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

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Preface

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mely Caballero-Anthony

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Abbreviations

NTS Non-traditional security
SARS Severe acute respiratory syndrome

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Chapter 1

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

Mely Caballero-Anthony, Swee Lean Collin Koh
and Sofiah Jamil

Abstract This chapter highlights non-traditional security (NTS) challenges in relation to energy security. It first frames energy security within the context of human security, which provides the foundation for NTS, and then highlights the NTS issues that have arisen in recent years, such as the traditional energy sector (i.e. fossil fuels) and alternative sources of energy. Finally, it attempts to provide some recommendations for addressing these issues keeping the future role of markets, governance, civil societies and technology in focus.

Keywords East Asia • Energy • Environment • Human security • Non-traditional security • Nuclear

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1.1 Introduction

Much has happened in the last five years that has had significant impacts on energy security—from a financial recession and oil/food crisis in 2008 to the trials and tribulations of moving forward in addressing global climate change and, most recently, the implications of the earthquake and tsunami that hit Fukushima, Japan, in March 2011. The various political, socioeconomic and even environmental dynamics at play in the above-mentioned events have demonstrated that energy security is not merely a matter of securing a steady supply of energy sources but also one that necessitates the existence of a complementary environment that is conducive to sustainable human development. This is particularly evident from projections of increased global population and energy consumption in the coming decades, especially in industrialising countries such as China and India. Developing Asian countries have had to reconsider their options for secure energy sources in order to sustain and support their economic growth and development. What is clear from the multitude of developments is that balancing the demands of various stakeholders has become increasingly more complex, thereby making it difficult for countries to break free from their strong dependence on limited energy sources. As such, the energy security concept needs to also include environmental and socio-economic impacts, the resultant interdependent nature of which necessitates a rethink of the role of markets and governance—one that transcends the national level to involve non-government actors and greater international cooperation.

Focusing on the Asia-Pacific region, this chapter aims to illuminate contemporary energy security issues with particular emphasis on the non-traditional security (NTS) challenges of energy security. For instance, its socioeconomic and environmental impacts.¹ It first frames energy security within the context of human security, which provides the foundation for NTS, and then highlights the NTS issues that have arisen in recent years—first, the traditional energy sector (i.e. fossil fuels) and second, alternative sources of energy. Finally, it attempts to provide some recommendations by looking at the future role of markets, governance, civil societies and technology for addressing these issues.

1.2 Energy Security as a Non-Traditional Security Issue

Unlike traditional definitions of security, which revolve around the stability and security of the state in terms of territories and military capabilities, ‘human security’ highlights security from the perspective of individuals and communities

¹ This chapter brings into discussion many of the points and reflections raised at the Regional Workshop on Energy and Non-Traditional Security, Singapore, 28–29 August 2008. The workshop was conducted by the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

within the state. Human security plays an important part in human development, as highlighted by the late Dr Mahbub ul Haq in the Human Development Report 1994, which was published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (UNDP 1994). In the report, he defined human security as a broadening of the scope of global security to include seven threats: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.

At first glance, energy security, as set forth in these categories, would not seem to have any part to play in human security. Energy security as a concept was born out of the 1973 oil crisis and was primarily focused on finding ways to handle any disruption of oil supplies from producing countries (Yergin 2006). This traditional definition remained the primary emphasis for energy security until newly emergent energy-related environmental and socioeconomic issues rose to prominence in recent years, which brought to the forefront elements related to a non-traditional paradigm of energy security in categories of human security such as economic, environmental and food security.

In 2003, the UN Commission on Human Security (CHS) further enhanced the concept of human security by highlighting its two pillars: (a) the freedom from want; and (b) the freedom from fear. From these two pillars, it is evident that energy security would come under the first pillar, given the constant need for energy despite its increasingly limited availability and the challenges being faced in ensuring the safety and sustainability of existing energy sources.

1.3 Securing Traditional Energy Sources via a Non-Traditional Security Lens

When considering NTS-related concerns, a discussion on contemporary energy issues would inadvertently demonstrate sources and implications of energy that may be broader than traditional. This section will examine several NTS concerns that have arisen from the energy sector in recent years.

1.3.1 Growing Energy Consumption Amid Rising Carbon Emissions

A primary dilemma facing many countries, as highlighted in other chapters, has been ensuring a steady flow of energy sources for sustaining development while addressing growing concerns of mitigating climate change where traditional energy sources, such as fossil fuels, play significant roles with their carbon content. Environmental changes, such as the melting of ice glaciers and consequently rising sea levels and coastal flooding, have been clearly documented in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).