



REVIEW ARTICLE

INDO-EU NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

***Uday Pratap Singh**

Department of Defence & Strategic Studies, University of Allahabad, U.P. (India)

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ABSTRACT

In 2008, the EU and India for the first time showed their willingness 'to work for peace and comprehensive security'. It was known as Joint Action Plan which did conceptualize 'Non-Traditional Security' (NTS) though it was regarded as part of comprehensive security. Nevertheless, elements of NTS have been part of the bilateral relationship for years. The paper will analyse how this concept of 'non-traditional security' should be understood; what are the limitation and what impact such limits may have on bilateral relations. Also attempt may be made to evaluate what has been done in this multifaceted field, and identifies such issues which raises specific challenges. As such it is necessary to examine the broader Asian and global context before defining the scope for enhancing Indo-EU cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION

In July 2011 in the EU External Affairs Review, Naila Maier-Knapp made his observation on the 10th ASEM Foreign Ministers' meeting and in the ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting entitled 'Working Together on Non-traditional Security Challenges' held on 7 June 2011 in Gödöllő, Hungary. He made the official comment of the concept of non-traditional security (NTS). This concept described unconventional threats which have stemmed from other sources than the military. This was for a long time regarded as scepticism by EU Officials, given its vagueness and its association with the cementation of state and military influence in Southeast Asia.' (Naila Maier-Knapp, 2011) It was then argued how to look at non-traditional security challenges. Though the document does not offer any comprehensive definition of NTS, but includes a number of its components: natural disasters, climate change, food and water security, energy security, the challenge of education and health as defined by the Millennium Development Goals, the need for social safety nets, social protection, inclusive growth and poverty reduction, science and technology issues, the need for a dialogue of cultures and interfaith cooperation for peace.

The global financial and economic crisis are also identified, alongside terrorism, piracy and transnational organised crime, cyber-security and nuclear proliferation. (Working together on non-traditional security challenges, 2011) The NTS has a bigger scope, for eg. The volatility of commodity prices, has a direct bearing on global food security. On the other hand, terrorism has been categorised as NTS challenge. People often wonder whether terrorism is a new dimension of the restricted 'traditional' concept of security.

It has been related to open conflict and the use of force. At the ASEM meeting of June 2011, India's External Affairs Minister S.M. Krishna did not give a detail account of it but confined himself to two issues: terrorism on the one hand and 'non-state threats to maritime security', particularly piracy, on the other hand. (EAM's statement on non-traditional security threats at ASEM FMs meet, 2011) The important question is whether India believes that ASEM is by its own definition 'an informal process of dialogue and co-operation'. The Indian political leaders have for years defined in such allusion that it was seen not as non-traditional security but as 'a holistic view of the foreign and security policy challenges facing the country'. In a talk delivered at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses in New Delhi in 2007, the then Minister of External Affairs made this point:

*Corresponding author: Dilip Kumar Maurya

Department of Defence & Strategic Studies, University of Allahabad, U.P. (India).

'If we have to succeed in the international arena and secure our vital national interests, it would be essential for us not only to have a strong defence, but also a robust economy. In fact, the two are closely interlinked. We have begun to enjoy a much greater measure of international respect due to our vibrant democracy, a dynamic economy and a strong defence capability. If India's democratic fabric is to be preserved and a high growth rate is to be achieved, we will need to meet a few pre-conditions.' What are these preconditions? The seven items mentioned by the minister may be listed as follows (External Affairs Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee's speech at the 42nd Foundation Day Celebrations of IDSA, 2007) The first is to ensure truly inclusive growth, so that all sections of our society enjoy the fruits of development and internal dissatisfaction is not created. The second is to preserve our secular ethos so as to avoid divisions in our society, which make it weak and vulnerable. The third is to focus on education, including higher education. If we want to make knowledge as the principal driver of India's growth, then higher education with an intense focus on research, technology and innovation must receive high priority. The fourth precondition is infrastructure, not only in terms of roads, airports and the like, but also planned urban renewal and development. Fifth is the provision of energy to meet our rapidly growing needs. Unfortunately, we are heavily dependent on the import of hydrocarbons and this dependence is likely to continue. Without energy, sustained economic growth is impossible. To meet our growing energy requirements, a multi-pronged strategy needs to be pursued. This will include development of alternative sources, fuels and nuclear energy. The sixth precondition, is to ensure that we protect our environment and prepare for climate change. All our efforts to develop will come to naught, if we do not address the problem of the rapidly degrading environment. Finally these measures must be accompanied by a proactive and vigorous foreign policy, seeking to develop strategic partnerships with all the major powers in the world and friendly and mutually beneficial relations with our neighbours.'

In addition to 'the current threats like terrorism, proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and conventional conflicts', the about preconditions also help in defining 'the critical areas of non-traditional security issues'. The Regional Centre for Strategic Studies at Colombo whose covers South Asian region and which has been working on NTS since 1997 has included in its definition of NTS 'governance in plural societies, globalization and its impact on development and security, environment and security, trans-border population movements and security, ethnicity and security'. (See Syed Rifaat Hussain) Former Indian National Security Adviser, Shiv Shankar Menon, speaking on 'New Dimensions of Security' at the IISS sponsored Shangri-La Dialogue in 2010, also regarded 'the geopolitical compulsion of the economic crisis', as one important aspect of NTS. Others were listed, in this order: the spread of weapons of mass destruction; terrorism (including trans-border terrorism) and piracy, energy security and stability, climate change, maritime security, security of the global commons (outer space, oceans, cyberspace, global transport and communications networks), and not to forget, when they pose a challenge, 'the power of non-state actors'. (Shiv Shankar Menon, 2010)

Some observations could be drawn from the above analysis. First, there is vagueness in the concept of non-traditional security which poses a problem. Now one can include all the variables in one Mely Caballero-Anthony, the Head of the Centre for NTS Studies at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies of the NTU University, Singapore. He argues that non-traditional security threats are 'challenges to the survival and well-being of peoples and states that arise primarily out of non-military sources, such as climate change, cross-border environmental degradation and resource depletion, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, people smuggling, drug trafficking and other forms of transnational crime'. (Quoted by Saurabh Chaudhuri, 2009) One may agree with this definition or include domestic to cross-border environmental degradation and resource depletion, and cyber security.

Second, there are various names such as 'comprehensive security', 'non-traditional security', 'human security' or 'new dimensions of security' – which is related to NTS have been on the agenda of Indo-EU cooperation. Third, there are a number of challenges related to NTS which are to be first addressed by the countries concerned themselves. Such issues such inclusive growth and preserving the secular ethos of India are fundamental national policy choices have to be addressed and implemented by the Government of India. On the other hand global issues like climate change energy security or water security issues are partly national, partly regional (water sharing), and partly global (energy). This should be bracketed as a global issue.

The Indo-EU Cooperation on Non-Traditional Security

The EU has addressed the issue of NTS in a number of fields in its cooperation with India. At the 2008 Indo-EU summit, the review of the Joint Action Plan released in 2005 stated 'Climate change, terrorism and instability remain as much of a threat as in 2005 and new challenges are emerging on the world map. Problems like energy and natural resources, including foodstuffs, has demanded immediate action, as well as long-term structural measures'. The following items then, become important in considering the relevance of NTS. These are: promoting peace and comprehensive security; promoting sustainable development; promoting research and technology; promoting people-to-people and cultural exchanges. What becomes important is dialogue in various forms like political dialogue and trade, investment and economic policy dialogue, and security dialogue. Beyond these what were the key areas of effective cooperation? The Country Strategy Paper 2007-2013 noted that there is a need for India to meet the Millennium Development Goals'. A two-pronged approach was thus suggested:

- I) to 'assist India in meeting the MDGs by providing budget support to the social sector', with a focus on health and education;
- II) to 'implement the Indo-EU Partnership through an ambitious Action Plan, giving emphasis to economic sectoral dialogue, civil society and cross-cultural cooperation, academic and education exchange'. (European External Action Service, India)

The Mid-Term Review of the Country Strategy Paper conducted in 2010 noted: 'The proposal should focus more on priority 1 (assist India with meeting the MDGs by providing support to the social sectors) and support for the social sectors as requested by the Government of India. Priority 2 should focus on a limited number of sectors such as higher education, energy and the environment, where policy dialogue between the Indo-EU is in progress in the context of the JAP and which are highly relevant to achievement of the MDGs and the targets set in the 11th Five-Year Plan.' (European External Action Service, India) One can say a range of dialogues are selected, without properly defining non-traditional security. But this is not the right place to choose a comprehensive study of the dialogues initiated and the actions conducted with an impact on NTS. Still then one can regard the environment, health, and terrorism as inevitable part of NTS.

Indo-EU Cooperation on the Environment and Climate Change

There is a need 'to support India's efforts towards sustainable growth'. Under it the EU-India Environment Forum has met once a year since 2005. On the other hand the Indo-EU Joint Working Group on Environment has met annually since 2007. The EU-India Action Plan Support Facility Programme (APSF) works for technical assistance in five sectors: waste, water, climate change, air pollution and chemicals. The Work Programme on Energy, Clean Development and Climate Change was adopted in 2008. It supported operations which dealt with energy efficiency, renewable energy, transfer of technology and water management. Sustainable habitat and climate change adaptation were also taken into consideration. In all these proposals the EU has cooperated with India on the priorities of India's National Action Plan on Climate Change. Important projects like community forestry in Haryana, a research on the impact of the retreat of the Himalayan glaciers, a loan from the European Investment Bank to the EXIM Bank of India to support investments that can contribute to climate change mitigation. EU-India joint research on climate change and natural disasters has also been carried out since 2004. Some of the projects also address the proper correlation between energy security, climate change and the environment, and spelt out the role of civil societies. Today, the focus is more on clean technology transfers in many fields: the environment, energy, transport and bio-technology.

The EU-India cooperation on the environment has more political scope because its goal is to develop 'understanding on global environment issues including climate change'. This is indeed necessary, and one encountered much difficulty in conducting during the Summit on Climate Change held in Copenhagen in 2009.

Indo-EU Cooperation on Health: the Case of AIDS

Long before NTS was in vogue, the EU had cooperated with India to fight against HIV/AIDS. Since 2003 NGOs' projects were funded in order to reach vulnerable youth, especially in rural and tribal communities; to prevent HIV/AIDS among childbearing women in the north-east; to ensure access to

sexual and reproductive health services for vulnerable women; to guarantee the health rights and needs of tribal people in regions prone to HIV, malaria and TB, under the framework of the EU 'Programme for Action to confront HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through external action (2007-2011)'. European funds cover more than 50 percent of grants received by India under the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Besides funding, sensitive issues are addressed in order to fight against the stigma attached to HIV. The EU works alongside Indian NGOs and the Indian National AIDS Control Organisation in order to build efficient indicators and monitoring tools useful for national policies.

Geopolitics and Geo-Economics of NTS

For many years Indian policy was to promote the balance of interests and the balance of powers influenced by from the Westphalian type of international relations. Pranab Mukherjee outlines this theory in these words: 'What the world needs is not old style balance of power but a well-crafted system to promote a "balance of interests" among the major powers. No structure of international security will endure if it does not take into account the interests of all the major powers. That is also true of regional security arrangements.' (External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee, 2007) NTS issues already addressed by EU-India cooperation have to be taken seriously. Today, the world is fighting against terrorism and both have to come together as they are facing severe challenge from it. Then, the issue of climate change has been a major challenge concerns for all nations. Today the need is more for common global interest that it should be properly addressed. Addressing this issue is a delicate task because it diverges between the old industrial nations on the one hand and emerging and developing countries on the other. The issue of Intellectual Property Rights is another case in point. The trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) are not merely an issue of trade; but they directly affect NTS when access to generic drugs to treat AIDS or other diseases becomes a matter of conflict. India also discusses EU agricultural policy. It is seen as to establish disguised protectionism through the high subsidies provided to European farmers. This is done at the cost of the competitiveness of agricultural exports from poorer countries having a large rural population.

The current debate on the Indian Civil Nuclear Liability Act on civil nuclear supplier, passed by the Indian Parliament in 2010, also examines the complexities of NTS issues, when they are linked to huge trade interests, both at home and abroad. The EU as compared to France and the United Kingdom showed its unwillingness to support the US offer to India for a 'Civil Nuclear Deal'. The deal provided access to update civil nuclear technology through a special status, outside the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It also made to adjust with the IAEA and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. After much discussions EU countries accepted Indo-US deal. Since then EU has shown its eagerness to support joint research projects on civil nuclear energy. Now that the nuclear deal has been signed, the Indian Civil Nuclear Liability Act 2010 has opened a new debate, as supplier countries are anxious about the financial implications of a hypothetical nuclear accident. There are other decisive issues where the interests of India and the EU diverge, though

not necessarily they are at conflict. The issue of global food prices, has much greater impact on food security in developing countries than in Europe. The urgency of an effective regulation of the global financial system is necessary for an insecure global economy. This has been shared by all countries. This becomes a good case for India, with a tradition of regulated finance, well-controlled banks and non-fully convertible currency. In regard to such a issue, geopolitical perspectives have to be serious thought. In 2011, India did not supported the European candidate for Director General of the IMF as a matter of principle because of considered multilateral key positions should be more evenly distributed between the established powers of the West and emerging countries. Geoeconomics and geopolitics become important in a number of NTS-related issues, just as they are in global politics. National sovereignty still prevails above the responsibility to protect, and India, along with other countries are wary of the Western propensity towards sanctions, the use of force and regime change. This is an indication of the end of cold war. The new economic global order is more complex, diverse and interdependent. What is important for India is to have a multi-directional foreign policy. It should be guided by a combination of short-term and long-term national interests, and more often for a better balanced multilateralism.

Seeing in this perspective the EU and India to do more have to come together on a number of issues related to NTS. In order, to increase this cooperation and identify its critical areas, it would be necessary to rethink about NTS concepts. Hence, the important issue lies in institutionalising a framework for a bilateral informed discussion between EU and Indian representatives. The NTS Asia initiative launched by the Centre for NTS Studies at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies of the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, has become a source of inspiration as there is no dearth of Indian expertise on the subject. A number of Indian think tanks have addressed the NTS issues, and the Observer Research Foundation project 'India 2022 Non- Traditional Security Threats' are doing good work in this direction.

Conclusion

It is hence necessary to enhance India-EU cooperation in critical areas of non-traditional security areas. We have seen the basis for expanding existing cooperation. But the problem is one when speak of comprehensive framework under the existing agenda in order promote bilateral discussion on those various issues which are already identified, but also about the correlations between them, that are crucial to the Strategic Partnership, be they trade or traditional security. In June 2010, while talking to Indian delegates Catherine Ashton discussed critical areas so that there can be close cooperation on: piracy in the Indian Ocean; counter-terrorism; Indian participation in EU crisis-management operations; dialogue on regional issues including Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; priority areas

such as climate change, energy. Today, there is much need for wider and deeper dialogue and cooperation between EU and India on NTS. The result will be fruitful if it is based on dialogue and cooperation. Further there is much need between them to re-spelt the established definition by each side and recognize the challenges that could be problematic, regional and global in future.

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