
EDITORIAL NOTE

From idealism after the First World War to realization of real and persistent conflicts in the Second World War and beyond, studies on *security* have been highly influenced by the lens and language of *realism*. As a powerful theoretical tradition in International Relations and its subfield of Security Studies, *realism* provides systematic explanation and understanding of the security environment in which threats are real. It has brought back security theorizing to its senses, by making the discourse on realpolitik, armed conflicts, and state survival in an anarchic international community even more vibrant and vigilant.

In the absence of a central governing authority in the international system, security has been construed by sovereign states along the lines of their own national security interests and strategic goals. Given this reality of power struggles, scholars of the field have not relented looking at security dynamics and imperatives that will balance power and, as Ruggie entitled his postmodern academic journal in 1998, “make the world hang together.”

Notwithstanding mainstream studies on security, the post Cold War in the early 1990s saw the resurgence of idealist notions and constructivist challenges to security, both as a concept and as a condition for policy. With the end of tense rivalry between the two Cold War titans, which left the United States of America (USA) as the lone superpower, the academic preoccupation on state and national defense seemingly waned. Non-military threats such as natural disasters, pandemics, financial meltdown, and poverty started to receive increased attention from academics and policymakers alike.

With the rise of *non-traditional* security concerns, there have been dramatic attempts to widen the scope of *security* as a subject of analysis. From a realist and state-centric concept, “*security*” is socially constructed by idealists to encompass concerns on economic development, governance, human rights, gender, natural resources, climate change, and technology, among others. Studies on these other *security* concerns have thus produced eclectic bodies of knowledge as various scholars interpret complex security problems from the vantage points of their own disciplines.

The constructivist paradigm of *human security* in all its dimensions, no doubt, has enriched the academic discourse on security as a comprehensive but nonetheless contested concept. Such conceptual extension of security that has become a powerful political construct did not proceed without criticism. With the

idealistic expansion of the scope of *security* came serious epistemological issues of *conceptual overstretch* and lack of focus of the subject matter especially if this is to be translated to policy and strategy. The attention afforded to non-traditional security concerns renders the concept of *security* highly fluid and amorphous. Moreover, the cognitive borders of its distinct intellectual tradition would be diluted if Security Studies were to champion the research agenda of other academic disciplines [i.e. Public Administration and Governance, Economics, Anthropology, etc.] with their own policy advocacies.

There is no argument that scholars of Security Studies must learn to comprehend the reach of their discipline by crossing over the theoretical domains of other fields. Discursive inquiries on the nature, scope, causes, and context of security essentially invite multi-disciplinary approaches. But while the ripples are important in a comprehensive picture of a security problem, where security analysts will throw their stone at to create the waves is more crucial, especially in the study of “national security.” It must be taken into account that the widening of ontological perspectives in Security Studies does not and should not mean a diminution of the core research interests of this prestigious intellectual field.

Notably, the discourse on *security* is shaped and influenced by unfolding events and developments in the real world. Dr. Condoleeza Rice, former National Security Adviser and Secretary of State in the US under President George W Bush, essayed her thoughts on security in the light of the tragedy of terror attacks that had breached US security on September 11, 2001. As she wrote in her book entitled “No Higher Honor” in 2011:

“The United States was the most powerful country in the world—militarily and economically. And yet, we had not been able to prevent a devastating attack by a stateless network of extremists, operating from the territory of one of the world’s poorest countries. Our entire concept of what constituted security had been shaken.”

The American experience and realization illustrates a rethinking of ‘security’ as a concept and as policy agenda attuned to contemporary events, many of which are cataclysmic in nature. The 20th century had seen two tragic World Wars, as well as ensuing Cold War, nuclear proliferation, civil wars, global financial crisis, pandemics, and ethnic conflicts. The new century world, despite its promise of democratic peace, has crossed a new era of more complex security threats and scenarios with broad impact to humanity.

Acts of terrorism, unconventional warfare, and mass destruction; as well as forces of climate change and natural disasters threaten the survival of people, states, and the world. From ancient to contemporary times, security threats--whether traditional or non-traditional, have always been the core concerns of nation states. The reality remains that human development, economic progress, and technological advancement have not precluded the eruptions of conflicts within states and the international system.

The discourse on *security* does not take place in a vacuum. There is always a context that makes security an intelligible subject of academic inquiry and policy discussion. In the Philippines, the praxis of 'security' across history has had a mixed-up character, similar to those of other developing countries and struggling democracies in Southeast Asia as well as in Latin America. Factors such as colonial legacies, geographical make-up, ideological competition, cultural diversities, politico-administrative structures, authoritarian experience, democratization process, and regional security dynamics weigh heavily on state and human security discourse in the country.

A sensible understanding of such an abstract concept of security entails a more realistic examination of its complex environment and political idiosyncrasies. Given the essential diversity of theoretical perspectives on the subject matter, security thinkers and policymakers in the Philippines are encouraged to carry on the academic discussions on the subject of 'security,'--its ontological views, epistemological issues, and methodological approaches, as well as historical experiences not only in the country but also in other nations.

The National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP), which aspires to be the center of excellence in the field, must revisit the scholarly literature and rethink the conceptual boundaries and constituent elements of national security. Significantly, the contemporary security discourse invites us to take a more comprehensible look at the *State*, as the core actor in security and the prime mover of policy both in domestic and international affairs.

Considering the complex security threats that nations face, the state stands as the predominant and legitimate institution that arbitrates conflicts, decides on policies, and shapes the strategic security environment. How the state performs this primary role, given the socio-economic and political milieu in the country as well as the security dynamics in the international community, constitutes essentially the field of Security Studies. However, this area of concern seems to be relegated to the doldrums of a national security administration course in the Philippines in favor of the populist agenda of social welfare, poverty alleviation, economic progress,

political development, and environment, among others. A reawakening of the vibrancy of a focused subject matter must be in order.

As a humble contribution to the ongoing scholarly conversations on national security in the Philippines, the NDCP, in its 50th year founding anniversary, publishes this special edition of the National Security Review (NSR) with the theme **“The Study of National Security at Fifty: Re-awakenings.”** Covering a wide but well-defined range of security issues and policy questions, Filipino scholars ruminate on the study of national *security* as a cardinal concern in international relations more than in public administration.

This NSR is divided into four chapters, representing key themes in contemporary Security Studies. The thematic parts of this Journal hold a compendium of scholarly works that define the core concerns, the contours, and the challenges of the academic field. The articles hope to form a body of knowledge that makes studies on national security distinct from other fields.

Chapter I is on **“Themes, Trends, and Transformations of Security Thought”**. This chapter traces the theoretical foundations and historical context of the study of national security in the Philippines. It frames security in the light of major events and developments that have shaped the landscape of security and policy in the Philippines.

- Dr. Cesar P. Pobre’s article on *“Trends in Security Thought”* examines the transformations of the thinking patterns and approaches on national security problems in response to key events and developments in the Philippines. Tracing the evolution of security thought, Dr Pobre relates the concept of ‘national security’ to ‘human security,’ postulating the complementarity of the two concepts in a comprehensive understanding of security phenomena, and in sound policymaking by the state.
- Dr. Gabriel Lopez’s article on *“Integrating National Security into Philippine Regional Development Planning”* explores various avenues in which national security imperatives can figure in regional development planning in the country. Dr Lopez analyzes theoretical relations between national security and development planning, with the end view of crafting a comprehensive framework for institutional linkages among key players.
- Professor Chester B. Cabalza, in his article on *“The Anthropology of National Security: Towards the Development of a New Epistemology,”* offers a

socio-cultural perspective of the study of national security in the Philippines. His anthropological viewpoint on national identity as a moral force seeks to build-up an alternative constructivist paradigm that enriches the body of knowledge in Security Studies.

- Using a critical approach, Dr. Ananda Devi Domingo-Almase reflects on the principles, policies, and problematique of national security in the article entitled “*What the Subject of Security Really Means: A Look into the Content and Context of the 2011-2016 National Security Policy in the Philippines.*” Her conceptual understanding of security places the subject in proper perspectives which is to look at security as a theoretical discourse, as a political construct, and as a policy agenda. Her study argues that the soundness of a policy on national security must be informed by a clear theoretical framework that would make sense of real security challenges.

Chapter II is on “**Security Sector Reform: Way Forward for Democracy and Development**”. This part presents studies on the ideational transformations and civil-relations of the military in the Philippines as well as in other countries. This chapter allows Filipino scholars to introspect on the professed values and principles of the existing study of national security in the defense department vis-à-vis the prescribed theories and norms of Security Studies in the academic community. Looking at the experiences of other nations in democratization and security sector development, homegrown security thinkers and practitioners can reevaluate their national security perspective to know how Philippine realities measure up to what is ideal in a truly democratic country.

- In “*Security Sector Reform: Way Forward for Democracy and Development,*” Atty. Rodel A. Cruz draws lessons from the social construction of new identities of Germany and Japan, both of which had been under militaristic and totalitarian regimes during the era of world war. Using the experiences of these two countries as model of security sector reform, the paper analyzes the transformation of the Philippine military from a maligned machinery under the martial rule of a dictator, to a reformed institution in democratic governance.
- Dr. Renato De Castro’s article entitled “*21st Century Philippine-Civil Military Relations: Why Partnership Instead of Subordination*” likewise discusses the role of the armed forces under the principle of democratic control of civilian authorities. The analysis, however, takes on a critical look into the refurbished character of the Philippine military as the latter assumes the

primary responsibility in internal peace and security. Dr De Castro argues that the catalyst role accorded to the armed forces in nation-building and socio-economic development speaks of an anomaly in a supposedly progressive democracy.

Chapter III is on “**Security Threats and Challenges in the Country in the 21st Century.**” In the sole article in this chapter, entitled “*Current Terrorist Groups and Emerging Extremist Armed Movements in the Southern Philippines: Threat to Philippine National Security,*” Professor Rommel C. Banlaoi provides a comprehensive discussion on the existing and emerging non-state armed groups that continue to threaten and disrupt peace and stability in the country. His paper discusses the involvement of these groups in criminal and terroristic acts, which complicate efforts to ensure national security. Professor Banlaoi brings to the fore of the security debate the persistence of real and complex threats that thwart the idealist vision of peace and progress.

Chapter IV is on “**Security Cooperation and Regional Security Dynamics,**” with particular focus on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). The contributors in this Chapter locate Philippine national interests in the complex milieu of regional networks and security cooperation.

- Professor Raymund Jose G. Quilop, in his article “*Furthering Community Building: Prospects and Challenges for the ADMM-Plus,*” puts forth his observations about ADMM-Plus and the circumstances surrounding its defense cooperative mechanism. He highlights the challenges that confront the ADMM-Plus, which include the management of strategic competition among regional powers.
- Dr. Aileen SP Baviera’s article on “*China-ASEAN Conflict and Cooperation in the South China Sea: Managing Power Asymmetry,*” on the other hand, explores strategies on how the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia can deal with China as an emerging power in the region. Dr Baviera’s paper discusses the security dynamics between a big power and its smaller neighbors in the longstanding territorial issues in the South China Sea.

Through this Special Edition of the NSR, the NDCP seeks to enrich the discourse and praxis of national security administration in the Philippines.

This publication invites more in-depth discussions of the subject of ‘security’ using theoretical perspectives, historical insights, and policy imperatives. The contributions of scholars towards this goal will help in the development of the academic field of Philippine security that is not myopic on domestic issues but strategic in international relations. The progress of this intellectual enterprise calls for a reawakening of national security thought, which can be realized by going back to the basics.

RSSD Editorial Team