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NTS VIEWPOINT

The world's first ever Arms Trade Treaty: Implications for Southeast Asia

By Pau Khan Khup Hangzo

After seven years of negotiations, the UN finally approved the first ever Arms Trade Treaty by an overwhelming majority. The treaty covers a range of conventional arms, from battle tanks to combat aircraft and small arms and light weapons (SALWs).

The regulation of SALWs in particular could have major implications for Southeast Asia, a region awash with both legal and illegal arms. Private gun possession ranges from 0.5 arms per 100 people in Indonesia and Singapore; to more than 4.0 in Myanmar, Cambodia and the Philippines; and 15.6 in Thailand.

Significantly, SALWs – pistols, rifles, machine guns, grenade launchers, mortars, and portable anti-aircraft and anti-tank systems – are widely used in armed conflicts. Although SALWs do not by themselves cause the conflicts in which they are used, they exacerbate their lethality. SALWs are also implicated in deaths occurring in non-conflict situations such as gang fights, homicides, suicides and random shootings. In all, SALWs cause an estimated 500,000 deaths worldwide each year.

What is worrying for Southeast Asia is that the region is a source, transit and destination for trafficked arms. On the one hand, ongoing low-intensity armed conflicts in countries such as the Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar continue to fuel demand for sophisticated arms. On the other hand, large stocks of surplus weapons in countries such as Cambodia and Vietnam, a legacy of the Vietnam War, have resulted in the region becoming an important source of illicit weapons for non-state armed groups such as those operating in India.

As such, the Arms Trade Treaty is vital for the region – for establishing standards for weapons sales, and also for ensuring greater oversight over a country's stock of weapons so as to prevent illegal diversions. Proliferation of arms to non-state armed groups is just one part of the problem. While states have the legitimate right to buy weapons for national security reasons, their unfettered purchase could result in indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force, further inflaming armed conflicts. It is not surprising then that there is increasing support in Southeast Asia for norms and standards for the arms trade, and that a majority of the countries in the region voted for the treaty.

However, the treaty, which attempts to regulate arms transfers to both states and non-state armed groups at the global level, would have limited effectiveness without there also being complementary gun control measures at the national level. Currently, the extent of gun control in Southeast Asia ranges from total control (Brunei, Cambodia, Vietnam) to restrictive control (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Timor-Leste) to highly permissive (Lao PDR, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand). This variation in level of control could stymie regional efforts to regulate SALWs.

As proliferation of SALWs is a transnational issue, regional standards based on complementary national laws are necessary. The Arms Trade Treaty offers an opportunity for countries in Southeast Asia to collectively develop regional standards and norms. Such efforts could in turn help reduce gun violence and improve prospects for negotiated settlements to longstanding internal armed conflicts in the region.

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Additional Info:

- Finn, Peter, 'NRA opposes U.N. arms treaty', *The Washington Post*, 17 March 2013.
- 'China overtakes UK to become world's fifth largest arms exporter', *The Telegraph*, 18 March 2013.

- MacFarquhar, Neil, 'U.N. treaty is first aimed at regulating global arms sales', *The New York Times*, 2 April 2013.
- Spencer, Richard, 'Libyan arms that went missing under Gaddafi "fuelling multiple conflicts"', *The Telegraph*, 10 April 2013.
- Gutierrez, Jason, 'Philippines' black market for guns thrives in absence of trust in security forces', *AFP*, 11 April 2013.
- Oxfam, 2012, 'Stop a bullet, stop a war: Why ammunition must be included in the Arms Trade Treaty', Oxfam Briefing, May.
- UN General Assembly, 2013, 'Draft decision: The Arms Trade Treaty', A/CONF.217/2013/L.3, New York, 27 March.

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CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS



News & Commentaries

- 'Philippines allots \$316 million for climate change', *EcoSeed*, 12 April 2013.
- 'Lifeline to "climate refugees"?'', *IRIN*, 17 April 2013.
- IRIN, 'Indonesia's natural disaster risks, costs rise: UN', *Jakarta Globe*, 19 April 2013.
- 'Political instability undermines disaster preparedness in Bangladesh', *IRIN*, 22 April 2013.
- 'UN to support China in ending production of ozone-depleting substances by 2030', *UN News Centre*, 23 April 2013.
- Appiah, Bernard, 'Women are "key drivers" in climate change adaptation', *SciDev.Net*, 24 April 2013.
- 'ADB: Asian economy has climate consequences', *UPI*, 25 April 2013.
- Rowling, Megan, 'Governments focus in on local solutions to climate change', *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, 26 April 2013.
- 'Right the flood project wrongs', *The Bangkok Post*, 2 May 2013.
- Klein, Naomi, 'The giants of the green world that profit from the planet's destruction', *Guardian*, 3 May 2013.

Selected Publications

- Kunreuther, Howard, Geoffrey Heal, Myles Allen et al., 2013, 'Risk management and climate change', *Nature: Climate Change*, Vol. 3, No. 5, pp. 447–50.

This article highlights how risk management can inform the sound development and evaluation of climate policies through the use of more robust approaches that are designed to deal with the uncertainties that are pervasive in climate change projections and impact.

- Buxton, Abbi, 2013, 'Responding to the challenge of artisanal and small-scale mining: How can knowledge networks help?', London: International Institute for Environment and Development.

This article examines the challenges faced by various artisanal and small-scale mining companies worldwide and highlights the prospects of using knowledge networks to overcome these challenges.

- Su, Yufang, Jianchu Xu, Andy Wilkes et al., 2012, 'Coping with climate-induced water stresses through time and space in the mountains of Southwest China', *Regional Environmental Change*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 855–66.

This paper highlights a range of coping strategies to address climate-induced water stresses resulting from erosion control, village water management rules, changes in cropping patterns and new irrigation methods. It argues that not all coping strategies are sustainable and that it is thus important to link short-term strategies with long-term ecological and socioeconomic adaptations.

Events & Announcements

- 'Fourth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction', 19–23 May 2013, Geneva, Switzerland.
- 'Resilient Cities: 4th Global Forum on Urban Resilience and Adaptation', 31 May – 2 June 2013, Bonn, Germany.

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ENERGY AND HUMAN SECURITY



News & Commentaries

- Boot, William, 'Burma and Bangladesh in battle of the Bengal Bay gas blocks', *The Irrawaddy*, 18 April 2013.
- Zhang, Hui and Shangui Zhao, 'China moves cautiously ahead on nuclear energy', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 22 April 2013.
- Haas, Benjamin and Aibing Guo, 'China oil majors see refining gains as pricing driven by market', *Bloomberg*, 26 April 2013.
- Fackler, Martin, 'Flow of tainted water is latest crisis at Japan nuclear plant', *The New York Times*, 29 April 2013.
- Rhee, Changyong, 'Energy demand: Powering the Asian century', *The Jakarta Post*, 29 April 2013.
- Schonhardt, Sara, 'Palm oil under pressure', *Eco-Business*, 29 April 2013.
- Bimantara, I.B. Made, 'Why Indonesia needs to expand its energy diplomacy', *The Jakarta Post*, 2 May 2013.
- Singh, Rajesh Kumar, 'Rocks in India coal supply means more power blackouts: Energy', *Bloomberg*, 2 May 2013.

Selected Publications

- Branosky, Evan, Amanda Stevens and Sarah Forbes, 2012, *Defining the shale gas life cycle: A framework for identifying and mitigating environmental impacts*, Working paper, Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.

While shale gas could help meet the demand for energy, there are detrimental effects associated with its exploitation and use. This paper provides a balanced, scientifically supported analysis of the implications of adopting shale gas, and suggests ways to control its negative externalities.

- Sovacool, Benjamin K. and Vlado Vivoda, 2012, 'A comparison of Chinese, Indian, and Japanese perceptions of energy security', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 52, No. 5, pp. 949–69.

This article investigates how energy security is perceived in Asia's largest energy consuming countries, namely, China, India and Japan. It is based on targeted surveys and statistical analyses. These perceptions have important implications for the countries' policies and external relations.

- Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2013, *Asian Development Outlook 2013: Asia's energy challenge*, Manila.

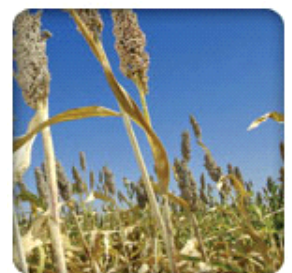
This report reviews economic development in the Asia-Pacific in 2012, provides country-specific analysis and outlines economic trends and prospects. According to the report, ensuring energy security would be a major challenge to continued development in the region.

Events & Announcements

- 'Job vacancy: Research Fellow in energy efficiency and innovation, University of Sussex', Deadline: 18 May 2013.
- '2013 Deloitte Energy Conference', 21–22 May 2013, Washington, DC, USA.
- '3rd Annual Asian Conference on Sustainability, Energy and the Environment', 6–9 June 2013, Osaka, Japan.

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FOOD SECURITY



News & Commentaries

- Gopinath, Deepak, 'Is India ill-prepared to deal with consequences of Food Security Bill?', *The Economic Times*, 5 April 2013.
- 'Dietary changes leading to surge in rice imports, food insecurity in China', *Oryza*, 12 April 2013.
- 'IRRI achieves breakthrough in salt resistant rice research', *Oryza*, 16 April 2013.
- 'FAO's panel on genetic resources adopts standards key for food security', *Food and Beverage News*, 22 April 2013.
- Raina, Leela, 'Regional cooperation holds the key to Indonesian food security', *Jakarta Globe*, 24 April 2013.
- Brown, Lester, 'The new geopolitics of food scarcity', *Thomson Reuters Foundation*, 25 April 2013.
- 'Indonesia relaxes import rules after US goes to WTO', *The Straits Times*, 25 April 2013.
- Claudio, Cora, 'Climate-proofing our farmers and food supply', *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 29 April 2013.

Selected Publications

- Dorward, Andrew, 2013, 'Agricultural labour productivity, food prices and sustainable development impacts and indicators', *Food Policy*, Vol. 39, pp. 40–50.

This article argues that discussion of agricultural productivity must also incorporate land productivity and labour productivity. It proposes indicators that measure agricultural development and the impact on economies, land and energy productivity in agriculture, and real food prices relative to real incomes. It notes that such indicators would be useful in evaluating post-2015 goals and targets.

- Anderson, Kym, Shikha Jha, Signe Nelgen et al., 2013, 'Re-examining policies for food security in Asia', *Food Security*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 195–215.

The article finds that trade policy restrictions are generally enacted to deal with short-term food price spikes. Having analysed the market projections to 2030, it argues that existing protectionist tendencies may not be the best way forward and recommends that governments consider other options such as enhancing the efficiency of domestic markets, investing in research and development, and improving communication and transport infrastructure.

Events & Announcements

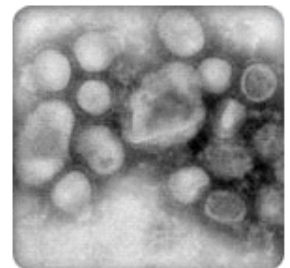
- 'Special Session of the International Rice Commission', 13–14 June 2013, Rome, Italy.
- 'FAO Conference 38th Session', 15–22 June 2013, Rome, Italy.

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HEALTH SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- 'Asia braces for spill-over of new bird flu strain', *IRIN*, 8 April 2013.
- 'Asian World Health Summit opens in shadow of H7N9 threat', *Asian Scientist*, 9 April 2013.
- NIH/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, 'Treatment for novel coronavirus shows promise in early lab tests', *ScienceDaily*, 18 April 2013.
- 'WHO launches emergency response to antimalarial drug resistance', *World Health Organization (WHO)*, 24 April 2013.
- Wong, Gillian, 'WHO: New flu passes more easily from bird to human', *AP*, 24 April 2013.
- Kelland, Kate, 'Scientists confirm new H7N9 bird flu has come from chickens', *Reuters*, 25 April 2013.
- Chen, Te-Ping, 'Hong Kong steps up flu fight', *The Wall Street Journal*, 28 April 2013.
- Wong, Chun Han, 'Dengue fever on the rise in Singapore', *The Wall Street Journal*, 29 April 2013.
- Connor, Steve, "'Appalling irresponsibility": Senior scientists attack Chinese researchers for creating new strains of influenza virus in veterinary laboratory', *The Independent*, 2 May 2013.
- 'Five die of SARS-like virus in Saudi Arabia', *Al Jazeera*, 2 May 2013.
- 'H7N9 genes originated from four sources: Lancet study', *Asian Scientist*, 6 May 2013.



Selected Publications

- Cheng, June J. and Peter Berry, 2013, 'Health co-benefits and risks of public health strategies to climate change: A review of current literature', *International Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 58, No. 2, pp. 305–11.

This article highlights the co-benefits as well as the risks that come with health improvements associated with adaptation activities that affect social capital. It discusses the impact on mental health, and touches on misconceptions about health and urban design strategies. It also argues for more research on the unintended positive and negative consequences of public health adaptation activities.

- Moon, Suerie and Oluwatosin Omole, 2013, 'Development assistance for health: Critiques and proposals for change', Working Group on Financing Paper No. 1, London: Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) and the Harvard Global Health Institute.

This paper discusses the landscape of development assistance for health (DAH) and highlights problems in the existing system that mirror development aid and health sector issues. It then offers key proposals for reforming the DAH system in the areas of financing, governance and extra-DAH institutions, and provides the criteria for assessing such proposals.

Events & Announcements

- 'World No Tobacco Day', 31 May 2013.

- '8th Global Conference on Health Promotion', 10–14 June 2013, Helsinki, Finland.

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INTERNAL AND CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT

News & Commentaries

- Fuller, Thomas, 'Ethnic rifts strain Myanmar as it moves toward democracy', *The New York Times*, 4 April 2013.
- 'South Sudan: UN officials, Security Council condemn deadly attack on peacekeepers', *UN News Centre*, 9 April 2013.
- 'Sectarian tension in Myanmar threatens aid workers', *IRIN*, 16 April 2013.
- 'Indonesia: Victims of the Aceh conflict still waiting for truth, justice and reparation', *Amnesty International*, 18 April 2013.
- Nyein, Nyein, 'No need for OIC intervention, Burma govt says', *The Irrawaddy*, 18 April 2013.
- Bodeen, Christopher, 'Local government says 21 dead in west China clash', *Time*, 24 April 2013.
- 'Engaging with Philippine armed groups', *IRIN*, 25 April 2013.
- 'Red tape hits humanitarian work in NW Pakistan', *IRIN*, 25 April 2013.
- Al-Mahmood, Syed Zain, 'Bangladesh unrest seen intensifying', *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 April 2013.
- Aneez, Shihar and Ranga Sirilal, 'Amnesty says Sri Lanka represses dissent to consolidate power', *Reuters*, 30 April 2013.



Selected Publications

- Jakobsen, Tor Georg, Indra De Soysa and Jo Jakobsen, 2013, 'Why do poor countries suffer costly conflict? Unpacking per capita income and the onset of civil war', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 140–60.

This article examines the relationship between poverty and conflict. The authors apply a combination of statistical and analytical approaches to test the explanatory power of three existing views on the linkage: (1) poverty leads to grievances; (2) income proxies the opportunity cost of rebelling; and (3) income proxies state capacity. The findings support the opportunity-cost explanation.

- Human Rights Watch, 2013, '*All you can do is pray: Crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Burma's Arakan state*', New York, NY.

This report looks at the ongoing sectarian violence between the Buddhist and Muslim communities in Myanmar. It recounts the violent incidents in a chronological order, examines the government's response, identifies the causes of the unrest and the resulting humanitarian concerns, and provides recommendations for stakeholders. The report draws international attention to the serious human rights abuses taking place.

Events & Announcements

- '23rd Session of the Human Rights Council', 27 May – 14 June 2013, Geneva, Switzerland.
- 'International Day of UN Peacekeepers', 29 May 2013.

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TRANSNATIONAL CRIME

News & Commentaries

- Warner, Bernhard, 'Google turns to big data to unmask human traffickers', *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 10 April 2013.
- Schearf, Daniel, 'UN: Asia's transnational criminal profits dwarf GDP', *VOA*, 16 April 2013.
- 'Heads of UNODC and CITES urge wildlife and forest offences to be treated as serious transnational organized crimes', *UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*, 23 April 2013.
- 'India's reserve bank works to combat counterfeiters', *Radio Australia*, 23 April 2013.
- 'Clamp down on transnational crime in Thailand', *The Nation*, 25 April 2013.
- 'Philippines steps up campaign against money launderers', *philstar.com*, 27 April 2013.
- Cardamone, Tom, 'There's no good reason to allow secret tax havens', *Quartz*, 30 April 2013.
- 'China returns 10 trafficked children to Vietnam: State media', *Channel NewsAsia*, 4 May 2013.
- Holmquist, Kate, 'It is impossible to separate trafficking and prostitution', *Irish Times*, 4 May 2013.



Selected Publications

- Farah, Douglas and Pamela Phillips Lum, 2013, 'Central American gangs and transnational criminal organizations: The changing relationships in a time of turmoil', Alexandria, VA: International Assessment and Strategy Center.

In 2012, the US Treasury Department labelled the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) a significant transnational criminal organisation owing to its role in drug trafficking, kidnapping, human smuggling, sex trafficking, murder, assassinations, racketeering, blackmail, extortion and immigration offenses. This report provides insights into the gang's workings, examining in particular the relationship of the gang to the transnational criminal networks that are growing in strength and sophistication across Central America.

- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2013, *Transnational organized crime in East Asia and the Pacific: A threat assessment*, Bangkok: UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

This report looks at major transnational organised crime flows relevant to the region. It calls for an integration of national responses with international strategies in order to effectively combat the problem. The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols, as well as the Convention against Corruption, provide useful platforms for establishing a normative framework to guide efforts towards capacity building and for strengthening regional partnerships.

- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2013, *Assessment guide to the criminal justice response to the smuggling of migrants*, Vienna.

This guide presents an inventory of measures for assessing the legislative, investigative, prosecutorial, judicial and administrative responses to the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, for deterring and combating such crime, and for integrating the information and experience gained from such assessment into successful national, regional and international strategies.

Events & Announcements

- 'First International Conference on Missing Children and Adults: "Working across Borders"', 18–20 June 2013, Portsmouth, UK.
- 'Responding to Transnational Crime', 29–30 July 2013, Brisbane, Australia.

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WATER SECURITY

News & Commentaries

- Gies, Erica, 'Restoring Iraq's Garden of Eden', *The New York Times*, 17 April 2013.
- Fackler, Martin, 'Flow of tainted water is latest crisis at Japan nuclear plant', *The New York Times*, 29 April 2013.
- Schneider, Keith, 'Qatar challenges way of the desert', *Circle of Blue*, 30 April 2013.
- Yan, Katy, 'Experts expect more earthquakes in China's dam-choked south', *International Rivers*, 1 May 2013.
- Gasson, Christopher, 'Is misusing and mismanaging water a human right?', *Global Water Intelligence*, 2 May 2013.
- Vidal, John, 'Greater Mekong countries "lost one-third of forest cover in 40 years"', *Guardian*, 2 May 2013.
- 'China to unify bottled water quality standards', *Xinhua*, 3 May 2013.
- Chua, Grace, 'Extra \$132m pumped in for major water tech research centre in Singapore', *The Straits Times*, 3 May 2013.
- Walton, Brett, 'Study: Plants play bigger role in river flows than previously thought', *Circle of Blue*, 3 May 2013.



Selected Publications

- Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2013, *Asian Water Development Outlook 2013: Measuring water security in Asia and the Pacific*, Manila.

This report provides a quantitative and comprehensive view of water security in the countries of Asia and the Pacific. By focusing on critical water issues, it provides leaders with a quantitative tool for assessing water security in the region, with specific recommendations for action.

- Werrell, Caitlin E. and Francesco Femia (eds), 2013, *The Arab Spring and climate change*, A climate and security correlations series, Center for American Progress, February.

The essays in this volume argue that the consequences of climate change are stressors that can ignite a volatile mix of underlying causes and lead to revolution. In the Arab world, climate change will continue to be a threat multiplier – exacerbating environmental,

social, economic and political drivers of unrest, including drought, water scarcity, food security and migration – as the countries of the Middle East and North Africa region transition and change.

- Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Environmental Protection of the People's Republic of China, 2013, 'Notification of the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Environmental Protection on issuing the guidelines for environmental protection in foreign investment and cooperation', 1 March.

These guidelines cover legal compliance, environmental policies, environmental management plans, mitigation measures, disaster management plans, community relations, waste management and international standards. Though non-binding, it provides civil society groups with leverage when it comes to holding Chinese companies responsible for their environmental and social impacts overseas.

Events & Announcements

- 'International Seminar and Workshop on Hydrography', 27–29 August 2013, Batam, Indonesia.
- 'Islands and Isolated Communities Congress', 9–11 September 2013, Honolulu, HI, USA.
- 'Singapore International Water Week: Water Convention', 1–5 June 2014, Singapore.

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About the Centre:

The Centre for NTS Studies, based in the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), was inaugurated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan in May 2008. The Centre maintains research in the fields of Climate Change, Food Security, Energy Security, Health Security, as well as Internal and Cross Border Conflict. It produces policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building capacity to address NTS issues and challenges in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. The Centre also provides a platform for scholars and policymakers within and outside Asia to discuss and analyse NTS issues in the region.

The Centre is the Coordinator of the ASEAN-Canada Research Partnership (2012–2015) supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. It also serves as the Secretariat of the initiative.

In 2009, the Centre was chosen by the MacArthur Foundation as a lead institution for its three-year Asia Security Initiative (2009–2012), to develop policy research capacity and recommend policies on the critical security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific. It is also a founding member and the Secretariat for the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia).

More information on the Centre can be found at www.rsis.edu.sg/nts.