Many security scholars are now accepting that our understanding of what security means, what constitute threats to security, and how best to achieve security, is changing in important ways. But the catalysts of this change remain under-theorized. This is an important gap for two important reasons. First, without an understanding of its catalysts, we would not be sure whether some of the alleged redefinitions of security are transformative or fad-like. Second, we need a sense of the relative importance of the various catalysts of security redefinitions so as to visualize what the emerging and future security order might look like. As leaders and academics continually look for new security concepts and approaches for the 21st century, it is useful to start by examining what causes changes to our definition and conception of security. This paper is a modest step towards understanding why security changes. I do so with the help of six major catalysts of change and briefly examine how they play out in the contemporary global and Asian security context.

1. New ideas about international relations
2. Emergence of new threats and perceptions of threats
3. Shift in the distribution of power and new international leadership
4. New Warfare (including technological changes that bring it about)
5. Domestic political change (including regime security and not necessarily democratization)
6. Advocacy by international institutions

Table 1: Basic Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Security Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National security (NS)</td>
<td>Protection of a state’s sovereignty and territorial integrity from external military attack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-traditional security (NTS)</td>
<td>Protection of a state’s institutions and governing capacity from non-military threats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive security (East Asia)</td>
<td>NS + NTS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human security</td>
<td>People’s freedom from fear, want and indignity caused by domestic and/or externally sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Security</td>
<td>Security with (as opposed to security against) a potential or actual adversary realized through transparency, mutual confidence and conflict resolution measures and mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Security</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific rendering (localization) of common security (minus human rights)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeland security</td>
<td>Internal security measures against terrorism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Ideas

It is commonplace to assume that security concepts emerge or change in response to new events or threats. But ideas can be ahead of ‘realities’. They can drive change, instead of simply reflecting change. Mikhail Gorbachev’s “new thinking” and the Palme Commission’s idea of common security both emerged well before the end of the Cold War. They contributed, rather than responded, to the end of the Cold War which in turn affected the global security paradigm in significant ways. Gandhi’s concept of nonviolence was not a response to his experiences in South Africa or simply inspired by a desire to end colonialism there or in India. It was a prior idea deeply ingrained in his personal belief system, as a result of his upbringing among non-violent Jain communities in the native Gujurat state.

In contemporary East Asia, China’s “new security concept” comes to mind. There are also new security ideas from India and Japan, including the notion of Japan as a “normal state” and India’s “post-Nehruvian” turn in foreign and security policy. But whether these represent a fundamental rethinking of national security can be doubted. (More on this later.) Whereas Gorbachev’s “new thinking” represented the relinquishing of an empire and acknowledging a failing economy and power base, the new security formulations of China, Japan and India reflect, and may be read more of a rationalization of their growing power and ambition, if not empire-seeking.

Asia of course has had its doctrine of comprehensive security, which many Asian see as a precursors to the ideas about non-traditional and human security. Japan and Malaysia adopted the exact language of comprehensive security. Indonesia’s during the Suharto period coined the terms ‘national resilience’ and ‘regional resilience’, which became ASEAN’s security mantras. Singapore developed and pursued the idea of ‘total defence’. Unlike Japan’s, the Southeast Asian formulations were no so much state-centric as being motivated by regime legitimation and survival concerns. But they were also not inspired by security for the people, hence should not be conflated with human security. Hence, it is not surprising that the idea of human security, which entered the scene 1994 onwards, was received with considerable misgiving in Southeast Asia. Even Japan, one of the most vocal proponents of human security in the international arena, would stress the economic and developmental aspects of human security, in contrast to the emphasis placed by Western countries like Canada and Norway on its political and military dimensions. Enough has been written on this debate to merit further elaboration here, but the fact remains that non-traditional security and human security, although both embrace a wider variety of threats than the concept of national security they seek to supplant, are not identical. Asia’s other major powers, China and India, are yet to adopt the idea of human security. In Asia, no nation has adopted the concept of human security if and when it seemed to compete with state (regime and national) security imperatives, and especially when it demanded regulating on curtailing the power and prerogative of the state.

But Asia is hardly alone in this. The United States, even under the Obama administration, is yet to make human security part of its new security policy lexicon, whereas it has supplanted the war on terror with “overseas contingency operations”). The Obama administration has reconstituted the National Security Council to take note of a wide range of challenges, in which the National security adviser would be the “integrator for an unprecedented range of policy issues -- security, military, economic, energy, environmental.”2 National Security Adviser Jim Jones speaks of ‘non-traditional

---

security' threats as one of his primary concerns. "Every single day we're handling a half a dozen serious issues simultaneously. The threats that are coming at us are coming at us in waves. They are very asymmetric, they're very different than in the 20th century....It is not just about a war on terror...It has components relating to proliferation, to climate and energy, economic security, cyber security, the illegal trafficking of humans, narco-terrorism, any number of things."\(^3\)

But the idea of human security is yet to enter the vocabulary of the new administrations despite potential advocates like Susan Rice and Samantha Power in high policy positions. It appears that while the international community is now willing to embrace non-traditional security, the same cannot be said about human security, which remains alive mainly in academic discourses and in the statements of a handful of international institutions like the UNDP and UNHCR.

**New Threats**

Now to return to the more conventional view: how ideas respond to events, including new or newly newly perceived threats, crises, wars, and revolutions. The 1973 oil crisis (the Arab oil embargo in response to the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur War) catalysed the prominence of economic security. Growing signs of environmental degradation, such as urban air pollution, acid rain, and deforestation was behind another redefinition of security in the 1990s, when environmental security emerged. Now climate change, though a long-term phenomenon (believers in “abrupt climate change” may disagree) and still debated as to its extent and implications, has been brought to the forefront of security concerns in the West. Pandemics are another example, especially in the wake of SARS, Bird flu and Swine flu. Crisis situations are, as might be expected, particularly important in redefining security concepts. The 9/11 attacks had a dramatic effect on Western thinking about security, halting the post-Cold War advance of the human security agenda, and returning national security concerns and approaches to the centre-stage. It marked the ascendancy of homeland security at the expense of human security. In East Asia, the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the 2002 Bali Bombings, the 2003 SARS outbreak and the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, all individually and collectively affected perceptions of security. Despite important differences among these events, they could be collectively labelled as non-traditional security threats.

**New Powers**

Neorealists are not the only ones who argue that the shifts in the distribution of power has a major effect on security concepts and practices, although they are more likely (than liberals or

---

constructivists) to view these changes as system-wide, focus their analysis on states, rather than individuals or societies, and make the balance-of-power the key tool of investigating the nature and impact of change. A problem in using the distribution of power as the main catalyst of changing security concepts is that we are frequently unsure, especially since the end of the Cold War, as to how exactly power is being redistributed. Even the Cold War consensus that the system was bipolar was subject to challenge, especially in the regional context of East Asia, due to the presence of China. Since the end of the Cold War, we have seen major debates as to whether the system has been unipolar or multipolar, or neo-bipolar (US-China replacing US-USSR). While unipolarity might now be regarded as having been a moment albeit a long one), rather than an era, its decline has triggered another round of debate about the shape of the coming power configuration in world politics: thanks to a proliferation of terms like “polycentric” (Joseph Nye), “nonpolar” (Richard Haas), apolar (Niall Ferguson), neopolar (The Economist), etc. etc.

Does it matter? How does the changing distribution of power, actual or imagined, affect our understanding of security? Perhaps very little. By itself, change to the distribution of power does not change the concept of security people and states have. Some of the biggest changes to the idea of security occurred without changes to the distribution of power - for example the broadening of security from a strictly military-oriented notion to economic and environmental security all occurred during the era of bipolarity. Human security was influenced by the end of the Cold War, which is not the same as end of bipolarity. But it is possible that a plurality of powers, or the absence of a global hegemon dominant in all issue areas of international relations might mean or encourage alternative views about security to emerge. Hence the rise of the EU as an international actor confronts the concept of collective security (represented by NATO) with an alternative, more normative-oriented notion, as symbolized in the increasingly fashionable designation of EU as a “normative power”.

The key question about shifts in the distribution of power is not whether it will generate more or less stability (in the manner of the old debate about whether bipolarity is more stable than multipolarity), but whose concept of security will matter more or most. Change to power structures means room of new leadership, which may make the real difference to how the concept of security is defined and undetood. Common to all conceptualizations of power today is the decline if not the end of Western dominance, and the growing weight of some non-Western countries –China, India, Brazil, Japan, Indonesia, South Africa, Nigeria, Iran, Egypt, etc. etc., - in world affairs. Even if one selects only a handful of them, say China, India and Brazil, as the emerging global powers of the 21st century, does it not mean that their respective ideas about security will affect how the concept is understood in the academic literature and policy discourse? Will the America-centric or Western-centric definition of security be imbued with, if not quite replaced by, something that reflects the vantage-point and perspective of these emerging powers?

To take a particularly important example, for over more than a decade, the Chinese have promoted what they call “a New Security Concept”. According to the Chinese government’s official position paper on the subject, the New Security Concept includes the following:

- To conduct cooperation on the basis of the UN Charter, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and other widely recognized norms governing international relations, and give full play to the leading role of the United Nations;
To peacefully resolve territorial and border disputes and other controversial issues through negotiations;

To reform and improve the existing international economic and financial organizations and promote common prosperity in line with the principle of reciprocity and mutual benefit and common development;

To place emphasis on non-traditional security areas such as combating terrorism and transnational crimes, in addition to the traditional security areas like preventing foreign invasion and safeguarding territorial integrity;

To conduct effective disarmament and arms control with broad participation in line with the principle of justice, comprehensiveness, rationality and balance, prevent the proliferation of weapons of massive destruction, uphold the current international arms control and disarmament regime and refrain from arms race.4

Even a superficial glance at the paper will quickly reveal that few of the elements of the New Security Concept are really “new”. The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence goes back to the 1950s. The demand for reforming international institutions to make them more attuned to reciprocity and mutual benefit (and less dominated by the West) is a familiar slogan from the developing nations bloc with which China has for long self-identified. Hence, the NSC is not even new for the Chinese themselves. Moreover, while the position paper mentions “non-traditional security areas”, such as terrorism and transnational crime, it does not mention human security, even if the concept had been around for almost a decade. So what is really new about the NSC? It may well be that the NSC is offered as an alternative to the “Cold War mentality” (guess whose?), another Chinese construct. Moreover, it signals and reflects China’s visible turn to Asia-Pacific multilateralism, after an initial period of doubt and suspicion. The NSC may also be seen as an effort to legitimize China’s growing power and role in international affairs, and to address concerns raised by the West’s “China threat theory” much in the same way as Japan’s “comprehensive security” doctrine was seen by many as an attempt to mask increasing defence spending, legitimize its efforts to develop a more expansive security perimeter, and address regional concerns about a possible Japanese remilitarisation.

There are several reasons to doubt that between them, the emerging powers like China or India are willing or able to reshape the concept of security. The new powers of the world are not a very homogenous lot, even within Asia. They do not have a uniform view on security and order in the national and international context. Second, the tools and medium of security discourse, the research centers, journals, publishing houses, the media with a global reach, are still heavily centred in the West. And even if they do have an influence on how security is defined in the 21st century, this might well mean a return to the traditional definition of security a kind of neo-Westphalianism. Indeed, India and China both hold a rigid view of sovereignty and reject post-Westphalian notions such as

humanitarian intervention or human security. Critics might wonder whether these countries or their academic centres might bring into the debate over the meaning of security ideas and approaches that are likely to be self-serving or geared to rationalizing and promoting their own respective interests. As a result, conceptual competition is likely and will dilute their impact in reshaping the meaning of security.

New Warfare

The “new warfare” is also a major catalyst of change in the way security is defined and understood. There is a growing debate over whether warfare is being rendered obsolete, or at least becoming less destructive of human lives. While one might agree with Margaret Mead that warfare is a social invention, it might well be a permanent invention. Few believe, a la John Mueller, that warfare is going out of style in the manner of slavery or duelling, once socially acceptable and commonplace. But just as slavery and honour killing have taken on new forms, war may simply be taking on new forms, rather than disappearing altogether.

To many, a more serious claim would be whether war is becoming less frequent and/or costing less lives. This concern with the human cost of conflict is a central theme of the concept of human security. The first Human Security Report, issued by the Human Security Centre at the University of British Columbia in 2005 (the report has since moved to Simon Fraser University), caused a good deal of controversy by suggesting that there had been a sharp decline in armed conflicts and that war is taking less lives than ever before. It also suggested several reasons for this trend: such as the end of the Cold War, increasing UN peace operations, rising economic interdependence among nations, the impact of norms, etc. But not everyone is convinced. Aside from the fact that intra-state conflicts have increased significantly relative to inter-state conflict (a trend recognized in the Human Security Report, 2005), critics argue that the decline in warfare has not been as pronounced as claimed, and that the trend is not irreversible. Moreover, analysts and leaders from the developing world feel that the old warfare (inter-state conflict) is simply being offset by new forms, such as humanitarian intervention.

Central to the notion of new warfare is of course technological change. It was no coincidence that the concept of national security came about when technology had advanced sufficiently to be able to cause or threaten to cause substantial damage or total destruction of the whole territories of nation states from across vast distances. Technology creates new forms of insecurity. It changes the nature of warfare. It makes warfare more destructive. The chemical defoliants used in the Vietnam War, a precursor to contemporary concerns about environmental security, were one example of how new technologies of war could cause new forms of insecurity. The notion of “global security” is a direct offshoot of globalisation, which is substantially driven by technology diffusion. New technologies of information and cyber warfare and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction make it more meaningful to speak of global security, rather than national security. Technology has placed an ever increasing power of destruction in their hands of an ever decreasing number of actors. Similarly, new forms of small arms with increasing killing potential and ease of affordability underscores one reason why the concept of human security has gained resonance among some of its advocates.

Military build-ups and arms races are usually a throwback to the old notion of national security, although some would claim that the revolution of military affairs (RMA) reduces the human costs of
violent conflict. New military technologies do save lives, and even makes warfare more humane. Hence, it is argued that human security may well depend not just on making war or violence less likely, but also on reducing the human costs of conflicts that cannot simply be avoided. In other words, solutions to the problem of human security in conflict zones can be found within the new technologies of warfare. But the recent experience in Afghanistan, where highly advanced weapons have not prevented significant collateral damage, does not inspire much confidence in this view.

The ongoing military modernization in East Asia, which is assuming ever greater proportions, features both conventional weaponry as well as RMA related technologies. China, Japan, India, as well as several ASEAN members, have undertaken a major upgrading of their air and naval forces. China is investing massively on information warfare technologies. In Northeast Asia and South Asia, this military build-up is motivated primarily by traditional security concerns, i.e. inter-state rivalries. While a good deal of modern weaponry can be dual-purpose, meaning it can be used to combat traditional as well as non-traditional threats (pirates, terrorists), there is a contradiction between East Asia’s apparent embrace of non-traditional security and the contours of the regional arms build-up that suggests the continuing primacy of traditional security threats. The introduction of a variety of new generation weapons has meant a reemphasis on national security concerns.

**Domestic Politics and Political Change**

Domestic politics and political change can be added to the list of forces that can spur new security thinking. However, two important caveats about domestic politics are necessary here. First, a central element of domestic politics is regime survival and strategies of regime legitimation, rather than state security per se. Thus, as discussed before, while comprehensive security and non-traditional security are both domestic politics oriented, the former is historically more associated with regime legitimation and survival rather than security of the state as a whole. When China adopted the notion of non-traditional security recently, it did so with the purpose of shoring up both the security of the state from a host of new threats, as well as to enhance the legitimacy and ensure the continued survival of communist party rule. Second, domestic politics and political change as a catalyst of new security thinking does not equate with democratisation. New security concepts can be associated with any type of shift in domestic politics. Southeast Asia’s collective descent into authoritarian rule in the 1960s and 70s paved the way for new security concepts such as national and regional resilience in Indonesia, total defence in Singapore and Malaysia’s comprehensive security doctrine. China’s embracing of non-traditional security is closely tied to domestic politics and regime legitimation, but not reflective of democratization, the evidence for which is far from certain. Lately, East Asia offers some signs that democratic governments are more likely to adopt a human security framework; as seen in the case of Japan, Thailand after the outbreak of the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and Indonesia in the post-Suharto period. But this is not to say that democratic governments always adopt human security ideas, as the case of India shows.

**International Institutions and Epistemic Communities**

International institutions, new or old, as well as epistemic communities, play an important role in (re)defining security. They can create and diffuse new security ideas and norms and institutionalize them. The concept of human security was in a sense invented by an international institution: the United Nations Development Programme. Aside from UN agencies like UNDP and UNHCR, regional organizations are increasingly attuned to the idea of human security. The idea of common security,
though articulated by the Palme Commission, was institutionalized by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). ASEAN and its epistemic counterpart, the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) diffused the notion of comprehensive security originally coined in Japan. The ASEAN Regional Forum and the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific (CSCAP) institutionalised the cooperative security idea. The ASEAN Plus Three (APT) group, and the Network of East Asian Think Tanks is playing a similar role with respect to the non-traditional security concept.

Academics are often quick to reconceptualize security after policymakers have made their “speech acts”. But in Asia, “pure” academic discourses (i.e., debates for the sake of generating new theories and concepts, as opposed to Track-II networking and conferencing aimed at serving the information needs of governments) have not played as important a role in redefining security as in the West, particularly in Europe, although the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Issues in Asia (NTS-Asia), set up by this author and modelled after the Canadian Consortium on Asia Pacific Security (CANCAPS), constitutes an important exception. NTS-Asia did much to debate securitization theory and examine its relevance in the Asian context; in that sense it was both academic and policy oriented. Following the lead of NTS-Asia, other centres to promote non-traditional security have been established, including the Centre for Non-Traditional Security at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (which is also hosted the secretariat of NTS-Asia, although NTS-Asia, funded by the Ford Foundation was strictly a pan-Asian, rather than Singaporean, entity). The Center for Non-Traditional Security and Peaceful Development Studies at Zhejiang University, the host of this conference, and the first centre on NTS in China, is another example of epistemic intervention in promoting change in security thinking and conceptualization in East Asia.

International institutions have also been in the forefront of implementing new security agendas. Many non-traditional security issues, such as environmental degradation, refugees, drug trafficking and money laundering, are being addressed through institutions, although often not with a great deal of effectiveness. In Asia, regional institutions have an increasing role in non-traditional security issues. ASEAN has created a Food Security Reserve, negotiated a transboundary pollution treaty, and a counter-terrorism convention, and is developing humanitarian assistance mechanism to address natural disasters (but not yet to deal with violence associated with internal conflicts). The ARF has reoriented itself towards non-traditional security issues, especially curbing transnational financial crime and maritime security challenges. APEC has been concerned with environmental security issues. APT is central to regional economic and financial security concerns. But Asian institutions, still wedded to Westphalian sovereignty, have a long way to go before emerging as instruments for implementing new security concepts.

**China’s Regional Security Doctrine**

The Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, held annually since 2002, is Asia’s preeminent gathering of senior defence officials. The 9th Dialogue was held in Singapore during 4-6 June, 2010. Defence officials from 28 countries attended, including the US Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, for whom this was the fourth such dialogue in a row. Also present was the Deputy Chief of the Peoples’ Liberation Army of China, the National Security Adviser of India, and defence ministers of UK, Australia, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and a host of other Asia Pacific countries. The keynote speaker was South Korea’s President, Lee Myung-Bak, who gave a clear-headed exposure of his
response to the unprovoked sinking on 26th March of a South Korean navy ship by a North Korean torpedo which killed 46 of sailors.

A highlight of the 9th Dialogue was a statement outlining Chinese concepts of security, by General Ma Xiaotian, a senior PLA official. It gave a window not only into the Chinese security philosophy, but also the difficulties of putting it into practice and applying it to the vital US-China relationship.

According to the Chinese Security Doctrine, a rising China will not seek hegemony, although it recognizes that such worries are understandable. Instead, China seeks the “common security of international community.” China is increasingly interdependent with the entire Asia-Pacific region. It cannot maintain its own prosperity and security alone. The only true path to security lies in building a harmonious Asia-Pacific community, one which recognizes and tolerates the diversity of cultures and traditions.

China’s new security doctrine outlines a new type of relationship (“partnership”) with other nations and consists of five key elements. These are:

- **Integrated security**, calling for a comprehensive partnership, with intertwined traditional and non-traditional security threats. It suggests a close link between economic development and security. Non-traditional security such as food shortages, climate changes and pandemics will be viewed as major threats side-by-side with traditional security challenges such as inter-state conflict.

- **Common security**. No country can address transnational security threats alone. But at the same time, security can only be achieved on partnerships with other countries that is based on equal terms, without any nation dominating over others.

- **Inclusive security**, the third element, emphasizes the need for mutual trust, and rejects exclusive military alliances (reference to US alliances with Japan, South Korea and other Asia Pacific countries) which are targeted against other countries (read China). Such alliances are damaging and outdated. What is called for instead is full respect for each other’s core interests. As an alternative, China holds up the “ASEAN Way” of consultations and consensus and peaceful engagement of all nations as “a role model for new type of partnership”. China is actively participating in all Asia-Pacific multilateral forums, including the ASEAN Regional Forum, which in China’s view has made a significant contribution to regional peace and stability.

- **Cooperative security**, implies that security is to be achieved through cooperation, which would involve mutually beneficial partnerships and leads to a “win-win” situation for all involved. But security cooperation could start from relatively easy areas, such as economic cooperation and humanitarian disaster reliefs and gradually expand to cover more difficult political and strategic issues. During this process, interconnected interests and a sense of interdependence will emerge and guide further cooperation.

- **Evolving security**, the final element, strikes an optimistic note, suggesting that the understanding of security by China and other nations is not static, or dependent on short-term calculations or single incident, but a long-term process subject to changes that will overcome historical animosities.
How can China’s new security approach help managing the obstacles to a more stable US-China relationship? A clear hint of the difficulties came from the conflicting positions of the two sides on the role of US military alliances in the region and the issue over recent US arms sales to Taiwan. China’s General Ma sees a “Cold War mentality” in recent US moves to refocus and strengthen its alliances in the region. For China, such moves are contrary to the spirit of “inclusive security”. US Secretary of State Gates on the other hand asserted that the US military presence in Asia Pacific, which is maintained primarily on the basis of its alliances with countries like Japan and South Korea, are a regional a public good, protecting free access to global commons, including critical sealanes through which much of the region’s commerce flows. Gates justified these alliances and the US military build-up in the region as a part of a policy of strong and effective “extended deterrence”, which protects both the US allies from the threat of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile. He maintained that the US is shifting to a more geographically distributed, operationally resilient, and political sustainable strategic posture in the region.

Gates accused China of breaking military ties with the US over the Obama administration’s decision to sale arms to Taiwan. He insisted that such sales are consistent with long-standing US policy and that the weapons being sold were carefully selected to bolster Taiwan’s defensive capability against a growing Chinese military build-up. But China views US arms sales to Taiwan as a direct challenge to its “core national interests”, and evidence of the US failure to honor its past commitments, such as the 1982 China-US Communique which stipulated gradual reduction in US arms sales to Taiwan. One silver lining from this exchange was that China rebuttal of Gates’ claim that US-China military ties were “broken”. China has only temporarily suspended such ties at high levels. But low level visits continue.

The conflicting perspectives of China and the US on security have serious implications for Asia Pacific on regional security. Canada should not only be paying attention but playing an active role in this debate. But while Canada’s major security partners such as the US, Australia, Japan and South Korea chose to send their highest defence officials to the 9th Shangri-La Dialogue, Ottawa’s highest official here was its Vice Chief of Defence Staff. Such neglect entails serious costs. Recently, another major forum of regional defence and security in Asia Pacific was announced. This would be a meeting of the defence ministers of 10 ASEAN members plus eight others, including the US, China, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Korea, Russia, and Japan. Canada was not invited.

Conclusion

An interesting point that emerges from the foregoing is that many of the recent redefinitions of security have come about as the result of factors other than the shifts in the distribution of power. Although the notion of human security did receive a lift from the end of the Cold War, its real origin lay in longer-term forces predating the end of the Cold War, such as the development economists’ dissatisfaction with orthodox measures of economic development (in terms of GDP growth rates), the Human Development Report, the legacy of past commissions such as the Palme and Bruntland commission, and the rise of internal conflicts many of them unrelated to the end of the Cold War. Moreover, the movement towards a broader notion of security has progressed steadily through conflicting shifts in the distribution of power, including the rise and fall of the unipolar moment.

A more influential factor has been changing ideas about security. It is interesting that the emergence of concepts such as common security, comprehensive security, and human security was not
necessarily due to any major or sudden crisis. (Non-traditional security in Asia might have been different; it was influenced by a series of regional crises such as Bali terrorist bombings, SARS, and the Indian Ocean Tsunami.) Instead, these concepts were slow-moving, voluntary and evolutionary constructions featuring ideas and debates that fundamentally reflected dissatisfaction with the orthodox notions of security. A closely related factor is the changing international leadership, especially the role of Middle Power advocacy typified by Canada, Australia and Norway, which is not the same as changes to the distribution of power. Indeed, the combination of changing ideas about security and leadership could be the most important reason why security has been and will continue to the redefined in the 21st century.

The emergence of new threats, actual or perceived, is insufficient by itself to alter prevailing notions of security in the absence of prior ideational shifts. Damage to the environment, or poverty and underdevelopment, are longstanding, but they could not have been seen as security challenges in the absence of new conceptions of security such as non-traditional or human security. A related conclusion of this paper is that while crisis might serve as a catalyst for new security thinking, this does not necessarily mean a broadening of the security framework. The 9/11 attacks spawned the “new” doctrine of homeland security, which to many was nothing other than the return of the national security state. Although terrorism could be in theory framed as a threat to civilians and common people (hence to human security), terrorism experts and national security officials in West and Asia alike lost little time in advocating a response that is overwhelmingly “national security”-like in its orientation and instruments, most vividly illustrated in the Bush administration’s doctrine of pre-emption and “war on terror”.

Finally, one might ask: what is the most relevant and appropriate concept of security for Asia and the world in the 21st century? Which concept best captures the referent objects (who is being protected), threats (protected from what), and the impact zones (from where is the threat coming from and where is the response being directed) of security now and in the coming decades? Looking at developments associated with new warfare and the growing academic and policy prominence of non-traditional security concepts, Asia seems still wedded to the idea of national security, the policy rhetoric of and speech acts by leaders and Track-II conferences notwithstanding. National security remains especially dominant in Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, while non-traditional security (although it does not necessarily conflict with national security) appears increasingly important in Southeast Asia. The rise of China, India and Japan is unlikely to change this equation, although China, driven by domestic concerns, is striving to achieve a balanced mix between national and non-traditional security. It seems to be dealing with its North East Asian neighbours in mainly national security terms, while adopting a primarily non-traditional security approach towards Southeast Asians. All this while, human security, the most direct opposite of national security, remains a distant prospect in Asia.

But national security is no longer subject to a strict territorial logic. Globalization, rising levels of regional economic interdependence, RMA, nuclear proliferation, and the growing power projection capabilities of East Asian countries, means that inter-state and international conflicts and war in traditional security complexes such as India-Pakistan, the Korean Peninsula, and the Taiwan Straits, can no longer be a strictly bilateral or subregional affairs without larger regional and global implications. War as a national security referent is not dead, but its effects would reverberate ever more than before across national and sub-regional, even regional boundaries.
Thus, while national security as a concept and practice is far from obsolete, it is increasingly difficult to conceptualize security solely in terms of the traditional notion of national security. Non-traditional security, although not a direct antithesis of national security, is gaining support. As noted, NTS subsumes the older notion of comprehensive security, but whether it is simply old wine in new bottle can be debated. Both comprehensive security and NTS are fundamentally state-centric, although comprehensive security is more regime security oriented. Responses to NTS issues tend to securitize them as national security challenges, rather than human security ones. The idea of non-traditional security in this sense will remain a misnomer if it continues to be fundamentally threat-driven without a prior or corresponding change in ideas that might render it less of a state-centric notion. But non-traditional security issues are also increasingly regional in scope and manifestation and responses to them are increasingly regionalised, with regional institutions adopting tasks geared to addressing such threats. Asian countries, as their counterparts in other regions of the world, are finding it easier to cooperate on NTS issues than over strictly national security issues.

Hence, in Asia today, the prevailing security paradigm consists of no single concept, but an interplay of national, non-traditional and human security ideas and approaches. Perhaps the new security concept for Asia and the world in the 21st century is better described as transnational security, incorporating national security events and instruments that have wide regional and international implications (especially in Asia where the emerging regional powers are also potential global players, as China and Japan already are), non-traditional security issues that challenge state institutions and governance capacity, and human security concerns that are fundamentally geared towards security, well-being and dignity for the people.

Table 2: Changing Security Discourses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Catalyst</th>
<th>Main National, Institutional and epistemic advocates in Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Security</td>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>Technological change/New warfare</td>
<td>US, SEATO, Five Power Defence Arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Security</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>Domestic politics and regime legitimation</td>
<td>Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, ASEAN, ASEAN-ISIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common/Cooperative Security</td>
<td>1970s/1980s</td>
<td>Ideational prior, institutions</td>
<td>ARF, CSCAP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Security</td>
<td>1990s-2000s</td>
<td>Ideational prior, institutions, domestic political change</td>
<td>Canada, Norway, Japan, Thailand, ASEAN Secretariat(since Surin Pisuwan)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>