

Coastal Zones and Climate Change

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Editors

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The **Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS)** is based in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and is an independent, nonprofit NGO that fosters collaborative research, networking, and interaction on strategic and international issues pertaining to South Asia. RCSS coordinates research on strategic and security-related issues; promotes interaction among scholars and other professionals in and outside the region who are engaged in South Asian strategic and international studies; and fosters relationships and collaboration among institutions studying issues related to conflict, conflict resolution, cooperation, stability, and security in South Asia.



The Stimson Center, located in Washington, DC, is a nonprofit, non-partisan institution devoted to offering practical solutions to problems of national and international security. Since its establishment in 1989, Stimson has been committed to meaningful impact, a thorough integration of analysis and outreach, and a creative and innovative approach to global security challenges. Stimson has three basic program areas: reducing the threat of weapons of mass destruction, building regional security, and strengthening institutions of international peace and security. These program areas encompass work on a wide range of issues, from nonproliferation to transnational challenges in Asia, from UN peacekeeping operations to analyzing the resources needed for 21st century statecraft.

Preface

Stimson's *Regional Voices: Transnational Challenges* project is devoted to enhancing the information and analysis available to US policymakers about emerging transnational security challenges. The project draws on the knowledge and perspectives of technical and subject experts, and of political and strategic analysts, to develop an ongoing dialogue among researchers and practitioners from various disciplines and occupational backgrounds. The geographical range of the project's work covers East Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Our work includes organizing workshops in the regions, entering into research partnerships with regional institutions and individuals, carrying out interviews in the field, and conducting research into the state of current knowledge and thought. We have sought the input of experts and practitioners who constitute new voices in the conversation with the US government. We have not shied away from perspectives that dissent from conventional wisdom, as long as they represent significant bodies of opinions in the countries of the regions.

During 2007, we sought to arrive at an understanding of perspectives specific to each region. This was reflected in our 2008 publication *Transnational Trends: Middle Eastern and Asian Views*. The following year, we engaged in extensive and substantial dialogue and collaboration across all the regions on themes as varied as the political economy of natural resources, climate change and river systems, maritime resources and security in the Indian Ocean, and the relationship between Islam and politics. Each of these resulted in a collection of essays by experts from the regions and from Stimson.

The current volume reflects some of our work in 2009. In addition to the work on climate change and coastal zones reflected herein, we have undertaken work in the areas of migration and urbanization, maritime security, international climate change policy, water and conflict, and political stability and internal conflict in South Asia.

We have sought to integrate these varied inquiries by asking the following questions in each area of research:

- How is evolving contemporary public discourse addressing the technical, governance, and cultural challenges of these specialized subject areas?
- How do political structures and cultural traditions constrain or facilitate effective responses? What examples or opportunities for transnational cooperation do they offer?
- What scientific, technological, and other intellectual resources are available or necessary, and how effectively are these deployed?
- What are the key relationships among social, economic, environmental, technological, and political trends? How do these trends relate to traditional security concerns? What new sources of instability, crisis, or conflict are found in these, and with what consequences?
- What are the social, political, and security consequences of rapid change?

We have sought throughout to maintain a transnational perspective, to look at trends or threats that transcend national borders, or at those that are national in scope but recur in many societies in a region. In all our conversations, conferences, meetings, roundtables, and focus groups, we have attempted to elicit the most candid discussion possible, and have done so by explicitly placing all conversations off the record and not for attribution.

Each volume in the present series consists of essays on some of these questions by experts and thinkers from the regions covered, accompanied by one or more essays by Stimson scholars designed to synthesize and analyze our findings and describe the key trends that we have noted.

Amit A. Pandya

Director, *Regional Voices: Transnational Challenges*

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I am indebted to chapter authors Alain De Comarmond, Mohamed El Raey, Nazria Islam, Nirmalie Pallewatta, Rolph Payet, Golam Rabbani, A. Atiq Rahman, and Poh Poh Wong for their commitment to this project, their valuable analytical contributions, and their patience with the process of publication.

This book owes its existence to the talent and dedication of the *Regional Voices* team and others who worked many minor miracles. Corey Sobel, Research Associate on the *Regional Voices* project, performed essential roles in the coordination, research, and editorial work for the volume. Research Associates Kendra Patterson and Jumaina Siddiqui shouldered much of the effort in organizing the Colombo conference. Director Amit Pandya, who coedited this volume, provided vision and intellectual leadership. Stimson's Director for External Relations, Nancy Langer, played a major part in bringing this volume to completion; as did Alison Yost, who is largely responsible for the production values, and Shawn

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David Michel

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