Chapter Five
REGIONAL THREATS TO SECURITY

In the previous chapter the issues that have been discussed were strictly domestic concentrating on factors that put to test the states’ internal security and stability. It is the scope of this chapter to go a level higher and take stock of those threats that have regional security implications. Herein it is again important to remember that apart from bilateral tensions, there are non-traditional security threats that span across the region but at times may originate from individual states. It is the scope of this chapter to mention such issues.

Before going into the details of the kind of security threats that arise from intra-state tensions and larger regional threats, one may refer to Buzan’s famous security complex, more specifically heterogeneous security complex.\(^1\) Considering the fact that the security scenario within Southeast Asia has become very complex and multifactored, it would be rather sensible to identify the region as a Buzanian heterogeneous security complex where various actors and sectoral determinants interact to shape the state of intrastate relations. Therefore, taking note of the complex intermingle of actors and factors, it is prudent to discuss some of the major state to state bilateral relationships involving both traditional and non-traditional security issues. In addition there are certain issues that threaten all or a large part of the Southeast Asian states and thus jeopardises regional security.

Bilateral relations and associated tensions are deeply ingrained in their historical relations, yesteryears’ experiences and deep entrenched animosities. It has a strong impact on their mutual security perceptions. Bilateral tensions had been pushed to the back seat during the Cold War when state to state relationship was determined solely by ideology driven political considerations. Ideology was complemented by the tussle for power and influence over the region. However within the region the criterion for determining a friend or a foe was largely on the basis of historical

\(^1\) Barry Buzan introduced the word Security Complex where the interdependence between the states is intense enough to the extent that their security concerns cannot be analysed or their problems solved independently from the other states within the region. In the heterogeneous security complex model the interaction and interdependence within a region involves a number of actors from different sectors thus giving a holistic estimate of the intensity of interactions and interdependence within that particular region. See, Barry Buzan, People States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era, Boulder, Rienner and London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.
experience. Else, it would be difficult to explain Thailand’s eagerness to strike a chord with China during the Vietnam-Cambodia imbroglio. The Chinese on their part not only reciprocated positively but also gradually withdrew support for the communist insurgencies in Southeast Asia, especially in the non-communist states of Thailand and Malaysia. It definitely had a positive impact on the security perceptions of these two states. All these point to the fact that the bilateral issues between states within the region of Southeast Asia have nothing to do with the Cold War; they emanate from regional causes and contexts. Therefore, there was only a simple lull in those problems during the Cold War period; they re-emerged in the post Cold War period. In addition new and emerging issues have added texture to these problems. Thus it is necessary to look at the state of bilateral relations on the basis of a discussion of the issues that constitute mutual threat perceptions. Some of these are conventional ones but non-conventional ones have been gaining importance by the day. Issues that will be focused upon include overlapping territorial (including maritime) claims and border demarcation problems, cross-border insurgency support, economic competition, refugees, and illegal immigration. In addition, there are issues like the challenge of piracy, narcotics trafficking, trans-national terrorism, and health hazards that plague all or majority of the States of Southeast Asia.

a) The state of relations between Thailand and Myanmar: The state of relations between these two countries is conditioned by their historical experiences and that is one of mutual competition and rivalry. Therefore their bilateral relationship is marred by mutual suspicion. Mutual negative perception did not essentially lead to tensions and conflict because for quite a period of time both the states were busy in their respective domestic fronts attempting to attain stability and socio-political security. Yet, it is remarkable that both the neighbours were dominated by military regimes. So it was in a way beneficial that both the countries did not wish to get into squabble on any political issue. However by the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the rise of democratic forces coupled with ethnic insurgency in Myanmar created a situation that led to tensions between itself and Thailand. Ethnic rebel camps like Manerplaw were located at the Thai border along the Moei River. Manerplaw became the symbol of solidarity between democratic and ethnic forces. Besides a huge number of hapless and helpless people poured into Thailand and found refuge in the Myanmar adjacent province of Mae Song Hon. Myanmar army made a few
incursions into the province targeting the Karens in the mid 1990s. Another assault was carried out by Myanmar against the Mong Tai Army (MTA) where they crossed the Salween. These actions had irritated the Thai government for they took these military operations as a violation of their borders. Besides, Thailand's inability to protect the innocent refugees earned it a lot of international criticism. No wonder Thailand in the early nineties was critical of the excesses by the junta in Myanmar.

Borders are an issue of contention between Thailand Myanmar. Thai security planners think that major rivers like the Salween, Mekong and the Moei are traditional boundaries and therefore any encroachment of the rivers is a violation of their borders. Such borders are ill-defined and porous making it an easy conduit for illegal trafficking. It is difficult to mark boundaries as the rivers keep changing course. As the rivers change course due to rains or due to heavy sedimentation any change creates complications and none of the sides are ready to yield any concession creating situations for armed confrontations. Military clashes have taken place in 1997, 1999 and once again not very long ago in 2001. Although attempts to solve these problems are on, solution is not in sight. The involvement of refugees, pro-democracy activists of Myanmar make the issue of Thai-Myanmar borders an extremely perilous one. For instance, following the clashes in 2001, on the one hand, the Myanmar government planned to use the tensions with Thailand to increase its support among the ethnic minorities that occupy the border. On the other hand, the SSA launched an attack on several Myanmar military posts in the area. Myanmar media has accused the Thai forces of offering covering artillery fire and aiding the SSA soldiers in taking over four Myanmar posts. Bangkok denied the allegations, saying that Thai military forces did fire mortar rounds across the border, but only after coming under fire themselves. It seems that cross-border shelling and minor clashes are relatively common between Myanmar and Thailand, as each fights ethnic

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3 In 1997, the clash took place as Moei River changed course, in favour of Myanmar, it resulted in a military standoff. After a two month long tense confrontation, between the two sides the government sealed borders at Mae Sot in Tak province. See, “Myanmar seals post in escalation of border dispute with Thailand”, *Straits Times*, June 14, 1997. Cited in op.cit.no.150, p.21.
4 In one incident in January 1999, the Myanmar government accused a Thai naval vessel of firing at one of its naval ships. For border related tensions over the Karen ethnic groups living in Thailand see, “Thailand, Myanmar Border Troops on Alert”, *Asian Political News*, October 18, 1999.
insurgents and drug traffickers operating in the area.\(^5\) Since the border between the states is characterised by the presence of rivers which have their own course, demarcation is a difficult problem. Therefore, it seems that the border problem between the two states will not be easy to solve.

Yet another problem in Thai–Myanmar relations is the question of illegal fishing. There is the constant problem of Myanmar’s trawlers and fishermen encroaching into Thai waters. On the other hand, Thai trawlers have been exploiting Myanmar’s need for foreign currency and acquiring licences to fish in Myanmar’s sea; sooner they created mischief and duplicated the licences and were using more than one trawler.\(^6\) Consequently, Myanmar has been losing a lot of its rich marine resources. Myanmar has subsequently stopped buying of licenses, but illegal fishing continues to irritate Myanmar.\(^7\)

China has been getting too friendly with Myanmar for Thailand’s comfort. Notwithstanding the short political honeymoon with China during the Vietnam-Cambodia war, Thais never think China to be a very reliable partner. China is a communist state with a strategy to expand its influence right to the Bay of Bengal. The Thais are alarmed by Chinese military installations in Myanmar including naval station in the Gulf of Tenasserim and radar installations in the Coco Islands in the Bay of Bengal. Besides, China is facilitating its communications by building roads and railways through Myanmar.\(^8\) Under such circumstances, the Thais have two options – seek assistance from its old-time ally United States or increase its military presence. They have enhanced their military preparations in an attempt to balance of

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\(^6\) N. Ganesan, op.cit.no.150, p.21.

\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) In the geo-economic dimension, Myanmar is important for China in the context of being a landridge for China to revive its ‘southwest silk road’ from Yunnan province to Myanmar and westward to Bangladesh, India and the West. The link up with Myanmar could help to develop the poor economies in the southwestern part of inland China to trade with the growing economies of Southeast Asia and India. Furthermore, with the realization of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) with a population of 500 million, China could promote trade southward using Myanmar as a ‘landridge’, linking China’s inland provinces with the rest of Southeast Asia. For more on the economic dimension of China’s policy objectives towards Myanmar see, Poon Kim Shee, “The Political Economy of China-Myanmar Relations: Strategic and Economic Dimensions”, Ritsumeikan Annual Review of International Studies, vol.1, 2002, pp. 33-53.
the Chinese. In any case the Chinese sway over Myanmar will lead to further tension and invigorate militarization of that part of the Indo-China complex.

b) The state of relations between Thailand and Malaysia: In comparison to Myanmar, relations with Malaysia are not very intensive and perhaps for that reason their tensions and differences are not that explicit as in the case of Myanmar. Both the countries have no love for communism and have been closer to the west. However, their differences again arise from historical experiences but this time in terms of culture and religion. While Thailand is confined to the Indo-China complex and is stringed to the Tibeto-Burmese identity that practices Theravada Buddhism, Malaysia is located in the Malay Archipelago complex and belongs to the maritime zone of Southeast Asia. It is inhabited by Malay-Indonesian people and is largely Islamic. Therefore, despite of geographical proximity the two countries were estranged by their socio-cultural identities. Thailand’s overtures towards the maritime zones during the Cold War were a makeshift arrangement that did not actually help to weave Thailand and Malaysia into an infallible bond of friendship. With the end of the Cold War, Thailand has been busier with its territorial neighbours than with Malaysia; its attention towards Malaysia has only been a part of its general thoughts for all the countries of Southeast Asia.9

There are tensions between the two countries and these arise from the problems of insurgency and separatism in Southern Thailand. Their roots are historical – the French and the British worked a Treaty in 1896 where the four Thai provinces of Yala, Satun, Narathiwat and Patani were handed over to the British ruling peninsular Malaya. It was returned in 1909 to Thailand but only this time with a small Malay Muslim minority now known as Pattani Muslims a name taken after the province they resided in. Pattani is believed to have close links with the Sultan of Kelanatan, a province in Malaysia. It establishes the rationale for Malaysia to have a soft corner for their cause. The activities of the Pattani Muslims under the flagship of the Pattani United Liberation Organisation (PULO) have been on the rise since the 1990s10 giving rise to suspicion that Malaysia is involved. The finger of suspicion has been

9 N. Ganesan, op. cit. no. 150, p. 24.
10 During Cold War, Malaysia and Thailand were rooting out communists in both the countries, PULO also faced the brunt and their activities had receded.
pointed towards the Partai Islam se Malaysia (PAS) but Malaysia has not accepted the allegation.\textsuperscript{11} Of late, Thailand has been particularly heavy handed in dealing with the challenge of insurgency in southern Thailand. It also has grand designs to improve the economic conditions of the provinces involved with insurgency. One of the proposals is to work along with Malaysia. On the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit in January 2007 the countries agreed to reconvene annual talks and to push forward the Joint Development Strategy, which is designed to foster economic integration between Thailand’s southern provinces and Malaysia’s northern states. It is to be seen whether this kind of development strategy will reduce insurgency or will pave the way for Malaysian assistance to the insurgents.

Illegal immigration is a constant irritant between the two states. Malaysia’s economic performance has attracted migrants largely illegal. There is no way Malaysia can absorb the entire work force especially since the Asian meltdown that has affected the county substantially. Besides, because of its fundamental policy to satisfy the bumiputeras, there remains very little scope that the outsiders can get jobs and be accepted as citizens in Malaysia. Malaysia is also unhappy with Thailand because the latter makes no effort to control relentless infiltration through it long and porous border. Similarly, Thai fishing trawlers have sailed their ways into Malaysian territorial waters, a number of trawlers have been detained off the coast of Trengganu. Violence has also taken place when in 1995 Malaysian naval gunboats shot two Thai fishermen leading to strong civilian protest and a threat to float a 2000 strong flotilla of fishing trawlers\textsuperscript{12} in Malaysian waters. Negotiations resulted in the diffusion of the tension.

Overlapping territorial claims constitute another dimension of bilateral disputes. Ambiguity regarding delimitation of borders has resulted in claims and counter claims. There are two stretches of the Malaysia-Thailand border which is subject to dispute. The first involves the land border in the Bukit Jeli (Jeli Hill) at the headwaters of the Golok River and the second involves the continental shelf

\textsuperscript{11} A good idea of the Malaysian factor in Southern Thailand can be obtained from Moshe Yegar, Between Integration and Secession: The Muslim Communities of Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand and Western Burma/Myanmar, Maryland, Lexington Books, 2002, pp.155-162.

\textsuperscript{12} N. Ganesan, op.cit.no.150, p.25.
boundary in the Gulf of Thailand.\textsuperscript{13} The undemarcated land border facilitated smuggling; there have been incidents of incursion in the early 1990s. In 1991 the Thai based Border Patrol Police made incursions into the Malaysian side of the border at Pedang Besar.\textsuperscript{14} However in the case of Thailand, both the countries decided since the 1970s to develop the disputed area jointly. Known as the Malaysia-Thailand Joint Development Area, is a 7,250 square km area in the Gulf of Thailand which was created as an interim measure to deal with the overlapping claims of the continental shelf between the two countries. The formula allows for both countries to share the non-living natural resources from the area on a 50:50 basis. It however does not extinguish the sovereignty claims by both countries over the area.

In order to curb smuggling activities, in 2001 the two countries agreed to construct just one wall along the border which would be located just inside Thai territory.\textsuperscript{15} The new border wall is 2.5m high and made up of a concrete lower half and steel fencing on the upper half. At the base, barbed wire runs along the length of the wall. The wall that once served as a physical immunity from the communists is said to protect against the insurgents. However as some would see it beyond just a simple division between the countries, “a 12-mile wall mark the divide not just between Thailand and Malaysia but between Southeast Asia’s Muslim and Buddhist worlds.”\textsuperscript{16} Taking up that negative note, it seems Thailand’s military activism either in southern Thailand or at the Gulf of Thailand makes the warming of Thai-Malay relations a little more difficult than it can be conceived to be. Given the basic context where the two cultures speak differently it is unlikely that all bilateral tensions will be addressed successfully, tensions will continue to simmer beneath an apparent calm.

c) The state of relations between Indonesia and Malaysia: The relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia is underlined by Indonesia’s hegemonic presence in

\textsuperscript{13} For a basic idea on the nature of the disputes see, Nguyen Hong Thao, “Joint Development In the Gulf of Thailand”, IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin, Autumn 1999, pp. 79-82.
\textsuperscript{14} N. Ganesan, op.cit.no.150, p.26.
\textsuperscript{16} Thailand insurgency may have links to the broader world of Radical Islam, Associated Press, Friday, March 9, 2007
the Malay Archipelagic Complex, which dwarfs Malaysia’s stature. Clashes between these neighbours mark their immediate past; the three year clash that took place in the 1960s revolved around the proposal to form the Federation of Malaya that would include the Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak. Like wise the Indonesians after the World War II were thinking of a greater Indonesia inclusive of the Malay Archipelago. Therefore there is enough reason for them to be suspicious of one another. Malaysia being the weaker state feels insecure, for that matter its perception of external threat is conditioned by the overbearing presence of Indonesia.

Territorial problems are a contentious component in the bilateral relationship between states. The most serious of the territorial disputes are over the islands of Ligitan and Sipidan. They are a pair of islands off Borneo’s northeast coast off the land border between the Malaysian state of Sabah and the Kalimantan in Indonesia. The issue was solved by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) who awarded the verdict in favour of Malaysia by virtue of the fact that Malaysia was the successor state of the British regime. Yet the ICJ did not resolve the undecided maritime border dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia in the Sulawesi Sea. As per the verdict, the two islands fall south of what Indonesia claims to be the base line.

One must not forget that although the judgement has been accepted by both the two sides, Indonesia is not happy and as the powerful one, it depends on to its good faith to abide by the decision. Meanwhile, Indonesian-Malaysian ties worsened significantly in February 2005 after Malaysia awarded an offshore production sharing contract to Shell within Ambalat, a disputed maritime region east of Borneo. In response, Jakarta deployed seven ships to the area and four F-16s to East Kalimantan, an escalation of tension in an area with two Malaysian vessels already on patrol. Access to waterways is essential to both the sides and Indonesia as the

17 The ICJ in the Hague ruled in December 17, 2002, that the Southeast Asian Islands of Sipidan and Ligitan, disputed by Malaysia and Indonesia belong to Malaysia. The judges rejected arguments made by both the sides involving colonial maps and treaties pertaining two islands which lie to the West North Kalimantan, Indonesia. The 16-1 decision is the first Southeast asian territorial ruling in the ICJ history. Sipidan came to limelight when in 2000 the Abu Sayyf Group from the Philippines raided and kidnapped 21 people. The ICJ rejected the Philippine request to join the proceedings of the Islands. Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda expressed disappointment with the verdict but accepted it. See, U.N. Wire, Tuesday, December 17, 2002, available at, http://www.unwire.org/.

dominating power in the archipelago asserts its claims over the Lombok and Sunda straits. 19

Geographical proximity has not only led to territorial disputes, it is also feared to create complications in overlapping claims to the Exclusive Economic Zones. In fact Indonesian claims to an EEZ 200nm wide overlap with similar claims of seven neighbours. In a clockwise manner those neighbours are India, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, The Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Australia. The maritime boundaries with Malaysia have been demarcated but the demarcation has not been completed because of the problem of overlapping claims. 20 As discussed previously, Malaysia has also become the neighbour victim to Indonesia's regular forest fires in the periphery. Malaysians are also victims of air pollution and suffer from respiratory and other pollution related health problems.

The Indonesians are suspicious that Malaysia has been discreetly supporting the Aceh separatists. Refugees are there in Malaysia, some have refused to be deported back to the country for they feel insecure and threatened by the Indonesian army. In 1997 illegal Achenese immigrants camped in Selangor resisted being sent back to Aceh. 21 Apart from the Achenese there are thousands of illegal immigrants who are burdening Malaysia beyond its means. Repatriation seems a futile exercise so long as Indonesia is not in a position to control the influx. In fact after Malaysia was hit hard by the economic crisis, it chose to forgo cheap Indonesian labour and decided to deport them in large numbers. As economic power houses, both the states had fared well until the Asian crisis. In fact at a point of time they were vying for attention from the outsiders as formidable yet responsible states of Southeast Asia. Both the states had policy differences, thanks to the perception differences between the two towering state leaders Prime Minister of Malaysia Mohammad Mahathir and the Indonesian President, General Suharto. While Mahathir floated the idea of East

21 N. Ganesan, op.cit,no.150, p.31.
Asian Economic Caucus (EAEC), Suharto was more comfortable in ASEAN and in the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). It is therefore a simmering but constant competition and rivalry of status and recognition that inhibits smooth neighbourly relations between these two countries. In addition, unresolved maritime claims and chronic problems like illegal immigration are feared to embitter relations between Malaysia and Indonesia.

d) The State of relation between Malaysia and Singapore: The relation and mutual threat perception between these two states are conditioned on the one hand by their bitter historical experience from the 1960s, and on the other hand by their interdependence. Geographical proximity, the joint British administration along with a short lived Japanese occupation made the two states almost inseparable with common political security interests. The commonality of the historical experience was reinforced by their common membership in the anti-communist military alliance the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA). Yet the bitter experience from the Malay Federation in the mid 1960s had its telling impact, widening the gap between the two countries, fuelling tensions between them. As an aftermath of the separation of the two all joint enterprises were dissolved and the Malay regiment was withdrawn from Singapore. Singapore followed it up by establishing its own armed forces and took help of outsiders to set up their military establishments. This was not taken too well by the Malaysians. Malaysia also learnt its share of lessons from the separation, particularly two of them. First, the country became more conscious about the territorial integrity, secession. Malaysia’s secession was seen as a surrender of Malaysian territory and an impingement on its indivisibility. Second, the event served as a catalyst for consolidating Malay identity. So long as Singapore was a part of the Malay Federation, Chinese were substantial in their presence. Malays felt insecure as they saw Chinese as a race alien to Malay culture. China steeped in communism was not seen as a desirable friend to a state with a perceptibly substantial Muslim population. It seems that there were almost not much scope for commonality between Confucianism and Islam. The bitter experience of Singapore’s

22 Originally there was agreement between the British, Malaysia and Singapore called the Anglo Malay Defense Arrangements. It was replaced in 1971 by the Five Power Defense Arrangements.
short stay and its dissociation underlined future ethnic animosity between the Malays and the Chinese. It also underlined the reason for the failure of an apparent consociational democratic polity in Malaysia.

A very important issue between Singapore and Malaysia states is the Singapore’s dependence on Malaysia for food and water. Historically Singapore depended on water from the southernmost Malaysian state of Johor. Water transfers are part of 1961 and 1962 Malaysia-Singapore water supply agreements, which are set to expire in 2011 and 2061 respectively. As if to compensate for the loss of territory to Singapore, since the day of separation Malaysia consciously has been using water link as a foreign policy component giving itself leverage over Singapore. The message in Anthony Head’s (British High Commissioner in Malaysia) confidential telegram is a testimony to the observation. He wrote, “[t]hat if Singapore’s foreign policy was prejudicial to Malaysia’s interests they (the Malaysians) could always bring pressure to bear on them by threatening to turn off the water in Johore.” 24 Since then the water issue has been a very delicate aspect of Malaysia-Singapore relations; several Malaysian statesman have used water to their convenience to serve them as an antidote to Singapore’s anti-Malay stance. For instance, there was a call from anti-Zionist Malaysian politicians to end the water ties in order to protest against the visit of Chaim Herzog to Singapore. 25 The present Prime minister was then heard airing the resentment, “Malaysia saw Singapore’s invitation to Herzog as reflecting a lack of sensitivity towards its Muslim neighbours.” 26 In addition, there is also a problem regarding the use of Malaysian air space for Malaysia initially disallowed access to low flying areas. The final shock came when, in the late 1990s Malaysia declared without prior notification and withdrew access to Malaysian airspace for all aircraft from the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF). 27 Both the states try to extract benefits from the issue of water. For instance during the financial meltdown, Singapore tried to exploit the depressed economic situation in Malaysia by attempting to tie its offer of a four billion-dollar financial aid package to a renewal of

the long-term water deal. Later Malaysians tried to work out a deal where in exchange for water and the permission to use Malaysian air space, Singapore would have to agree to a number of Malaysian demands including relocation of the Malaysia’s Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) Complex to Kranji, and the demolition of a bridge to build roads. As to the use of water, Malaysians are determined to extract a price for the water Singapore uses.

The territorial dispute between the two states revolved around the tiny islet of Pedra Branca and the nearby Middle Rock and South Ledge that is located where the Singapore Strait meets the South China Sea. Singapore laid claims over it as successor to the Strait Settlements but Malaysia made references far back in history claiming that the Johor Sultanate had sovereign rights over it. Singapore had made various efforts to establish its claim. This included investigation into marine accidents in the waters around Pedra Branca, strict vigil on any other’s access to the island, plans to reclaim it and installation of military communications equipment there. Clashes in 1989, was followed by the decision by both the sides to go to the ICJ. In May 2008, the ICJ gave its verdict largely in favour of Singapore. The ICJ awarded the main island to Singapore, and the two smaller nearby outcrops to Malaysia. The court did not make a definitive ruling on the third rock of contention, South Ledge, which is visible only at low tide. It belongs to whoever owns the territorial waters it sits in, said the court. Therefore the judgement is incomplete and it will depend on whether the territorial waters between both the countries are clearly demarcated and are unanimously accepted.

28 Originally the CIQ complex was located in Tanjong Pagar railway station, Singapore had protested since that was within Singapore and had asked the CIQ to be moved to the Woodlands. However according to the new arrangement, while a new station in Kranji is constructed, Malaysia's CIQ would be moved first to Woodlands, then to Kranji on its completion. Singapore would build an underground railway tunnel from Johor to the proposed Kranji station, and the CIQ will move to Kranji once the tunnel is built.

29 It has become a source of earning for both the sides and therefore both the sides try to make the best of the deals. Singapore obtains half of its water needs from Malaysia under agreements running until 2061 and 2062. The Malaysian state of Johor provides 350 million gallons of water per day to Singapore at $0.007 per 1000 gallons, while Singapore has to resell a minimum 17 million gallons per day of treated water to Johor at $0.13 per 1000 gallons. According to the Singapore Ministry of Foreign affairs, "It costs Singapore (63 cents) to treat a thousand gallons of water. But Singapore sells the treated water to Johor at only (13 cents) per thousand gallons. Singapore is therefore absorbing the cost of treated water sold to Johor ... Johor in turn sells the treated water it has purchased from Singapore to its consumers at $1.04 per thousand gallons." See, "Malaysia-Singapore Water Issue Boiling", Singapore, United Press International, January 28, 2002.

Tensions between both the countries have been caused by the careless remarks of the erstwhile Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew where he suggested a merger with Malaysia is possible provided the latter practised meritocracy. It created furore in Malaysia for the Malays are rather sensitive about their bumiputera status. Again in his memoirs, he made very candid comments about Malaysian politicians and has made references to unhappy precedents that have annoyed the Malaysians.\textsuperscript{31} Singapore also exploited the chance of throwing muck at the Malaysian system when a defeated opposition party member of fled to Johor citing harassment as the cause. Sooner a legal proceeding followed where in an affidavit submitted on behalf of the PAP Johor was described as a den of anti-socals. It annoyed Malaysia and tensions ran high so long as Yew did not submit an apology that he did later, not once twice. Therefore, relations between the two are far from being harmonious. Bilateral issues will only be manifesting the discordance between the two. Describing the dialects between dependency and rivalry that characterises this particular bilateral relationship, Tim Huxley terms it as, “the most sensitive and unstable relationship between any pair of ASEAN members.”\textsuperscript{32}

e) The state of relations between Malaysia and Philippines: The most important issue within Malaysia and Philippines relations was the disputed claims over Sabah. The historical context of these claims began when the British decided to grant political independence to Brunei, British Borneo and Singapore by extending the territorial limits of the Federation of Malaya. Brunei withdrew from the scheme leaving it to the Federation of Malaya as we know it. It begot the ire of both Indonesia and the Philippines. While Indonesia embarked on a prolonged confrontation known as konfrontasi, Philippines severed diplomatic ties with Malaysia not before laying claims on Sabah. The basis of the Philippine position was an 1878 agreement between the Sultan of Sulu and the proprietors of the North Borneo Company transferring the administration of the North Borneo territory to the Company. Philippines insists that once the British relinquished the rights originally held by the Company, it would automatically revert back to the Sultan of Sulu and no

\textsuperscript{31} N. Ganesan, op.cit.no.150, p.43.
\textsuperscript{32} Tim Huxley, Defending the Lion City: The Armed Forces of Singapore, St. Leonard, Allen and Unwin, 2000, p.45.
other new member. Moreover, according to the constitutional provisions and
domestic legislation, the Philippines had inherited the dominion and sovereignty in
North Borneo as a matter of historic and legal right. The case has not led to any
major military confrontation, but that the Philippines has not renounced its claims
over Sabah was proven by Philippines presentation of the claim before the ICJ during
the case on Pedra Branca between Malaysia and Singapore. Yet Malaysia’s claim
over Sabah had been already established through the Ligitan and Sipadan Islands
case between Indonesia and Malaysia. Had Malaysia not been a member of the
Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) and had not they a way of influencing the
Middle East, then perhaps, Philippines would have considered military options. 33
Malaysia does not recognise Philippines’ claims and has not yet shown any interest
in responding to Philippines’ demand to go to the ICJ. Yet, interestingly, Malaysia
pays annual rent to the Sultan of Sulu, it’s in a way accepting Philippines claims over
Sabah. Another contentious territorial claim is the one at the South China Sea. In
1999, Philippine made accusations that Malaysia was erecting structures on
Investigator’s Shoal and occupying two other reefs that seemed to belong to the
Philippines. They had threatened that they would build structures as a counter
measure in the areas claimed by Malaysia. 34 However, Malaysia thinks that they are
building structures in the parts of the South China Sea that they said was rightly
theirs. 35

Illegal migration is also a source of tension between the two States. The Sulu
Archipelago and Mindanao houses gypsies called Bajau and Tausang, they have
regular contacts with Sabah. In fact a substantial number of Muslims from the
Philippines have crowded Sabah. Anti-social activities have increased in Sabah and
the Malaysian government is irritated with the state of affairs in Sabah due to the
exodus from the Philippines. The Philippines is also under the impression that
Malaysia is providing sanctuary to the Moros, most of them come as refugees and

33 In 1968, the Philippines had already tried to use force to put pressure on Malaysia. In an incident
called the Corregidor Affair Manila had trained a special military force in a place called Corregidor
Island in order to send them to infiltrate Sabah. J Soedjati Djiwandono, “Intra-ASEAN Territorial
in N. Ganesan, Bilateral Tensions in the Post Cold War ASEAN, Singapore, ISEAS, 1999, p.47.
35 Strait Times, June 28, 1999, cited in N. Ganesan, op.cit.no.150, p.47.
operate from Sabah. The Philippines' allegations must be taken seriously in the light of the increasing piracy and armed robbery in that region. In fact the stretch of waters separating Mindanao and Sulu archipelago from Sabah is a haven for smugglers, pirates and even Muslim activists including members of the Abu Sayyf gang. Malaysia does not seem seriously perturbed by the mounting pressure of the refugees, for it is said that the increasing Muslim population also provides valuable vote bank that can be wooed and encashed by the political parties – both UMNO and its opposition the Partai Bersatu Sabah (PBS). Last but not the least Malaysia has been unhappy in the way the Philippines had been critical of the Anwar case. The then President of the Philippines was vociferously critical of Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad as he was a good friend of Anwar Ibrahim. Yet this criticism did not blow out of proportions to create a political turmoil between the two states. In fact, in all the bilateral relations discussed so far, probably the relation between the Philippines and Malaysia is the least volatile except in one case – the claims in South China Sea. That is a regional problem also.

Besides the bilateral tensions discussed, above there are still more territorial disputes. One such dispute exists between Thailand and Cambodia over over the ancient temple of Preah Vihar. The basic tension is between the Kantharalak district (amphoe) in the Sisaket province of eastern Thailand and the Choam Khsant district in the Preah Vihear province of northern Cambodia. Thailand claims that demarcation has not yet been completed. Recently there have been tensions between the two sides as Thailand has tried to establish its claim over the temple. It only shows that Thailand does not accept the verdict of the ICJ in 1962 by which the temple belongs to Cambodia. The 1962 ICJ ruling remains deeply unpopular in Thailand, and has been used as a trigger of crude nationalist and anti-Cambodian sentiment. The latest round of tension involves both civilian unrest and amassing of military forces in the borders. Though the casualties are not alarming, the whole episode resonate the volatility of the Thai-Cambodian border. Thailand has yet another border dispute with Laos. There are the twin problems of border demarcation and the competing claims to two tiny islets on the Mekong between Thailand and

37 For the details on the events that led to this standoff, see, “Cambodia and Thailand's Standoff Threatens Regional Stability”, New America Media Commentary, August 1, 2008,
Vietnam, Mano I and Mano II. In addition, Laos will also want to get back the sixteen Isan community provinces that they claimed belonged to them but were taken away during colonial times. Probability of conflict is high as there have confrontations in the late 1980s. Both the sides are yet to demarcate the border and somehow Thailand's reluctance is testing the patience of the Laotian authorities. The Laotian attitude is reflected thus, "[t]he outcome of the Mano islets is a foregone conclusion; Lao will retain full control over it. After all, it is Lao's territory. To contest it would mean a protracted and bloody military campaign, which Thailand cannot afford, and Lao has nothing to lose". 38 There is a problem of overlapping territories between Malaysia and Brunei involving territorial waters which are believed to be rich in oil and gas deposits in the border areas between the two countries and the land boundary in Limbang, in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. Malaysia and Brunei have reached several agreements to resolve disputes but it is too early to predict the success of these negotiations and agreements.

In a different case, a dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia over Ambalat area in the Celebes Sea in 2005 has led to the deterioration of relations between the two countries. The dispute over Ambalat is related to the distribution of licence by Malaysian Oil Company Petronas to its own exploration arm along with Shell. The Malaysian blocks overlap Indonesian blocks leading to heated exchanges between Malaysia and Indonesia. Ambalat is a place that comes within the Sipidan Ligitan Islands region. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2002 had given an award in favour of Malaysia. However Indonesia has never been happy with the case and still claims that the both the Ligitan and Sipidan belongs to them and so does Ambalat. This had been flowed by tensions over construction work carried out by Indonesian engineers in Karang Atoll that lies within the disputed region. There were Malaysian interceptions warning the Indonesians to leave or face imprisonment. There have also been allegations from the Indonesian side that Malaysian Naval Surveillance aircrafts had entered the disputed Ambalat region. Tensions were running high in mid-2002. Though a military conflict did not take place, a diplomatic

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solution is pending and more so because the tensions arose even after the ICJ had
given its verdict regarding the Ligitan and Sipidan Islands in favour of Malaysia.\textsuperscript{39}

Brunei is involved in two particular territorial disputes. One of the disputes involves
a land border dispute with Malaysia around the Limbang region. In 2003, Malaysian
patrol boats claimed that they have chased away a French Oil company team in the
disputed region and that oil company was exploring after acquiring permission from
Brunei. Previously, in 2002, the Malaysian national oil company Petronas had signed
a contract with a US company Murphy Oil Company in order to explore a block that
was already awarded by Brunei to another Oil company, Total FinaElf in May 2002.
This led to disputes. In view of the overlapping claims, Brunei and Malaysia in 2003,
ceased gas and oil explorations in their disputed offshore and deep water sea-beds
and negotiations have stalemated prompting consideration of international
adjudication. However, Malaysia has ruled out chances legal solution to the disputed
claims. The Malaysians think that it is not a case of over lapping territorial claims
since Limbang region has always been a part of Malaysia, therefore the demarcation
of the border and the exclusive economic zone can be discussed between both the
countries. Progress on this front has not been very good. Talks between both the
states continue and they have also made agreements on jointly developing the Islamic
Banking system and the insurance system but negotiations on the Limbang issue
have not been smooth. Malaysian Prime Minister confessed that, there could no time
frame for this negotiation and the protracted negotiations were due to several
complex technical issues.\textsuperscript{40}

In the other territorial dispute Brunei is party to the South China Sea. Brunei has
claims over two reefs Lousia Reef (also claimed by Malaysia) and Rifleman Bank, a
maritime zone based on the continuation of the continental shelf. These claims are
based on historical records, a 1954 British decree declaring the boundaries of its
Borneo possessions to include, “the area of the continental shelf…to the territorial

\textsuperscript{39} For further details on the dispute over Malaysians oil concessions in Ambalat see, “Indonesia and
Malaysia Spar over Offshore Oil Concession”, \textit{Jane Intelligence Review}, June 2005, pp.36-39.
\textsuperscript{40} a Some Progress Made in Maritime Issues”, \textit{Bernama}, Malaysia, August 30, 2005; “Exploring New
Fields”, \textit{Strait Times}, August 30, 2005

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waters". Subsequently based on those claims Brunei has made claims to a 200 nautical miles fishing Zone in 1982 and a 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone in 1984. Brunei’s claims are complicated because of its contiguity to the Malaysia subsequently some of its claims encroaches the Malaysian territorial domain. However there has been no serious clash between Brunei and Malaysia over the claims on the South China Sea.

Brunei’s perception of its regional outlook was well expressed in the ARF Annual Security Outlook in 2002. It provided a panoramic view of the security situation across the globe with special focus on the threat of international terrorism in the year after the attack in the US. The country also recorded its desire that the dialogue process between North and South Korea continue. The role of major powers (without their names) in maintaining the stability of the region had been underlined. As a party to the South China Sea dispute the country also expressed its satisfaction over the progress of talks between China and the ASEAN. In response to the complex security scenario, in 2004, Brunei decided to publish its own Defence White Paper. This is in light of the fact that Brunei thinks that it must prepare itself for unseen security problems. The White Paper writes that Brunei is aware of the fact that the security environment continues to be shaped by traditional sources of conflict. Not discounting the importance of regional partnerships between states of the region and the major powers, Brunei still felt that there will remain uncertainty in the region. ASEAN will thus remain the prime focus of activities within Southeast Asia. However Brunei has concentrated more on non-traditional security issues basically transnational crimes like illegal drugs, illegal trafficking of women and children, sea piracy and arms smuggling and money laundering are some of the issue that are of concern to them. In addition Brunei has expressed concern over the increase in arms procurement of the states of the region. This will empower the criminal groups with

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42 Ibid.
more sophisticated weapons; smuggling weapons are difficult to detect especially where there are porous borders.  

The Country is also very clear about its defence responsibilities. The White Paper provides a holistic view of the kind of roles that the State and its defence establishments are expected to play. They are:

- Support and maintain the stability and the cohesion of the country;
- Protect national interests in adjacent maritime boundaries;
- Reinforce the integrity of the nations's borders;
- Enhance the national capability to counter terrorism;
- Cooperate within the ASEAN context on issues of shared concern and supporting stability of the neighbours;
- Further regional security cooperation through dialogue, increased transparency and crisis management; and
- Develop a robust and flexible defence capability able to handle the complex set of current tasks while retaining the capacity to deter aggression.

It is in accordance with the last responsibility that the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) has undergone noticeable defence modernisation. The RBAF are participating in bilateral armed exercises in order to acquire the necessary defence skills. For instance, there was a joint exercise against maritime piracy between the Japan Coast Guard vessels and the Brunei Armed Forces and Marine Forces. Brunei also participated with the US in a joint naval exercise under the Cooperative Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT). Besides Brunei has participated in a number of peace-monitoring missions, the first of them was in 2004 in Mindanao following the 2002 truce between the Government of Philippines and the MILF. These kinds of involvements have helped Brunei armed forces in gaining valuable defence-related experiences and exposure to the security challenges of the region. The responsibilities of the RBAF are:

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47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
Protect robustly the nation’s sovereignty and national security interests in the currently complex and uncertain strategic environment;

Progressively enhance the ability of the nation to defend itself should strategic circumstances deteriorate;

Support the Government and other national agencies in promoting the well-being and cohesion of the nation; and

Work constructively with neighbours and the wider international community to promote regional stability and to respond to the common security concerns.49

Brunei expressed its confidence in the regional mechanisms of the region especially the ASEAN, the ARF, and the APEC. On ASEAN and ARF, Brunei mentioned that,

Brunei Darussalam believes it is important for ASEAN to remain a leading role in the ARF. While taking account the numerous views about the pace of its evolution, Brunei Darussalam sees it essential for the ARF to move at a pace comfortable to everyone. Thus it is of importance to note that the ARF has started to address the concept of Preventive Diplomacy (PD) while continuing to attach greater importance to the central issue of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs).50

Brunei also defined its role in the ARF that it continued to promote trust among the participants through its good offices and coordination. It also reiterates its faith and commitment towards regional processes through hosting meetings of some of these regional dialogue processes like the APEC, the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and the Post Ministerial Conferences (PMCs).51

Apart of the bilateral relations and security concerns of individual states within Southeast Asia, this region is challenged by a number of other traditional and non-traditional security problems. In the domain of traditional regional security problems, they complement and to a certain extent exaggerate bilateral problems. For instance the region is awash with weapons making it one of the most volatile zones of Asia. Arms build up in Southeast Asia determined a couple of factors. First, a long
association with the politics of Cold War and proxy wars had turned some of the countries into outposts of superpowers in Southeast Asia. They were flooded with weapons so that they could be used to deter their rivals as well as those of their sponsor's. Second, there is a genuine need to protect the territorial independence, integrity and sovereignty of all these states. This is also coupled with the need to meet the internal challenges – secessionism, ethnic conflicts, anti-establishment protests, and terrorist attacks. Third, there is a growing desire to keep up with the neighbours. Leong calls this as an interactive factor that leads to a virtual arms build-up competition as every state tries to 'catch up' with the other. Fourth, the economic and financial prosperity of most of these countries at least till the Asian crisis had given them the money power to buy go shopping for arms – arms acquisition lists are noticeable, both in terms of quantity and quality. It is necessary to take note of the fact that the Southeast Asian countries have gradually pulled themselves out of the depression and are now in a position to acquire advanced defence weaponry and equipment. As a former Japanese vice admiral describes the development, "Southeast Asia's return to prosperity since the financial crisis of 1997 has brought a region-wide splurge on new weapons." In addition he makes another prominent observation, "[w]ith China's military build-up causing nervousness everywhere, many governments in the region are starting to work with outside powers." This brings to the front the fifth factor. The presence of formidable neighbours especially China creates a sense of insecurity amongst Southeast Asian States and send them scurrying for weapons. Other external states make good use of this opportunity to assist insecure states and gain influence over them. It creates a Cold War-like situation. On the other end some states like Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore right from the post Cold War days have viewed arms transfer as a valuable mechanism for technology transfer and economic modernisation. Sixth, the political regime of a country can also have a telling influence on its defence policies;

52 For instance, during the Cold War period, US supplied arms to Thailand, Vietnam received arms from the Soviet Union, Cambodia was assisted by China and the US.
55 Ibid.
in some of these countries political elites were comprised of military personnel like in Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia. They influence decisions related to defence procurements. Seventh, a large amount of arms procurement is done by non-state actors and they are certainly not a part of the defence procurements of the state; it means that the actual procurement of arms within a country is much more than what is official. Eighth, one of the most important factors is the existence of territorial disputes between the some of the States of this region. Leong makes an interesting observation that, "[t]he ramifications of territorial disputes are not limited to inter-state relations but have a direct impact on the political fortunes of the incumbent political regimes." 57 Given this context, popularity of the future of the regimes will depend on their capability to turn every territorial dispute into a zero sum game, where the use of military strength would be a necessity and not an option. Naturally, every such incumbent regime would focus on defence procurements and modernisation. Herein the irony is that while the impression is that arms would provide security in an environment haunted by various territorial disputes. In reality, military augmentation will only nourish the feeling of mutual distrust and apathy thus pushing the scope of political solutions far beyond means. The increasing military prowess is proportionately related to the scope of military confrontation in zones of conflict. It is therefore almost essential arms build up be done after a good amount of homework has been done on confidence building. Arms build up in a conflict prone and conflict ridden region promotes arms race; a regional arms race is detrimental to all the States of the reason, irrespective of their defence capabilities.

The domain of non traditional security factors is large, complex and varied. Issues range from terrorist threats to environmental problems too drugs and health hazards. Illegal trade and migration and their notorious regional networks are very issues non-traditional security threats. Some of these issues are being discussed.

Threats from terrorists operating from a regional level challenge national defence of a number of Southeast Asian states. During Cold War, communism was a common threat in a number of non-communist States and communist groups received assistance from China, Southeast Asia's communist neighbour. However as the threat

of communist insurgency is on the wane, trans-national terrorist threats have taken the front seat. In fact the Rand Terrorism Chronology recorded the sudden increase of terrorist activities in Southeast Asia since 2000. US identifies Southeast Asia as the ‘second front’ in its global campaign against terrorism. There are a number of reasons for the proliferation of terrorist activities in Southeast Asia. First, though the region is well known for its moderate brand of Islam, gradually, the radical form is gaining ground as a number of young people are being exposed to the anti-pluralist brand of Islam from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, a number of radical groups have taken on to Islamic revivalism. Third, the economic meltdown had exposed the weakness of the States to provide for the economic wellbeing and general welfare of the people. This was encashed by the radical groups to begin their own welfare activities; for instance start religious schools. Fourth, the region had historical ties with the Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, finances from those regions were never strictly monitored. Funding of radical groups was relatively easy. Fifth, in Southeast Asia, borders are often porous and immigration controls and systems of administration are weak. It is a region famous for tourism therefore immigration controls are very relaxed. Malaysia for example has not, until recently, required visas for anyone from Muslim countries which are members of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC). The Philippines has a weak immigration system and it is easy for foreigners to marry Filipino citizens and effectively change their identity. Besides, as tourist spot, exchanges of currencies are also not strictly monitored. Last but very important because of the organised crime network, weapons and any kind of support required for organising terrorist expeditions is easily available. Terrorist organisations can easily attain anything they need by paying the criminals. In course of time an extremely unholy nexus between organised crime and terrorism may develop rendering most national governments helpless.

The focus is on regional terrorist organisation that coordinates terrorist attacks in the States of Southeast Asia. Jemaah Islamiyah can be labelled as the regional coordinator. It has a number of cells in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and

58 For the period 1968 and 1985 Southeast Asia and Oceania recorded 95 terrorist attacks; for the period between 1986 and 2004, the Rand recorded a total of 619 terrorist incidents in the same region. See, Rand Terrorism Chronology, available at, http://www.tkb.org/Home.jsp.
the Philippines.\textsuperscript{60} JI has affiliations with \textit{Al Qaeda}. It is not difficult to trace the roots of the \textit{Al Qaeda} in Southeast Asia. The initial recruits came from Afghanistan, they were largely radicals who fought alongside the Mujaheddins during the Soviet occupation. The war in Afghanistan provided the combat experience to a group of \textit{jihadi}s heading for Southeast Asia. In Indonesia Afghan \textit{jihadi} veterans and local radicals were known as “Group of 272”.\textsuperscript{61} This group constituted of major prominent fundamentalist leaders Jaffar Umar Thalib, Hambali, Mohammad Iqbal Rahaman, Nik Aziz Nik Adili, and Abdurajak Janjalani. They have been closely associated with the \textit{Jemaah Islamiyah} such that it has been described as nothing more than an Afghan alumni.\textsuperscript{62} Some of these people have been master minds behind the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in this region. However the mastermind behind the \textit{Al Qaeda} was Moahammed Jammal Khalifa the brother-in-law of Osama­bin-Laden; he was given the responsibility of laying the network. Khalifa began with his base in the Philippines. Therefore the connection between the Moro movement in the Philippines and the \textit{Al Qaeda} network is well established. Together they are responsible several terrorist attacks in several places of Southeast Asia.

The most gruesome attacks have been carried out in Indonesia from 2000-2006.\textsuperscript{63} Noticeable here is the fact that terrorism has struck Indonesia before 9/11. The JI have been actively involved in these attacks in fact in after the bomb explosion in Jakarta in 2004, JI admitted their involvement, “We decided to settle accounts with Australia, one of the worst enemies of God and Islam....and a mujahadeen brother succeeded in carrying out a martyr operation with a car bomb against the Australian embassy.”\textsuperscript{64} JI is a constant threat to the national security of the states because they have not only carried out bomb explosions, the organisation is also encouraging Islamic revivalism in the region encouraging the radical brand of Islam. Assistance comes in the forms of funding, training at camps, establishing madrassa where

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\textsuperscript{60} "Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged but Still Dangerous", \textit{International Crisis Group Report}, no,63, August 26, 2003.
\textsuperscript{61} Zachary Abuza, “Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda’s Southeast Asian Network”, \textit{Contemporary Southeast Asia}, vol.24, no.3, December 2002, p.431.
\textsuperscript{63} To get more details on this terrorist attacks see, “Terrorism in Indonesia”, available at, \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Terrorism_in_Indonesia}. Also see, Bilveer Singh, ibid, pp.xi-xxxiii.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Jemaah Islamiyah Statement 2004}, available at, \url{http://enda.globlogmedia.com}.
\end{flushleft}
fundamentalist indoctrination takes place. More in the name of holy war of Jihad, they provide recruits in communal strife like in Moluccas, Poso and Sulwesi. Most important, JI operatives provide any kind of support to Al Qaeda in their terrorist operations in any part of Southeast Asia. At this point of time, Al Qaeda, JI, and the various Islamic and separatists groups operating in the various states have bound themselves into strong, network based on symbiotic relationship. Going by Andrew Tan’s analysis, there is a strong link up between old terrorism and new terrorism. Irrespective of their age and origin, all of them wish to inflict maximum damage on the states and therefore a serious threat for authorities. It may perhaps be difficult to contain the spread of terrorism in the region. This is because there is a slow but steady trend towards what Singh describes as Talibanisation of considerable parts of Southeast Asia. In countries like Indonesia always known for its moderate Islam, radical tendencies are taking over the moderate perspectives. Islamic parties are becoming active in the politics of the country. States like Malaysia and Brunei are also fast catching up with this trend of radical Islamic influence. There is a general disregard for the western values and ideas; as radical Islamic parties enter into mainstream politics, there is an increasing attempt to push for an Islamic identity of the state. Social intolerance is evident in the violence unleashed on non-Muslims in Ambon, Poso and Southern Thailand. Radical Islamic indoctrination continues to infiltrate academic curriculum especially in religious schools like the Pesantrens in Indonesia. Incriminating documents have been seized by the Indonesian police in about 140 Pesantrens located in Indonesia that make the JI guilty of spreading radical ideas and promoting intolerance. These developments making it very easy for international terrorist network like the Al Qaeda to cultivate ties with local elements and promote mindless violence in the region. However Jom Dosch has been very clear in analysing the rise of threat of terror in this region particularly the links between local groups and international organisations, “While the local-national nexus can identified as the independent variable and violence as the dependent variable,

65 Andrew Tan puts old terrorism as all those terrorist activities including local Islamic groups in Southeast Asia and the activities after 9/11 and those in association with Al-Qaeda as new terrorism. Andrew H. Tan, A Handbook of Terrorism and Insurgency in Southeast Asia, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2007, pp.4-7.
66 Bilveer Singh’s book, The Talbanization of Southeast Asia, Losing the War to Islamist Extremists, looks at various facets of the Talibanisation process in Southeast Asia.
international structures and actions of external agents, such as colonialism and today global terrorist networks, forming intervening variables. This only substantiates the fact that it will rather difficult to eliminate the scourge of Islamic terrorism because separatism and the roots of Islamic radicalism are well entrenched within the systems of Southeast Asia.

Environmental security is a very serious issue in modern day security agenda. Environmental threats have been gaining increasing attention in recent times. Not long ago, the zest for economic development and progress had relegated the environment to a very inconspicuous position. This was the residual impact of the colonial attitude that propelled on ruthless resource exploitation for economic development. As had been observed by Hurst, "Colonies were primarily established to exploit countries’ natural resources and create new markets for finished produce; that a range of problems would arise from such relationships is hardly surprising." This temperament continued into the later phases fortified by the role played by the multinational corporations who aimed at nothing but remorseless exploitation of the natural resources of Southeast Asia. In addition the polluting industries have mushroomed in certain Southeast Asian counties. Within the region, industry driven growth began to catch speed in the 1990s. This is because of the changing political context in Southeast Asia in the post Cold War period and the penetrating influence of the forces of globalisation. Globalisation encouraged the market forces to the extent that they appropriated the agro-based peripheral domains and stringed them to the process of rapid and intensive industrialisation. Development became the magic word as the national leadership sought to emulate European or/and East Asian patterns of growth and industrialisation. This had a serious effect on the environmental balance of the region. There were widespread deforestation, pollution of waterways, conversion and degradation of arable land, polluted air, declining population of fish and wildlife and shortages of resources particularly where more than one state benefited from the pool of resources. Newer urban needs have led to

70 For instance, since the early 1990s Japan was identified as one such country that shifted its Polluting units to Thailand. See, M.A. McDowell, "Development and the Environment in Asean", Pacific Affairs, vol. 62, no.3, 1990, pp. 327.
faster exploitation of the resources bases and have not only harmed the ecological balance of the region but also the source of livelihood of many an indigenous population. Environmental problems at this point have become a direct threat to human security.

Concerns related to environmental security have found expression in two tendencies. The first tendency is explicit in the intensifying competition for resources, space (as in land and locations) and such other components as is seen necessary for industries and service providing projects. The second tendency manifests itself through the vociferous advocacy for environmental health of the countries, in turn the region. This has opened up avenues for political activity around hitherto marginalised issues. Both these tendencies can be distinguished as ‘politics of environment’ and ‘environmental politics’. Politics of environment involves a range of actions, responses and trade-offs that arise from the competition over resources and the complications arising thereof. Environmental Politics concerns disputes organised negotiations between organised environmentalists and the state or corporate authorities engaged damaging activities. It is difficult to keep them in two watertight compartments, and therefore the discussion on environmental security will focus on these issues simultaneously.

In Southeast Asia the governments have shown the urge to develop expansively and at a rapid race. Subsequently States have been promoting economic activities – industrialisation, business, and building infrastructures single handed. The government in many of these States seek to promote economic activities that help them derive rich monetary dividends – for instance logging, extraction of forest resources, mineral extraction, etc. Rich tropical forests in large parts of Southeast Asia particularly in Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines are being plundered by private enterprises that are supported by state authorities. Often these enterprises are run in unison with rent seeking bureaucrats and politicians. Such has been the case of Myanmar and in the Sarawak region of Malaysia. In other cases the permission to exploit forest resources including timber is a way of political patronisation wherein the state would give licence to the politically favoured agency. In the Philippines, this was most prominent during the Marcos period where the Timber Licence Agreement (TLA) became a handy tool for the government to grant permits only to those who
were loyal to Marcos. Politicians had direct stakes in logging and pursued their forest resource based interests at the cost of public good and environmental degradation. Subsequently, logging became a source and means of money-making and political corruption as land owning oligarchs and millionaires ran the political show either by becoming one of the players or else by becoming kingmakers. In all this the forests, its resources were virtually denuded and forest communities were left home­less and helpless as loggers and businessmen made the maximum use of their licence. Some of these permits were short term thus the agents hastening the process of extraction without paying heed to the minimal environmental standards. Political uncertainty and insecurity only added to the problems of illegal cleaning of forests. In Cambodia, during the period of Cold War and even after that, government and anti-government factions – Hun Sen’s Cambodian People’s Party (CPP), the royalist United National Front for an Independent, Neutral Peaceful and Cooperative Cambodia (FUNCINPEC), and the Khmer Rouge (KR) have resorted to logging of forests in order to extract maximum income. It seems that mining of Cambodia’s forests has been the source of financial sustenance and the key to the power of the military and political leaders in Cambodia. In Myanmar as the junta struck ceasefires with several ethnic factions, they were also business associations. It has led to a notorious nexus between those factions and the tatmadaw in jointly exploiting the pristine forests hitherto inaccessible the military regimes. Mindless deforestation in these countries has resulted in massive soil erosion and led to massive floods in of the watersheds. Flooding unfolds another set of problems – homeless populations, spread of diseases, fall in agricultural productivity, and losses in pisciculture.

In Vietnam, loss of forest resources has been coupled with irrational exploitation of mineral resources especially coal. Uncontrolled and unscientific mining has created serious environmental problems – air pollution and water pollution (surface, underground and coastal). Water pollution has led to reduction of fresh water fishes, reduced fertility of arable land, and depletion of forest areas. The water levels have

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73 Ibid.
also reduced making it difficult for both inhabitation and agriculture. Local communities have no choice but move elsewhere. There is also a lack of scientific approach towards policy decisions regarding mining or other forest related activities; there also seems to be conflicting interests within the governmental departments making it almost impossible to have a hands down approach for mining policies. In the Philippines strict mining laws have been bluntly disobeyed time and again leading to serious disputes. The state has not been much successful in addressing the imperilled non-traditional security situation (including primarily environmental degradation and its impact on indigenous communities). Four serious disputes at Boac in the Marinduque province, Sipilay in the Negros Occidental province, Siocon in the Zamboanga del Norte province, and Tampakan in the South Cotabata province are haunting the consecutive governments in Philippines. Mining firms openly flout environmental rules because the authorities are very weak at establishing a regulatory mechanism that may be imposing on these firms. The government has neither shown interest in approaching local communities that may help it in controlling these irresponsible mining firms. As a result the environment of these mined areas, their contiguity and the people who live in it face a number of risks.

Another contentious issue is that of mega projects that states consider essential for infrastructure and overall development. Of these, the most prominent are the mega dam projects undertaken and constructed in a number of the Southeast Asian countries. Dams have come to symbolise differing often conflicting perceptions on social justice. States consider large dams as symbols of development, progress and social justice that would ensure distribution of developmental profits to the far reaches of the land. The opposite perception is that these dams cause more misery than miracle. Dams also encroach upon the environmental stability of the region – fish migrations are upset, extensive downstream sedimentation takes place. It leads to lopsided development wherein a section of the population benefits at the cost of those

74 To learn about these governmental complications, see Bach Tin Sinh, “Environmental Policy and Conflicting Interests, Coal Mining, Tourism and Livelihoods in Ninh Province, Vietnam,” in Philip Hirsch and Carrol Warren (eds.), op.cit.no.121, pp.159-177.
who loose their land and lifestyle patterns and are forced to move elsewhere. One cannot forget that large sections of the population of Southeast Asia continue to live in rural areas. This rural population depends on water and water based resources. Therefore, environmental impacts are bound to have social implications. Any intervention, even for the sake of development actually surmounts to encroachment on their ways of sustenance. Continued social complications can have its environmental consequences. One such complication occurs when local material interests that are threatened are most conveniently represented on a wider political scale through environmentalist discourse. It is an attempt to create space not always available through straightforward claims over resources, tenure of which is ambiguous and over which challenges may be represented as subversive to the state itself.\footnote{Philip Hirsch, "Dams Resources and the Politics of Environment in Mainland Southeast Asia", in Philip Hirsch and Carrol Warren (ed), op.cit. no. 121, p. 56.}

In a differing situation the politics of dams involves more than a simple trade off of resources between the local people and the state authorities. States have been cunning in giving compensation to physically displaced people from lands close to dams. Since the latter are left to the mercy of the magnanimity of the former, states compensate in return of bondage to political support from the marginalised. States taking pride of the dams is evident from the fact that Indonesian authorities have tried to portray their dams are far superior to any other in the region. Eulogising of state projects serve two complementary purpose. First it helps aggregate popular support, increase public tolerance for the kind of sacrifice needed out of the masses. Second, it helps built a popular disapproval of any voices or environmental movements directed against state engineered activities. It helps achieve superiority of the national over the local.\footnote{See, George J. Aditjondro, "Large Dam Victims and their Defenders. The Emergence of Anti-Dam Movements in Indonesia", in ibid, pp.29-54.}

Environmental politics primarily environmental movements, are a strict ‘no-no’ in most of the Southeast Asian countries as these movements are feared to create social space, increase social consciousness and crystallise civil society opinion that form the foundations of social capital.\footnote{Ibid.} Clapp and Dauvergne define social capital as the “social glue that binds together networks of community cooperation and creates social trust...This is often crucial to enable decisive and effective action to promote growth and protect the environment. In other words it is necessary to empower the civil
society." In authoritarian states the authorities believe that the kind of social space created through environmental movements may soon take over the power enjoyed by the state. It shows the kind of insecurity faced by the developmental state that implements its development strategies at the risk of alienating majority of its populations. They may not be wrong for in response to the state's tireless and uncompromising developmental zeal, a new form of environmentalism has emerged that can be interpreted as another form of political opposition. They are clubbed into the family of New Social Movements and are assisted by foreign organisations like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), regional organisations like the Asian Pacific People's Environmental Network (APPEN). Other global environmentalist groups that have their interest in the environmental issues of the region include Green Peace, Friends of Earth, and the Third World Network. Under such circumstances, apprehensions run to the extent of fearing that local environmentalism with strings attached to global counterparts may only be a manifestation of the larger conspiracy to bring down authoritarian systems in Southeast Asia.

Problems relating to environment are more complicated because they are not only relevant for internal security but have regional security implications. It is not only to focus on bilateral problems concerning resources, but there are very complex issues related to the environment that states can hardly contain within it boundaries. For instance there are some serious environmental issues related to the South China Sea where there are a few claimants. South China Sea is an integral ecosystem that must be treated by all the littoral states surrounding it. However competing security interests have prevented a collaborative approach to sustain the integrity and balance of this ecosystem. With the exception of Singapore, all the countries surrounding the sea suffer the indomitable problem of population explosion. It has its own problems; rapid urbanisation for instance leads to environmental degradation of the cities and any place that is highly populated. Population movements also cause environmental distress in terms of resource and space crunch. The relentless need to develop and

80 Ibid, p.25.
grow to provide for the ever growing population makes all the states energy hungry. Energy scarcity is a variable which combined with population growth is one of the most uncertain issues in the South China Seas. Desperate needs for energy has led to a scramble for fuel in the South China Sea irrespective of the Sea’s capacity to fulfil the endless requirement for fuel. It has also produced a peculiar logic amongst the belligerent states. The hope to acquire valuable fuel has made them not only contestants to the claims over this sea, it is also aggravating the problem of unresolved maritime-boundary quarrels. The lack of demarcation of maritime boundaries has delayed delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) that could have allowed respective States to use their own islands, reefs and extract resources within their EEZs. The entire South China Sea conflict thus awaits solution while the states are caught in this vicious logic.

Apart from this, there is this constant fear of disposal of hazardous wastes into the South China Sea. There are even apprehensions of nuclear wastes being slipped into the sea waters. As states explore options to fulfil their ever expanding needs for energy, the nuclear option may seem plausible and therefore attractive. At present apart from China, the Southeast Asian states that have expressed desire to go the nuclear way include, Indonesia (by 2017) and Vietnam (by 2020). It remains to be seen whether the states can act as responsible nuclear states. Still more difficult is to predict whether they can and will find alternative to nuclear energy in order to prevent environmental calamity in the South China Sea.

Population explosion and population mobility leads to the problem of food security. Population pressures increases the challenges food sufficiency. Already there are debates on the question of food security and sustainable ways of food production and agricultural methods in highly populated countries like Indonesia. As discussed before, arable land would be on the decrease as a result of pollution, deforestation, floods urbanisation and industrialisation. It must not be forgotten that marine resources especially fishes constitute a very important component of the food basket. In addition, fresh water would also decrease as water bodies would gradually dry up. Fresh water fishes would decrease accordingly. In totality, sea fishes and other

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82 Mary Young, “Food Production and Environmental Security”, in David Dewitt and Carolina G. Hernandez (eds.), op.cit.no.125, pp. 137-162.
marine edibles would become important in the near future. It would unleash a fresh round of squabble amongst the competing littoral states relating to fishing rights and the rights to extract marine resources. Already there has taken clashes between states over the issue of fishing. Thailand possesses the largest fishing fleet and after their traditional fishing grounds were exhausted, there have been allegations that Thai trawlers have encroached into others’ EEZ. In 1990s such allegations have come from Myanmar, Malaysia and Vietnam. In the late 1980s clashes have taken place between Myanmar and Thailand in the Andaman Sea when the latter intercepted the former encroaching their seas; some sailors have also been killed. Clashes between Thailand and Vietnam have also taken place in the mid 1990s. Thai navy have opened fire in order to protect Thai trawlers being seized by the Vietnamese navy. It resulted in casualties on both sides. Thai trawlers and fishermen have been arrested by the Malaysian authorities for encroaching into their waters in 1999. Vietnamese vessels have fired at Malaysian fishing boats and vessels from Taiwan and China. Besides, Filipino navy had also sunk a Chinese boat in the same year off the island of Palawan. However there are long existing tensions between the two countries over claims in the South China Sea region.

Provisions for fresh water will also become challenging with growing population pressures. There is a general concern over the availability of for the region’s requirement for fresh water. Requirement of fresh water can lead to tensions between states as has been the case in Singapore-Malaysia relations. More complicated are the environmental problems are related to large rivers running through several Southeast Asian states. Such is the case of the Mekong that originates from the China and runs through the Southeast Asian states of Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar. The environmental problems relating to the Mekong River revolves mostly around the series of dam building projects spread across these countries. As

84 Ibid, p.105.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 A substantial discussion on the developments between Malaysia and Singapore is provided in Alan Collins, Ibid, pp.105-107.
88 The river Originates from the east edge of Tibet where it is known as Dza Chu Rive, then it moves to the Yung-Nan Province in China where it is called Lancang Jiang. It runs down to the south through the border of Lao PDR and Myanmar. Continuing further south and the border it flows through the border of Lao PDR and Thailand. Here, it takes some tributaries from Thailand and then flows into Cambodia. Again the Mekong also draws some tributaries including Tonlesap River from the Great Lake. At the lower end the Mekong starts breaking up into plural flows and form vast Mekong Delta in Vietnam and finally runs into the South-China Sea.
mentioned before, dams are considered essential for infrastructure development and are hallmarks of the growing economic strength of the state. Dam projects are being supervised by a pilot body called the Mekong River Commission (MRC). Environmental problems revolving around the projects along the Mekong are of two types. First, the construction of dams on the upstream of the Mekong has severe environmental impacts on the downstream. Second, dam construction processes in individual countries have detrimental impacts on the local environment and on their neighbouring states.

In the first case, China being the upstream of the Mekong continues to construct dams – a dam has been constructed at Manwan, the second is being completed at Dachaoshan, and another twelve are under consideration. The monstrosity of Chinese planning in complete disregard to the downstream environmental and social impacts is worrying the members of the Mekong River Commission (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand). Since the building of the first Chinese dam (Manwan), many species have become endangered including the Mekong dolphin and manatee, water levels have dropped and ferries get stuck, fish caught are small and the catch is less than half of before the dam. The turnover at Chiang Rai port is less than 1/4 of previous years, and crossings from Chiang Rai to isolated Luang Prabang have lengthened from 8 hours to 2 days due to inadequate water levels.\(^{89}\) More problems will multiply as China continues constructing dams. There will be erratic water flows, very less in some cases resulting in drought conditions downstream. On the other hand certain regions will be inundated when the Chinese blast gorges and sandbars in order to construct their dams. Water pollution will increase at an alarming rate as industrial wastes and run off will encourage algae bloom. Cambodia and Vietnam will fall prey to the erratic water flows, will be facing drought and famines complemented by sudden floods. Navigation between China and Thailand has already decreased and will almost stagnate if China doesn’t pay heed to the issue. China’s adamant attitude is only drawing displeasure from the Mekong River Commission. Already, Surachai Sasisuwan, who heads Thailand's Water Resources Department, had said that he would take Beijing to task on the issue. "We would like

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China to tell us frankly about its dam projects and let us know whether or not the dams are the cause of the disappearance of the water."\footnote{Thais Blame China over Low Mekong\textsuperscript{a}, BBC News, April 2, 2004.}

Ambitious projects have been undertaken in Southeast Asia. Originally the MRC has made plans to construct almost a hundred dams small and big all along the river and its tributaries to harness water and produce hydro electricity. Some of the construction projects are outsourced, foreign companies have become involved making it a much larger financial enterprise. The project of the Nam Thuen II in Laos is an example of outsourced project. Dams have direct relations with trade especially in terms of services and sell of power. The prospects of selling power to energy hungry neighbours have spurred dam construction, paying almost no heed to environmental and social concerns. Subsequently dams are being constructed in Laos that have attracted a lot of protests. The Theun-Hinboun Hydro power project has caused severe environmental damage. Local villagers have suffered massive decreases in fish and other aquatic resources. They have also been forced to abandon their rice fields due to the repeated loss of wet season rice crops. Flooding has caused water contamination, skin diseases, drinking water shortages, death of livestock from drowning and disease; as well as other temporary food shortages.\footnote{For a detailed idea on the damages related to the Theun-Hinboun project see, Ruined Rivers and Damaged Lives, The Impacts of the Theun-Hinboun Hydropower Project on Downstream Communities in Lao PDR, Report Produced by The Association of International Water Studies (FIVAS), Osterhausegate, 2007.} The other mega project, the Nam Theun Dam II has been going on without much attention to the drastic negative effects it has on the environment as well as the livelihood of the local communities in living along Nam Theun River in Khammouane and Bolikhamxay provinces of central Laos. The conditions seem to be deteriorating by the day.\footnote{In order to learn about the deteriorating environment, including on green house gas effect and the dismal lifestyles of the local communities, see, Report by Sipalak G. Khundee, in The Nation, June 23, 2008.} Construction of dams in Thailand, particularly the Choa Nem Project, have had governmental support, however serious environmental problems have challenged the worthiness of the projects. For instance, reduction of water flow downstream has caused an intrusion of saline water wiping out farmland and ruining the fragile mangrove forests. In addition, the dam is responsible for hardening the soil on the river-banks by reducing the water flow. Coupled with the problems of deforestation...
in Thailand, successive droughts exacerbated the difficulties of farming the soil. Infrequent rainfall from deforestation hardened the soil and pushed back the planting season from February to May. The export crops produced downstream on coconut and lychee plantations were wiped out and farmers were forced to abandon their land because of accumulated saltiness. As other economic activities become impossible under inhospitable environmental conditions, government’s campaign to promote hydro-power projects as a means of earning becomes easier. Sooner local communities were landless, jobless and even choice less in what they wish to do with themselves. They are no longer in a position to protect themselves or the local resources that are plundered and destroyed by foreign companies involved with the projects. Vietnam and Cambodia have also joined the fray in building mega dams that will not only satiate their energy needs but will also help them fill their coffers by selling to countries that need energy. If all the members of the MRC and China move along similar lines erecting dams here and there in Mekong then, environmentalists fear it will choke the normal flow of waters from Tibet to southern Vietnam. Therefore, problems of harnessing big rivers in Southeast Asia for economic development will not only affect the internal environmental security of the countries and the regional ecological balance but also impinge upon the lifestyles of the local communities. This is becoming a source of popular discontent against the governments. In a way environmental and social securities have spill over effects endangering the political security of ambitious regimes.

A very serious environmental threat arose from the forest fires that originated from Indonesia and affected the neighbouring regions. In the late 1990s there were two factors that initiated the forest fires. First was the age-old method of shifting cultivation wherein in any dry season caused by the El Nino effect, forest burning was considered economically beneficial to the extent that it outdid possible social and environmental consequences. Many of the fires in Indonesia were started for the purpose of shifting cultivation or conversion of forest to palm oil production. It is believed that small parts of the forest were set on fire by companies who were looking for agricultural lands; their greed for land and economic benefits came down

heavily upon the ecological balance of Indonesia. The November 1997 report of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (of which United Nations Environment Programme or the UNEP was a member) concluded that the fires "have turned out to be an environmental emergency of exceptional proportions", and warned of "a repetition of the present emergency" if current practices remained unchanged. 94 The second cause was the constant spate of dry weather that repeated itself and in 1999 fires resurfaced creating yet another environmental human calamity. Forest fires seemed to have resurged in 2006.

Constant fires have destroyed the environment of Indonesia and became a health hazard for a large part of the region affecting almost 20 million people.95 Indonesia lost rich environmental assets completely destroying the biodiversity of some of the richly endowed islands. Almost all of Kutai National Park, the Wein River orangutan sanctuary, and unique limestone forests in the north of Kalimantan were destroyed by fire. Kalimantan contains 14 percent of global biodiversity potential. The fires in Indonesia threatened at least 19 protected areas, all internationally important, including a World Heritage site (Ujung Kulon in Java), Ramsar Wetland (Berkab in Sumatra) and Biosphere Reserve (Tanjung Puting in Kalimantan).96 In the recent forest fires of 2006, a substantial part of the archipelago had been affected. According to Ministry of Forestry, there were over 4,000 hotspots in Indonesia, mainly concentrated in Sumatra (Riau, Jambi and South Sumatra provinces) and Kalimantan (Central, East and West) islands during the month of July. Fires mostly happened in abandoned ex-plantation areas and peat lands, and they were difficult to control. Currently, the number of hotspots continues to fluctuate.97 Often recurring fires have engulfed the neighbouring region in smoke and haze. The local population and that of the neighbours were hit hard by this smoke and the haze. The forest fires laid bare the state’s inability to draw the line between economic enthusiasm and the

96 Op.cit.no. 139.
well being of the environment. It also laid bare the states ill preparedness to tackle internal environmental challenges that assume larger proportions have a trans-national impact. Tourism industry has suffered a lot because of the haze, communications were disrupted as airports in the affected states like in Indonesia and Singapore was paralysed because of invisibility. Anger and anguish has been expressed in Indonesia and the civil society has been demanding that the notorious companies be brought to book. The state is yet to show some positive response to those demands. Meanwhile the Indonesian government and the neighbours like Malaysia have made serious efforts to address the haze and air pollution that had vitiated the atmosphere. Malaysians suffered health hazards, schools and offices were shut down due to health concerns. Accidents have taken place when twenty-nine sailors were feared drowned as a cargo vessel collided with an oil tanker near Port Dickson, Malaysia. Mechanisms have been also devised at the regional level regarding such environmental emergencies as shall be discussed later.

While the forest fires of Indonesia is an example of how an internal environmental crisis can have external fallouts and the neighbours are caught in a serious environmental situation. On the other hand, Tsunami occurring in December 2004 is an example of an environmental threat from natural sources that have impacted the internal security and very existence of the coastal and archipelagic states of Southeast Asia. The magnitude of the tsunami can be understood from the extent of death and devastation in the coastal countries of Southeast Asia – Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar and Malaysia. The hypo-centre of this great Sumatra-Andaman Earth Quake (followed by the Asian Tsunami) was 160 km (100 mi), in the Indian Ocean just north of Simeulue Island, off the western coast of northern Sumatra. Naturally Indonesia took the worst hit. A rough estimate puts the figure of the confirmed dead to 130,736, feared to be dead 167,736, missing 37,063 and displaced more than 500,000. Aceh was the region thoroughly devastated. Most interesting, following the unprecedented devastation, the conflict between the Acehnese

separatists and the state of Indonesia came to an end. The widespread devastation led the main rebel group GAM to declare a cease-fire on December 28, 2004, followed by the Indonesian government. The two groups resumed long-stalled peace talks, which resulted in a peace agreement signed August 15, 2005. The agreement explicitly cites the tsunami as a justification. Other Southeast Asian countries also suffered considerable loss of human life. Effects of the tsunami were also felt upon the environment and ecological systems of the Southeast Asian countries. Coral reefs, forests, coastal wetlands, vegetation, sand dunes and rock formations, animal and plant biodiversity and groundwater were largely destroyed. In addition, the spread of solid and liquid waste and industrial chemicals, water pollution and the destruction of sewage collectors and treatment plants threaten the environment even further, in untold ways.\footnote{Staff Writer. "Impact of Tsunamis on Ecosystems." UN Atlas of the Oceans. Available at http://www.oceanatlas.org/servlet/CDSServlet?status=ND03MTY4NyY2PWVuJjMzpSomMzc9a29z.} The economic impact was also noticeable, a large number of fishermen died or were feared missing; those poor fishermen who survived lost their fishing boats and equipment. Industrial infrastructure was also damaged making it difficult to carry out productive activities. In Indonesia alone, three major industrial sites are confirmed to be damaged: Pertamina (oil depot in Krueng/Banda Aceh), Pertamina (oil depot in Meulaboh), and Semen Andalas Indonesia (cement factory in Banda Aceh).\footnote{Op.cit.no. 144.} A very big amount of money was essential for rehabilitation and reconstruction and the countries had not much choice than asking for assistance from outsiders. Tsunami, was a big eye opener for several reasons. First, it exposed the fact that none of the states were prepared with any form of early warning signal to predict such natural threats. Second, in the face of such enormous environmental disasters, the states are totally helpless, totally insecure; there seems no full proof immunity to ensure impregnability against devastation. Third, regional environmental disasters do not recognise national borders and therefore it puts internal security of the Southeast Asian states to test.

Perhaps the most serious environmental threat that challenges the natural equilibrium of the region is the critical situation in Global Warming and Climate Change. While everyone is aware of the fact global warming have global impacts like increase in temperature, recession of glaciers and the melting of polar ice-caps, irrational weather
behaviours, cyclones, increase in desert areas, increase and in health hazards, there are specific impacts on regions. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies specific impact of climate change on Asia. Most important of them are scarcity of freshwater in the near future, fear of frequent floods in the delta regions, chances of droughts, decrease in resources and the increase in mortality rates.\textsuperscript{103} The region of Southeast Asia specially is likely to face serious consequences.\textsuperscript{104} First, millions of people depending on the waters of the great Himalayan rivers of the region like the Mekong, Irawaddy, the Salween are likely to face water scarcity as the Himalayan ice are melting at an alarming rate. Melting of ice will at first will result in sudden enormous floods and later lead into water scarcity. Second, floods will have their own impacts as massive deforestation have taken place. It will result in change in soil quality and make agriculture difficult. Droughts will become common. The fifty million people who rely upon the River Mekong in its downstream stretches below will all be very badly affected. Nearly the entire region relies upon wet paddy rice fields to grow rice and there would need to be changes to this if there is no water to be had. Third, rise in sea levels will imperil the small islands of Southeast Asia, they are likely to perish under the sea along with their resources, and respective ecosystems. It may result in a social crisis of landlessness in case such small islands were populated. Fourth, the states of Southeast Asia have to become stringent on their plans of economic development in case they have to keep a check on their annual emission levels. Although developing nations have not been forced into signing the Kyoto Protocol but as the future changes they may find it difficult to avoid such international agreements. Already states of Southeast Asia fear economic losses have run into millions, for instance, Thailand suffered more than Bt70 billion (around US$ 1.75 billion) in economic losses related to floods, storms and droughts in the period between 1989 and 2002. Majority of these losses came from the agricultural sector where crop yield losses amounted to more than 50 billion Baht (around US$ 1.25 billion) during 1991 to 2000.\textsuperscript{105} Again a report from Philippines mentioned that,

\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report, An Assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Valencia, Spain, November 12-17, 2007.}

\textsuperscript{104} Some of the consequences to be discussed have been already mentioned in John Walsh, "Climate Change in Southeast Asia 1, the Impact of Global Warming" available at, http://easianaffairs.suite101.com/article.cfm/climate_change_in_southeast_asia_1.

\textsuperscript{105} Kansri Broonprakrob and Sattara Hattirat, "Crisis or Opportunity, Climate Change and Thailand", \textit{Report based on information from IPCC and based on studies conducted in Thailand, July 25, 2006}, p.17.
“[f]rom 1975 to 2002, the annual average of casualties was 593 dead, damage to property of 4.578 billion pesos, including damage to agriculture of 3.047 billion pesos”.106 In the recent the first regional study on climate change impact has been conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The report predicts that, the region’s economies could lose as much as 6.7 percent of combined gross domestic product yearly by 2100, more than twice the global average loss.107 In fact the ADB report provides a vivid but alarming report on how the impacts of global warming and the erratic behaviour of the nature will result in serious economic losses of the countries of the region.108

Trans-national criminal activities comprise an emerging area of non-traditional threat to the States of Southeast Asia. A major component of these criminal activities includes smuggling. The act of illegal transit is possible for a number of reasons but some of the most important ones include the appalling degree of corruption in the states of the region where bureaucrats, businessmen political elites both civilian and military are all involved in the bandwagon of organised crime. Besides, smuggling activities are carried out in a very professional, organised manner by big, cross-border criminal syndicates. They are indigenous and have very good knowledge of the region, besides they are well connected to the corrupt members of the state authority. Whether open borders or disputed ones, it has been well exploited by the smugglers to move their goods.

The list of contrabands is long and varied – they include natural resources, particularly rare animals, and plants and of course the precious timber; other dangerous items include narcotics, and arms. National parks and sanctuaries are being robbed mercilessly not only of their wildlife but also of invaluable medicinal plants. A particular scandal in Malaysia where foreign scientists were caught stealing rare plants from Endau Rompin Nature Park at Johor is a proof of the extent of desperation of the scientific expedition.109 Another source of wild life smuggling is

106 “Crisis or Opportunity: Climate Change Impacts and the Philippines”, Report based on information from IPCC and based on studies conducted in Philippines, November 3, 2005, p.20.
the resource rich sea waters of Southeast Asia. Illegal fishing has been an issue of dispute between littoral states like between Thailand and Cambodia and also between the Southeast Asian state of Philippines and China. Timber logging as discussed earlier is an issue with political significance. Illegal logging is carried out ruthlessly both by state authorities and by ethnic groups, anti-state groups living in jungles. Three areas within Southeast Asia that are identified for mindless timber logging and illegal trading are Cambodia, Thai-Myanmar border and the island of Borneo. As the states are plagued by political instability, state-to-state tensions the state authorities consider these problems of lesser concern. Yet international pressure to deal with such problems is increasing. In Cambodia the pressure is being increasingly felt as western donor agencies have asked the government to revoke logging concessions and stem the corruption involving forest officials.110

Narcotics trade is flourishing in the region at an alarming rate for certain reasons. Peter Chalk has identified some of these reasons. First, the climatic conditions encourage a crop of opium, marijuana and cocoa. Second, the inaccessibility of the interiors of Southeast Asia makes it a safe haven for crime groups to operate beyond government reach. Third, the legal systems of these states are not well equipped to deal with the criminal syndicates. In addition, corruption within the system has allowed the criminal organisation to influence the top orders of administrative and judicial sections of the governments. Fourth, the continuing challenge of the insurgency has acted as a catalyst in narcotics trafficking; Chalk in fact called these as commercial insurgencies that are driven more by the urge to amass wealth and material power than any other ideological consideration.111 Southeast Asia is home to the infamous golden triangle that includes the eastern Myanmar, Northern Laos and Northern Thailand. The routes for drug trafficking include the Myanmar-Thailand border, transported to Thailand and from there to various other places. A second route goes through Laos as shipments bound for Cambodia and Vietnam. Both air and marine routes are used to send them to the international markets. Another popular route is through the Chinese provinces of Yunan and Guanxi from where it reaches Hong Kong.

Opium constitutes quite an important component of the drug trade in Southeast Asia. Opium production in the region is quite old dating back to the nineteenth century; they were introduced by the Chinese who moved into the Golden Triangle region, the Kuomintong (KMT) was extensively involved in the opium trade in the Myanmar section of the triangle. Although Opium produced in the Golden Triangle region mostly in Myanmar is destined for the global market, the local population in the region have become victims of drug abuse. In 2001 there have been reports that as the US led an invasion into Afghanistan, opium production dropped and this was compensated by increased production in Myanmar. The Thai intelligence in 2002 had reported that, “On the Burmese side, we see that new fields are being cleared and planted” Again in 2008, United Nations on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted a survey in the Golden Triangle to take stock of the Opium threat. According to the findings of the report, Southeast Asia’s progress in reducing opium production is under threat, with an extensive new survey by the UNODC revealing a recent upswing in opium cultivation during the 2008 growing season. The agency is alarmed by the fact that in 2008 Southeast Asia's major opium-producing countries planted 30,000 hectares of farmland with opium poppies. The UNODC report identified that, “Myanmar, the largest opium cultivator in the region, has seen major decreases over the years...The downward trend was consistent form 2000 to 2006, but was followed by an upward trend in 2007 and a de-facto stabilization in 2008”. Other parts of the Golden Triangle Laos and Thailand may have been better but in overall the eradication programmes are still yield a complete success. On the contrary, in the case of Thailand, the survey noted that, “In the 2007/2008 poppy season, the survey found a total of 288.06 hectares of opium poppy fields. Mostly located in the remote mountain areas of Chiang Mai, Tak and Mae Hong Son, opium cultivation was increasing by 24.63% compared to the last year.” UN officials however admit that the main challenge comes from Myanmar, “Everybody knows

113 Cited in ibid.
115 Thailand Opium Cultivation in Southeast Asia, UNODC, December 2008.
116 However the report notes that in spite of the high opium cultivation figure, the opium poppy field eradication operation reached and destroyed opium poppy fields in almost all places. See, Ibid.
the political situation there. And, it is very challenging to get support and provide assistance in many of these areas," he said. "Many of these areas do not have the necessary peace, stability, and security for projects to operate freely. And, that is the biggest challenge we face."

Drug trade is harmful to the Southeast Asian states in more than one way. First it is almost an illegal parallel economy threatening the economic performance of the countries victim to it. Second, it is a social aberration as destroying the young generation. Drug trade harms the younger generation as a double edged sword, it loops in young people into heinous crimes and produces hundreds of drug addicts. In addition it is one of the most important reasons for the spread of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Drug Trade leads to lack of economic performance of the affected countries. It makes the younger generation unproductive and therefore underemployed, handsome earnings parallel economy challenges the modest earnings of the national economy, and most importantly the state has to divert a whole lot of resources to fight narcotic trade and the problems related to it. As this trade is lucrative because of its quick monetary returns, it bedazzles the officials and bureaucrats; it is therefore difficult to root out corruption. Corruption help drug trade to flourish, drug trade sustains corruption, this quid pro quo arrangement is to continue for long. Narcotics trade will help sustain insurgencies, perhaps terrorist activities too. Apprehensions have been expressed over a chance of narco-terrorism where drugs trade and terrorism will function in a hand-glove relationship to bring about more doom to these troubled states.

Illegal arms trade has produced very rich arms smugglers in Southeast Asia. Criminals, insurgents and now terrorists all depend on arms which make it a thriving business. Arms movements take place along the Thai-Myanmar border. China is also a supplier of these arms. A large amount of arms reaching are acquired by

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119 For a clear idea on arms trade see, Katherine Kramer, "Legal to Illegal: Southeast Asia's Arms Trade", Kasarinlan, vol 16, no.1, pp. 41-48.
insurgents especially in Myanmar, they in turn sell it to others. Thus, arms are not only to fight for a cause, but for economic benefits also. The Karen community and the Shan State Army have been benefiting in the process. Commenting on the state of affairs at the Thai Myanmar border, Tagliacozzo writes, “More guns cross the Thai-Myanmar frontier everyday than perhaps any other border on the planet; the only other region which is remotely comparable is the boundary region between Colombia and Peru.”

So long as arms will be availed to the disruptive elements of the state, no State in Southeast Asia will feel safe either socially or politically.

Maritime crimes are on the rise in Southeast Asia and states are plagued by a variety of maritime crimes. More serious threats come from piracy. A number of factors have helped piracy to develop and sustain over the years. The geographical outlay of the seas next to Southeast Asia provides a good opportunity for the pirates to attack and escape. For instance, the Malacca Straits, the busiest channel routes of the region is very narrow at points where ships have to reduce speed and can fall easy prey to piracy attacks. Sand dunes, heavy rainfall and the availability of a number of uninhabited tiny islets of the large Indonesian archipelago provide the perfect setting for piracy driven ambushes. The proximity of various states makes it easier for the pirates to take shelter in any one of them. The pirates are well equipped with modern weaponry and marine vessels. Some of them also have sophisticated equipments like radars, used to send confusing signals. There have been instances where surface to air missiles have been a part of their arsenal. Instability of the political systems caused due to insurgency and terrorism has allowed for piracy. Indonesia is a living example of that fact where after the financial crisis the Aceh Movement became very perilous. Piracy provides a means of sustenance for raising funds and acquiring arms. Of late piracy has taken on to violence and kidnappings for ransoms which raise the suspicion that they are not simple sea burglars, their activities resemble those of well trained terrorist outfits like the Abu Sayyf Group of the Philippines. Reports of such kidnappings began to come around 2001 in the area around Sulu Sea. It just may be a coincident that 2001 is the year the whole world woke up to the threats of terrorism. Piracy in the Southeast Asian seas is due to the reduced presence of the super powers

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especially the US. This power vacuum is being exploited by the pirates; unfortunately the Chinese or the Japanese have not been able to intimidate the pirates. Acts of piracy have also been a result of illegal immigration in the Indonesian province of Sabah. As the government allowed Muslims from Indonesia and the Philippines to settle, (for reasons already discussed) they have taken on to random piracy. Immigrants make the most of the traffic and rob and intermingle with the crowd, making it difficult for the authorities to book them. In Sabah, the complex situation makes it difficult to identify a pirate from a commoner, or identify a sea brigand from a religious extremist or a separatist. It seems theft is the most common activity.

Apart from piracy other maritime security threats include the use of sea routes for ferrying arms for various insurgent groups within Southeast Asia and beyond. Terrorist activities on the seas have also been on the rise. Some of the terrorist groups like the Kumpulan Mujahideen Malaysia (KMM), Lashkar Jihad (LI), and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) are at present equipped to execute terrorist attacks on the sea. However, of these the Abu Sayyf Group (ASG) has already carried out terrorist attacks on sea as early as mid 90s. John Bradford mentions that regional security forces have disrupted half a dozen plots to attack on US Navy and global trade. In addition, he apprehends how Al Qaeda may plan a marine attack of cataclysmic proportions, perhaps a bomb attack or a harmful nuke. Piracy, terrorism contest and rivalry over vital marine resources are threatening and will continue to challenge the safety of the Southeast Asian maritime zones.

Troubled political situations and economic hardships have resulted in migration in various parts of Southeast Asia. Perhaps the single most influx of refugees has taken place from Myanmar to Thailand especially after the military crackdown of the late 1980s and the military take over state power in the nineties. They were a source of threat to the military regime, yet there are instances of feud amongst themselves. In the wake of the 1988 massacres, nearly 10,000 pro-democracy activists fled Burma’s urban centres for the border areas near Thailand, where already a multitude of ethnic insurgents were active. Subsequently, true to the junta’s fears an alliance between the ethnic rebels along its frontiers and the pro-democracy activists was worked out.

However there could not be much of an alliance between the Communist Party Burma (CPB) and pro-democratic elements, the former soon split along ethnic lines. Immigrants are not only a source of political complications; they are also involved in drug trade and transit of illicit goods. In addition Myanmar is housing a hundreds of Yunan Chinese While the Yunnanese have chosen Burma, illegal immigrants from other parts of China use the same local contacts to transit the country on their way down to Thailand — and on to the West. Widespread corruption in Burma — and the division of the northeastern parts of the country into semi-autonomous fiefdoms ruled by former rebel warlords — has made Myanmar a favourite route through which to leave China and reach the ports and airports of Thailand. Thailand has turned out to be a hub of another kind of illegal industry — that of forgery where documents and arrangements are made to send neighbouring people to wherever they wish to go, illegally. Chinese immigrants in Thailand and Myanmar are involved in criminal activities. Illegal migration for a better living is common in Southeast Asia; especially to countries like Malaysia with commendable economic performance and the inability to stem the flow of neighbouring population have had to take the pressure of illegal immigration. As discussed before, Malaysia was forced to deport a large number of Indonesians during recession. Illegal immigration causes tensions within the host society. Riots against the ethnic Chinese and the Indonesians in the countries of Indonesia and Malaysia are proofs of the simmering hatred for migrants — legal, for illegal even more.

Not only immigrants, health hazards are a challenge to the states of Southeast Asia. Challenges like the avian bird flu that struck the region in 2005, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and AIDS have all pointed to the vulnerability of the states to regional health hazards. Attacks from pandemics like the avian flu are not only health hazards they threaten the economic and social security of the states. The 2006 Global Risk Report has underlined the economic and social risks involved in such health hazards. Environmental hazards like the haze due to the forest fires in Indonesia which increased respiratory problems amongst people of the neighbouring 

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123 The word fiefdoms have been used to project a parallel system of governance where corruption, malpractices are rampant within the jurisdiction of the landlords; these areas are virtually run by drug lords. Khun Sa was for example one such drug lords.

countries particularly Malaysia have also challenged the security of the states. It was also asserted that smoke due to wood-fire could cause cancer much more (about twelve times higher) than from tobacco. The tsunami also resulted in the outbreaks of diseases like cholera, diarhorrea, diphtheria, malaria, pneumonia that no government was in a position to contain. Even under normal conditions standing threats are derived from diseases like tuberculosis, malaria, some of them drug resistant. More lethal diseases like the Ebola virus or the West Nile virus that cause acute pulmonary syndromes or the Nipa Encephalitis may always remerge and the states of Southeast Asia are not that prepared to handle health crisis of such mammoth proportions. In addition one more dimension is that health issues intertwine the fate of nations together, therefore that, which is a threat to a state soon would become a threat to the region and may soon achieve regional proportions. Therefore it is not the job of any State to singularly fight such pandemics. Yet coordinated efforts are still to yield results.125

At the end of this prolonged discussion on security threats within Southeast Asia it may be said that perhaps there are more problems within the region than which arise from the involvement of external agents. External agents will only exploit situations that are vulnerable. In order to counter and contain these challenges, coordinated and well organised efforts are essential. ASEAN as a regional organization has taken up this Herculean task of addressing the various security concerns that are present within the States and within the region. Since internal and regional security concerns in Southeast Asia are almost mutually reinforcing, it is desirable that mechanisms devised to address these challenges are flexible enough to move in and out the realms of internal and regional security concerns. Moreover, States ought to be comfortable and receptive of mechanisms that would be piloted by the ASEAN. Such mechanisms can yield the desired result provided states cooperate with the ASEAN and amongst themselves. Yet, the reality is that states are, after all, territorial sovereign units and have all the independence to take decisions for themselves. It will be the scope of the following chapter to look at the efforts taken by ASEAN in countering security challenges that imperil Southeast Asia and also make a realistic stocktaking of the success of those efforts.