sub-regions ranks alarmingly high on several of the following indicators:

**Social**
1. mounting demographic pressures
2. massive movement of refugees or IDPs
3. vengeance-seeking group grievance & paranoia
4. chronic and sustained human flight

**Economic**
5. uneven economic development along group lines
6. sharp and/or severe economic decline

**Political**
7. criminalization and/or delegitimization of the state
8. progressive deterioration of public services
9. suspension or arbitrary application of the rule of law & widespread violation of human rights
10. security apparatus operating as a "state within a state"
11. rise of factionalized elites
12. intervention of other states or external political actors

**Source:** The Fund for Peace, "The Twelve Indicators," http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=229&Itemid=366; Foreign Policy 2010 Failed States Index http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/06/21/2010_failed_states_index_interactive_map_and_rankings.

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In the past six months, the Thailand-Cambodia dispute over a section of their shared border near Preah Vihear temple (see map) has resulted in military exchanges and casualties. A 1962 ruling by the International Court of Justice granted the temple site itself to Cambodia (over Thai objections), but left a 4.6 square-kilometer area of adjacent territory undemarcated.

The issue remained dormant until 2008, when the temple's inscription as a UNESCO world heritage site prompted a military build-up by both sides, eventually erupting in violence in October 2010. Since then, the dispute has been marked by sporadic clashes and failed ceasefires, and recent fighting in April 2011 even extended to nearby temples.[1]

Multilateral efforts to resolve the dispute include a UN Security Council request to implement a ceasefire and ASEAN efforts, led by its current Chair, Indonesia, to mediate and position observers at the site. To date, however, these efforts have proved futile. While this dispute is unlikely to impact regional security as a whole, it does not bode well for ASEAN and its capacity to attain the goal of creating an ASEAN Security Community.

[1] "Thai-Cambodia ceasefire breaks down," Al Jazeera, 29 April 2011, http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2011/04/201142911654143385.html.

**Source:** International Security Assistance Force: Key Facts and Figures, 15 November 2010, http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/index.php

(OIC), the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD), the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), and the US Institute of Peace (USIP) all of whom have offered their assistance in moving Southeast Asian conflicts away from violence and toward some type of resolution. In addition, the multilateral Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) has conducted a successful capacity-building program focused on demobilization and rule of law.

Two other early warning and preventive diplomacy mechanisms that are currently under-utilized are the ARF's Eminent and Expert Persons (EEP) group and Friends of the Chair (FoC). The CSCAP Study Group on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP), which takes an active interest in developing early warning and response capabilities, has explored options for giving these two bodies a more active early warning and preventive diplomacy (PD) role.

## ROLE FOR TRACK TWO AND CIVIL SOCIETY

ASEAN is almost alone among regional organizations in not devoting time and attention to the development of an effective early warning system. Africa, for example, has developed a range of different mechanisms within the African Union (AU) and within sub-regional organizations aimed at closing the early warning-early response gap. The UN Security Council urged regional organizations to be much more proactive in developing closer links between themselves and the UN on early warning.[10] (See Security Council Statement of 10 January 2010). The ARF, however, evidences no urgency and indeed little apparent need for the development of early warning mechanisms.

Because of this regional unwillingness to establish a formal early warning and response mechanism, non-state actors should think about filling the vacuum by developing systematic early warning analytic capacity and making the results of these available to regional and national decision-makers. This mechanism could use open source information, both qualitative and quantitative, and could also extend its analytical reach to also address longer-term structural and developmental issues. There is a precedent for NGO-run early warning systems in Africa, and this and other experiences could be mined for best practices in conducting this type of work.

CSCAP itself is a suitable institutional home for this type of anlaysis. Its Study Group on the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) has already begun exploring options for bringing the region's early warning and response capability in line with what the UN is requesting.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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[1] For another related discussion, see Nick Grono, "Fragile States and Conflict," International Crisis Group, 27 March 2010, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/speeches/2010/fragile-states-and-conflict.aspx.

*" There is a precedent for NGO-run early warning systems in Africa, and this and other experiences could be mined for best practices in conducting this type of work."*

[2] See World Summit Outcome Document, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/487/60/PDF/N0548760.pdf?OpenElement, p. 30, para 138.

[3] On economic drivers, see, for example, Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War," World Bank Policy Research Paper No. 2355, May 2000.

[4] For a fuller discussion, see Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, http://www.gsdrc.org/go/fragile-states/chapter-1--understanding-fragile-states/definitions-and-typologies-of-fragile-states.

[5] For a full elaboration of each of these indicators, see the pop-up information at Fund for Peace, "The Twelve Indicators," http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=229&Itemid=366.

[6] Vision of Humanity, Global Peace Index 2010, available at http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/#/2010/scor.

[7] Fund for Peace, "The Twelve Indicators."

[8] For a more detailed discussion of this, see Elsina Wainwright, "Conflict Prevention in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific," Center on International Cooperation, April 2010, http://www.cic.nyu.edu/global/docs/wainwright_conflict_asia.pdf, pp. 12-23.

[9] International Crisis Group, "China's Myanmar Strategy: Elections, Ethnic Politics, and Economics," Asia Briefing No. 112, 21 September 2010; Stephanie T. Kleine-Ahlbrandt, "Forget about the Sham Burmese Elections," *Foreign Policy*, 5 November 2010, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/

2010/11/05/forget_about_the_burmese_elections.

[10] See "Security Council to Promote Closer, More Operational Cooperation between United Nations, Regional Organizations in Early Warning, Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding," 13 January 2010, http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sc9840.doc.htm.

**CHEON SEONGWHUN**

# Post-Cheonan Security in Northeast Asia

*The sinking of the Cheonan, uncertainties about North Korean stability and China's growing irritation with US-ROK military exercises do not bode well for Northeast Asian security.*

***Editors' Note:** Since publication of the CRSO 2009-10, there have been significant developments on and around the Korean Peninsula. Looking to present both North and South Korean viewpoints, the Editors invited their respective CSCAP Member Committees to identify an expert to present their views on the current state of inter-Korean relations and the possibilities for bilateral and multilateral (track two) steps towards alleviating tensions and avoiding crises. This chapter, by Cheon Seongwhun, presents the South Korean contribution. The Editors regret that requests to CSCAP DPRK went unanswered.*

**THIS YEAR MARKS THE 60TH** anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. On July 7, 1950, the United Nations Command (UNC) was formed to fight against North Korean forces that had invaded the South on June 25 of that year. Twenty-one nations joined the UNC, sent combat troops and provided medical and material support. The armistice signed on July 27, 1953 has been the backbone of providing security on the Korean Peninsula. Despite numerous inter-Korean efforts and multilateral dialogues throughout their six-decades of division, the danger of military clashes has not been reduced, and in some ways has been aggravated in recent years.

The year 2010 was eventful for another reason. In March the South Korean naval vessel *Cheonan* was sunk by North Korea's submarine attack, killing 46 sailors on board. The incident was the culmination of a series of hostile provocations by North Korea such as a South Korean tourist

killed by the North Korean army in July 2008 at Mt. Kumkang, a third long-range missile test in April 2009, and a second nuclear test in May 2009. In the fall, Kim Jung-eun, the third son of Kim Jong-il, officially emerged as his father's successor. His earlier-than-expected public appearance seems to suggest that North Korea's accelerated power succession is due to Kim Jong-il's deteriorating health. These developments, along with the recent high-level Workers' Party meetings, visits by the senior leadership to China, and failed currency reform policies of 2009, have fueled analysts' speculation concerning North Korea's uncertain domestic circumstances.

Rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the potential for instability in North Korea, and the stalemated situation of the Six-Party Talks, are obviously not favorable signs for Northeast Asian security. It is no longer taboo to discuss North Korean contingencies which will have grave impact on the regional security order. At the same time, regional powers are showing more interest and sensitivity to the Korean issues. China, in particular, has reacted strongly against joint ROK-US military exercises in the wake of the *Cheonan* sinking and directly and indirectly extended support to Pyongyang. For instance, on October 25, Xi Jinping, the vice-chairman of the Chinese Central Military Commission, referred to the Korean War as "great and just war for safeguarding peace and resisting aggression,"[1]—a statement that challenges the consensus of the international community. (Box 1 provides a time line of Korean Peninsula-related events over the

*" …the danger of military clashes has not been reduced, and in some ways has been aggravated in recent years."*

months following the *Cheonan* incident.)

## THE CORVETTE CHEONAN INCIDENT

On March 26, the South Korean navy corvette *Cheonan* sank in the West Sea just south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL) near Baekryong Island (See Map 1).[2] A sudden underwater explosion ripped the battleship in two, killing 46 out of 108 sailors on board. Amid rumors and speculation of North Korean involvement, the South Korean government launched a scientific and thorough investigation. The Joint Investigation Group (JIG) was comprised of 25 South Korean experts and 24 foreign experts from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Sweden, and Canada. On May 20, after a two-month investigation, the JIG released its

report, which concluded that the *Cheonan* sank as the result of an external underwater explosion caused by North Korea's torpedo fired from its submarine (Figure 2 provides a map locating the *Cheonan* incident.).[3]

A spokesman of the National Defense Commission (NDC), North Korea's highest decision-making apparatus, issued a statement criticizing the joint investigation, defining the *Cheonan* incident as "a conspiratorial farce and charade by the group of traitors in a deliberate and brigandish manner to achieve certain political and military aims."[4] Since then, North Korea has launched an intensive external campaign arguing for their innocence and condemning South Korea and the United States.

On May 24, President Lee Myung-bak promised to hold North Korea accountable, and announced the following policy measures:[5]

- Regarding inter-Korean relations, South Korea will no longer permit North Korean ships to pass through any of the shipping lanes in the waters under its control, which had been allowed under the Inter-Korean Agreement on Maritime Transportation. It will suspend the inter-Korean trade and exchanges except providing assistance for infants and children. Matters pertaining to the Kaesong Industrial Complex will be duly considered, taking its unique characteristics into consideration.
- Regarding South Korea's military posture, it will not tolerate any provocative act by North Korea and will maintain a policy of proactive deterrence. If South

Korea's territorial waters, airspace or territory are violated, it will immediately exercise its right of self-defense as a sovereign nation.

- Toward the North Korean authorities, President Lee demanded an immediate apology to South Korea and the international community and called to punish those who were responsible for the attack.

- Despite the tragic incident, President Lee reconfirmed that South Korea's overriding goal was not military confrontation but the attainment of real peace, stability, prosperity, and peaceful unification for all Koreans.

## THE ROK-US ALLIANCE RESPONSE

Throughout these events, the United States has provided strong diplomatic and military support to South Korea. The US mobilized naval vessels and diver personnel to assist in the search and rescue operation of missing sailors and the salvage operation of the wrecked ship; and US experts actively participated in investigating the cause of the incident. Washington also cooperated with Seoul to hold Pyongyang accountable in the international stage by pressing for a UN Security Council statement and strengthening economic sanctions. At the first "2 + 2 meeting" of foreign and defense ministers of the two countries, the two sides "committed to maintain a robust combined defense posture capable of deterring and defeating any and all North Korean threats."[6]
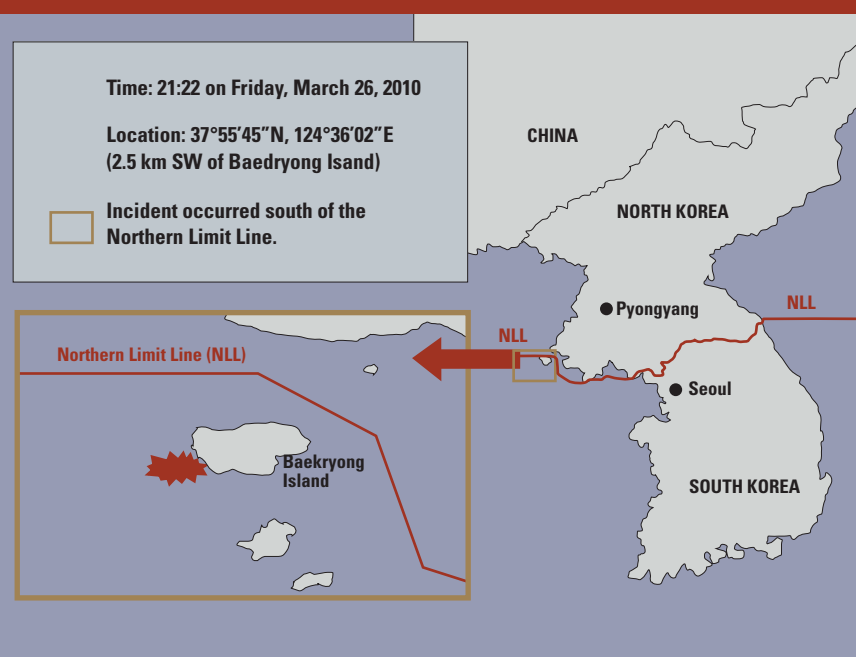
Further strong US support resulted in joint military exercises around the Korean Peninsula. Most notably, *Invincible Spirit*, the largest air and naval combined exercise in the history of the alliance, was held in the East Sea from July 25 to 28. Several more joint exercises took place by the end of 2010, including a joint anti-submarine warfare exercise carried out in the West Sea.

## CHINA'S REACTION

China reacted, in what many viewed as an atypically harsh manner to these joint ROK-US military exercises. Referring to the *Invincible Spirit* exercise originally planned for the West Sea near the eastern coastline of China, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang expressed its "serious concern to the relevant parties," with an intention to "closely follow the development of the matter."[7] Two days later on July 8, he elaborated China's opposition to the joint exercise by saying "We firmly oppose foreign military vessels and planes' conducting activities in the Yellow Sea and China's coastal waters that undermine China's security interests."[8] As reported in the South Korean daily *Hankook Ilbo*, Chinese officials and analysts viewed the ROK-US joint exercise's true purpose as to intimidate China.[9] Indeed, in response, as the *Invincible Spirit* exercise was carried out in the East Sea, China conducted a large-scale exercise in the West Sea, including ground-to-air medium-range missiles.

Secretary of State Clinton's remarks on July 27 at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Hanoi were interpreted by South Korea media as an indication of the new tensions in Northeast Asia triggered by the *Cheonan* incident, then spreading into the South China Sea and moving toward competition between the United States and China for hegemony over the entire East Asian region.[10] A similar observation was made by US commentators, for example, that the *Invincible Spirit* exercise in South Korea and a diplomatic defense of the freedom of the South China Sea highlight an emerging conflict between America's renewed interests in Asia and Chinese



**MAP 1: THE LOCATION OF *CHEONAN* INCIDENT**

Time: 21:22 on Friday, March 26, 2010

Location: 37°55′45″N, 124°36′02″E (2.5 km SW of Baedryong Isand)

Incident occurred south of the Northern Limit Line.

Northern Limit Line (NLL)

CHINA

NORTH KOREA

Pyongyang

NLL

Seoul

SOUTH KOREA

Baekryong Island

Source: *Joint Investigation Report on the Attack against ROK Ship Cheonan*, Seoul: Ministry of National Defense, the Republic of Korea, September 2010, p. 36.

resentment of influence by a distant power in the region.[11]

In response to fierce Chinese opposition, the ROK and the US decided to change their original plan and relocate the *Invincible Spirit* exercise to the East Sea—a move ROK Defense Ministry officials admitted was affected by Chinese objections to a West Sea exercise.[12] This decision was significant. Throughout six decades of the US-ROK bilateral alliance, *Invincible Spirit* was the first joint military exercise to which the Chinese government raised a strong objection in public and the ROK-US alliance retreated. This event is seen as a signal that the rising China looks to exercise its growing national power to influence the bilateral alliance in the name of protecting its national security and regional stability.

Moving the *Invincible Spirit* exercise to the East Sea opened the window for Chinese future claims that US presence on the Korean peninsula's western coast undercuts China's security interests. One day, China may take issue with the new US base currently under construction in Pyongtaek (see Figure 3). US air force bases in Osan and Kunsan are located nearby, which means that it will become a strategic hub combining US air, naval and army assets. The Chinese might perceive Pyongtaek as a threat to "the gateway to China's capital region and a vital passage to the heartland of Beijing and Tianjin."[13]

## THE FUTURE OF MULTILATERAL SECURITY COOPERATION IN NORTHEAST ASIA

The Six-Party Talks have been stalemated since the end of 2008. Despite these multilateral efforts, since the Talks began, North Korea

has quadrupled its nuclear capacities, conducted two nuclear tests, and secretly provided Syria with an upgraded version of the 5MWe reactor. Compared to the mid-1990s, the amount of plutonium that North Korean has acquired has increased from 7-12.5kg in the 1990s to 32.5-58.5kg at the end of 2009. The possible number of nuclear warheads also has increased from approximately 5-10 to 9-17, depending on various criteria and level of technologies.[14]

Critics of the Six-Party Talks point to what they regard as major flaws in the negotiating strategy. The original intention of the Talks was to build a five-party coalition, exert pressure on North Korea, and push it to dismantle its nuclear program. China assumed the role of moderator and host of the talks. With hindsight, the Talks only served as a background for US-North Korea bilateral talks. Major breakthroughs could be made only when Pyongyang and Washington made

compromises. North Korea tried to drive a wedge among the five parties, and sought every opportunity to have direct talks with the US, thereby marginalizing the Six-Party framework. The five parties were supposed to lead North Korea, but in fact, were led by the North. For its part, China scored a higher diplomatic profile, but its convening of the Talks led to little substantial result. Beijing tried to balance international demands for nonproliferation guarantees and an ending of North Korea's nuclear programs against its own aspirations to prop up a feeble North Korean regime. Beijing often appeared to be tilting toward the latter by evading or watering down sanctions imposed by the international community.

If the Six-Party Talks or other multilateral dialogues are to be successful in the future, the above-mentioned mistakes should be avoided. The core objective of the Six-Party Talks is denuclearization of



**MAP 2: US MILITARY BASES NEAR THE WEST SEA**

Note: The West Sea is known elsewhere in the region as the Yellow Sea, and the East Sea is known elsewhere as the Sea of Japan.

North Korea. North Korean provocations are contrary to the spirit and agreements of the talks, and thus should be stopped as well. Unless North Korea changes in some fundamental ways, genuine peace on the Korean peninsula and sustainable stability in Northeast Asia will not come about. The most productive approach to induce positive changes in North Korea will be to inform ordinary North Korean people of what is going on in the world and to provide humanitarian assistance to them while exposing the leadership in Pyongyang. In this respect, the role of South Korea should be highlighted.

South Korea needs to pursue a North Korea policy according to the proposition that the Kim Jong-il regime should be separated from ordinary people in North Korea. To date, in South Korean society, North Korea has been a subject of a dual nature. It is a kind of psychological fixation that North Korea is an entity of enmity as well as of one of cooperation, and thus the nature of the inter-Korean relations has no choice but to be dual, being vigilant as well as giving assistance. This long-held dual perspective has created confusion among the South Korean public and ambiguity within its governments on how to deal with the dictatorial regime in Pyongyang.

To break the long-held myth and to escape this intricate dilemma, a new North Korea policy should distinguish the North Korean regime from ordinary people, based on the clear understanding that North Korea consists of two different entities—the dictatorial regime on the one hand and the victimized people on the other. This policy of bifurcation does not mean a refusal to talk with the current North Korean regime. Instead, it seeks a sensible approach on the part of South Korea by refraining from assisting the authoritarian leadership under the pretext of helping the North Korean people.

By focusing on the welfare of ordinary people, the ROK should continue to provide humanitarian assistance and at the same time, take on the regime by raising issues like human rights, family reunion, prisoners of war, and abductees, as well as WMD proliferation and military provocations. Such a bifurcated policy is expected to fulfill the South Korean public's demand for helping North Korean people and to draw international support for its North Korea policy by meeting the consensus and norms of the international community.

## BOX 1: POST-CHEONAN INCIDENT EVENTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Mar 26 | ROK Cheonan explosion, vessel sinks, 46 dead |
| May 3-7 | Kim Jong-il visits northeast China |
| May 15 | South Korean navy fires warning shots at North Korean ships |
| May 20 | Joint Investigation Team releases report |
| July 9 | UN Security Council statement on the Cheonan incident |
| July 15 | DPRK and ROK military officials meet in Panmunjom |
| July 21 | First "Two plus Two" meeting of the ROK and US |
| July 23 | Secretary of State Clinton's statement to ARF meeting in Hanoi |
| July 24 | ARF statement concerning the Cheonan incident |
| July 25-28 | Invincible Spirit US-ROK exercise held in the East Sea/Sea of Japan |
| July-August | Serious flooding in North Korea |
| Aug 16-26 | ROK – US Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise |
| Aug 26-30 | Kim Jong-il visits China |
| Aug 31 | South Korea Red Cross sends aid for North Korean flood victims |
| Aug 31-Sep 4 | Chinese PLAN exercise in West/Yellow Sea |
| Sep 27-Oct 1 | ROK- US anti-submarine joint exercise in West/Yellow Sea |
| Oct 13-14 | First PSI exercise joined by ROK in sea near Busan |
| Oct 29 | ROK – DPRK exchange shots across DMZ – first time since 2006 |
| Oct 30-31 | South Korean – North Korean family visits |
| Nov 3 | ROK navy fires warning shots at North Korean vessel |

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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[1] *Daily NK*, http://dailynk.com/english, 26 October 26 2010.

[2] The East and West Seas around the Korean peninsula are also called the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea, respectively.

[3] The Joint Civilian-Military Investigation Group, *Investigation Result on the Sinking of ROKS "Cheonan,"* Seoul, The Ministry of National Defense, 20 May 2010.

[4] "Spokesman for the DPRK National Defense Commission issues statement," *Korean Central News Agency*, 24 May 2010, http://www.globalsecurity.org.

[5] *South Korean President Lee's National Address*, 24 May 2010, http://www.cfr.org/publication/22199.

[6] *Joint Statement of ROK-U.S. Foreign and Defense Ministers' Meeting on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Korean War*, Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State, 21 July 2012, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/07/144974.htm.

[7] "China seriously concerned about US-ROK naval drill: spokesman," *Xinhua News Agency*, 6 July 2010.

[8] *Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Qin Gang's Regular Press Conference on July 8, 2010*, Beijing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 9 July 2010.

[9] *Hankook Ilbo*, 21 July 2010 (in Korean).

[10] *Maeil Business Newspaper*, 3 August 2010 (in Korean).

[11] Philip Bowring, "Washington shores up its strategic assets in Asia," *New York Times*, 2 August 2010.

[12] "Compromise on drill by U.S., Korea," *JoongAng Daily*, 16 July 2010.

[13] Major General Luo Yuan, deputy secretary general with the PLA Academy of Military Sciences, explained the several reasons for Chinese opposition in an online discussion with citizens on People's Daily Online. "Why China opposes US-South Korean military exercises in the Yellow Sea," *People's Daily Online*, 16 July 2010.

[14] Cheon Seognwhun, *Threat Assessment of North Korea's WMD Capabilities and the ROK Response*, Seoul, Korea Research Institute for Strategy, December 2009, pp. 32-72 (in Korean).

# UPDATE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

**INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS:**
More than one year after the sinking of the *Cheonan,* inter-Korean relations remain strained, with no thaw looming on the horizon. North Korea continues to deny involvement in the *Cheonan*'s sinking, which has stymied the prospect of mediated talks between the two sides. The US and South Korea conducted high-profile naval exercises in the Yellow Sea, displaying their sea power with the intent of deterring further North Korean antagonism. However, bellicose North Korean rhetoric and actions have continued, most notably when the North fired 170 shells at the South's Yeonpyeong Island on November 23, 2010, killing two civilians and injuring sixteen.

While North Korea's motivations remain hard to read, analysts speculate that Pyongyang's aggressive actions over the past year may be related to Kim Jong-Il's succession strategy, with leadership to be passed to his son, Kim Jong-Un. North Korea experienced devastating floods throughout the summer of 2010. President Lee-Myung-bak, having halted all aid to the North immediately following the *Cheonan* incident, subsequently allowed shipments to resume, then suspended them following the Yeonpyeong shelling, and has recently restarted them, but on a very limited basis.[1]

Developments in North Korea's nuclear program have caused concern. Siegfried Hecker, former director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, visited the Yongbyon uranium-enrichment facility in November 2010, finding that progress was further advanced than originally anticipated.[2]

**INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS:**
The US increased the level of its military cooperation with the South, while China refused to condemn North Korea directly, being keen to avoid instability on the Korean peninsula. Thus, while the UN Security Council issued a statement on July 9, 2010 condemning the sinking of the *Cheonan* and calling for "appropriate and peaceful measures to be taken against those responsible for the incident," it stopped short of identifying North Korea as the responsible party.[3] China has, however, been proactive in attempting to re-start the dormant Six-Party Talks (6PT) on North Korea's nuclear program. Following the Yeonpyeong incident, Beijing proposed an emergency session of the talks, and Pyongyang announced its willingness to participate. However, South Korea and the US remain unwilling to meet unless the North meets preconditions, including taking responsibility for sinking the *Cheonan.*

**LOOKING AHEAD:**
A recent visit by former US President Jimmy Carter to Pyongyang prompted North Korea to reiterate its offer of re-starting the 6PT, but without the preconditions demanded by South Korea and the US. Given the rigidity on both sides, these overtures and China's efforts are unlikely to kick-start a new round of negotiations. South Korean public opinion and policy towards the North has shifted discernibly in a more hard-line direction over the course of the past year, leaving Seoul unwilling to make deal with Pyongyang as it has in the past. Given the chilly state of inter-Korean relations, and given the unresolved grievances that prevented talks from restarting in 2010, the prognosis for positive developments on the Korean peninsula seem remote in 2011.

[1] Donald Kirk, "South Korea OKs Humanitarian Aid Trip to North Korea," *Christian Science Monitor*, 13 August 2010, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2010/0813/South-Korea-OKs-humanitarian-aid-trip-to-North-Korea; "Seoul Allows Humanitarian Aid to N. Korea to Resume," *Chosun Ilbo*, 1 April 2011, http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/04/01/2011040101053.html.

[2] Siegfried S. Hecker, "A Return Trip to North Korea's Yongbyon Nuclear Complex," Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/23035/HeckerYongbyon.pdf.

[3] United Nations Security Council, "Security Council Condemns Attack on Republic of Korea Naval Ship 'Cheonan,' 9 July 2010, http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sc9975.doc.htm.

*Update provided by the CRSO Editorial Staff.*

**CAROLINA G. HERNANDEZ AND RALPH A. COSSA**

# CSCAP and the Continuing Search for Track Two Identity



*Despite CSCAP's contributions to regional security-related dialogue, the organization needs to ask itself hard questions about its Track Two 'autonomy' and its relationship with Track One counterparts.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) has been written about by numerous scholars and security analysts around the world.[1] It was formally established at a meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 8 June 1993 following a series of meetings among strategic studies institutes in ten countries in the Asia Pacific region. As a Track Two (non-governmental) mechanism, CSCAP joins the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN ISIS), Southeast Asia's pre-eminent Track Two grouping, in seeking to generate research-based policy options on relevant security issues for regional governments to consider in their policy decision making.[2]

CSCAP was intended to be a Track Two diplomatic mechanism that would feed its studies and findings into the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the region's Track One official body. While CSCAP predates the ARF, its efforts are aimed at informing and driving the ARF's agenda. CSCAP was intended to be inclusive, engaging "participants [from the] countries and territories in the Asia Pacific…to address security issues and challenges facing the region." (CSCAP Charter, 2.a, 2.b) Informal discussions in CSCAP were intended to be fed into the Track One process of the ARF. In this regard, it should be recalled that the ARF was an initiative that took off only when ASEAN proposed it as a political security dialogue mechanism for the Asia Pacific region once the Cold War overlay disappeared.

However, since its establishment CSCAP has had limited success in

establishing its identity as an independent Track Two actor, given the close association that many of its member institutes have to their respective governments.[3]

## CSCAP'S TWIN CHALLENGES AS A TRACK TWO ACTOR

Twin challenges have confronted CSCAP almost since its establishment: its identity as a Track Two actor, and the lack of consensus among members of its Steering Committee (SC) on whether and to what extent CSCAP should aspire to partner with the official ARF track.

It is ironic, and a reflection of the regional distribution of power, that the shared aspiration of CSCAP's founders to organize an autonomous Track Two body that is "inclusive of states and territories" in the Asia Pacific region has not been fully realized. Just as ASEAN ISIS members lack autonomy from some of the states in Southeast Asia, the same could be said of CSCAP.[4] One principal reason for this reality is the dominance of government or government-related institutions within the membership of various CSCAP member committees, especially in Southeast Asia, but also elsewhere. In many instances, member committees are drawn largely from the retired foreign ministry and defense bureaucracies, military officers and even party 'apparatchiks'. A bane of ASEAN ISIS since its enlargement at the end of the Cold War, and the principal cause of its failure to generate and submit to ASEAN various memoranda on critical issues to ASEAN on a regular basis, this government dominance among member committees afflicts CSCAP as well.

Related to this issue is the matter of government funding behind CSCAP

> " Twin challenges have confronted CSCAP almost since its establishment: its identity as a Track Two actor, and the lack of consensus among members …"

member committees and their activities. An inquiry into the sources of funding support for many member committees is likely to reveal that many of these member committees are financially dependent on their respective governments. For instance, about half of the Philippine member committee's annual contribution to the CSCAP central fund during the administration of former President Fidel V. Ramos came from the CSCAP Philippines Co-Chair, the National Security Council (NSC) whose head was also the former president's National Security Adviser. However, the costs of the participation of CSCAP Philippines in the Steering Committee Meetings (SCMs), the various CSCAP Working Groups (WGs) of earlier times, and the current Study Groups (SGs) were borne by the individual

participants. And since the end of the Ramos administration in 1998, the Institute for Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS) as the Secretariat of CSCAP Philippines has covered the bulk of its annual contribution to the CSCAP central fund because this member committee's annual membership fees fall far short of its annual contribution to the CSCAP central fund.

Several other member committees rely on governments to fund their annual contribution to the CSCAP central fund and other activities. Consequently, not only is the lack of autonomy shaped by the dominance of government institutions in the membership of the CSCAP member committees of these countries, but it may also be influenced by their dependence upon official funding sources.

Attitudinal behavior by a number of member committees in CSCAP Steering Committee meetings (SCM) also indicates a certain kind of confusion—even among the leadership of these bodies—about their true identity. During SCMs, for example, some member committees have argued for the postponement of voting on important and even not-so-important issues with the rationale that they "need to consult with higher authorities," thus revealing these speakers' view of the character and role of their member committees. CSCAP has also struggled to remove diplomatic protocol in its deliberations, further contributing to the challenge for CSCAP to fully establish its identity as an independent Track Two actor. In fact, many in the CSCAP SCM would refer to member committees as 'national' committees, a term that the CSCAP founders laboriously dispelled

from the founding documents (e.g., the CSCAP Charter and By-Laws) in order to firmly establish CSCAP's Track Two identity.

A second challenge is the variety of views—regardless of CSCAP's original intent—within CSCAP on whether and to what extent CSCAP should aspire to partner with the ARF. In its early years, China's objection within the ARF against such a relationship stemmed from the absence in CSCAP of a Chinese member committee in particular, and in general because participants in the ARF did not coincide with the CSCAP Steering Committee membership.[5] But even after this perceived defect had been corrected with the inclusion of a Chinese member committee in CSCAP, the relationship remained under-institutionalized. Part of the problem lies in the difficult and extremely challenging process of generating a CSCAP memorandum bearing the CSCAP seal, which allows the document to be officially transmitted to the ARF as a CSCAP document. This problem is linked to the problem of CSCAP's Track Two credentials. Many member committees remain driven by their own government's position on an issue and their country's national interests.

The issue of an institutionalized relationship with the ARF therefore goes beyond the use and acceptance by the ARF of the research-based policy recommendations of the CSCAP Working Groups (WG) and Study Groups (SG). For instance, the ARF has taken on issues addressed by a number of the WGs and SGs, including on Preventive Diplomacy, Confidence-Building Measures, Maritime Security, and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Yet, other proposals for WGs and SGs have been blocked by the national interests of member committees. In some instances, CSCAP has not even been able to get to 'first base,' to borrow baseball terminology, in addressing critical and urgent security issues through the WGs and SGs. Even assuming that CSCAP is successful in establishing a WG or SG on a politically sensitive topic, the process of developing a memorandum as a CSCAP document poses another difficult hurdle, followed by yet another at the ARF level where national interests are a dominant presence.

In 1999 when the current ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Surin Pitsuwan was Thailand's Foreign Minister and his country became Chair of the ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC), he sought to establish an institutional relationship between CSCAP and the ARF. The prevailing sentiment at the time within the CSCAP Steering Committee (and in the ARF) was to maintain the CSCAP-ARF interaction, but not to move towards an

## BOX 1: CSCAP STUDY GROUPS

CSCAP's study groups are its primary mechanism for generating policy-oriented insights and recommendations. They are meant to serve as region-wide multilateral fora for consensus-building and problem solving and to address specific issues and problems that are too sensitive for official dialogue. CSCAP currently has eight active study groups and one experts group. For more information, see www.cscap.org.

**Cybersecurity as a Central Strategy for Securing the Cyber Environment**

Co-Chairs: CSCAP Australia, CSCAP India, CSCAP Malaysia and CSCAP Singapore.

**Water Resources Security in Mainland Southeast Asia**

Co-Chairs: CSCAP Cambodia, CSCAP Japan, CSCAP Thailand and CSCAP Vietnam.

**Responsibility to Protect (RtoP)**

Co-Chairs: CSCAP Australia, CSCAP Canada, CSCAP Indonesia and CSCAP Philippines.

**Naval Enhancement**

Co-Chairs: CSCAP China, CSCAP India and CSCAP Japan.

**Safety and Security of Offshore Oil and Gas Installations**

Co-Chairs: Aus CSCAP, CSCAP Malaysia and CSCAP Singapore.

Co-Chairs: Aus CSCAP, CSCAP New Zealand, CSCAP Philippines and CSCAP Thailand.

**Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction**

Co-Chairs: US CSCAP and CSCAP Vietnam.

* **Export Controls Experts Group** (a sub-group of the Study Group on WMD)

Chair: US CSCAP

**Multilateral Security Governance in Northeast Asia/North Pacific**

Co-Chairs: CSCAP Japan, CSCAP Korea and CSCAP China

institutionalization of the relationship. Indeed, as Ball noted, the meeting of the ARF -ISG on CBMs and PD held in Bangkok in March 1999 that considered the matter rejected a proposal for a formal relationship but kept the door open "to the promotion of informal links."[6]

Subsequent discussions about this issue between the ARF Chair (Thai Foreign Minister Surin) and CSCAP (under the CSCAP Philippines and CSCAP Australia co-chairs) led to some kind of *modus vivendi* in which both sides agreed to explore ways for CSCAP policy inputs to be "more effectively fed into the ARF processes."[7]

However, the most that Dr. Surin could report to the seventh ARF meeting in Bangkok in July 2000 was "the implementation of the enhanced role of the ARF Chair as an excellent example of progress in the interaction between the ARF and CSCAP."[8]

Consequently, there are indications that some CSCAP member committees are becoming increasingly frustrated by this uncertain state of affairs. They struggle with trying to make CSCAP function as a genuine Track Two institution and are unhappy about the continuing crisis of identity that inhibits achievement of this goal. Some have demonstrated their frustration by not attending CSCAP SCMs; others have thought aloud of abandoning CSCAP altogether. These are indications of the need for urgent reform within CSCAP on many fronts.

## CSCAP'S EXPERIENCES WITH THE ARF

Despite positive evidence of 'creeping' institutionalization, including the almost institutionalized opening of the ARF-ISGs meetings to briefings by the CSCAP Co-Chairs, there remains a troubling tendency among the ARF

" *Many member committees remain driven by their own government's position on issues and their country's national interests.* "

officials attending these meetings to treat CSCAP 'guests' unevenly. Both authors have personally witnessed the lack of consideration among some of these officials.

Thus, for example, at the meeting in Phuket, Thailand in September 2008, while waiting for their slot late in the afternoon before the conclusion of the meeting and in the presence of both Mohamad Jawhar Hassan (for CSCAP) and Hernandez (for ASEAN ISIS), one ARF official raised the issue of whether the presence of Track Two guests should be allowed during official discussions. In another instance in March 2010, the CSCAP Co-Chair arrived in Vietnam to attend the ARF-ISG on CBMs and PD, only to

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**BOX 2: : CSCAP MEMORANDA TO THE ARF**

1. Asia-Pacific Confidence Building and Security Measures (June 1995)

2. The Concepts of Comprehensive Security and Cooperative Security (December 1995)

3. Guidelines for Maritime Security Cooperation (December 1997)

4. Cooperation for Law and Order at Sea (February 2001)

5. The Practice of the Law of the Sea in the Asia Pacific (December 2002)

6. The Relationship between Terrorism and Transnational Crime (July 2003)

7. The Security of the Asia-Pacific Region (April 2004)

8. The Weakest Link? Seaborne Trade and the Maritime Regime in the Asia Pacific (April 2004)

9. Trafficking of Firearms in the Asia-Pacific Region (May 2004)

10. Enhancing Efforts to Address the Factors Driving International Terrorism (December 2005)

11. Human Trafficking (June 2007)

12. Maritime Knowledge and Awareness: Basic Foundations of Maritime Security (December 2007)

13. Guidelines for Maritime Cooperation in Enclosed and Semi-Enclosed Seas and Similar Areas of the Asia Pacific (June 2008), and Guidelines for Managing Trade of Strategic Goods (March 2009)

**Source:** Desmond Ball, "CSCAP's Foundation and Achievements," in Ball and Kwa Chong Guan, eds., *Assessing Track 2 Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region*, Canberra: Strategic & Defence Studies Centre and Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2010, p. 17, Figure 2.3.

discover that the meeting had finished the afternoon before she arrived. However, experience varies. On several occasions, CSCAP representatives have been permitted to sit in on entire ARF ISG Meetings, and their opinions have been actively solicited and warmly praised. The level of participation of the CSCAP representatives appears to hinge on the preference of the particular ARF host or hosts. Some standardization (preferably on the side of greater involvement) would be welcomed.

CSCAP has also been encouraged to hold SGs back-to-back with ISG and ISM meetings, with ARF members invited to sit in at the CSCAP meeting as a means of preparation for the ARF session. These sessions have been praised by ARF members and the findings of these meetings are usually briefed at the ARF meeting that follows.

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CSCAP-ARF RELATIONS

The above observations and concerns highlight the ways in which CSCAP could and should become a more effective Track Two mechanism for security cooperation in the Asia Pacific. They do not detract from the positive signs of institutionalization of the CSCAP-ARF relationship. Due to the persistent efforts of leading CSCAP members, notably from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the United States, CSCAP has been able to produce a number of memoranda on the work of the ARF as well as on critical security issues shared by many ARF participants. (For a full list, see Box 2)

## ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF IDENTITY AND RELATIONS WITH THE ARF

In order for it to be able to provide timely, objective and relevant policy inputs to the ARF, there is an imperative for CSCAP to firmly establish its Track Two identity and to clarify its relationship with the ARF. Among the measures that all CSCAP

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## BOX 3: FOUR PROPOSALS FOR CSCAP

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In 2010 Barry Desker, a former CSCAP Co-Chair, suggested four concrete steps CSCAP could take to enhance its regional role and relevance. The following points are excerpted from his chapter, "CSCAP: Shaping the Future of the ASEAN Regional Forum," in the recent Ball and Kwa edited volume, *Assessing Track 2 Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region*.[1]

1) Maximize the impact of networking with the ARF. Specifically, CSCAP should consider proposing alternative preventive diplomacy mechanisms (PD) in general and early warning (EW) mechanisms in particular. In 2007, the CSCAP Study Group on Preventive Diplomacy explored these issues in depth, and a current study group is looking at how PD and EW might be activated within the context of the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP). The participation in CSCAP by many of the ARF's Eminent and Expert Persons (EEPs) could provide a logical starting point for building stronger PD and EW capacity.

2) Engage a wider range of stakeholders. This includes not only intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations, but also regionally-based and international NGOs and civil society organizations (so-called Track Three actors) who could contribute a much-needed on-the-ground perspective to specific regional security concerns. Bringing these voices into the discussion must be done with a certain degree of awareness on both sides; for their part, some Track Three actors "may need to adopt a less adversarial relationship to security regionalism."[2] In turn, track two actors should ensure that civil society voices are taken seriously and treated with an appropriate level of respect.

3) Give greater attention to intra-state conflicts. These types of conflicts are a major concern for many of the region's states, particularly in Southeast Asia. In fact, a significant number of ad hoc mediation processes already exist, including some by Asian mediators. But as one past CRSO author has noted, despite the region's clear need for third party mediation, this capacity is weakly institutionalized.[3] CSCAP could explore ways of making these mechanisms more robust. One possibility is to activate the EEP to play an early warning and prevention role.

4) Introduce more non-traditional security (NTS) issues into the agenda. To its credit, CSCAP has looked at critical NTS issues through its study groups on human trafficking, transnational crime and climate change. In some cases, however, these efforts have fallen victim to politicization, thus precluding the serious discussion and effective response that the issues warrant. As the ARF's NTS agenda will continue to expand, CSCAP, if it is to play a useful role, should look to ensure that its research and analysis of NTS issues are not encumbered by political polarization.

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[1] Barry Desker's full chapter can be found in Desmond Ball and Kwa Chong Guan, eds., *Assessing Track 2 Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region: A CSCAP Reader*, Canberra: Australian National University, and Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2010. The CRSO Editors added additional elaboration and points of discussion.
[2] Brian L. Job, "Track 2 Diplomacy: Ideational Contribution to the Evolving Asian Security Order," in Ball and Kwa, eds., pp. 150.
[3] See Michael Vatikiotis, "Southeast Asia's Internal Conflicts: Regional Mediation Tools," *CSCAP Regional Security Outlook 2009-10*, pp. 16-21.

member committees must consider seriously are:

1) Building a more inclusive base of membership within the broader community of security analysts and specialists in each country where a CSCAP member committee exists,
2) Finding multilateral funding partners for their activities, including for the annual membership fee in CSCAP,
3) Developing Track Two attitudinal behavior,
4) Ensuring pro-active chairs and/or co-chairs at the level of the member committees and at the CSCAP SC level, and
5) Forging a memorandum of understanding with the ARF on the specific terms of engagement between CSCAP and the ARF.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

The expressed frustrations of the authors and some more proactive members notwithstanding, CSCAP advocates can argue convincingly that their efforts, on key occasions, have made a difference. For example, it was CSCAP that provided the ARF with a Working Definition and Statement of Principles for Preventive Diplomacy. That in turn allowed the ARF to reach a consensus on this issue and begin to make some progress moving toward their stated PD mission. Likewise, the new Nonproliferation and Disarmament ISM has adopted for consideration the CSCAP memorandum on Export Control Best Practices and has encouraged CSCAP to hold sessions of its Countering the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Study Group back-to-back with the Nonproliferation and Disarmament (NPD) sessions. There are also signs of

> " …if CSCAP is to reach its full potential…member committees need to more firmly understand and adopt and endorse the true spirit of track two."

growing comfort among some of the CSCAP committees most closely aligned to their respective foreign ministries to push the envelope in considering new approaches to old and new problems.

There is also a positive flip side to close association with respective governments. When a CSCAP SG or Memorandum reaches consensus on an issue, the recommendations emanating from CSCAP are more likely to be found acceptable to governments than those coming from purely academic meetings. The ability of CSACP SGs to provide summaries of their findings and recommendations, not as consensus documents but as food for thought, has also helped to overcome burdensome bureaucratic processes in order to stimulate thinking.

We believe CSCAP has made a difference and has been a net positive in supporting security-related dialogue in the Asia Pacific region. But if CSCAP is to reach its full potential, we also believe that member committees need to more firmly understand and

adopt and endorse the true spirit of Track Two.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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[1] Some of these works were put together in a volume published in 2010: Desmond Ball and Kwa Chong Guan, editors, *Assessing Track 2 Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region: A CSCAP Reader* (Singapore: Booksmith for the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies of Nanyang Technological University and the Strategic & Defence Studies Centre of The Australian National University, 2010).

[2] Track Two meetings involve scholars and security specialists as well as former and current government officials, with the latter participating in their private capacity.

[3] See Herman Joseph S. Kraft, "The Autonomy Dilemma of Track 2 Diplomacy in Southeast Asia", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 31, no. 3, September 2000, pp. 343-356. An updated version with a post-script titled "The Autonomy Dilemma in Track 2 Diplomacy in Southeast Asia (2000), is found in Ball and Kwa, editors, *Addressing Track 2 Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region: A CSCAP Reader*, pp. 162-176.

[4] The ASEAN ISIS is a network of think tanks in each of the ASEAN states.

[5] Desmond Ball, "CSCAP and the ARF", in Ball and Kwa, editors, *Assessing Track 2 Diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific Region: A CSCAP Reader*, p.64.

[6] Ibid., p. 66.

[7] Ibid., p. 67.

[8] From the Chairman's Statement as cited in *ibid.*, p.65.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **AICHR** | ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights |
| **ARF** | ASEAN Regional Forum |
| **ASC** | ASEAN Standing Committee |
| **ASEAN** | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| **ASEAN ISIS** | ASEAN Institute of Strategic and International Studies |
| **AU** | African Union |
| **CBM** | Confidence Building Measure |
| **CTBT** | Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty |
| **DMZ** | Demilitarized Zone |
| **EEP** | Eminent and Expert Person |
| **EWR** | Early Warning and Response |
| **FMCT** | Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty |
| **IAEA** | International Atomic Energy Agency |
| **ICG** | International Crisis Group |
| **IDP** | Internally Displaced Person |
| **ISAF** | International Security Assistance Force (to Afghanistan) |
| **ISG** | (ARF) Inter-Sessional Support Group |
| **MRC** | Mekong River Commission |
| **NLL** | Northern Limit Line |
| **NPR** | (US) Nuclear Posture Review |
| **NPT** | Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty |
| **NSG** | Nuclear Suppliers Group |
| **NTS** | Non-Traditional Security |
| **NWFZ** | Nuclear Weapon Free Zone |
| **NWS** | Nuclear Weapons State |
| **PD** | Preventive Diplomacy |
| **PLAN** | (Chinese) People's Liberation Army Navy |
| **RevCon** | Review Conference of the NPT |
| **SPDC** | (Myanmar) State Peace and Development Council |
| **START** | Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty |
| **TCG** | Tripartite Core Group |
| **UNAMA** | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan |
| **UNFAO** | United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization |
| **UNHCR** | United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees |
| **UNODC** | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |