EAST ASIA IMPERILLED

Transnational Challenges to Security

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Transnational Challenges to Security

Security issues have traditionally been defined in military terms, yet the post-Cold War security landscape contains numerous non-military challenges to security. In this pathbreaking analysis, Alan Dupont argues that an emerging new class of non-military threats has the potential to destabilise East Asia and reverse decades of hard-won economic and social development. He shows that these transnational shifts must be grasped and dealt with by governments and non-government organizations both regionally, and internationally, if conflict is to be avoided. Transnational threats stem from overpopulation, deforestation and pollution, global warming, unregulated population movements, transnational crime, virulent new strains of infectious diseases and a host of other issues not previously associated with international security. Collectively they represent a new agenda that stretches our understanding of security and pose novel challenges for foreign and defence policy. This highly informative, compelling and authoritative book is essential reading for East Asia specialists and makes a significant and timely contribution to international security debates.

Alan Dupont is a former army officer, intelligence analyst, journalist and diplomat who has worked on East Asian security issues for over 25 years and is now a prominent academic at the Australian National University. He has served in the Australian embassies in Seoul (1984–87) and Jakarta (1991–94), and has written over fifty articles and book chapters on defence and international security, including an Adelphi Paper for the International Institute for Strategic Studies on the environment and security in Pacific Asia. He is also a well-known commentator on political and strategic developments in East Asia.

For the three women in my life – Rosemary, Clair and Pia.

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Acknowledgments

In the early 1990s, when I first began seriously to contemplate the likely sources of insecurity in the post-Cold War world, the transnational issues which are the subject of this book were generally regarded by the strategic and foreign policy community to be of marginal significance for international security. Traditionalists argued that the environment and other non-military security issues had no real place in the study of war and conflict. Defence planners and senior military officers were concerned that too broad an interpretation of security could distract them from their core business, thereby running the risk of 'dulling the sword', as my colleague Lorraine Elliott has written.

Coming as I did from a traditional security background as a former military officer, intelligence analyst, diplomat and strategist, these criticisms and anxieties initially struck a sympathetic chord in me. However, as a result of the experiences and insights gained while working on East Asian security issues during the 1980s and 1990s, I gradually came to the view that the salience of transnational forces had been seriously underestimated by scholars and policy-makers. There were clearly important, if still poorly perceived, connections between East Asia's deteriorating physical environment and the capacity to govern, feed and provide for the region's burgeoning populations. Growing numbers of people were on the move outside the control of governments, and the activities of organised crime were increasingly traversing the grey area between law and order and security. More fundamentally, the realist security framework seemed in need of substantial revision if not major renovation. Its familiar and once reassuring verities no longer seemed capable of providing a reliable guide for making sense of a world in transition or illuminating the dynamics of a rapidly evolving international security environment. In short, there was a worrying disconnection between

theory and the practice. Not all will be convinced by the arguments in this book but there will, I hope, be some enlightenment even for the most committed and unrepentant of traditionalists.

My first attempt to come to grips with the theoretical concepts explored in the Introduction and Chapter 1 of this book appeared as 'New Dimensions of Security', in Denny Roy (ed.), *The New Security Agenda in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Macmillan Press, Hampshire, 1997). An article in *Pacifica Review* entitled 'Unregulated Population Flows in East Asia: A New Security Dilemma?' contains some initial thoughts on the subject of unregulated population movements. Chapter 10, which deals with drug-trafficking, was first published in *Asian Survey* as 'Transnational Crime, Drugs and Security in East Asia' and is used here with the permission of the regents of the University of California, Berkeley. Peter Gleick very kindly consented to the use of several of his excellent tables on water availability. I am particularly indebted to the International Institute for Strategic Studies and Oxford University Press for permission to draw on the material from my Adelphi Paper 'The Environment and Security in Pacific Asia'. In virtually all cases, the material in these earlier publications has been substantially rewritten, revised and updated for this book.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues Des Ball and Denny Roy for their early words of encouragement in pursuing this project, Pauline Kerr for her valuable comments and advice on the conceptual chapters, the late Gerry Segal for his critique of the section dealing with environmental security, and two anonymous reviewers. This book would not have been possible without the industry of my research assistant, Jena Hamilton, and her unique ability to unearth useful references from the most unlikely sources. Having suffered through five years of distracted husband syndrome, I owe a special debt of gratitude to my wife Rosemary for her understanding and forbearance.

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ATS	amphetamine-type stimulant
BBM	Bugis, Buton and Makassarese
BCP	Burma Communist Party
bpd	barrels per day
BTK	Born To Kill (Vietnam)
CFCs	chlorofluorocarbons
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency (USA)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCAP	Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation (USA)
G7	Group of Seven
GDP	gross domestic product
GM	genetically modified
GMO	genetically modified organism
GNP	Grand National Party (South Korea)
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDU	injecting drug-user
IEA	International Energy Agency
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

IUU	illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)
KEDO	Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation
LDP	Liberal-Democratic Party (Japan)
LWR	light-water reactor
MIED	Maritime Information Exchange Directory
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
NGO	non-government organisation
NPA	New People's Army (Philippines)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OPM	Free Papua Movement
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
PLA	People's Liberation Army (China)
PUB	Public Utilities Board (Singapore)
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council (Burma)
TCO	transnational criminal organisation
TFR	total fertility rates
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPMs	unregulated population movements
USCR	US Committee for Refugees
UWSA	United Wa State Army (Burma)
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Introduction

A familiar brown haze settles over the verdant jungles of Kalimantan, dissipating the last moisture-laden clouds of the departing rainy season. Fuelled by countless fires lit by human hands, the haze intensifies as the dry season takes hold, blanketing the island and spreading into nearby Malaysia and Singapore. Factories are forced to close, tourism plummets and affected locals pack into overwhelmed hospital casualty wards complaining of respiratory problems caused by the acrid smoke. The muted response of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) belies the region's frustration and anger that Jakarta has failed to prevent the wanton acts of environmental vandalism that are destroying the remnants of Indonesia's once pristine forests and levying significant human and economic costs on neighbouring states.

Two thousand four hundred kilometres to the northwest, the skies are clear as a caravan of heavily laden mules carefully picks their way down a boulder-strewn gorge abutting Burma's border with Thailand. A heavily armed ethnic Wa tribesman smiles in anticipation as he calculates his profit from the heroin destined for the affluent and captive markets of North America, Europe and East Asia. This brief moment of satisfaction is his last. A bullet from a Thai border patrol policeman eviscerates his brain and a salvo of mortar rounds brackets the panicked mules, decimating their guards. As the Wa draw their last breath, security officials meeting in Seoul and Beijing peer out at the receding snows of an unusually warm Northeast Asian winter and dust off their contingency plans for North Korea. There is little discussion of North Korea's military and ballistic missile capabilities. These are relatively known quantities. Of more immediate concern to the South Korean and Chinese officials is how they should handle the anticipated inflow of millions of refugees from a famine-stricken North Korea.

In a windowless, electronically screened room, Singapore's political leaders ponder the implications of a secret intelligence assessment on the island state's strategic vulnerabilities. At the top of the list is water. Reliant on Malaysia for 50 per cent of its fresh water and mindful of past threats by Kuala Lumpur to turn off the tap, Singapore's leaders are being forced to consider alternative sources of fresh water. There are, however, few viable options and all are expensive. Meanwhile, in distant, cosmopolitan Geneva, an impeccably attired United Nations official briefs a jostling crowd of unruly reporters. He warns that Asia is about to overtake sub-Saharan Africa as the region most affected by AIDS and that some Southeast Asian countries are already in the throes of an explosive epidemic. Earlier, the Security Council had convened for its first ever session on AIDS at the behest of US Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who argued that the disease has metamorphosed from a public health issue to one of international security.

Transnational Threats

Although partly imagined, these scenarios suggest that the 'drivers' of East Asia's future security environment will be substantially different from those of the past.[1] A new class of threats is emerging which is stretching the boundaries of conventional thinking about security. Some of these threats are economic; others relate to the earth's physical environment; many are contemporary manifestations of age-old afflictions.[2] They stem from demographic pressures, resource depletion, global warming, unregulated population movements (UPMs), transnational crime, virulent new strains of infectious diseases and a host of other issues not previously associated with international security. Complex, interconnected and multidimensional, these non-military, transnational issues are moving from the periphery to the centre of the security concerns of both states and people. Collectively they represent a new security agenda that will increasingly demand the attention of policy-makers everywhere.[3]

This new agenda has important implications for international relations theory as well as for the conduct of foreign and defence policy. Many of the emerging transnational causes of conflict are the result of forces outside the traditional framework of strategic analysis that have little to do with the exercise of coercive power by competing nation-states but everything to do with the stability of states and human survival. Transnational phenomena are likely to become more prominent causes of conflict and insecurity, particularly in the developing world, as pressure on natural resources increases, people become more mobile, and non-state actors compete with states for money, influence and power. Environmental degradation intensifies the problems of governance and development in

poorer countries and precipitates trans-border and internal migration. The very existence of some states may be threatened by sea-level rise resulting from human-induced climate change. Access to food, energy and water is dependent on preserving and sustaining the earth's natural resource base. Drug-trafficking distorts economic development and promotes the spread of AIDS, a disease that is destroying the social fabric of many communities and causing millions of preventible deaths.

These are all problems that fall squarely within the realm of international security, yet paradoxically they have been largely excluded from the mainstream academic discourse on security. As a result, policy-makers are struggling to locate transnational threats conceptually and to comprehend their causes and strategic significance. The main reason for the intellectual inertia and policy confusion about the place and importance of transnational threats is that they do not fit comfortably within the worldview of realism, which is the leading theoretical paradigm in international relations and the conceptual frame of reference for most policy-makers and scholars working on international security issues.[4] To understand why realism has been unable to accommodate the transnational agenda, which is a central task of this introductory section, it is necessary to appreciate the theory's historical roots, its defining beliefs and the reason for its waning explanatory power. A second task is to sketch out an alternative framework for thinking about security that encompasses the transnational agenda.

Realism's Limitations

Realism, in its many forms, has dominated European and by extension Western thinking about security since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which is generally accepted as having laid down the foundations of the contemporary state system. Europe's ruling classes were conditioned by centuries of internecine warfare, dynastic competition and colonial expansionism to seek security through military strength and alliance-building rather than cooperation. The consequences for Western security thinking were profound and enduring. Since force seemed a more effective means of maximising strategic influence and protecting vital interests, especially for the larger states, cooperative impulses were often short-lived and expedient. In order to maintain the equilibrium of the system and to preserve their own independence and interests, states frequently sought to maintain a balance of power, either by reducing the strategic weight of potential hegemons or by increasing their own.[5]

Security was thus associated in the minds of Europeans with the protection or acquisition of territory. The most serious and frequent challenges to state sovereignty invariably originated in the actions of other

states seeking to enhance their power or wealth by increasing their control of territory. European nations had good cause to fear the territorial encroachments and ambitions of others. Richard Rosencrance estimates that 95 per cent of the states that existed in 1500 have since been 'obliterated, subdivided, or combined into other countries'.[6] The Cold War subsequently imbued a generation of American scholars and policy-makers with the tenets of realism, and these were subsumed and internalised in the idea of national security.[7] As the United States assumed the role of standard-bearer and protector of the West's political and spiritual heritage, American academic thinking on security became the accepted Western orthodoxy, and it was the orthodoxy of realism that prevailed. The Cold War also encouraged the development of a subdiscipline of international relations known as strategic studies. Strategic studies reinforced the realist bias towards the military aspects of national security, producing, as Barry Buzan has noted, a large volume of empirical literature on the problems of military policy but giving little attention to alternative approaches or interpretations of security.[8]

For these reasons, both classical realists and contemporary neo-realists are primarily concerned with the balance of power between states and how best to deal with the security dilemma that arises from the structural tensions inherent in a system of independent states when there is no supranational authority to maintain order.[9] Realists consider anarchy to be the ordering principle of the international system and independent, sovereign states the principal actors, engaged in an unending and brutal struggle for survival. However, anarchy does not presuppose the total absence of rules or norms, nor does it mandate conflict. Rather it denotes the absence of an overarching authority or 'government of governments' that can impose its will over the state.[10] Uncertainty over neighbours' intentions or actions creates a mutual security dilemma: feeling threatened by others, states may feel compelled to attack first or run the risk of being destroyed.[11] From a realist perspective, military threats are therefore paramount. Defending national sovereignty and territory from the hostile or predatory intentions of others is a fundamental responsibility of government, and survival of the state as a distinct political, cultural and social entity is the primary objective of security.[12] Economic vulnerabilities and strengths figure prominently in traditional security thinking but usually only as elements of military power and important measures of a state's strategic weight and war-fighting potential.[13]

I argue that this characterisation of the security problematique is too narrowly conceived and Western-centred to encompass and make sense of the transnational challenge to global security, especially in East Asia. My reasons are fourfold. First, realism's concentration on state power