

'CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF SECURITY IN
A CHANGING PACIFIC ASIA'

A Concept Proposal for DSA '96 Conference

by

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In a recent report by a leading institute of security studies in Australasia, it was stated that the 'whole concept of strategic studies has become broader, covering economic and trade considerations, illegal immigration, international crime, ecology and the environment, technological advances, peacekeeping and confidence-building measures'. The broadening, as it were, of the agenda suggests both a crisis in the field of strategic studies as it gropes for a central or defining focus as well as an opportunity for a broadening of horizons as 'security' takes on a more multi-faceted or multi-dimensional, or some would say, contextual approach.

On closer examination, however, a re-conceptualisation of the meaning and focus of strategy in international affairs and the national policies of nations as they chart the difficult waters of modernisation in this century and into the next may well require a return to its true *raison d'être* so much side-stepped during the Cold War because of 'an overemphasis on nuclear deterrence and arms control theories'. It is well to be reminded therefore of the following observation of John Chipman:

True strategic thinking requires an appreciation of the forces at play, both locally and generally, which may result in peoples, nations or states (not necessarily the same thing) using military force to achieve their ambitions or to reverse a perceived wrong. Equally, it requires an understanding of the way the eventual use of force, or a decision to desist in its application, affects the stability of the area in which it was exercised and the interests of outside actors politically, or otherwise, engaged. All this makes necessary analysis of the quality of social organisation, economic prowess, political unity and military preparedness that makes the use of force by any group a realistic option, or its renunciation an imperative. The deployment and engagement of military force may be the anchor of the strategist's concerns, but it will be political, economic and social factors that permit or constrain, that inspire or foreclose the decision to use military force that must be at the centre of any investigation. The wide field of enquiry is the proper camp of the strategic analyst.

In this light, the impact of the forces at work on the application of force for war and peace purposes may alter the meaning of both security and strategy in any domain or context, be it domestic or national, or regional or international circumstances, or a combination of these levels. Given the 'anarchy' that exists in the international arena even as the nation or state or better, the nation-state, remains a persistent central political ordering entity in the lives of men and societies, it would be fundamental to examine its ramifications in changing conditions of world order, as presently still evolving.

More specifically, the context or circumstances of this transition of a world ordering from that which had existed in the Cold War still require examination, especially when focused on the Pacific Asian region. In others words, how does one conceptualise the meaning(s) of strategy and security in a region such as Pacific Asia which differs markedly from that such as Western Europe? Such a query also rests on the following assumptions:-

- (a) that the nature and role of the Pacific Asian state posits 'different' bases of political legitimacy;
- (b) that the quest for regional order may ultimately signify a non-Western' notion of regional hegemony;
- (c) but that in any event the impact of larger forces -- social economic, political, and technological -- still will manifest a bearing on the regional balance of power and the use, or threat of use of force by the various states.

The use of force or the fact that it remains a vital component of national strategy in Pacific Asia should not be overstated, but in recent years defence spending in the region has been at very high levels -- perhaps even inordinate in terms of conventional measurements. Some of this high defence spending can be explained by money and resources made available due to high economic growth but it is apparent that defence acquisitions are also being driven by a host of political and security considerations. Even as the states of the Pacific Asian region experience dynamic economic growth, it remains unclear as to the direction in which regional and national security will take. Indeed, what is apparent is an air of self-confidence and even brashness, but yet a sense of uncertainty, even fear, that conflict may be unavoidable. It is interesting, therefore, that calls have been within the region for new security architectures and dialogues so that confidence-building mechanisms can be in place to ensure the non-likelihood of conflict.

In a sense, the problematique of the Pacific Asian region is really in security terms the challenges of dealing with change as the impact of modernisation brings forth in its wake a multitude of problems that are complex and not so tractable for public policy resolution. The changing face of Pacific Asia will bring forth the phenomena of mega-cities, increased rural-urban population shifts, greater trade flows and communications that will reduce the traditional capacity of nation-state governance, new security issues (such as how to deal with huge influxes of foreign workers), to name but a few.

Among the questions that can be raised are:- What new conceptions of security are possible, if existing ones are invalid? What are the consequences of change in Pacific Asia? How does economic growth contribute to power diffusion in the region? What does this power diffusion mean in terms of the evolving regional balance of power? What and how will new technologies

impact on regional security? Can there be prospects of arms control or for conflict to be avoided through dialogue and other confidence-building measures? Can there be synergies in areas of defence co-operation that can enhance regional and national security?

These and other questions form the DSA '96 Conference theme titled 'Changing Conceptions of Security in a Changing Pacific Asia'. Apart from dealing with the issues already somewhat listed, the DSA '96 Conference will also provide a forum by government representatives for discussion of the issues and possibilities, especially the synergies of co-operation, bilaterally and multilaterally, in areas of defence technology and other aspects, in the region and sub-regions.

Annexure I is the suggested conference programme and Annexure II the suggested parameters of the papers to be presented.

DSA '96 CONFERENCE
'CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF SECURITY IN A CHANGING PACIFIC ASIA'

Day One *April 25, 1996*

SESSION I: OPENING CEREMONY

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 0900-0910 | Welcoming Remarks
- <i>Professor Dr. Zakaria Hj. Ahmad</i>
President, Malaysian International Affairs Forum |
| 0910-0935 | Keynote Opening Address
- <i>YB Dato' Syed Hamid Syed Albar</i>
Minister of Defence, Malaysia |
| 0935-1015 | Reception |

SESSION II: CONTEXT OF PACIFIC ASIAN SECURITY

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| 1015-1300 | Paper #1 | 'The Pacific Century: Promise or Peril?'
<i>Professor Emeritus Robert S. Scalapino</i>
University of California, Berkeley |
| | Paper #2 | 'The Impact of Technology on Force, Warfare
and Regional Security'
<i>John Keegan</i>
Daily Telegraph, London |
| | Discussants: | <i>Dr. J. Chandran</i>
Malaysian International Affairs Forum

<i>Dr. Dewi Fortuna Anwar</i>
Indonesian Institute of Sciences |
| 1300-1415 | Lunch | |

SESSION III: CONTEXT OF PACIFIC ASIAN SECURITY

1415-1545	Paper #3	'The Changing Balance of Power in East Asia' <i>Dr. Brian Bridges</i> Lingnan College, Hong Kong
	Paper #4	'Changing Modalities of Southeast Asian Security' <i>Dr. Dewi Fortuna Anwar</i> Indonesian Institute of Sciences
	Discussants	<i>Professor K. S. Nathan</i> University of Malaya <i>Maj. Gen. Jelani Aswawi</i> Ministry of Defence, Malaysia
1545-1600	Break	
1600-1715	Discussion	
		<i>End of Day One</i>

Day Two

April 26, 1996

**SESSION IV: ENHANCEMENT OF LINKAGES IN A CHANGING SECURITY
CONTEXT**

- 0900-1045 Paper #5 'Security Through Linkages: A South African
View'
F. H. Land
Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa
- Paper #6 'Security Through Linkages: A Malaysian
Perspective'
Siti Azizah Abod
Ministry of Defence, Malaysia
- Discussants *J. N. Mak*
Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs
- A. Razak Baginda*
Malaysian Strategic Research Centre
- 1045-1100 Break

**SESSION V: MINISTERIAL PERSPECTIVES ON SECURITY THROUGH
LINKAGES**

- 1100-1215 Panelists: *YB Dato' Syed Hamid Albar*
Minister of Defence, Malaysia
- Prof. Dr. Ir. B. J. Habibie*
Minister of State, Science and Technology,
Indonesia
- 1215-1220 CLOSING REMARKS
- *Professor Dr. Zakaria Hj. Ahmad*
President, Malaysian International Affairs Forum

End of DSA '96