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***TRANSNATIONAL TRENDS:***  
**Middle Eastern and Asian Views**

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**THE SHAPE OF CHANGE:  
NATURE, ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND IDEOLOGY**

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Whether it be global *jihad* or global climate change, food security or financial markets, fisheries or forests, it is clear that the daily lives and welfare of people everywhere are increasingly subject to natural, economic, and ideological forces that transcend national boundaries. It is equally clear that these forces are progressively less susceptible to the control of the governments and societies of individual nations. These trends are likely to have profound impacts on all aspects of security: the human security of citizens, the possibility of conflict between states and among groups within states, the legitimacy of states and of important sub-national social institutions, and the capacity of states and societies to maintain political stability and social peace.

Security discourse is increasingly focused on issues of nature and human development, and is moving beyond the traditional concern with conflict between and armed threats to states. Global climate change has now become an urgent challenge to the very survival of small island nations. Flooding, a recent UK government study concludes, is a greater security threat to Britain than terrorism. The people and government of Bangladesh have had palpable reason to reach the same conclusion a little earlier.

Transnational threats as we understand them are those which transcend national borders, and those which are national in scope but recur in many societies in a region. These may be triggers of conflict or instability, or may offer opportunities for transnational cooperation. Examples include water shortages and shared use of water tables or river systems. Some may principally threaten individual societies, but may produce sufficient instability to spill over into neighboring countries, or may offer fertile ground for foreign interference or the appeal of transnational militant ideologies.

The determinants of these challenges are global trends toward integration within and between national economies; an ever-accelerating pace of social, economic, and technological change; the rapid diminution of the capacity of states and social institutions to interpret, mediate, and act upon these changes on behalf of their citizens or clients; and declining capacity of established political or religious ideologies to appeal to people's search for ideological "maps" with which to navigate

this brave new world. It is hardly to be wondered at that the result has been social and political instability and a sense of crisis. Equally unsurprising, in light of historical experience, is that rapid change of this nature results in a plethora of conflicts between beneficiaries and victims.

There is both threat and promise here. Threat because the efforts of states to variously accommodate opposition or repress it with force have often been unsuccessful, and may even have compounded the problem. Alienation and despair, or more calculated strategies for dominance, have often manifested themselves as civil unrest, insurgency, or terrorism. Promise because globalization has sometimes brought assets: rapid communication and greater transparency empowering populations and raising expectations, intellectual resources (including ideologies) from societies that have been more successful in addressing challenges, and the necessary scientific and technical resources.

If ever a complex analytical model—a “theory of everything”—were needed, it is here. In whatever dimension one begins the analysis, one is compelled to address all others. Economic analysis, issues of state capacity or political legitimacy, impacts on the natural environment, political instability, prospects of inter-group or anti-state violence, and cultural and ideological developments are all part of a seamless whole that demands attention to all its parts.

Global integration has only intensified and expanded the always transnational character of ecology, ideas, trade, and migration. It has accelerated the pace of change, eroding local and historical cultures and identities, in large part by homogenization of consumer taste, and destabilizing settled expectations and personal or household economic calculations. Penetration of national economies by multinational corporations with substantially greater revenues than the gross domestic product (GDP) of many nations has subjected populations to trade and investment regimes perceived as made in the developed world largely for its own benefit. The rapid economic changes triggered by global integration have led to sharpening of inequality between beneficiaries and victims of new trends, and to competition over natural resources between local and remote interests and between traditional and high-tech means for their exploitation.

The extent and effect of each of these have in turn both determined and reflected the myriad ways that states respond to the challenges of change. State responses, as well as the underlying processes of change, have in turn fueled political instability, new forms of consensus, competing ideologies, and new threats to the state or the strengthening of old ones. The legitimacy of states in developing countries often depends on their capacity to deliver the benefits of economic development. They often find themselves confronting the challenge of managing the environmental and cultural instabilities resulting from economic development, even as their human and material resources seem increasingly unequal to the task. The state’s failure to do this effectively will undermine it, the sole legitimate and authoritative guarantor of peace, security, public order, and the rule of law. That in

turn will prejudice the West's fundamental security interests in political stability in these regions.

Several domains are inherently transnational. In these the developments and trends that constitute the interests of particular sovereign states and their citizens are played out in a dimension that is by definition not subject to the sovereignty of any

### Crime in the Malacca Strait

Over 60,000 vessels, carrying around a quarter of world trade and half of global energy needs, pass through the Malacca Strait each year. Maritime terrorism has so far not occurred, but many believe that it may become a threat in the future. There are also fears that terrorists and pirates might collaborate or adopt each other's techniques. There is debate in Southeast Asia about how to define piracy and how to best deal with it. If piracy is classified as terrorism, an international coalition must be organized to deal with it; if it is viewed as local or organized crime, existing law enforcement agencies should handle it.

In 2007, 70 cases of armed robbery and piracy were recorded in Southeast Asia. (By comparison, there were 263 cases worldwide in 2007, an increase of 10 percent over the previous year, with Nigeria and Somalia showing the biggest increases.) These crimes affected less than 0.1 percent of the ships transiting the Malacca Strait. In Southeast Asia, the number of such incidents has shown a downward trend since 2003. Most of the incidents involve only small-scale thefts, with knives being used more frequently than firearms. More serious incidents in 2007 included three hijackings and one kidnap for ransom. The majority of the attacks have been made on the more vulnerable slower and smaller vessels, even though the larger and more sophisticated vessels carry most of the cargo through the Strait.

Other types of maritime crime are illegal fishing and smuggling of arms, narcotics, wildlife, and people. The Malaysian prime minister suggested recently that smuggling and illegal migration are more serious problems in the Malacca Strait than the threat of terrorism.

Key nations have differing perspectives on the problem of crime in the Malacca Strait. Of the littoral states, Singapore, as a small group of islands adjacent to the Strait, finds the prospect of an environmental accident resulting from hijacking particularly threatening. Both Malaysia and Singapore express impatience at Indonesian efforts. Indonesia, for its part, lacks the capacity of those two states to deal with the crime and seeks international technical and material support. The perspectives of some littoral states differ from those of key extra-regional nations that have economic or strategic interests in the Strait, such as Japan and the United States. The latter believe that enhanced multilateral naval patrolling and, therefore, an enhanced presence for their national navies are essential to meet the challenge. Some littoral states have concerns about their sovereign prerogatives and often see the threat as less significant than do outside powers.

*Sources: The Edge (Malaysia); New Strait Times (Malaysia); Jakarta Post (Indonesia); Business Times (Singapore); Straits Times (Singapore); Asia Times Online (Hong Kong); Asian Survey; Rajaratnam School of International Studies (Singapore); International Maritime Bureau.*

one nation. River systems shared between nations, the earth's atmosphere, the maritime realm, and its fisheries—many of these are long-standing sources of international contention, as is suggested by the development of a customary and positive international law governing the rights and obligations of states relating to maritime matters and rivers.

The availability of well-established rules has been of only partial use in reducing the prospects of conflict between competing uses, or promoting cooperative action between states. For example, India and Pakistan have been able to address their competition over the Indus River basin, but India and Bangladesh have had less success on the Ganges/Brahmaputra River systems. The countries of the Nile Basin seem to have established rules for management at least of its waters (though not their ownership). The countries of the Tigris and Euphrates system seem to have further to go. It has proved possible to use international cooperation and laws to address piracy but not fisheries.

Even where there have been established bilateral agreements or mechanisms for cooperation, the pace of economic development or the intensification of use has had the effect of vitiating those agreements or mechanisms. Greater demands for water for industrial and agricultural development, proliferation of shipping, and exponential increase in the effectiveness of marine fishing technologies have cast a pall of uncertainty over international understandings, and over allocations between sectional interests within nations, whether tacit or explicit.

### **VARIETIES OF VIOLENCE: TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY**

In discussions of the core security issues such as terrorism, many informed people in these regions express anxiety about a simplistic US approach to terrorism, which appears to have compounded rather than ameliorated instability and insecurity, and thus disserved US interests as well as those of their own societies.

Not all political violence is “terrorism.” Terrorism and insurgency are distinct phenomena with distinct origins. Distinct responses are appropriate to each. The imprecise understanding of “terrorism” produces a failure to understand the distinct social, economic, political, organizational, psychological, and ideological main-springs of each, and thus to adequately respond to the challenge that either poses. Among the clearest proponents of such precision are retired and active police, intelligence, and other internal security officials in the regions. Though they will sometimes use the term “terrorism” to describe popular insurgencies because of the violent means employed, they nonetheless insist that smart policing, intelligence, and internal security policy demand an accurate understanding of the social, political, and economic causes and sources of insurgency, and of the distinct character of covert terrorism.

Conflation of terrorism and insurgency is also seen by critics of the status quo in the regions as a political strategy for delegitimizing authentic movements for social justice or social change.

Violence in the course of insurgency operates against symbols or institutions of the state or dominant social and economic interests; civilian casualties are incidental and rarely intentional. In contrast, terrorist groups are seen to direct violence specifically against civilian bystanders, to induce terror, not as a means of leverage for political ends, but rather to discredit or weaken the state. Insurgencies frame their demands in political terms and appeal to social norms, albeit dissident ones. Terrorism rarely is anything other than a threat to public safety, susceptible to established tools of law enforcement and intelligence. It may sometimes have political utility to disaffected elites seeking to restore their power or influence, and thus be used as an extension of jockeying for political power. However, its means and postulates entail rejection of political frameworks and social norms.

Terrorism is of course a manifestation of socio-psychological factors common to societies, such as alienation and the “rejectionist” culture and frustrated aspirations of youth. However, it is an extreme and pathological manifestation. The range of prestigious ideologies on offer at a given time in a given environment will determine what model of rebellion against society youth or other alienated groups will gravitate to; why terrorism rather than insurgency, or why violence rather than religiosity or *avant-garde* culture or other expressions for youth alienation? Those ideological choices are themselves functions of recent history and the history of the local culture. In that respect, the actions and perceived purposes of the US and the West will play a role. Resentment against perceived US incomprehension or hostility will burnish the appeal of anti-Westernism, including political Islamism or terrorism.

It is important to locate political Islamism accurately relative to other challenges to the state. Some Islamist political parties may be ambivalent about or even sympathetic to the use of violence, but they remain political in their orientation, methods, and objectives. They should be understood in the same political terms that are used to understand all political parties. This is not to say that political Islam does not pose an existential and ideological challenge to the very foundations of the established order and the elite culture that supports it. However, it does so as a political movement susceptible to political analysis and understanding.

It is highly misleading to allow their common Islamist rhetoric to suggest that Islamist political parties and covert and conspiratorial groups such as al Qaeda occupy points on a single spectrum. Islamist parties are distinguishable in their use of the traditional means of politics, including propaganda, provision of welfare, and grass-roots organizing. They share a spectrum with secular political parties. While the ideological frameworks or rhetoric of Islamist parties may overlap with those of more violent groups, this could prove an asset to political stability. It could provide political expression for points of view that would otherwise be marginalized and therefore susceptible to the siren call of terrorist groups.

Both insurgency and Islamist political parties are distinguishable from terrorism by being reflections of political, economic, and social dynamics. Their force and appeal derive from the perceived failures of states and elites to address the social

and political stresses resulting from rapid change in the realms of environment and natural resources, economic development, and political participation. Knowledgeable discussions of Muslim insurgencies in Pakistan, Thailand, or the Philippines, and of organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, inevitably focus on the very same issues as arise in discussions of rebellions based on ethnic or class interests. These are failures of governance, poor policy, group discrimination, graft, service of plutocratic interests, exploitation of local natural resources by outsider interests, disproportionate repression, and state violence.

Several areas suffering high levels of armed conflict also suffer extremely high rates of unemployment and stressed livelihoods from traditional occupations. They also experience high proportions of populations in the age groups at the threshold of or at working age. If these age groups are not provided with opportunities for participation in society, violent, criminal, or extremist options will be attractive. This inevitably creates a vicious cycle, as the capacity of states and societies to offer education, training, and jobs remains compromised by high levels of violence and political instability.

Many insurgencies occur where the encounter between modernity and traditional ways of life has been insistent and rapid. Many of these areas have been experiencing and continue to experience substantial dislocation from natural resource exploitation, and attendant environmental degradation. This is often accompanied by collusion between states and corporations, and lack of consultation with local opinion. Often, the groups in rebellion against the state are distinguished from the mainstream by their minority ethnic or cultural identity. Thus, the rapid changes contributing to instability build upon a sense of grievance based on historical discrimination, and ethnic or cultural identity becomes the unifying factor of their armed rebellion. Irian Jaya, Aceh, the Indian Northeast, and Jammu and Kashmir are among the clearest cases of such “national” identities asserted against a homogenizing state. Experts, including senior officials formerly responsible for security or administration in these areas, agree that rapid economic and ecological changes in livelihoods, land use, or demographic balance as a result of internal migration, have often been the catalysts to transform a distinct sense of identity into a *casus belli*.

Whereas it is essential to avoid conflation of terrorism and insurgency through imprecision, there are important cases where the distinction is hazy in fact. Terrorist groups and insurgent groups are sometimes seen to inhabit common geographical and political terrain. In the Moro areas of Mindanao, Abu Sayyaf has profited from the erosion of state authority and public order resulting from an insurgency for self-determination. In Indian Jammu and Kashmir, *jihadi* terrorist groups have availed themselves of the opportunities provided by long-standing nationalist insurgency. In Pakistan’s Pashtun belt, al Qaeda, the Taliban, and local insurgencies have engaged in tactical cooperation while remaining distinct in their political objectives. Other insurgent groups have deliberately and extensively used terrorist vi-

olence against bystanders as well as against political antagonists; an example is the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka.

More problematical is an armed movement like Hizbullah or Hamas. Each is clearly an organized political movement with political legitimacy grounded in popular support and the consent of its constituents. Each also performs civic and state-like functions in providing security and social welfare to populations under its control. Yet each engages in armed attacks on civilians.

A significant dimension of organized violence can simultaneously be anti-state in its effects on public order and be sponsored or even carried out by the state itself. Anti-Muslim violence by extremist Hindu chauvinists in India, sometimes (as in Gujarat) using state resources, emboldened by state rhetoric, and yielding electoral gain to its state perpetrators, is the source of serious alienation of the Muslim community nationwide. This community has hitherto been loyal and anything but militant. There is a looming concern in both the Muslim and the non-Muslim populations that the alienation and insecurity have widened the appeal of voices counseling extreme measures of Muslim resistance. That state-sponsored violence has blown back on its state sponsors is an experience only too familiar to the security establishments of India (the Khalistan insurgency in Punjab) and Pakistan (support to insurgents in Indian Jammu and Kashmir and in Afghanistan).

The three regions considered here have recently been of heightened interest to the US as sources of violence against the West. In the local perspective, political violence often feeds upon a more generalized political volatility that in turn reflects larger concerns about economic and social inequality, about trends in the cultural and intellectual lives of their societies, and about the performance, responsiveness, and legitimacy of states. Economic, environmental, and intellectual concerns and struggles are often more immediate and important in the political debates of those societies. These debates may be articulated in ideological terms that are Islamist, or are otherwise at odds with conventional wisdom or with a global ideological consensus desired by the US. Policy makers should avoid focusing on the ideological rhetoric that articulates political demands, and look at these societies as complex and integral wholes. This is not to suggest a facile equation of, or a simple relationship between, violence and social injustice or governance failures, but rather the need for an integral awareness that does not isolate security concerns from their larger context.

The US interest in security would be well served by a more sympathetic understanding of these concerns about the impact of global economic policies, and of popular social and economic aspirations and demands. Social and economic policy may be more availing than security policy. The perception that the US is a significant author of a global consensus on global economic policy (including the belittling of the role of the state in economic regulation), and therefore complicit in the implementing policies of national governments, is as damaging to US standing in these societies as any explicit security posture adopted by the US. Where

developments in those regions proceed from global economic policies on which the US has substantial influence, the US should understand their impact on political instability and violence.

Where there is an implication that national governments have adopted economic or security policies reluctantly or under duress, the damage to US standing is the greater. It is also damaging when national governments are perceived to be under pressure from US policy on terrorism and militant Islam, and US policy is seen as pressing societies to take political or security initiatives that provoke instability or violence, particularly if such policies appear to devalue the perspectives and political consensus of the societies concerned.

## WEALTH AND INEQUALITY

Economic globalization, with its integrative effects on societies (some catastrophic), is of course as old as the modern world and the early stages of European colonization. What is it about globalization today that threatens stability and security? A historical perspective suggests that the distinctive characteristic of globalization today is the relentless pace of change, with its effects on the capacities of states and other social institutions to respond, on the expectations of populations brought unprepared into the global economy, and on the resilience of nature.

Because the benefits of economic development based on integration into the global economy have been enjoyed unequally, the process of economic change has become a source of social and political discontent. Not only have the new benefits been unequally distributed, by creating new winners and shutting many out from winning, but the removal of regulatory protections and the changing of the rules of economic competition have in fact created new losers as well. Erstwhile middle classes and even the well-to-do have experienced precipitous declines in their economic status. Economic changes have also destabilized settled expectations about social status. The relatively massive increase in the wealth of the very wealthy as a result of global economic integration has constituted a new source of social resentments, a sense of injustice, and potential political stress.

The upshot is that, even as some social groups have become satisfied clients of the new order, new sources of political stress and social resentment have been generated in almost all the societies of these regions. Inequality has had deleterious effects on the possibilities of consensus around particular political dispensations and social contracts. Where such consensus had existed in the past, however limited, growing inequality has eroded it. In other cases, the inequality has simply made the possibility of constructing such a consensus more remote. All members of these societies other than the most obvious winners, even the educated, have experienced a sense of insecurity resulting from rapid inflation and erosion of the national government's capacity to control events, to buffer its citizens from their vulnerability to economic trends generated in a remote global economy, such as the steep rise in food prices noted recently.

Egypt offers an apposite example. In one perspective, it appears a model of economic growth which, according to neo-liberal theory, should lead to significant reduction in poverty. With annual growth of 7 percent and significant increases in prosperity for certain classes, it seems to offer cause for optimism. However, more than 20 percent of Egyptians continue to live in poverty, and this number has increased rather than decreased during recent years of high economic growth. Meanwhile, Egyptian wage

### The Rising Cost of Food

Food security has traditionally been discussed in terms of amount of food being produced. Today, however, the cost of food has become the more significant determinant of its availability to individuals—and thus the greater source of food insecurity in most societies.

Ten thousand people took to the streets in Indonesia in January 2008 to protest a 125 percent increase in soybean prices in the year 2007. In a country where soy provides 22 percent of the average protein intake, a price increase that more than doubles costs is a serious blow to food security. Indonesia is not the only country experiencing disquiet over the cost of food. Food prices worldwide rose 50 percent in the last year, and even Saudi Arabia, long known for its zero inflation rate, is coming to terms with a possible 30 percent rise in food costs over the coming year.

At the center of this phenomenon are competing demands for the staple crops of grain and soy, as these crops are increasingly being used for biofuel production and animal feed in countries where meat consumption is growing. In China, as in much of the developing world, people are eating twice as much meat as they did 20 years ago. The demand for soy feed for Chinese livestock is partially responsible for the shortage of soy to feed people in Indonesia. The majority of corn and soy grown in the world is now consumed by animals destined for the dinner table. The biofuel industry is proving to be as hungry as this livestock for staple crops. In 2007, Thailand mandated that all gasoline must contain 10 percent ethanol, which is produced from crops containing sugar or starch.

Growing populations are putting additional pressure on food security. In India, grain production has been failing to keep up with population growth since the mid-1990s. Like people in many other countries, Indians are eating more meat; their per capita consumption of grains has actually declined over the past 30 years. However, the population is growing steadily—it will hit 900 million by 2020—and so total demand for grain has not dropped. On the contrary, it is projected to continue to grow by 2 percent a year for the foreseeable future.

Because they are traditionally plentiful and cheap, staple crops such as grain and soy constitute the major part of people's diets the world over. When the cost of these foods rises, violence can erupt quickly. In Mexico last year, people rioted over a rise in the price of corn flour due to an increase in the use of corn grown in the United States to make biofuels. In November 2007, there was a deadly stampede in Western China as people rushed to buy subsidized cooking oil. If the cost of food continues to rise, this kind of social conflict is likely to be more frequent in the future.

*Sources: New York Times; Financial Times; Economic and Political Weekly (India); UN Food and Agriculture Organization (Cairo); World Economic Forum 2008.*

earners have experienced a sharp diminution of their share in national income. The security implications of this have been glaringly evident in recent civil unrest over the sharp worldwide increases in food prices, the effects of which on Egypt have constituted a tipping point for many working-class households.

### **Rising Stars of the Global Economy**

One narrative of contemporary economic globalization finds the rapid rise of underdeveloped societies into stars of the global economy, such as Vietnam and India. Careful examination reveals a counternarrative that deserves attention.

Vietnam raises high expectations of rapid economic development, on the basis of a well-educated workforce and low costs of labor. It is positioned in the robust and complex transnational economy of ASEAN and East Asia. It enjoys the ready availability of substantial investment from Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, the US, and European nations, as well as from within ASEAN. This makes it a particularly promising prospect. However, certain developments, some of them direct results of integration into the global economy, have emerged as challenges to the rosy scenario for the “tiger cub.” Foreign direct investment, other inflows of foreign resources, and the rising prices of food and fuel have triggered inflation above 10 percent. This has undercut not only its competitive position in the global economy, but also poverty reduction. It has also imposed new hardships on a population just emerging from hardship, in the context of reductions in public welfare initiatives.

India today suffers from rates of malnutrition equal to those of sub-Saharan Africa. This problem will only worsen as wages fall behind soaring (globalized) food prices. One hundred and twenty million Indian families are living from hand to mouth on subsistence agriculture, and are vulnerable to loss of their tenancies to landowners seeking higher returns from capitalist agriculture for the global market, or to expropriation by governments in collusion with developers or with multinational or Indian corporate interests. Forty percent of rural Indians are already landless. Landlessness on this kind of scale, with its impact on basic subsistence, is likely to breed disaffection and resistance in populations with nothing to lose. It will also lead to rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, with further socially and politically destabilizing consequences.

Several reasons for caution about the sustainability of the trajectory of India’s economic development should be noted. The sectors in which the growth of the Indian economy is focused, a reflection of the benefits of global economic integration, are high technology, information, and financial and business services. These sectors provide almost no absorption of people thrown off the land by modernization and by concentration of agriculture for a global market. Meanwhile, the limited capacity of India’s educational system to produce sufficient numbers of qualified workers for those sophisticated sectors has already become identified as a crisis in national education policy discourse.

### Globalization and Discontent in India

Integration into the global economy has seemed to yield significant benefits for India. However, clear warning signs of trouble have already appeared.

Mumbai, burgeoning with financial development and prosperity, suffers chronic power shortages that limit economic growth. Gurgaon, the business suburb of Delhi, is experiencing a construction boom in high-cost housing and business facilities, including many corporate (including multinational) headquarters. However, Gurgaon is expected to run out of water within a decade. The construction of sufficient power-generating capacity is constrained by the fact that Indian and foreign manufacturers of power-generating machinery are over-subscribed with orders. Additionally, major projects of foreign investment have been stalled or aborted because of security concerns, such as the Posco steel plant in Orissa. Foreign direct investment in India actually declined between 2005 and 2006.

New security threats have arisen from the integration of the Indian countryside into the global economy. In Nandigram in West Bengal, local farmers have offered militant resistance to the taking of their land by government fiat to establish Special Economic Zones (SEZ) for foreign and Indian corporations to locate export production facilities. Popular mobilization has led to armed violence by proponents and opponents.

Movements that are involved in insurgency elsewhere have also sought involvement in these new types of disputes. A variety of local insurgent movements described as "Naxalite" or "Maoist" operate in more than one quarter of India's administrative districts, often exercising substantial enough administrative and police powers to render areas inaccessible to officials. The Naxalite movement dates to the 1960s (its precursor, the Telengana movement, dates to the 1940s). Its origins lie in responses to endemic Indian inequalities making it therefore entirely Indian. To a large extent the sources of local rural discontent to which the movement appeals today remain peculiarly Indian injustices, mostly caste discrimination. However, whereas Naxalism seemed almost entirely defunct in the last decade, the extent to which it has recently been able to revive and grow is a reflection of the impact of the economic trends set in motion by the global economy.

The land and other natural resources such as forests and water upon which many rural communities depend for livelihoods and subsistence have been subject to *de facto* expropriation by Indian and foreign economic actors extracting and producing for the monetized economy. There is little disagreement that this constitutes a substantial part of the discontent which Naxalites have tapped.

Where rural smallholders have sought to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the global economy, they have found themselves ruined by the high cost of inputs for cash crop production, uncertain markets and unstable commodity prices, and loss of the safety net of their subsistence agriculture. The rash of peasant suicides resulting from such ruination is now a pervasive part of Indian political discourse.

*Sources: Financial Times; Indian Express; International Herald Tribune; Asian Age (India); Hindustan Times; Times of India; The Hindu.*

The development of traditional consumer and producer industries, which might absorb surplus rural populations, is constrained by serious limitations in the form of insufficient numbers of trained workers and poor infrastructure. The lack of minimally literate and numerate workers in turn reflects the failure of basic education.

This failure is itself a result of the under-allocation of public resources to basic education relative to higher education, the latter being the basis for India's competitive edge at present. There is also repeated hand wringing about the infrastructure's inability to sustain any protracted process of economic development.

The rapid development of India's economy has given rise to new sources of disintegration of social structures and cultures that have historically been important guarantors of social order and political stability in a notoriously ungovernable state. They have also given rise to significant increases in rural-urban migration and to uncontrolled urbanization, with its own challenges to social order and governability. Substantial hardships and shocks have been experienced, particularly by India's rural poor, in the process of integration of the Indian economy into the global economy. The social conflict, economic insecurity, and natural resource degradation that have resulted have spawned various forms of resistance, many violent, and some in a form that has explicitly posed a challenge to the authority of the Indian state. One quarter of the districts in India now experience some form of armed presence of anti-state groups, and in many the writ of the state (police presence, revenue collections, administration) runs little or not at all. Retired senior intelligence and police officials are pessimistic about the capacity of the agencies of law and order to meet the challenges to political order that lie ahead.

It might justly be noted that all developed societies have managed the wrenching adjustments of rural-urban migration and change of livelihoods. India might do the same, albeit with the same significant costs in human suffering. What distinguishes the Indian experience is the absence of a strong state capable of acting coherently for these purposes. The political system in India is seriously fractured and its administrative system seriously compromised. Unlike Britain during its industrial revolution or China today, the Indian state is not capable of resolute response to the instabilities and resistance spawned by these rapid economic and social changes. Indian law enforcement and intelligence professionals note the seriously compromised capacity of the state to maintain law and order; they anticipate deterioration in the current chronic state of public disorder. Among India's particular obstacles must be noted the bewildering variety of its political parties and the social groups and interests they represent, and the imperative necessity of ad hoc coalitions among them. Opportunistic and short-term political calculations render coherent long-term policy almost impossible.

It should be noted here that many elements of the foregoing analysis of India could be applied to other South Asian societies, though differences in the political context or levels of development or complexity of economies would require some modification of the model. For example, to the extent that Pakistan has also experienced a significant improvement in its macro-economic performance and high rates of growth, and has been noted as a model for poverty reduction, it might be seen as another example of a South Asian economic miracle. Thus, its foreign reserves have increased tenfold during the Musharraf years, its GNP doubled, and its foreign investment quadrupled, with nominal poverty diminished by 10 percent.

Nonetheless, with 8 percent inflation adding to fuel and food costs, and rates of unemployment high, the political mood among the mass of Pakistanis is clearly anything but positive. The rhetoric that resonates most in political discourse is still the promise of jobs, shelter, and affordable food. And experts in policing and internal security come to the sober and gloomy prognostications of their Indian counterparts. Moreover, there is widespread pessimism about the prospects of a new political compact to resolve what seems like an impossible fracturing of political life among parties and ideologies.

### NATURE AND ITS LIMITS

The global economy has seen accelerating growth and an aggregate rise in consumer demand resulting both from expansion of populations of consumers and from rising demand for new luxuries and tastes for new products. This is of course good news in many respects, as prosperity and economic expansion feed each other. However, it has also spelled accelerating impact on natural resources, and on patterns for their exploitation. The extraction of minerals to feed the producer industries that serve the industrialization of emerging economies, the felling of timber to feed increasing consumer demand in developed and emerging economies, and the extraction of raw materials to feed luxury consumer tastes have also contributed to despoliation of the environment, to pollution of air and water, to degradation of soil quality, to increased susceptibility to disasters such as flooding, and to global climate change. In this process, the modern global economy has come closer than ever before to traditional rural and wilderness communities and ways of life.

The state's political imperative to usurp and exploit natural resources in the interest of development generally, or to facilitate corporate use of them, has had a negative effect on the human security of the large population that traditionally sustains itself by subsistence farming, gathering of forest products, and fishing. Deforestation and mining, much of it carried out illegally, destroys watersheds and pollutes rivers and streams, as does the rapid development of hydropower resources. Yet, at the local level, where problems such as chemical contamination of water are experienced, are found the fewest technical or financial resources, and least administrative capacity or political authority for addressing such problems.

The pace of change and the scale of impact are equally important sources of concern. Whether we look at desertification or the deterioration of hitherto sustainable arid environments (including agricultural environments), it is apparent that an intolerably rapid pace of impact overrides the environment's capacity to regenerate itself, and that an appropriate level of exploitation can be sustained by fragile environments only if they are not stressed beyond their natural capacity.

Livelihoods and environmental degradation are closely linked. If settled means of livelihood are disrupted, more people will be thrown upon even greater reliance on nature for subsistence. In the course of the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s,

### Climate Change and Water in India

Melting glaciers, radical changes in rainfall, more frequent and severe weather events, and degradation of coastal areas from a rise in the sea level are confidently predicted for India, and to some extent have already been noted. They are likely to be greatly compounded by the effects of exponentially increased carbon emissions resulting from rapid economic growth, which is highly reliant on “dirty” sources of energy such as coal and petroleum, and the huge increase in automobile use expected to result from economies of scale and increased consumer resources. The likely outcomes are severe flooding, droughts, and soil degradation, with serious impacts on agriculture, human settlements, and coastal fisheries.

The melting of glaciers in the north will lead to flooding of the Indus and Ganges Rivers. The Indus River system covers 20 million hectares and provides annual irrigation capacity for more than 12 million hectares. The melting of glaciers will also result in severe and chronic droughts, as the river valleys will lose freshwater replenishment capacity. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh will permanently lose their source of strategic water reserves.

A temperature rise of 2.5–4.9 degrees Celsius in India would reduce its staple crops of rice and wheat by 32–52 percent. The impact on gross domestic product (GDP) would be a drop of between 1.8 and 3.4 percent. Over 60 percent of Indian agriculture is dependent on the monsoons. Changes in rainfall patterns (increases in variability, more rain falling in shorter periods, or heavier rainfall) could have devastating effects. Twenty-five percent of India’s land is already prone to drought. Declines in soil fertility, water-logging or flooding of farmland, increases in the salinity of water, and drought will affect not only food security but also employment and profits in Indian agriculture—and therefore the Indian economy.

Coastal fisheries, subsistence and commercial, will be affected by significant reductions in fish stocks as a result of changes in water temperatures, in the chemistry of the water, or in currents. India is the second-largest producer of fish in the world, and the fisheries are crucial to the livelihoods of millions of people in coastal areas. Coastal populations, including those engaged in agriculture, will also suffer degradation of their living environments from coastal flooding and saltwater intrusion, as a result of a rise in sea level.

Among the effects on urban populations and infrastructure identified by Indian and international scientists and social scientists are problems with urban drainage and waste disposal, increased demand for water and electricity as a result of rising temperatures, and threats to human health from changes in local ecologies.

India draws 213 billion cubic meters of groundwater annually, the largest draw in the world. The rate of replenishment of the water table is insufficient in many places. In 1995, 7 percent of water table blocks were semicritical, critical, or overexploited. By 2004, this figure had increased to 28 percent. With 16 percent of the world’s population but only 4 percent of its water resources, India is already highly vulnerable to natural shocks. With a growing population, a shift toward urban areas, and an increase in industrial and consumer demand, the likelihood of internal political conflict will increase greatly.

*Sources:* Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research; *Economic and Political Weekly* (India); Center for a New American Security; Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests.

## Bangladesh: A Perfect Storm

Bangladesh is one of poorest and most densely populated countries on earth. Its 144.3 million people, two thirds living in extreme poverty, occupy 144,000 square kilometers. It is highly likely to face threats from nature, compounded by the effects of human intervention in nature, many closely related to global warming and climate change.

The prospect is one of flooding, radical changes in temperature, increases in sea level, and more extreme weather disasters such as cyclones, as well as greater vulnerability to storm surges which will reach further inland. This will have serious impacts on the livelihoods and minimal food security provided by agriculture and fisheries, as well as on the secondary industries and commerce based on those. Other side effects will be disrupted communications in an already challenging river delta environment, serious shortages of water for human consumption and household use, and water-borne diseases. Decades of investment in human development and infrastructure could be quickly wiped out.

Both Bangladesh's principal source of grain (rice) and its principal source of protein (fish) are water dependent. Rice accounts for approximately 92 percent of all the food grain that is produced and employs almost 60 percent of Bangladeshi labor. A temperature increase of 2 degrees Celsius would decrease the rice yield by 19 percent. Changes in rainfall patterns would also impact crop yields. For example, in the 2006 monsoon season, a decrease in rainfall resulted in the decrease of rice crops by 25–30 percent.

Bangladesh faces an almost certain rise in sea level, which would reduce the amount of land available for crop production as well as harm the quality of groundwater used for irrigation. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that for every 45 centimeters that the sea level rises, 10 percent of Bangladesh will be under water. The sea level increase will make storm surges more powerful and increase their reach inland. In the coastal areas of Bangladesh, the salinity of the ground and rivers has already increased owing to both the increase in the sea level and the decrease of fresh water from the Ganges. Fisheries, both riverine and maritime, remain highly vulnerable to these radical and rapid changes.

Because Bangladesh is predominantly a river delta, and the lower riparian of river basins controlled by India, it is highly vulnerable to planning decisions over which it has no control. India is engaged in massive and escalating uses of these rivers for agriculture and industry. Before the Farakka Barrage was constructed in 1974, Bangladesh had 1,000 rivers; it now has 250. Its waterways have dwindled from 24,000 kilometers to about 4,500 kilometers.

India is already vulnerable to Bangladesh's predicament, and should be cautious about exacerbating it. Loss of land, livelihoods, and food sources in Bangladesh would force mass movements of people into India, which almost entirely surrounds it. India has already begun building a wall on the border to deter illegal migration. The 2001 Indian Census notes that 3,084,826 Bangladeshi have migrated to India. This has already spawned hostility and discrimination against them. Catastrophe or rapid deterioration of conditions could build on historic patterns of migration and lead to the migration of as many as tens of millions of Bangladeshis into India over a short period.

*Sources:* World Bank; Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies; Bangladesh Rice Research Institute; *The Daily Star*; 2001 Indian Census; Center for New American Security.

societies witnessed return migration of urban dwellers to their rural villages of origin. The accelerated pursuit of livelihoods—by local communities engaging in traditional uses of nature, by corporations generating employment, or by governments building infrastructure—leads to environmental degradation. Environmental degradation in turn erodes the long-term sustainability of livelihoods, through depletion of resources such as fish stocks or forests relied upon for subsistence, or through secondary despoliation of natural resources such as water or soil, which in turn affects the quality of subsistence agriculture.

Not only are transnational economic trends the sources of many of these practices. They in turn have impacts that transcend national boundaries, reaching across into shared space and natural resources, into the atmosphere, rivers and river systems, water tables, and fish stocks and habitats. The burning of forests in Indonesia to the detriment of air quality and public health in neighboring states, the damming or polluting of upstream waters in international river systems such as the Mekong, Ganges, and Tigris and Euphrates, and the impacts of overfishing by factory fleets on local fisheries and on marine environments: all constitute sources at least of international tension, and potentially of conflict.

When environmental degradation, or radical environmental changes such as flooding of farmlands by dams, makes livelihoods, life, or health unsustainable, or results in natural or environmental disasters, the result is often significant migration. In Bangladesh, for example, experts anticipate that rising sea levels and flooding resulting from a combination of global warming, increased human intervention in natural flow of rivers, and the effects of soil erosion on watersheds will increase the already substantial unlicensed migration of Bangladeshis into India, already a source of ethnic, religious, and international tension.

### **Expropriation of the Commons**

The commons in traditional English law and custom were lands that were available for common uses such as pasture, where property rights could not be exercised to exclude such common use. Their enclosure by private landholders constituted the first and essential element in the move of England toward capitalist agriculture, and simultaneously resulted in the impoverishment of numbers of peasants and their eventual movement away from the countryside. This concept has been in increasing use as a means for explaining the patterns of expropriation of nature witnessed in many of the societies of the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia. The customary practice in most societies has been to think of certain natural resources as commonly available, rather than privately owned. Traditional uses of the entire ecosystems of forests by communities engaged in subsistence livelihoods have included food, building materials, and pharmacopeia. Fish stocks and the marine environments in which they are found have also been depended upon by coastal communities and been available as a common resource.

The commons may be expropriated in several ways. The modern state has played the role of expropriating these to itself, and then enjoying beneficial ownership or use itself, or licensing or selling beneficial ownership or use to private interests. Examples include expropriation of forest resources, or interventions to radically

### **Floods and Forests: Indonesia and Malaysia**

In the past two years, Indonesia and Malaysia have experienced catastrophic floods.

In December 2006, over 100 people were killed and 70,000 driven from their homes by rain-triggered flash floods in Aceh's eastern coastal areas. Two thousand three hundred houses were swept away and 7,000 seriously damaged, as were school buildings, mosques, and bridges.

In February 2007, Jakarta was hit by its worst flood in recent decades. The flood killed at least 80 people in the capital and surrounding areas and displaced thousands, unleashed disease outbreaks such as diarrhea, fever, flu, and skin irritation, and disrupted transportation, communications, and power supply. The flood paralyzed the center of Indonesia's economy for several days. Businesses lost about US\$1 billion.

At the end of July 2007, over 20,000 people were forced to evacuate to safer areas because of floods in Morowali district, Central Sulawesi. Thousands of hectares of farm lands were damaged.

In Malaysia, destructive floods due to continuous rainfall hit the southern region twice, on December 19, 2006 and on January 10, 2007. Several states, in particular Johor and neighboring states Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, and Malacca, were affected. These floods displaced approximately 100,000 people, and caused major damage to roads, bridges, palm oil estates, and fish farms. The floods were the most costly disaster in Malaysian history, with the loss estimated to be in the vicinity of US\$500 million.

A wide range of Indonesian officials have publicly acknowledged the connection between deforestation and floods, from President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to district and environmental officials. Environmental activists have blamed illegal logging activity for floods in certain parts of Indonesia.

In Malaysia, opposition members suggest that large-scale illegal logging has contributed to the floods, and they have criticized the government for not dealing with deforestation effectively. Malaysia's press takes it as a given that there is a link between deforestation and the flooding in 2006–2007.

There is disagreement among experts about the extent to which deforestation increases the risk of flood disasters. Researchers from Australia's Charles Darwin University and the National University of Singapore believe they have evidence of a link. Analyzing data from 56 developing countries across Africa, Asia, and Central and South America between 1990 and 2000, they extrapolated that a 10 percent decrease in natural forest area increased the frequency of flooding from 4 to 28 percent.

*Sources: Antara (Indonesia); New Straits Times (Malaysia); The Straits Times (Singapore); Consortium on Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia.*

change watercourses and water uses, through dams, irrigation networks, and similar means.

In some cases, the commons have been used by outside “free-riders” with technical or capital resources superior to those of local communities. As a result the commons either have been depleted to the detriment of local livelihoods and environments, or have been environmentally damaged as a side-effect of other economic activities. Overfishing, degradation of marine environments through other economic practices, and degradation of water quality, land erosion, and similar consequences of mineral extraction may be considered examples of these.

In some instances, the predominant issue has been simply economic: competition for use of commons between different interests. Examples include competition between local coastal fisheries and multinational factory fleets or concerns that the economic benefits of extraction of minerals by multinational corporations are not being equitably shared with local communities. In other cases, the concern is primarily environmental, related to traditions and cultures rooted in local ecological balance.

In yet other instances, the issue of expropriation of the commons arises at a broader social level, with effects of general scope. Such effects raise public policy questions that transcend local communities or even nation-states. When planting of cash crops leads corporate interests or even local communities to burn forests in Indonesia, this expropriates the atmosphere throughout the region by polluting it with smoke and haze. It also reduces nature’s contribution to carbon reduction, a unilateral impact on the global environment. Notably, the entire issue of global climate change has been repeatedly framed by experts in all three regions as an instance of competing and unregulated expropriation of the commons.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONFLICT

Recent trends in natural resource exploitation also constitute threats to security as conventionally defined, because they give rise to conflict or exacerbate existing sources of conflict. These are often armed conflicts among contending private actors, as in forest resource conflicts in India or Indonesia, or between local groups and the state. These conflicts have become threats to the authority of the state because of the role of the state in facilitating the entry of outsiders for exploitation of natural resources, because of the corrupt practices often associated with this, and because the state’s efforts to constrain the worst excesses (social, economic, or environmental) are often hampered by incapacity or lassitude.

Conflict and armed challenges to the state arise repeatedly from the interplay of economic, political, and environmental factors. Highly similar dynamics recur in places as culturally and politically varied as the Philippine island of Mindanao, the Indonesian province of Irian Jaya, areas throughout India, the Pakistani province of Balochistan, the Pashtun areas of the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the island of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea.

The common elements are combinations of the following factors: political struggle over grievances about inequitable distribution of the economic benefits of mining operations by large corporations; a sense of discrimination on the basis of group identity; and concerns about damage (say from mining operations or deforestation) to the natural environment associated with a traditional way of life, in terms of traditional livelihoods and culture.

Precise district by district data collected by Pakistani environmental and development experts demonstrate the highest incidence of insurgency in districts experiencing the most intense levels of degradation of livelihoods and environment, and the highest levels of food insecurity. Tribal areas in the Indian heartland are simultaneously areas of a high degree of exploitation of mineral or forest resources and of Naxalite insurgency. Areas in India's Northeast, which have suffered insurgencies for a half century and continue to do so today, are also areas of intense natural resource exploitation by technically sophisticated and politically well-connected corporations in culturally and ecologically vulnerable environments. The same is true for areas of Burma that have long-standing ethnic insurgencies.

Particularly rapid acceleration of the pace of natural resource exploitation is often seen to overwhelm the very cultural and institutional mechanisms that could mediate and contain the stresses and conflicts that arise from that rapid change. These changes also constitute threats to human security because they prejudice the long-term sustainability of livelihoods, economies, and ways of life. They simultaneously threaten to create environmental stresses and natural disasters that could themselves pose challenges to the physical security of those affected. They also contribute to migration from the countryside to the cities or across national borders, which brings attendant human hardship for migrants and stresses on their host communities.

Another significant source of instability is seen in the extent to which attempts to regulate and control water resources through construction of dams lead to social dislocations on a significant scale. It is estimated that 56 million people have been displaced by dams in India alone, without adequate planning or provision for their resettlement. This is a source of social disruption in their new locations, as well as creating alienated and economically deprived populations with few sustaining social institutions. Yet dams are considered central to the water strategies (agricultural irrigation as well as municipal supply) of Pakistan and India.

Meanwhile, the changes effected by dams in major river flows have profound implications for the human security and welfare of downstream users, and have already spawned significant disputes (and could trigger conflict) between nations and even between provinces and states within nations. The human security impacts will also be likely contributors to social and political instability. Institutional mechanisms such as the international bodies purporting to regulate the Mekong or Ganges systems remain weak and unequal to mediating the rapidly changing natural profile of river flows and the rapidly changing use patterns from rapid and unregulated economic development.

## The Case of Mindanao

The multiple insurgencies in the Philippines, and particularly on the island of Mindanao, suggest the complexity of the relationship among the economics of natural resource exploitation, its environmental implications, and cultural identity. It is commonly understood that there is more than one insurgency in the Philippines, a Communist one conducted by the New People's Army (NPA) and one in the "Moro" Muslim areas of Mindanao. What is less clearly understood by observers outside the Philippines is the complexity of the situation in Mindanao. Clearly the shift of center of gravity from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) suggests a change in emphasis from an ethnic basis of identification (albeit an ethnicity also marked by religion) to a specifically Islamic basis of identity. Nonetheless, it is quite clear from the demands that are articulated by MILF that, like the rebellion in Muslim southern Thailand, the Moro rebellion remains more about grievances based on identity than about Islamic ideology, more about local control of resources and political power than about theology.

What is most interesting is to place the Moro rebellion (limited to a small portion of the island) in the larger context of economic development throughout Mindanao (mineral resources in the central uplands, deep sea oil and gas reserves, and agro- and fish-processing). The larger political-economic context consists of multinationals extracting mineral resources in partnership with Philippine corporations, and aided by a government perceived to be highly corrupt. Whereas the contention between these interests and local communities is predominantly about a fair share from these activities, the failure to arrive at a formula for this has led to the demand that local communities, including the Moro, have political control of those resources and of the local structures of law and order and administration. Meanwhile, locals describe the situation as being "like Aceh or Papua," where corporations act as a state with their own armed forces, with the Armed Forces of the Philippines available to these companies as subcontracted security forces.

Equally interesting is the play of cultural factors in this complex mix. Whereas the issue of fair share of economic benefits of extractive activities (and the related issue of full participation in governance to ensure a local role in decision making about distribution of economic benefits) is a common cause of all armed resistance in Mindanao, there are significant ideological and cultural variations on other issues. Within the Moro community, the majority are concerned with the core issues of governance and fair share, but a minority finds itself also concerned with the environmental impacts of the economic activities in contention. This environmentalist element shares common interests with the more inchoate armed resistance found in central Mindanao, where the aboriginal populations have heightened concerns about a threatened way of life. They also feel threats to their cultural identity, including their strong sense of identification with elements of the physical environment, such as mountains that they consider sacred which are being mined

by Canadian corporations. For example, these communities have established what are called “schools of living tradition” which see reclamation and protection of the environment as tantamount to establishment of educational and cultural resources and institutions.

The absence of organized political movements here, in contrast to the Moro areas, has led to the sole recourse of sporadic armed resistance, small scale, uncoordinated and *ad hoc*. In contrast to the fracturing of resistance on a community by community basis, the Moro political leadership seeks to advance a vision of unity, of all local struggles in Mindanao sharing common interests. An alternative vision is offered by the NPA, seeking to unify these local struggles with a larger nationwide Communist insurgency also largely based on local injustice and grievance, but with a class-based national orientation.

## THE STATE

The state is often the source of conflict and insecurity. Its deliberate withdrawal from its function as provider of social welfare or economic regulation; its deteriorated technical or administrative capacity; its lack of political will; its capture by private interests through graft or nepotism; and its role in implementing policies that increase economic and social inequality: these factors often contribute to the alienation and despair of already economically or socially marginal populations. By the same token, there remains a prospect that the state could be re-empowered as an instrument of security and social and political order if it demonstrated the capacity to meet the most pressing challenges faced by societies. When a society requires institutional and technical means to respond to pandemics or natural disasters, to conserve environmental goods, to engage in economic reform and regulation to attract investment and generate livelihoods, or to restrain predatory economic actors, the opportunity presents itself for the state to win the confidence of its citizens or subjects.

There appears to be an almost universal trend in all three regions of a significant diminution of the state’s role as provider of basic education, basic health services, and other common goods such as clean water. An exception might be noted in the paternalistic welfare states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Here too there is growing concern about the relative insufficiency of public support to meet need (certainly as compared with past state munificence), though their elites at least have the means and the will to outsource these functions to the private sector and expatriate expertise.

There is also a universal trend of either withdrawal from regulatory functions or the revision of regulatory policy so as to leave citizens less protected than before. Corruption emerges as a significant common factor here, varying from the outright graft seen in most of the states in the three regions to the more predictable but still inequitable preferences and privileges of elites in the Gulf.

Of particular concern and a particular source of vulnerability for the state is its capacity to respond to catastrophic events of nature or human health. Most societies in the three regions (prosperous Gulf societies and Singapore and Malaysia excepted) already suffer from fragile infrastructure and lack administrative capacity to meet even normal needs. The potential consequences of a catastrophe on the social well-being of their societies, and the possibility that subsequent political and security consequences will lead to a serious erosion of state legitimacy and public order, remain a sword of Damocles.

At one end of the spectrum are found those states that are considered at peril of failing for one reason or another, each related to a transnational threat or (more commonly) a combination of them. At the other end of the spectrum are states that are strong and evince little sense of concern about their capacity to control events. Singapore and the Gulf monarchies are the clearest examples of the latter. Malaysia and Thailand seem fundamentally capable, but their capacity seems to be in question owing to recent stresses to their political systems. The states at the edge of failure include Cambodia and Bangladesh, and the more self-evident cases of countries suffering armed conflict, such as Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

Afghanistan presents a potentially disastrous conjunction of natural resources eyed eagerly by foreigners and poor state capacity to negotiate sovereign interests in these. Its hydrocarbons, copper, iron ore, gold, gemstones, and marble have already both attracted the attentions of corporations and been significant sources of income for belligerent forces in recent civil conflicts. There is a vast inequality in technical knowledge and resources between the Afghan government and international corporate and government bidders for its wealth. The corrosive effects of pervasive corruption are also a significant source of vulnerability. There is a high likelihood that negotiations could result in an agreement that undervalues the Afghan economic stake, insufficiently protects environmental equities, and therefore undercuts the fragile political and ideological legitimacy not only of the present Afghan government (already widely excoriated as a foreign puppet) but more widely of the present Afghan political system.

Most of the states in the three regions fall between strong states and those at the edge of failure. They are stressed by several factors, principally declining capacity and willingness to provide social protection to their populations, either through exercise of regulatory functions over economic activity, or through provision of clean water, basic education, basic health care and protection against chronic or acute public health threats, and infrastructure such as sewage and electricity. The rising expectations and higher level of alienation, born of greater transparency and global communications, have led to these factors having greater political consequence than might have been the case. The falling off from a baseline set by traditions of basic social protection under erstwhile autarchic statist systems such as those in Egypt and India has also been a significant factor.

## Legitimacy and Sovereignty

As social conflict has intensified as a result of growing disparities of wealth and opportunity, or over competition for resources, the state has also been stressed in its capacity to provide law and order to its citizens. In part this diminution of capacity is a result of diminished resources in the hands of the state relative to total resources in the society. In part it is the result of increased need, owing to increases in population, the increased sophistication of criminals, and the availability to them of more lethal and sophisticated tools. In part it is the result of increased demands for police resources from new economic installations and new elites with more to protect.

The combination of diminution of absolute protection and rising expectations has resulted in serious erosion of the state's legitimacy with its citizens. In some cases, alternative sources of social and/or police protection have emerged to occupy the vacuum left by the state. Examples are Hizbullah in Lebanon and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. More localized militant and armed alternatives to state authority have emerged in many of the countries of the three regions, including Pakistan, India, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

In cases where states are perceived as being captive to foreign interests—whether governments, corporations, banks, multilateral lenders, or donors—their legitimacy is subject to yet another source of challenge.

The increasing role of foreign and multilateral interests and institutions in the affairs of all nations is of course a natural reflection of the processes of global integration. The question of sovereignty is a complex one as it is applied to the range of transnational trends and challenges. Many of these, such as climate change, migration, pandemics, natural disasters, transnational crime, and terrorism, exceed the capacities of individual states to address effectively. Nonetheless, at a time when the social and economic inequalities within states and between states are rising steeply, it is highly problematical to contemplate the loss of effective national sovereign control (which in democratic states means popular control) over the policy decisions that can address these emerging transnational threats.

What is clear is that the losers from global integration seem to have common interests with similar social groups in neighboring states. For example, Pakistani, Indian, and Bangladeshi peasants have a common interest in changes in the forces of nature (river systems, climate change) that will determine their livelihoods and food security. Their advocates certainly are among those most avidly supporting regional cooperation, even as they criticize the state's willingness to collaborate with foreign capital. Nongovernmental groups in Southeast Asia, particularly those working on anti-corruption advocacy, on environmental protection, and on grass-roots organizing on natural resources, have also developed a web of transnational technical collaborations and a sense of transnational solidarity. Critics of

global economic integration are as ready as its proponents to contemplate and even welcome the model of a “post-Westphalian” international order. All this suggests that what drives resistance to globalization is its particular form and effects, not a xenophobic rejection of cosmopolitan identity.

In all three regions, the state is often seen as the source of the problem rather than the solution. It is often seen engaging in acts and adopting policies that will add to rather than mitigate transnational threats such as environmental degradation, migration, or terrorism. The inability of the losers to participate in the design and implementation of development and reform strategies is likely to contribute to a widening gulf between state and society. Shared political norms and commonly accepted ideologies will consequently become increasingly irrelevant or lose their sense of legitimacy. This diminution will open the way for narrower, less modernizing, and more divisive ideologies. It is essential to look behind the institutional forms of democracy and governance, and to take account of how power relationships between social groups affect on the one hand their participation in and perceptions of the state, and on the other the quality of governance.

A sign of the future is found in three relatively democratic societies—Lebanon, the Philippines, and India. In Lebanon, the state appears to have effectively bifurcated, and is essentially in a process of negotiating a confederation. The causal varieties and territorial extent of insurgencies in India and the Philippines are cause for alarm. All three challenge the facile narrative about democratic states and societies, or economically liberalizing ones.

Two trends together constitute a volatile mix: on the one hand, a diffusion of knowledge and increasing awareness in civil society and among individuals and, on the other, serious impairment of the legitimacy of the state and its capacity to maintain public order. The relationship between the state and its citizens is a major feature of the political instability and political violence widely anticipated as a result of rapid social change.

The state’s legitimacy is closely related to the overall resilience of societies in facing transnational challenges. Non-state actors have assumed increasing importance at this historical juncture, and this trend will continue. These non-state actors include commercial and financial interests and Islamist movements.

As significant are the nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that serve vulnerable populations or unpopular causes such as environmental protection. Yet these often evince ambivalence at their own indispensability; they are wary of being the default substitute for the state’s failure. They feel that only the state has the sovereign authority, administrative capacity, reach, and technical or financial resources to adequately respond to the scale of need. Although their lack of self-confidence sometimes causes the state to ignore them, they are often the greatest advocates for restoration of the capacity of the state. Yet their contentious struggles on the front lines of pressing transnational issues often cause them to sympathize with

others who compensate for the state's shortcomings, including ideologically radical or even violent anti-state movements.

The hampered capacity and political will of the state to respond to the threats of greatest concern, to populations as a whole and to particular constituencies, has created a crisis of legitimacy for the state. In many cases, this merely compounds

### Climate Change and Indian Opinion

The government of India adopts the posture of a conscientious party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. Its statements at multilateral meetings note that it has

- Created the National Council on Climate Change, chaired by the Prime Minister and tasked with developing a national strategy.
- Adopted the Energy Conservation Act, establishing the Bureau of Energy Efficiency and outlining the national government's authority to enforce conservation and efficient use of energy.
- Adopted the National Environmental Policy (NEP) in 2006 as a comprehensive framework.

The government takes the position that all countries do not bear equal responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, and that developing countries are less responsible for climate change but will bear the brunt of its effects. It resists calls to curb India's emissions and has objected to UN calls for developing countries to cut carbon emissions by 20 percent. It rejects "quantitative targets of emissions limitations" as "counter-productive" and as having "a negative effect on ... development." It asks developed countries to take the lead in emissions reduction.

However, India's emissions are growing rapidly, and it is poised to become the world's third-largest emitter by 2030. Elements of Indian civil society evince a different position. A survey conducted in 2005 by WorldPublicOpinion.org finds that half of Indians surveyed believe that India should limit its greenhouse gas emissions, and that 85 percent of those surveyed see the effects of global warming as a threat. The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) Climate Confidence Index of July 2007 notes that out of the 9,000 people surveyed in nine countries, Indians are the most concerned about climate change and committed to steps to mitigate it. Climate change ranks as the second-greatest concern for Indians after terrorism. The HSBC Index finds that 70 percent of Indians believe that developed economies should take the lead in mitigating climate change, compared to a world average of 85 percent.

Indian citizens appear to support more resolute unilateral action than does their government. Critics of official policy find little evidence that the government incorporates the issue of climate change into national policy discussion related to electricity generation, transportation planning, and other related sectors. They also note the absence of assessments of prospective economic damage from climate change, suggesting that such assessment would require hard choices about investment priorities.

*Sources:* Government of India National Environmental Policy; Statement of Minister of External Affairs at Meeting of Major Economies, Washington, DC, September 27, 2007; *Economic & Political Weekly* (India); WorldPublicOpinion.org.

an existing legitimacy deficit born of capture of the state by political and economic elites. In other cases, it magnifies what is more the ineptitude of a state than its deliberate denial of popular aspirations. In yet others, the lack of meaningful response to global trends becomes the primary source of doubt about state legitimacy. On occasion there is a more or less rapid dissolution of ideologies or value systems that have tacitly guided and framed discourse in these societies. The combination of an ideological vacuum and a lack of political legitimacy opens space for the rapid advance of ideologies and rhetoric that may have little historical presence in a society. At times it allows ideologies which have historically appealed only to small minorities to expand their influence rapidly.

### IDEOLOGY AND IDENTITY

Rapid change in ways of life has led many to seek reassurance in traditional identities and cultures, has provided *entrée* for new ideologies. The latter are often “neo-” versions of traditional identities and ideologies, severed from their social, cultural, and historical contexts, and grossly simplified or distorted in content. They often answer to the anxieties and discontents born of social dislocation and destabilization. This is associated with an increase in religiosity, particularly in the Middle East and in South Asia, and in all religious groups. This has both a psychological and a practical dimension. The vacuum left by withdrawal of the state from the provision of social safety nets such as low-cost food or functioning public education or primary health services has been filled by traditional religious charitable groups or by political movements.

Across the three regions Islam’s influence is the most widespread, in the formation of contemporary identities and in the elaboration of contemporary ideologies. It is not however the only important ideology. Both secular ideologies and movements of non-Muslim religious ideological renewal and political mobilization also deserve attention.

In the domain of secular ideologies, neo-liberal economics and liberal political values remain fiercely contested ideological ground. Secular anti-capitalism and secular anti-Westernism retain substantial force, particularly in India and generally in non-Muslim South and Southeast Asia, as well as in important Muslim countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, though in these latter they are generally accompanied by an acknowledgment of the primacy of Islam. In most of the Muslim world, secular forms of anti-capitalism and anti-Westernism are eclipsed by the Islamic formulation of anti-capitalist or anti-Western sentiments. The most significant ideologies giving rise to armed challenges to state authority are variants of Maoism, which are particularly significant in India, Nepal, and the Philippines.

Among religious ideologies, most significant is radical Hindu mobilization in India. It has also begun to be seen in Nepal. Buddhist mobilizations are assuming increasing importance for political stability, either as threats to social unity and se-

curity and generators of conflict, as in Sri Lanka or Thailand, or as peaceful challenges to state authority as in Burma. Also significant are various forms of mobilization among Christians, Roman Catholic and Protestant evangelical, in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines and Indonesia.

Each of these, with the exception of the mobilization in Burma, implicitly or explicitly asserts religious ideology as a basis of division in society, and thus poses actual or potential threats to political stability through provocative and divisive mobilization for social conflict. It is hard to overstate the widespread concern among Indians of all religious groups about the threat to social order, and to the fragile political consensus, posed by Hindu chauvinist mobilizations. This concern is intensified by the aid, comfort, and legitimacy lent by some state officials to manifestly illegal and violent sectarian activities. These are also seen as contributing to militancy and sympathy for covert terrorist groups among Indian Muslims, youth in particular. In Southeast Asia, concerns are expressed about the socially and politically destabilizing consequences of Christian evangelism and related business activity. Evangelical Christians and the Roman Catholic Church (hierarchy and membership) play a significant political role as supporters of government counter-insurgency efforts in the complex security picture in Mindanao, where indigenous Muslims, aboriginal populations, long-established Christian settlers, and outsiders both Filipino and foreign, contend over the island's natural resources, including minerals and agricultural land, in a heavily armed environment, in the context of armed insurgency and counter-insurgency operations.

### **Islamism, Muslim Identity, and Intellectual Renewal**

Islamist politics is one manifestation of a global Islamic revival which comprises intellectual, cultural, and theological renewal and reform. That revival is about the growth and development of Muslim societies, not their opposition to the West. Intellectually imprecise condemnation of Islamist politics can be mistaken for hostility to that larger revival, and thus to the energy of Muslim societies to renew themselves. Because that revival takes place in societies the vast majority of whose members are also concerned with benefiting more fully from the economic fruits of modernization, the revival is not necessarily in opposition to modernity. Its oppositional stance is as much against perceived externally dictated modernization and against states and local political elites that appear to be closer to the purposes of the West than to the aspirations of their own populations.

Among Muslim communities, whether at the level of state and society in Muslim-majority countries, or at the level of society in Muslim-minority countries, Islam remains the predominant source of authority and legitimation even for the most secular of political and social strategies. Public health campaigns in Muslim societies benefit from *fatwa* and the appeal to religious principles. Attempts to provide gender-sensitive policing can be justified by appeal to Islamic values. Societies as distinct as those of Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, India, and Iraq find elites and dissidents, state and non-state actors, appealing to Islam as a source

of justification for social policy. In the realm of thought, Islam functions as a source of presumptive and self-evident intellectual validity, its role akin to that of reason or logic in secular philosophy. In Muslim-majority societies, the strategy of the most secular and de-Islamicized of Muslim intellectuals is to begin with the argument that a particular course of action is not contrary to Islam. What distinguishes this from developments among, for example, Hindu Indians is the fact that in Muslim communities the appeal is not only to a religious *identity*, but simultaneously to Islamic *values and intellectual tradition*.

Not all anti-state violence carried out by Muslim groups has religious or Islamist inspiration or goals. Muslim groups in armed rebellion for control of territory (such as those in southern Thailand, the southern Philippines, Aceh in Indonesia, or Indian Kashmir) may identify themselves in terms of their religious identity, but are more often in opposition to the state for the same reasons as non-Muslim groups such as those in the tribal areas of India, in northeast India, or in Irian Jaya in Indonesia. All have in common their struggle for control of local resources, for self-determination, and for freedom from discrimination by governments or majority ethnic groups. This distinguishes these Muslim insurgent groups quite sharply from groups with a more explicitly Islamic religious agenda, such as Islamist political parties or covert *jihadi* terrorist groups. *Jihad* as a rationale for violent attacks (usually covert) on civilians, however thoroughly elaborated as ideological, is quite similar to the *modus operandi* of non-Muslim terrorist organizations. *Jihadi* terrorism should also be distinguished from the use of Islamic identity as the basis of political organization and political parties. The extent to which the latter are covert is as often as not a function of state repression rather than a preference for conspiratorial methods for their own sake.

These distinctions have implications for political strategies and the political stability of important states such as Pakistan. The view from within the Pashtun belt suggests that the interests of the US and the Pakistani state would be better served by an understanding that the issue is less one of Islamic ideology than it is an issue of governance and local control. Such an understanding suggests political and administrative approaches based upon local networks and loyalties that among Western observers are understood only by ethnographers (certainly not by military planners), and upon the seamless and complex political, economic, social, and ideological continuities and unities between the areas of conflict and the rest of the society and country. That said, it should be acknowledged that Pashtun rebellion in Pakistan is different from Muslim rebellions in Muslim-minority countries. In a national polity dominated by Islamic religious-political discourse, this opposition to a nominally Islamic government has articulated a more religious rationale, purist relative to the perceived hypocrisy of the national body politic. This has also meant that the lines are more blurred between this predominantly local political resistance and the activities of *jihadi* groups and Islamist political parties, as all three forces jockey for political alliances based upon shared Islamic referents.

There can be little doubt that Islamist political parties throughout the three regions do have a political agenda based on religious identity and values, and that their commitment to the firmer establishment of *sharia* is serious. That said it is just as clear that the predominant explanation for their appeal is simply political. These parties often appeal to pragmatic political concerns, such as rejection of Israel or alienation from Al Fatah misgovernment among Palestinians, and the failure of government institutions and weakness of civil society among Egyptians or Lebanese Shia. Their appeal is bolstered by their provision of many services that governments or secular institutions are incapable of offering, such as humanitarian food aid, basic education, and health clinics. That said, these Islamist parties have not systematically developed political programs incorporating these aspirations of voters. It has been the case where they have governed, as in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, that the challenge of governing has exposed the fragility of their political base, and they have been succeeded by secular parties. Something similar is predicted in the event of the Muslim Brotherhood being allowed to assume power after free and fair elections in Egypt.

Among the strategies that state elites have employed to compensate for their deficit of popular political legitimacy is selective adoption of the rhetoric and policies of critics. Where states pursue substantive policies that promote global integration and its consequences, they “buy” political space to do so by the embrace of religious-political rhetoric. This has occurred in Gujarat state in India, which is simultaneously a “poster child” for economic growth from global integration and for vicious anti-Muslim pogroms, and in the Wahhabi state of Saudi Arabia.

## THE FUTURE

The growing religiosity of political discourse reflects the delegitimation of secularism owing to its perceived failures or its association with corrupt or unrepresentative political orders. Those secular ideologies that appear to have greatest continuing viability are anti-capitalist, or those which articulate demands for democracy that move beyond a sole demand for representative institutions, to encompass a full range of governance issues, including economic inequality, transparency, the rule of law, and the social support needs of vulnerable groups of society.

Looming above the trends projected by experts, and the mapping of the current ideological, cultural, and intellectual terrain, is a question about the ideological implications of demographic trends. The youth bulges found in much of South Asia and the Middle East (less so in Southeast Asia) raise significant questions. With the coming to maturity of this large age group, not only does the issue of employment generation come to the fore, with all the political and security implications of failure. As important are the cultural effects.

What will be the psychological and ideological dimensions of youth’s response to social, economic, or environmental crisis in their respective societies? What will

they learn from each other across borders and through cyberspace, that epitome of youth? Above all, what will be the ideological implications of the cultural center of gravity in many large societies shifting to populations that have little living memory or historical awareness (and even less if educational systems continue to fail) of political or cultural traditions such as Arab or Indian secularism or the syncretic Hindu-Muslim culture of the South Asian subcontinent?

Behind all these intellectual trends and more lurks a question of what will be the future sources of cultural and ideological prestige and authority. What is clear is that the sharp dialectic between the status quo and reformist or revolutionary modernization is no longer useful. Tradition, in the form of what we might call neo-traditionalism, is as much a tool for radical questioning of the conventional trajectory and dominant narrative of a beneficent integration into a global society. Economic and political modernization is often seen as the instrument of consolidation of elite interests and dominance. Indian “Marxists” line up on the side of both multinational corporations seeking displacement of Indian peasants and those resisting them. Islam is both the basis of the monarchical authority of super-wealthy elites, participating with sophistication in the complex global economy, and a call to mobilization of dispossessed Palestinians, disadvantaged Lebanese Shia, or Egyptian urbanites.

This ideological vacuum and intellectual ferment provide both the opportunity and the necessity for all contending social forces to articulate a new vision. Clearly, a growing religiosity is a significant factor that will shape the ideological landscape of the future. Equally clearly, ideologies based on the antagonistic class interests of the dispossessed and the possessors have substantial viability. How does a secular vision and narrative compete in this environment, where the secularisms of a previous generation have been exhausted or discredited by their association with failed political systems or elites?

## IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY

There is growing recognition that violent threats to security and uncontrollable threats to political order cannot be understood without reference to other realities. These realities include general trends in societies and economies, and trends in the relationships between human societies and nature. This demands that what has been called “human security” or “nontraditional security” be placed in the mainstream of security discourse and salvaged from the sometimes patronizing indulgence accorded it as an intellectual fashion *parvenu*. With the ever greater likelihood of catastrophic droughts, floods, or coastal inundation, the security consequences of resulting migrations towards urban centers and across international borders deserve urgent attention. The prospects of social instability resulting from large and uncontrolled movements of people are great. As great are the prospects of conflict over essential resources such as water rendered even scarcer as a result of these catastrophes. Among the cluster of potential outcomes of climate change

and resulting environmental degradation identified by the recent European Union report on Climate Change and International Security are mass migration, radicalization, and state failure.

Without an analytical understanding that comprises a complex set of issues, it will be harder to accurately diagnose security threats, and to bring to bear the appropriate instruments of power for their mitigation or solution. What has become apparent in recent years is that single or simple instruments of power have been unequal to the task. The overarching governance challenges of the early decades of the twenty-first century will be to devise the appropriate analytical models to understand our world, and to adapt cultures and ideologies for marshalling social consensus in support of policy responses.

As important as an integral analytical model is reliance on multiple and representative sources from the front lines. Careful listening to experts from those societies prevents hasty decisions, gives pause where appropriate, and cautions as to how complex things might be. Policy decisions can only benefit from this closer reading of the terrain over which policy will be implemented.

Diplomatic or development initiatives, and decisions about the uses of military power, can only benefit from accurate reading of that terrain. An understanding of the complexity of the social and political environment is essential to any of the following: the appropriate diplomatic posture to secure collective action on pandemic diseases; the development of options for, or effective pursuit of, military operations; or the appropriate combination of military force and development. One could avoid inadvertently compounding the problem, for example in the Afghanistan-Pakistan borderland, if one understood the political implications of rapid environmental deterioration, of rapid change in people's livelihoods, of removal of traditional trade routes as a result of security operations, and of rapid change in structures of local political authority.

