

Non-Traditional Security Issues and the Stability of Southeast Asia¹

Zarina Othman, Nur Ruhana Nasuha Abdullah Jian,
and Abdul Halim Mahamud

Abstrak

Perubahan paradigma politik internasional berargumen bahwa diskursus keamanan non-tradisional (*non-traditional security*-NTS) adalah ancaman bagi keamanan. Pergeseran ini telah menarik minat para sarjana maupun pengambil kebijakan, seiring meningkatnya gejala maupun dampak penting diskursus NTS terhadap keamanan pada tingkat domestik, regional, dan global. Diskursus NTS menyangkut perubahan iklim, bencana alam, migrasi, dan persoalan lintas batas yang melibatkan aktor non-negara dan berdampak pada negara dan masyarakat. Tulisan ini mengelaborasi tiga persoalan diskursus NTS, yaitu terorisme, peredaran obat terlarang, dan penyelundupan senjata ringan yang mengganggu stabilitas Asia Tenggara. Tulisan ini berargumentasi bahwa dari segi topografi, wilayah geografis yang bersifat terbuka, dan posisinya yang strategis menjadikan wilayah ini rentan terhadap ancaman. Konflik pada tingkat domestik yang terjadi di Kamboja, Vietnam, Filipina (Mindanao), Indonesia (Aceh) dan Thailand (Pattani) telah memberi ruang gerak bagi tindak kejahatan lintas batas ini. Tulisan ini terbagi menjadi empat bagian; pertama, tulisan ini mengungkap latar belakang konsep keamanan non-tradisional. Bagian selanjutnya berfokus pada bagaimana terorisme, peredaran obat terlarang dan penyelundupan senjata api ringan memengaruhi stabilitas Asia Tenggara secara keseluruhan. Berdasarkan data primer seperti dokumen resmi, laporan media terkait diskursus ini, tulisan ini menyimpulkan bahwa wilayah ini akan menjadi tempat berlangsungnya aktivitas keamanan non-tradisional jika hal ini terus dibiarkan. Harapannya, diskusi tulisan ini akan memperkaya diskursus dalam kajian hubungan internasional dan kajian keamanan regional, khususnya mengenai diskursus keamanan non-tradisional dan bisa menjadi referensi bagi para sarjana, mahasiswa hubungan internasional dan para pengambil keputusan.

Kata kunci: keamanan non-tradisional, peredaran obat terlarang, penyelundupan senjata ringan, Asia Tenggara, terorisme

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Introduction

The end of the Cold War in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 have provided space for the discussion of previously marginalised issues. These issues are sometimes referred to as 'new security issues', 'ambiguous', 'non-military', 'non-conventional' issues or 'grey area phenomena', but regardless of the name chosen, they all affect human, state, regional and global security. These issues cross country borders and are brought about and committed by non-state actors (Daud and Othman, 2005). International relation scholars and policy makers have recently become interested in the issue of non-traditional issues in individual and multiple states, partly because developments in information technology and economic openness in some SEA countries that have acted to compound the problem (Cusimano, 2011). Therefore, this article will unlock the question of how NTS threats have impacted on the stability of the Southeast Asia region.

Any assessment of the NTS threat in SEA should be considered to be very important for three reasons. First, over the last decade the regional security environment in SEA has changed dramatically as it is increasingly confronted with new security challenges emerging from a host of transnational threats (Anthony, 2010). Second, NTS is something that cannot be avoided in a rapidly modernising region. Third, NTS threats have an extensive network, ensnaring many countries into a realm of globalised crime (Viano, 2009, 2010). This article will therefore consider the NTS background in SEA, followed by a discussion of three selected NTS cases, namely terrorism, drug trafficking and small arms and light weapons (SALW) smuggling, by investigating how each of these NTS issues have impacted the security and stability of the Southeast Asia region.

Non-Traditional Security Issues in Southeast Asia

Major world powers have from time-out-of-mind shown an interest in SEA. Most of the region has, at some point in history, been the subject of colonial power, a fact that has shaped the distinctive political systems, cultures, ethnicity, languages and religion of SEA's eleven countries. The Asian studies specialist, Barbara Watson Andaya, sees SEA as divided into two zones, namely the 'mainland' and 'island' regions. The 'mainland' zone encompasses Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. The 'island' zone includes Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, and East Timor (Andaya, 2012). Both areas are highly vulnerable to security threats from the land or from the sea. Most of the 'mainland' countries have experienced domestic conflicts that have caused their borders to become fragmented or contested spaces, hence very susceptible to drug and weapons smuggling. On the other hand, the countries of the 'island' zone are disadvantaged by their

long littoral boundaries that make it difficult for them to fully safeguard their coastal security.

In the SEA region, the issue of cross-border crime is one of the most significant non-traditional issues to the region's stability. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) defined transnational crime as encompassing any criminal activity that is conducted in more than one state; planned in one state but perpetrated in another; or committed in one state where there are spill over effects into neighbouring jurisdictions (Giraldo and Trinkunas, 2010). The United Nations survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (1994) listed eighteen categories of transnational crime, including terrorism, and illegal trafficking in drugs, arms, piracy, and people. This article will focus on three of these categories namely terrorism, drug trafficking and small arms and light weapons (SALW) trafficking.

During the period of the Cold War (1946-1989) and the Vietnam War (1965-1975), Southeast Asian countries lived in fear of a domino effect, whereby security issues resulting from these conflicts would spill over into the region. Thus, it became imperative to strengthen and defend Southeast Asian territorial integrity to ensure the region's long-term survival. The end of the Cold War, however, changed the dimension of the security threat from military and political to non-traditional, including the increase of human trafficking, small arms and light weapons as well as illicit drugs smuggling. Not all scholars agree. Peter Hough, for example, argues that the military threats of the twenty-first century are as serious as they ever have been, if not more so than during the Cold War (Hough, 2004: 7). The simple fact is that the Southeast Asian nations face both types of threats indeed, Hough argues that non-military issues can be securitised and prioritised in line with national security.²

Since the end of the Cold War, the Copenhagen School have worked towards broadening and deepening our understanding of NTS threats, offering the concept of "new security" which, though it continues to be contested, has been recognized by the United Nations (UN). "New security" encompasses human security and, according to Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, should include military security, political security, economic security, social security and environmental security (Buzan et al, 1998). The Copenhagen School's approach has undeniably played a significant role in identifying the existence of new security threats and finding solutions.

2 Hough cited Clinton administration's 1994 National Security Strategy: "Not all security risks are military in nature. Transnational phenomena such as terrorism, narcotic trafficking, environmental degradation, rapid population growth and refugee flows also have security implications for both present and long term American Policy". *The White House, National Security Strategy of Engagement*. Washington DC: Government . 1994. 2004 : 1 & 14

The definition of NTS is quite complex. The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) has provided the following comprehensive definition. According to RSIS, NTS are challenges to the survival and well-being of people and states that arise from non-military sources, such as climate change, resource scarcity, infectious disease, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking and transnational crime (RSIS, 2012). Each issue has its own in-depth definition with a description of certain criteria (Ramli et al., 2012).

In addition, NTS also share five common characteristics. They are transnational in scope (neither purely domestic, nor purely interstate), come at very short notice and are transmitted rapidly due to globalisation and the communications revolution, they cannot entirely be prevented but coping mechanisms can be devised to lessen their effect. National solutions are often inadequate to resolve them, and they require regional and multilateral cooperation to address them (Desker, 2011).

Terrorism

Terrorism is a security threat that has been afforded increasing attention by scholars since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C. Moreover, terrorism has been securitised by President George W. Bush's adoption of a global "War on Terror". According to Lutz and Lutz, terrorism includes the following elements. The use of violence, or the threat of violence, by an organized group to achieve a political objective, and this violence is directed against a target audience, who are often innocent civilians. Furthermore, while a government can be either the perpetrator of violence or the target; it is only considered an act of terrorism if one or both actors is not the government; and finally terrorism is a weapon of the weak (Lutz and Lutz, 2010). Meanwhile, there is a view that "new terrorism" has emerged since September 11 through the exploitation of the information technology (IT) revolution to reach a global audience that is much larger than the clandestine support based in the pre-Internet age (Tan, 2011).

After the September 11 attacks, SEA was labelled the "second front" in the global war on terror by the United States (Tan, 2011). This designation was due in part to the emergence and existence of regional Islamic separatist groups associated with the Al-Qaeda network. Al-Qaeda has funded local cells in SEA, provided them with military training camps in Afghanistan and sought affiliations with other Islamic separatist groups. In some countries, these groups seek to establish an Islamic government, lead them to violence at the cost of civilian lives. A recent evaluation conducted by the United States' National Counter Terrorism Center (2011) revealed that Thailand and the

Philippines were the primary terrorist bases in SEA out of the fifteen countries most associated with terrorism in the world.³

Even though Indonesia is not listed in the National Counter Terrorism Center's 2011 evaluation, a discussion of terrorism in SEA would not be completed without mentioning terrorist activities here. The Bali attack in 2002 appeared to mark a watershed in SEA, with the highest number of casualties in a single terrorist attack; the high number of Western casualties; the lethality and sophistication of the bombs (including one detonated by a mobile phone), and the fact that it was carried out by local suicide bombers (Tan, 2011: 27). The incident shows of how an overseas terrorist network could impact human security, and the security of a state and a region in its breadth and scope. Terrorist activities in Indonesia have largely related to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a group that has links with the Al-Qaeda network. Table 1 below displays the sequence of events associated with the activities of JI.

Table 1. Terrorist Incidents Linked to Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).

Year	Incident
2000	The bombing and attempted assassination of the Philippine ambassador to Indonesia
2000	Bombing of the Jakarta Stock Exchange, which left 15 people dead.
2002	Bali Bombing Incident
2003	Bombing of the US-owned JW Marriott Hotel, Jakarta
2004	Almost identical bombing at the Australian High Commission, Jakarta
2002 – 2005	High profile attacks conducted led to 366 casualties and more than 688 injuries
2009	Links to the bombings at the Ritz Carlton and Marriott hotels in Jakarta, which targeted a high-powered business meeting of Western business executives

Adapted from: Peter Chalk et al. 2009. *Evolving Terrorist Threat to Southeast Asia: A Net Assessment* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation), pp. 98-9 & Andrew T. H. Tan. *Security Strategies in Asia-Pacific: The United States 'Second Front' in Southeast Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 27-28.

³ The 15 countries listed are Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Somalia, Colombia, Thailand, Russia, Israel, Nigeria, Greece, Filipina, Yemen, Turkey and Congo.

From the above Table, it can be clearly seen that terrorism in Indonesia has affected the country's stability and demonstrates how easily the region has been infiltrated by outside elements. At the same time, the potential for terrorist activities has stretched throughout the region: almost all SEA countries have had some role in either raising or channelling funds, training militant groups, forging documents, manufacturing or smuggling weapons, or have been used as sites of opportunity for the carrying out of violent action (Freedman, 2010).

It is undeniable that JI has received support from a network of terrorists in the region, a number that include the Abu Sayaf Group (ASG) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the Philippines.⁴ These groups have similar goals to JI, demanding an Autonomous Muslim region in Mindanao. Evidence, including the testimonies of captured JI leaders, has pointed strong links between some elements of the MILF and JI, including the continued training of JI terrorists in MILF camps and the shared planning of terrorist operations (Vaughn et al, 2009). The MILF and ASG also have a very good relationship in both the training and operational front indeed. The ASG was originally a splinter group of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). In addition, both groups have been identified as having ties with Al-Qaeda that have played an important role in bringing regional terrorist groups together, JI included. Together with the MILF Special Operations Group, JI conducted bombings in Manila on Rizal Day, December 30 2000, after having met with ASG leaders, for example (Gunaratna, 2012).

Al-Qaeda has had far more influence on ASG than MILF due to the fact that most of its original members who had joined since the group was established in 1991 were former Afghanistan muhajidiens. Al-Qaeda provided ASG with funds through Osama bin Laden's brother-in-law, who used to live in Manila, and training by Ramzi Yousef who was responsible for the first World Trade Center bombing in New York in 1993 (Tan, 2011: 40). ASG executed extreme action including extortion, kidnapping for ransom and assassination, in addition to the bombings that brought chaos in the Philippines. Table 2 below illustrates ASG related terrorist activities.

4 On 15 October 2012, the Philippine government and the MILF has agreed on framework agreement for peace. The announcement of the framework agreement came following the 32nd round of exploratory talks between the negotiating panels from both sides held in the Malaysian capital from October 2 to 7, 2012.

Table 2. Terrorist Incidents Linked to the Abu Sayaf Group (ASG)

Year	Incident
2000	Kidnapping of 21 hostages including 12 Western tourists at the island resort of Sipadan, Sabah, Malaysia
2004	Firebombing of Philippine <i>Super Ferry 14</i> , a joint operation with JI that resulted in 116 deaths
February 2005	Series of coordinated explosions that took place in Davao City, General Santos City, and Manila
March 2006	The bombing of a bar on Jolo.
January 2007	Planned simultaneous attacks on sites hosting the ASEAN Regional Summit and the East Asian Summit (EAS)

Adapted from: Peter Chalk et al. 2009. *Evolving Terrorist Threat to Southeast Asia: A Net Assessment* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation. Hlm 51 – 52) & Andrew T. H. Tan. *Security Strategies in Asia-Pacific: The United States 'Second Front' In Southeast Asia*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011: 40

Indonesia and the Philippines are not the only areas to have been affected by terrorism. Thailand is also one of the fifteen countries highlighted by the National Counter Terrorism Center to have experienced terrorist activities that might affect the stability of SEA (NCC, 2011). Most of the terrorist attacks have occurred in the southern provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, conducted by several Islamist separatist groups that demand independence from Thailand. The separatist movement was originally an internal conflict. The current wave of violence in Thailand originated on January 4 2004, when Muslim insurgents and terrorists moved in nine districts in Narathiwat and Yala (Gunaratna, 2012: 83). From January 2004 to the end of April 2008, a total of 8,064 violent incidents were recorded in southern Thailand: incidents that have left 3,002 dead and another 4,871 injured (Chalk et al, 2009: 12).

The relationship between the separatist groups of southern Thailand and other terrorist groups such as JI has yet to be determined. However, there are signs that indicate the possibility of a connection. For instance, several JI and Al-Qaeda operatives have found shelter among co-religionists in Thailand, a number that has included the former top JI commander in the region, Hambali, until his arrest in Thailand in 2003. Equally, the coordinated nature of insurgent attacks as well as the sophistication of the bombings suggests global linkages with jihadist elements (Tan, 2011: 75-76). The Pattani *Barisan Revolusi Nasional-Koordinasi* (BRN-C) – the Pattani independence movement – has attracted both foreign-trained Pattani Muslims and foreigners trained in Indonesian schools to fight under their banner and Al-Qaeda dispatched several Southeast Asian operatives to fight in Thailand (Gunaratna, 2012: 84).

The connections between the SEA terrorist groups and the Islamic separatist group in Southern Thailand have threatened the country's sovereignty, the human security of its population, and regional security and stability.

Despite a recent decrease in the terrorist activities of three countries discussed in this article, the potency for reescalation still exists. The continued call for an autonomous Muslim region or an Islamic state acts as a unifying terrorist agenda in this region. Thus, Al-Qaeda might seek an opportunity to escalate the jihadist fight by manipulating specific Southeast Asian groups, especially those who consider themselves oppressed by their government, such as the minority group of Rohingya in Myanmar. The former ASEAN Secretary-General, Dr Surin Pitsuwan, argued that the problems suffered by those people could facilitate radicalism and the potential destabilisation of the whole region to the Malacca Straits, the main gateway to SEA (*The Jakarta Post*, 2012). The warning has also been applied to the situation currently being experienced by Cambodian Muslims. In October 2004, the chairman of the United Nations Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee, Heraldo Muñoz, warned that the Cambodian Muslims had become increasingly radicalised as a result of discrimination (Chalk et al, 2009: 199). The oppression, disaffection and marginalization of such minority groups leaves them open to exploitation by al-Qaeda.

Drug Trafficking

Besides terrorism, SEA also has been exposed to drug smuggling activities. As has been emphasized by James Rosenau and Gay & Mussington, the threat from cross-border drug trafficking weakens states and contracts their sovereignty (Rosenau et al, 1997: 144-161). As the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)'s World Drug Report 2007 argues, all states are facing drug trafficking problems of different magnitudes. The age-old problem of drug trafficking jeopardises security at the domestic, regional and global level. SEA is no exception where most trafficking is centered on the 'Golden Triangle' of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand (Fortson, 2005).

Illegal drug trafficking syndicates are often associated with other crimes including human trafficking, arms and child labour. Indeed, the profitable trade in drugs often underpins such other activities and the power of some syndicates can undermine the state. In Colombia, South America, for example, drug cartels have the power to coerce judges, local police and politicians in order to increase the production of the drug industry in that country (Gracia, 2003). The use of 'plato o plomo', or forcible coercion, is common, leading to drug cartels influencing Colombian governmental politics and bringing unrest to the country.

Drug networks are a non-military threat that pose danger to the long-term prospects of a society in more ways than the attrition of a state by drug cartels. According to Alan Dupont, drug abuse by users also facilitates crime (Drug, 1998: 1-30). In SEA, most drug users tend to be drawn from the younger generation. According to statistics from the National Narcotics Agency Malaysia, 65% of addicts in this country were young men between the ages of 20 to 29 (Kamaruddin, 2006). The 'Golden Triangle' that situated in SEA has targeted its neighbouring countries namely Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Cambodia, as transit countries for storing processed heroin before it is distributed to other countries such as Brunei, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand (Ismail, 1995). *The World Drug Report 2012* stated the manufacture of illicit amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) has recently been uncovered in countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia, which had hitherto only been primarily used as transit countries for ATS. Table 3 below shows the categories of drug networks in ASEAN countries.

Table 3. Categories of Drug Networks in ASEAN Countries

Producer Country	Transit Country	Receiver Country	Country with illicit manufacturing
Myanmar	Cambodia	Indonesia	Cambodia
Laos	Malaysia	Brunei	Indonesia
		The Philippines	Malaysia

Modified From: Yaman Mohamed Ismail Mohamed. 1995. *Supply and Trade in Narcotics: Checking Sources and Distribution: The Malaysian Experience*. 9th Asia Pacific Conference Working Paper, Kuala Lumpur 5-8 June & United Nations Office On Drugs And Crime. 2012. Jun. *World Drug Report 2012*: 80

The above Table shows which ASEAN countries have been enmeshed in the drug network either as a producer, a transit country or a recipient. Such situation illustrates the severity of the threat to Southeast Asian security. Moreover, these activities are predicted to be more acute in the future. According to the *World Drug Report 2012*, Laos and Myanmar account for over 20% of the world's total cultivation of opium poppies. With regards to areas of opium poppy cultivation, Myanmar is the second largest after Afghanistan. The north-eastern region of Myanmar particularly is at the heart of heroin and synthetic production in the 'Golden Triangle' (Othman, 2009: 78). Table 4 below shows statistics relating to drug-related arrests in SEA and reveals the increase since 2006.

Table 4.

Drug-related (All Types of Drugs) Arrests in Southeast Asia, 2006-2010

COUNTRY	YEAR				
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Thailand	86,197	104,347	149,915	135,976	174,725
Indonesia	25,012	38,235	40,569	26,721	23,401
Vietnam	16,686	14,800	24,739	21,086	23,497
Malaysia	22,811	14,489	12,325	15,736	23,642
Philippines	11,535	10,710	10,530	9,052	8,259
Myanmar	3,865	3,074	3,368	4,743	3,465
Singapore	1,218	2,211	2,537	2,616	2,887
Brunei D	475	772	591	556	565
Laos	479	182	418	718	1,007
Cambodia	608	263	394	615	648

Source: *Drug Abuse Information Network for Asia and the Pacific - DAINAP*. 2011

The above table clearly displays how vulnerable SEA is to drug trafficking. In fact, the problem is considered so serious that in June 1998, ASEAN officially declared drug trafficking as a threat to its regional security and signed the Joint Declaration for a Drug Free ASEAN, committing them to eradicate drug trafficking by the year 2020 (a target that was later was shifted to 2015) (Othman, 2004: 33-34). However, the target is still far from being realised as the statistics above clearly demonstrate inversely. For example, the expansion of crystalline methamphetamine manufacture in the region has increased by 44% (UNODC, 2011: 8). Overall, the winners are the leaders and the losers are the addicts, the state, and society.

Small Arms and Light Weapons Trafficking

The post-Cold War period has also witnessed serious threats related to small arms and light weapons (SALW) smuggling, especially in situations where the trade has exacerbated internal country conflicts. Indeed, SALW smuggling has often been used by non-state actors as a way of influencing government decision making through the use or threat of violence (Wall, 2006: 3). The magnitude of SALW smugglings expanded dramatically after the end of the arms conflict in Cambodia.

The increase of arms conflicts and insurgency in the Southeast Asian region are undeniably linked to the rise of SALW smuggling, threatening political stability, social harmony and economic stability. For example, the religious and ethnic conflicts in Ambon, Indonesia have illustrated how

SALW has exacerbated conflict between ethnicity and religion. The Ambon Conflict that erupted on 19 January 1999 claimed an estimated 9,000 lives and more than 400,000 become refugees (Schulze, 2002: 57).

The smuggling of SALW combines many inter-related factors. First, SALW smuggling is often performed by non-state actors whose objective has been inspired by religious ideology. Thus, smuggling and regional conflict have a direct relationship and, as has been claimed by Fearon in 2002, Southeast Asian SALW activities have been particularly prolonged compared to other regions, for this very reason (Fearon, 2002). The diffusion of small arms in weak or failing states poses an implicit threat to the survival of that state because anti-government groups can readily gather the weaponry needed to mount a revolution or insurgency (Klare, 2004: 123). The ability to execute SALW smuggling has become the main variable of the conflict cycle in the Southern Thailand and the Philippines, as well as in Aceh and Ambon. Arms smuggling is often connected with other cross-border crimes as sources of funding are frequently obtained from overseas from contributions by supporters or sympathisers, and are connected with illegal logging, prostitution, drug trafficking and extortion (kidnap for ransom). The magnitude of the problem requires a strong network of cooperation among countries to address the situation.

The second factor is of supply and communications. SALW trafficking has focused on Cambodian black markets and the so-called 'grey area'. Thailand is used as one of the main transit areas for any small arm transfers (Wall, 2006: 116). On the other hand, smuggling can also be part of government's covert activities, including the abuse of weapons confiscated during operations.

Finally, geographical position plays a large part in SALW trafficking. The relative weakness or lack of policing of land and maritime borders between neighbouring countries has exacerbated arms smuggling activities. Problems also arise from the networks of financial resources, technological expertise, training and cooperation of state and non-state actors in this region. When SALW trafficking is organized, it has established a strong network and utilises sophisticated and up to date global technology, resulted the problem becomes even more difficult to overcome.

SALW smuggling in SEA has resulted in significant human costs, especially with its connections with insurgency in the Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar. However, none of this violence has undermined a regional government (Capie, 2008: 649), but this should not detract from the fact that this region could become a safe haven for arms trafficking and black markets. As mentioned before, SEA provides a conducive environment for SALW which can easily be manipulated by terrorists group operating in the region.

According to Ryan Clarke (2011: 157-188), supporters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) have occupied strategic locations for arms smuggling throughout Asia. One of these is Thailand, the most important nation for the LTTE in regard to transshipment, coordination and logistics due to its advanced communications infrastructure, proximity to conflict zones (current and former) in Myanmar and Cambodia, and its western coastline along the Bay of Bengal to Sri Lanka. The failure of the Thai government in handling and controlling drug smuggling at the Thailand-Myanmar border, has created favourable opportunities for continuous arms smuggling by the LTTE with the support of Tamil-Thai community of 10,000 in Thailand. This reality, combined with Thailand's strategic location next to Cambodia's illicit arms markets and geographic proximity to Sri Lanka, made it an area that the LTTE could not do without. On the other hand, Cambodia also has a substantial arms black market, contributing between 5-10 per cent of the LTTE's stockpile. At the same time, the LTTE was believed to have links with insurgent groups in Myanmar's Karen, Kachin, and Shan states and was successful in obtaining weaponry from Myanmar insurgent groups. These links will continue to exist as long as these particular groups persist in their fight to claim independence from Myanmar.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that SALW smuggling in SEA could destabilise the region particularly if the arms dealer network grows. Such situation could rapidly become unmanageable, affecting the national, regional and human security, as can be seen in Southern Thailand currently where uncontrolled SALW smuggling orchestrated by drugs cartels has led to the eruption of violence affecting civilians as well as security forces.

SALW may not be considered as big a threat as conventional weapons. However, it has still a significant impact on security. Some of the ASEAN countries that have suffered civil wars, have started initiatives to combat SALW smuggling. In spite of several ASEAN initiatives to address the problems, non-traditional security issues continue to be the problems in the region. Apart from that, challenges also derived from the fact that the difficulty in safeguarding broad and long boundaries given the geographic nature of the region. Even though there has been an integrated effort at cooperation through the regional security framework to control SALW trafficking, it is still far from achieving its target.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the NTS threat has a significant role in influencing the stability of the Southeast Asian region. Among the NTS threats are the transnational crimes of terrorism, drug trafficking and SALW smuggling, involving regional and international networks. Non-state actor's activities and networks represent

a challenge to many country's national sovereignty, integrity of independent states, threaten the survival of governments, undermine social order by increasing the level of violence (Emmers, 2003: 2), and threaten human and regional security. The US has labelled SEA as the 'second front' in the global war on terrorism due to the existence of Islamic separatist groups in this region of which are associated with the Al-Qaeda network. The extremist network like Al Qaeda take full advantage of local instabilities and tensions between minority groups and governments to spread Jihadist ideologies encouraging radicalism and violence against civilians. Meanwhile, the threat from drug trafficking acts to jeopardise socio-economic and political stability in many states. SALW smuggling is also a concern, one which deserves great attention even if it does not immediately threaten to bring down a state government. The worry lies in the illegal arms dealer's involvement with drug cartels and criminals in the region that can inflame an already unstable Southeast Asian region. ●

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