

ผลกระทบและนัยของประเด็นปัญหาความมั่นคงที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทหารที่มีต่อความร่วมมือ
ในอนุภูมิภาคสุมาตรา



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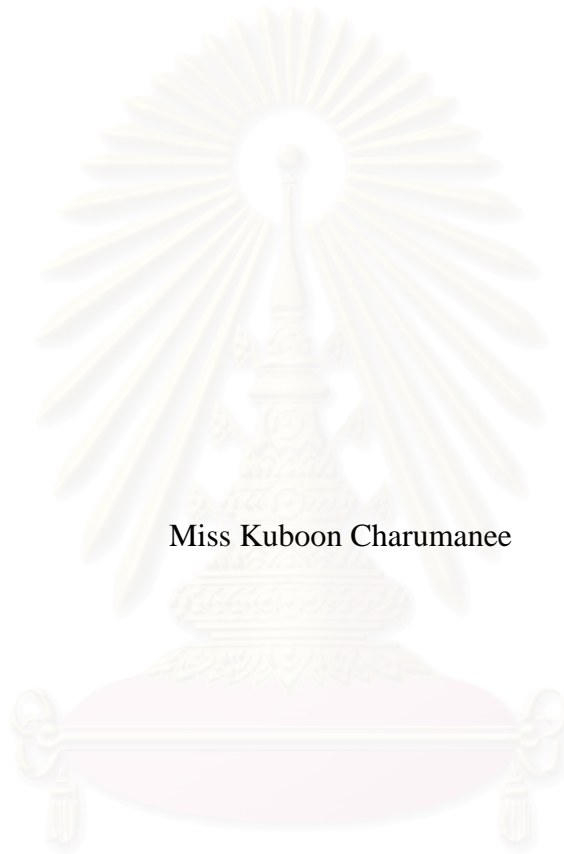
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**IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF NON- TRADITIONAL SECURITY ISSUES
ON GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION COOPERATION**



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สถาบันวิทยบริการ
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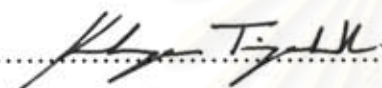
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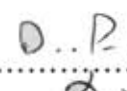
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คู่มือ จารุณี: ผลกระทบและนัยของประเด็นปัญหาความมั่นคงที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทหารที่มีต่อความร่วมมือ
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โครงการความร่วมมือในอนุภูมิภาคแม่น้ำโขง หรือ Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) คือความร่วมมือ
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 สะดวกต่อความร่วมมือทางเศรษฐกิจในภูมิภาค

อย่างไรก็ตามความร่วมมือดังกล่าวมุ่งเน้นเพื่อการพัฒนาทางเศรษฐกิจและกายภาพในภาพรวมโดยอาจมองข้าม
 ประเด็นปัญหาความมั่นคงที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทหารในภูมิภาคได้




ดังนั้นวิทยานิพนธ์เล่มนี้จึงได้ศึกษาถึงประเด็นปัญหาความมั่นคงที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทหารตลอดจน
 ผลกระทบและนัยของปัญหาดังกล่าวที่มีต่อความร่วมมือทางเศรษฐกิจในอนุภูมิภาคแม่น้ำโขงเพราะความร่วมมือ
 ดังกล่าวอาจไม่บรรลุวัตถุประสงค์ซึ่งว่าด้วยการส่งเสริมความร่วมมือทางเศรษฐกิจที่ยั่งยืนและพัฒนาคุณภาพชีวิตของ
 ประชากร ในภูมิภาคได้หากไม่ตระหนักถึงประเด็นปัญหาความมั่นคงที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทหาร

จากผลการศึกษาและวิเคราะห์นั้นแสดงให้เห็นว่าประเด็นปัญหาความมั่นคงที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับการทหารดังเช่น
 ปัญหาการอพยพชายฉกรรจ์, ปัญหาการค้ามนุษย์, ปัญหาการแพร่ระบาดของ HIV/AIDS และยาเสพติด รวมถึงปัญหา
 สิ่งแวดล้อมล้วนมีนัยโดยตรงทั้งต่อความมั่นคงโดยรวมและความเป็นอยู่ที่ดีของประชาชนในสังคมและประเทศชาติทั้ง
 ในอนุภูมิภาคแม่น้ำโขงเองและภูมิภาคเอเชียแปซิฟิกด้วย ดังนั้นจึงอาจสรุปได้ว่าการจะพัฒนาประเทศในอนุภูมิภาค
 กลุ่มแม่น้ำโขงอย่างเต็มศักยภาพนั้นจำเป็นต้องให้ความสำคัญและแก้ไขประเด็นปัญหาความมั่นคงที่ไม่เกี่ยวข้องกั
 การทหารเสียก่อน

อย่างไรก็ตามวิทยานิพนธ์เล่มนี้ยังปรารถนาที่จะส่งเสริมให้เกิดความเข้าใจต่อประเด็นปัญหาความมั่นคงที่ไม่
 เกี่ยวข้องกับการทหารที่ส่งผลต่อความร่วมมือในภูมิภาคทั้งในด้านการเมือง ความมั่นคง เศรษฐกิจและสังคมเพื่อเป็น
 ข้อมูลประกอบสำหรับผู้ที่เกี่ยวข้องในการกำหนดนโยบายและวางแผนการปฏิบัติเพื่อการยกระดับความเป็นอยู่ที่ดีของ
 ประชากรในภูมิภาคต่อไปในอนาคต

สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา

ปีการศึกษา 2549

ลายมือชื่อนิติศ 
 ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา 
 ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม 

KEY WORD: GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION/ NON- TRADITIONAL SECURITY

KUBOON CHARUMANEE: IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY ISSUES ON GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION COOPERATION. THESIS ADVISOR: SUNAIT CHUTINTARANOND, Ph. D., THESIS CO- ADVISOR: MYA THAN, Ph. D., 140 pp.

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) comprising of Cambodia, China (Yunnan and Guangxi province), Myanmar, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, was started in 1957 but the most effective initiative came in 1992 when the Asian Development Bank (ADB) initiated a regional Technical Assistance Program. The program was designed to promote and facilitate economic cooperation among the six riparian countries.

However, the operation of GMS focuses on economic and physical development and overlooks the non-traditional security issues within the region.

Therefore, this research attempted to study the extent of the non-traditional security issues and their impact and implications on Greater Mekong Subregion economic cooperation. Because without addressing the non-traditional security issues the regional cooperation is not able to achieve its aims in facilitating sustainable economic growth and improving the people's standard of living in the Mekong region.

The research finding suggested that the non- traditional security issues such as cross border migration, cross border human trafficking, cross border spread of HIV/AIDS and drugs and cross border environmental issues have direct implications on overall security not only in the Mekong region but also in the Asia- Pacific and on the wellbeing of individual states and society as a whole. Therefore, it should be noted that the full potential of the GMS countries can be realized only if the non- traditional security problems are adequately addressed and taking care of.

This thesis is also attempt to bring better understanding toward problems concerning the limitation of cooperation due to non-traditional security issues that affect the political, security, economic and social cooperation in the GMS. By learning these issues and their impact and implications on GMS, those who concerned could formulate policies and practices in order to uplift the social wellbeing of the people in the GMS region.

Field of Studies Southeast Asian Studies

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Academic Year 2006

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ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ADB : | Asian Development Bank |
| AEM : | ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting |
| AFTA: | ASEAN Free Trade Area |
| ASEAN: | Association of Southeast Asian Nation |
| ASEAN- MBDC : | ASEAN- Mekong Basin Development Cooperation |
| ATS: | Amphetamine- Type- Stimulant |
| BCI : | Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative |
| CDRI : | Cambodia Development Resource Institute |
| CEP : | GMS Core Environment Program |
| CNG : | Compressed Natural Gas |
| CPC : | Communist Party of China |
| EIA : | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| EU: | European Union |
| ECAFE : | United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East |
| FCDI : | Forum for the Comprehensive Development of Indochina |
| FDI : | Foreign Direct Investment |
| GDP: | Gross Domestic Product |
| GHG : | Greenhouse Gas |
| GMS: | Greater Mekong Subregion |
| GRID: | Global Resources Information Database |
| G8: | Group of Eight |
| HRD : | Human resources development |
| IDRC : | International Development Research Center |
| IDU: | Intravenous Drug Use |
| KMT : | Kuomintang |
| Lao PDR: | Lao People's Democratic Republic |
| LPRP: | Lao People's Revolutionary Party |
| MAFF : | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries |
| MDRN: | Mekong Development Research Network |
| MDGs : | Millennium Development Goals |
| MoE : | Ministry of Environment |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| MoNRE : | Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources |
| MOU: | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MRC : | Mekong River Commission |
| MTS II : | Medium-Term Strategy II |
| NCEA: | National Commission for Environmental Affairs |
| NCGUB : | National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma |
| NGO : | Non- Governmental Organization |
| NRM: | Natural Resource Management |
| PPP : | Phnom Penh Plan |
| PRC: | People's Republic of China |
| RCSP : | Regional Cooperation Strategy and Program |
| SLORC : | State Law and Order Restoration Council |
| SPDC : | State Peace and Development Council |
| UK: | United Kingdom |
| UN: | United Nations |
| UNCED : | United Nations Conference on Environment and Development |
| UNEP : | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNESCAP : | United Nations Economic and Social Commission of Asia and Pacific |
| UNDP : | United Nations Development Program |
| UNHCR: | United Nations High Commission on Refugees |
| UNICEF: | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNODC: | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime |
| USA: | United States of America |
| VPA : | Vietnam People's Army |
| WHO : | World Health Organization |
| WTO: | World Trade Organization |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical Background of Greater Mekong Subregion

1.1.1 A Brief History of Greater Mekong Subregion “GMS”

The Mekong River has its headwaters on the Tibetan Plateau, seventeen thousand feet above sea level. It runs down to the People Republic's of China, passing through Yunnan into Myanmar. Then, it runs much of the length of Lao People's Democratic Republic, dividing it from Thailand, across the North of Cambodia and, finally, Vietnam before it enters into the South China Sea. It is almost 4,200 kilometers long, creates a total basin area of 790,000 square kilometers through which about 475 trillion cubic meters of water flows annually serving more than lives along its run.

The Mekong River is the world's 12th largest river and Southeast Asia's largest waterway. It originates in Tibet and flows through the Chinese province of Yunnan before continuing southwards, touching the territories of six countries and ending in the South China Sea. The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) covers some 2.3 million km² and a population of about 245 million. For many decades, if not centuries, explorers, traders, and more recently, politicians have seen the Mekong valley as a natural geographic region whose peoples not only shared the resources of this mighty river as well as some distinctive cultural features. “Unlike the post- colonial states of Africa and the Americas, those of the lower Mekong basin were well developed political entities prior to French colonization... political competition between Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand during the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th continue to form interstate relationships” (McElwee/ Horowitz¹⁹⁹⁹).

The history of the Mekong is the history of the six riparian countries since the mighty Mekong served as the boundary line among these riparian countries before borderlines were marked by French and British colonialists in the first half of the 19th century. Therefore throughout history, as riparian states, there were wars and peace alternatively over time across the Mekong River; in times of peace, there were trade

relations among them. Along with mountain passes, Mekong also served as a trade route. Thus, the history of these six riparian countries is the history of wars, peace and trade among them across the Mekong. In other words, the GMS have a history of both conflicts and cooperation (Than, 1997).

In fact, the history of the first ever formal subregional economic cooperation among the riparian states goes back to the later half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century when treaties were concluded between Siam (as Thailand was called in pre- 1939 days) and France, on behalf of its protectorates in Indo- China to regulate the navigational use of the lower Mekong. But “it may thus be said that the non- navigational utilization of the transboundary water resources of the Mekong basin has been characterized throughout by a virtual absence of hard and fast rules derived from international law” (Prachoon 1995).

The post- war history of GMS cooperation started in 1957 (when the Cold War was at its height) with the establishment of the Mekong Committee at the initiative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE)¹ and four riparian countries of the Lower Mekong Basin (Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and South Vietnam). Since the Cold War was in its climax, Burma (now Myanmar) and China were left out probably because of political reasons. The USA and Thailand have played the chief roles in the Committee, and Thailand’s economic interests have dominated its agenda. The objective of the Mekong Committee was to promote, coordinate, supervise and control the Lower Mekong Basin, in other words to exploit the waterway jointly for energy, irrigation, transportation and fisheries, with little regard for formal economic or political cooperation. China and Myanmar, the two upstream states, were not signatories to the agreement the Committee have concerned itself with such activities as an inventory of resources, environmental monitoring and small scale irrigation. All in all, only a few cooperation and coordination project were carried out as the area was subject to political disturbances for nearly two decades.

The new phase of sub- regional cooperation began in 1991 when the last two of the riparian states, Myanmar and China, agreed to join and establish a network called the

¹ Now it is called United Nations Economic and Social of Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP).

Mekong Development Research Network (MDRN), an initiative of the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada. This was made possible by recent developments in China, Myanmar and Indochinese nations, to opening up their economies and the thawing of Cold War political tensions. The new stress on negotiation and cooperation has recently been reflected in the 1995 Mekong River Commission (MRC) agreement which reduced the veto rights of downstream countries over the water resources projects of upstream countries.

The most effective initiative, so far, came in 1992 when the Asian Development Bank (ADB) initiated a regional Technical Assistance Program designed to promote and facilitate economic cooperation among the six countries. Its long term objective was *“to contribute to an ongoing process that will build confidence and trust among the participants and help provide an enduring framework for development assistance with a regional focus”* (ADB 1993).

The Mekong becomes a new symbol of the region, a source of unity in a region redefining itself. The five countries that comprise the Greater Mekong Subregion are members of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and the sixth is the People’s Republic of China (Yunnan province and Guangxi autonomous region). Two countries, namely Lao PDR and Vietnam, are Socialist republics now embracing the market oriented economy while Yunnan and Guangxi as a less developed part of China. Thailand is a democratic state fully integrated into the world economy and Cambodia is a fledging democracy with a growing but troubled economy. Myanmar is ruled by a military regime.

The ADB has been very active, since 1992, the countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion have embarked on a program of economic cooperation (the GMS Program) that aims to promote development through closer economic linkages. The GMS Program, with support from the ADB and other donors, helps the implementation of high priority subregional projects in transport, energy, telecommunications, environment, human resource development, tourism, trade, private sector investment, and agriculture. Much of current emphasis is on developing an attractive investment environment and in enticing the private sector to invest in the region, as a result of the agreement among six countries; over

100 priority projects have been identified. Out of them, five road upgrading projects are at the top of the list of their priorities.

Apart from the MRC and the ADB, there exist at least four international initiatives to develop the greater Mekong subregion. They are as follow:

The Forum for the Comprehensive Development of Indochina (FCDI): This initiative addresses needs and opportunities for cooperation, and funding for coordination comes from Japan. It includes primarily Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar. It is concerned mainly with infrastructure and tourism.

The ASEAN- Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (ASEAN- MBDC): This framework was initiated by the ASEAN nations mainly dominated by Malaysia and Singapore in 1995 with the aim of promoting well- being of people of the Mekong subregion. It agreed on seven areas of cooperation: agriculture, minerals and forestry, industry, transport, telecommunications and energy, education and training, tourism and trade and investment. Malaysia had also prepared a project feasibility report on trans- Asia railway links between ASEAN countries and the GMS countries and China. Thailand is also preparing an ASEAN Mekong Fund. Moreover, ASEAN is seeking support from other countries outside the region such as Japan, Korea, the EU and Australia. This ASEAN- MBDC initiative would link for the first time the non- Mekong and Mekong members of ASEAN together.

The Golden Quadrangle (Quadripartite Economic Cooperation): This initiative came from Thailand with the objective of strengthening economic cooperation and peaceful relations based on the concept of “turning battlefields into market places” in 1992 and links Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and the Yunnan province of China. It is a loose informal arrangement that concentrates primarily on infrastructural development and tourism. A number of ministerial level meetings were held to discuss these issues. Yunnan is very active in pursuing cooperation among the four participating countries in the transport sector.

The AEM- MITI Initiative: The ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting (AEM) together with the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry, in 1994,

developed an initiative to maintain and promote dynamic economic growth in Asia as a whole and strengthen economic linkages between ASEAN and Indochina. This focuses on issues of transition to a market economy in the Indochinese countries and Myanmar with an emphasis on infrastructure, investment, trade and industrial policies.

Moreover, there also exist other initiatives such as the Mekong Fund, Mekong Development Bank, Thailand's Indochina Fund, and IDRC initiated Mekong Development Research Network. Many of these initiatives are overlapping in many areas and more coordination among them is needed.

Since several initiatives are involved in the development of the Mekong region, some analysts are worried that several activities relating to the GMS will be redundant (Ngampramuan,2005).

Another ground breaking development in the Mekong region is that China signed the framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation better known as China ASEAN Free Trade Area Agreement (ASEAN+ 1) in 2002 and the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in October, 2003, at the Bali Summit. This made Mekong regional cooperation more enhanced and faster.

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

The GMS Countries

Figure 1: Map of the Greater Mekong Subregion



Source: <http://www.adb.org/gms>, 2005

1.1.2 Recent Development and Achievement of the GMS

Since the substantial progress has been achieved in terms of implementing GMS projects over the past 13 years. Priority infrastructure projects worth around US\$5.2 billion have either been completed or are being implemented. Among these are the upgrading of the Phnom Penh (Cambodia)-Ho Chi Minh City (Viet Nam) highway and the East-West Economic Corridor that will eventually extend from the Andaman Sea to Da Nang. A significant amount of resources has been mobilized for the GMS Program. For the 19 GMS projects that ADB has assisted, GMS governments have provided about US\$1.6 billion.

Recently, the ADB has extended loans amounting to US\$1.4 billion. ADB has also generated US\$2.2 billion in co-financing for these investment projects. A total of US\$105 million of grant resources have been mobilized, of which US\$60 million have been provided by ADB, to finance technical assistance focusing on human resource development, tourism, environment, trade and investment².

Transport

Improved transportation links within the GMS are central to increasing trade and economic exchange. Physical infrastructure links, combined with cross-border facilitation measures, promote trade, investment, and tourism; enhance labor and social mobility; and increase access to markets and other economic opportunities.

Economic corridors are being developed along transport routes to link infrastructure with production and trade. Much progress has been made in the three major GMS economic corridors - East-West, North-South and the Southern economic corridors- all of which will be completed by 2012.

The development of a GMS transport network enhances connectivity, increases competitiveness, and promotes a sense of community through strengthening of linkages, reduction of transportation costs, and enabling greater interaction among the people of the GMS.

Energy

The GMS is well endowed with energy resources that are diverse but unevenly distributed. GMS cooperation in energy promotes complementary use of energy that

provides GMS members access to more economically viable energy resources. Power interconnection and trade among GMS countries help reduce investments in power reserves to meet peak demand, achieve more reliable supply, reduce operational costs, and enhance consumer access to cheaper power sources. To promote power trade, the GMS Program helps develop policies/institutions for cross-border power dispatch, through the signing of the Inter-Governmental Agreement on Regional Power Trade and the formulation of the Regional Power Trade Operating Agreement. Grid interconnection infrastructure will be developed through a building block approach based on the Regional Indicative Master Plan on Power Interconnection completed in 2002.

Telecommunications

Telecommunications, including the internet, is playing an increasing role as the GMS economies develop. Cooperation in the telecommunications sector seeks to develop a subregional network linked to international gateways. Through cooperation GMS countries can acquire the advanced technologies they need to expand access to e-commerce and low-cost communications services.

Environment and Natural Resources Management

In the GMS, which holds some of the most important natural forests and biodiversity in the world, protecting the subregion's wealth of natural resources is a major challenge in the face of efforts of GMS countries to achieve faster economic growth.

At a special meeting of the GMS Ministers on Environment in Shanghai in May 2005, the GMS Core Environment Program (CEP) was launched to ensure stronger coordination in conserving natural systems and maintaining the quality of the environment. Under the CEP a Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (BCI) is being implemented to protect high-value terrestrial biodiversity and protected areas, by establishing sustainable management practices and restoring habitat connectivity in these areas.

Measures for reducing poverty among communities living in or near the economic corridors, defining appropriate land-use, and restoring connectivity of ecosystems will be undertaken in six BCI pilot sites.

Human Resource Development

With about 354 million people, many of whom are young, the GMS have a vast potential workforce. Human resources development (HRD) is a key to harnessing the subregion's human potential. HRD is crucial for increased productivity and competitiveness and overall economic development and is directly linked to poverty reduction.

GMS cooperation focuses on the cross-border dimensions of HRD health and social matters associated with mobile populations, the prevention and control of communicable diseases, and helping the poor to gain better access to education and health services. At the first Summit in Phnom Penh in 2002, a major initiative to help GMS countries better manage the complex task of development was launched through the Phnom Penh Plan (PPP) for Development Management. Through various learning programs, the PPP is helping to build the capacity of middle and senior level professionals in the GMS.

Tourism

The tourism potential for GMS is enormous. The Mekong subregion's rich cultural heritage and unique natural geography make it an attractive tourist destination. The GMS countries are promoting the subregion as a single tourist destination through joint marketing efforts and capacity building. Nearly 16 million tourists visited the GMS in 2004, with expenditures valued at \$12 billion.

A GMS tourism strategy for 2006-2015 is being developed that supports a holistic and coordinated approach to tourism development, including the implementation of high-priority tourism infrastructure projects, and the promotion of pro-poor and environment-friendly tourism.

Trade

Connectivity through infrastructure development has given a boost to trade. Total exports of the GMS countries tripled from 1992 to 2003, and intra-regional trade as a proportion of total trade increased from about 6 percent in 1992 to about 15 percent in 2003.

Economic corridors are developing along transport routes-promoting increased production and trade. Commerce is thriving, especially along the borders. Roadside

business is booming. And agriculture products are finding new markets. All these are helping to create jobs and increase incomes.

Transport and trade facilitation are promoting smoother cross-border flows of goods and people. By 2003, all GMS countries had ratified the Cross-Border Transport Agreement to reduce the regulatory impediments to cross-border traffic. A Strategic Framework for Action on Trade Facilitation and Investment is being prepared which will further simplify and harmonize customs procedures, streamline inspection and quarantine measures, develop trade logistics, and enhance the mobility of business people.

Investment

The investment requirements of the GMS region are very substantial. It is therefore essential that public and private resources are mobilized to meet the financing needs. Rapid economic growth in the GMS has increased its attractiveness for investment. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows to GMS countries have shown improvements. In addition, the GMS countries have taken measures to enhance the investment climate, including improvements in the legal framework, incentives regime and the streamlining of investment procedures. In 2000, the GMS Business Forum was established to promote investment in the region. The GMS Program also arranged special GMS events to publicize the investment opportunities in the GMS region. These have proven to be quite successful.

Agriculture

Sustainable agriculture growth is crucial to reducing poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals given that poverty in the GMS is largely rural in nature. The GMS Program helps poverty reduction in the GMS through partnerships with rural communities to promote agriculture trade, food security and sustainable livelihoods. Enhanced connectivity also helps expand market opportunities³.

There are current GMS Development Trends and Issues as follow:

The Regional Cooperation Strategy and Program (RCSP) for the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) aims to help achieve the GMS vision of a prosperous, integrated, and harmonious subregion through the pursuit of four strategic pillars, namely:

³ <http://www.adb.org/gms>, 2005

- i. strengthening connectivity and facilitating cross-border movement and tourism
- ii. integrating national markets to promote economic efficiency and private sector development
- iii. addressing health and other social, economic, and capacity building issues associated with subregional linkages
- iv. managing the environment and shared natural resources to help ensure sustainable development and conservation of natural resources

This annual update of the RCSP was prepared to ensure that the RCSP's strategic pillars and rolling program remain relevant in light of the rapidly changing global and regional context, as well as key developments in the GMS Economic Cooperation Program. This update summarizes significant achievements since the RCSP update (2006–2008) was approved in August 2005⁴.

Recent Global and Regional Developments of ADB

Three key developments dominated the global setting in the past year (2005-2006)⁵:

- i. continuing high energy prices with fading expectation for a price decline in the near future due to rising demand from emerging economies and continuing volatility in the Middle East
- ii. the emerging prospect of an avian flu pandemic
- iii. growing international payments imbalances

Each of these trends, together with a possible slowdown in demand from major developed countries' markets, could pose a threat to the continued strong performance of the Asian and Pacific economies, as well as to the global economy.

On the regional front, regional cooperation and integration initiatives continued to gain considerable ground. The first-ever East Asia Summit was held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005, with participation by heads of state from the 10 ASEAN countries, Australia, the People's Republic of China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and New

⁴ <http://www.adb.org/gms>, 2005

Zealand. The Summit addressed such major issues as regional security, the problem of infectious diseases, and energy cooperation. Meanwhile, ASEAN countries are accelerating formation of the ASEAN Economic Community by moving to integrate their economies into a single market and production base by 2015, instead of the earlier agreed date of 2020.

Economic Assessment and Outlook

Economic growth in the GMS remained robust at almost 8% in 2005. The GMS economies expanded faster in 2005 than in the previous year despite high oil prices, the increased threat of avian flu, and protectionist tendencies in key export markets (ADB, 2005). For Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Vietnam, growth was the highest recorded since the start of the decade. This resulted from a confluence of robust agricultural sector performance, strong export growth (especially in Cambodia where clothing exports performed much better than previously expected), and a rise in investments. As anticipated, the PRC saw slightly decelerating growth largely as a result of macroeconomic adjustment measures to arrest an incipient overheating of the economy, but investments and exports continued to be buoyant. Thailand also experienced a slowdown due to a severe drought and rising oil prices. Initial indicators show that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in most GMS countries has slowed in the first few months of 2006. Myanmar's economy is growing at the double digit rate in recent years.

The ratio of investment to GDP has increased significantly for most of the GMS countries in the last five years, largely as a result of robust private capital formation. FDI flows into the subregion have also been on the rise, with substantial increases in 2005, and particularly for Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand. The PRC continued to be a magnet for FDI, approximately maintaining its substantial share of global FDI flows in the previous year. As a result of greater openness of the GMS countries, total merchandise exports grew by more than 300% from 1992 to 2005. Intraregional trade increased even more dramatically in 2004, it was 11 times more than the 1992 level. Annual tourist arrivals to the subregion doubled from 10 million in 1995 to an estimated 20 million in 2005.

Robust investments in and exports from GMS countries are expected to continue due to the improving investment climate resulting from such recent legal and policy

⁵ <http://www.adb.org/gms>, 2005

reforms as the passage of unified laws on enterprise and investment in Vietnam, as well as anti-corruption laws in Lao PDR and Vietnam. While a projected expansion in the major industrial economies and continued growth in global trade bode well for the subregion's growth prospects for the next couple of years, persistent global payments imbalances are a concern. Other threats to the strong performance of the Asian and Pacific economies mentioned earlier high and rising oil prices and the possible emergence of an avian flu pandemic remain significant risks to the subregion's growth prospects.

Recent Social and Political Developments

With nominal per capita GDP (in US dollar terms) growing at 10–14% annual rates during 2005 in most GMS countries, poverty in the subregion is expected to have continued to decline in line with the trend over the past 12 years. Available poverty indicators (Table 1) show that the incidence of poverty as measured against national poverty lines has declined substantially, with the reductions most pronounced in Thailand and Vietnam. Recent poverty assessments of some GMS countries indicate, however, that

- i. there remain vast numbers of poor and near-poor people and income inequality has increased in most GMS countries
- ii. access to vital social services remains severely limited and unequal

However, the GMS governments have greater awareness of the need to address social and human development problems, if economic development is to be sustained and poverty significantly reduced. For instance, in its recently formulated Sixth National Socioeconomic Development Plan, the Government of Lao PDR accorded highest priority to human resource development and stressed the need to strengthen the positive linkages between economic growth and social development. Similarly, the overriding goal of Viet Nam's latest Socioeconomic Development Plan is to reduce poverty incidence as measured against the national poverty line from 28.9% in 2002 to 15–16% by 2010. The poverty reduction strategies of Mekong countries argue for pro-poor growth (with major emphasis on transport and agriculture), social development (particularly focusing on health and on indigenous people), and natural resources development as major sector areas for poverty reduction. They also reflect the important role of regional linkages in the efforts to achieve poverty reduction, such as regional trade, movements across borders, tourism, and natural resources management.

However, the governance reform is high on the agenda of GMS governments, particularly reforming economic governance to create a more conducive enabling environment for business. In Viet Nam, the National Assembly passed in 2005 three landmark pieces of legislation: a unified Law on Enterprise, a unified Law on Investment, and a Law on Fighting Corruption. The Government of Viet Nam is also actively pursuing reform of state-owned enterprises as well as financial sector and capital markets reform. In Lao PDR, the Government is also undertaking the restructuring and reform of state-owned enterprises, and it is preparing the legal framework for developing a real estate market. In Cambodia, the Government is pursuing a so-called “Rectangular Strategy” to enhance economic growth, employment, equity, and social justice. At the strategy’s core is good governance focusing on anticorruption, law and the judiciary, public administration and decentralization, and armed forces demobilization.

Table 1: Income Poverty and Distribution Indicators for GMS Countries

| Country | Per Capita GDP (current, \$) | | Poverty Incidence (%) | | | | | | Gini Coefficient ^a | |
|----------|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | Based on National Poverty Line (in %) | | \$1-a-day | | | | | |
| | | | | | Head Count Ratio (in %) | | Magnitude (in million) | | | |
| 1992 | 2005 | 1992/1993 | Latest ^b | 1990 | 2003 | 1990 | 2003 | Earliest ^c | Latest ^d | |
| Cambodia | 220 | 393 | 39.0 ^e | 34.7 ^f | 46.0 | 33.8 | 4.0 | 4.5 | 0.37 | 0.45 |
| PRC | 293 ^g | 842 ^{g,h} | 7.8/23.8 ⁱ | 3.4/7.9 ⁱ | 33.0 | 13.4 | 377.0 | 173.1 | 0.31 | 0.35 |
| Lao PDR | 271 | 491 | 46.0 | 32.7 | 52.7 | 28.8 | 2.2 | 1.6 | 0.29 | 0.37 |
| Myanmar | — | 176 ^j | — | 32.9 ^k | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Thailand | 1,945 | 2,727 | 23.2 | 9.8 | 10.1 | 0.7 | 5.7 | 0.4 | 0.54 | 0.50 |
| Viet Nam | 144 | 622 | 58.1 | 19.5 | 50.7 | 9.7 | 33.4 | 7.9 | 0.18 ^l | 0.20 ^l |

— = not available,

^a Gini coefficient is a measure of income inequality. If income distribution were exactly equal, this value would be 0. If one person had all the income, it would be equal to 1.

^b Cambodia and Viet Nam, 2004; Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Yunnan Province and Myanmar, 2001; Lao PDR, 2002-2003; Thailand, 2002.

^c Cambodia, 1994; PRC and Thailand, 1992; Lao PDR and Viet Nam, 1993.

^d Cambodia and Viet Nam, 1999; PRC, 2000; Lao PDR, 1997–1998; Thailand, 2001.

^e Data for 1993/94.

^f Based on 2004 Cambodia Socioeconomic Survey. 1993/94 and 2004 data are not comparable since the 1993/94 Socioeconomic Survey covered only 65% of households. 2004 poverty rate comparable with 1993/94 (39%) is 28%.

^g Covering Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Yunnan Province, PRC.

^h Data for 2004.

ⁱ 7.8% and 3.4% refer to Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region while 23.8% and 7.9% refer to Yunnan Province.

^j Data for fiscal year 2002 (April 2002–March 2003).

^k Based on the results of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey in 2001 with a sample size of 30,000 households from 75 sample townships.

^l Based on Theil L Index, a measure of inequality based on information/probability theory.

Sources: ADB. 2006. *Asian Development Outlook 2006*. Manila; ADB. 2006. *Country Briefing Papers for the 39th Annual Meeting*. Manila; ADB. 2006. *Country Strategy and Program (2007–2010): Viet Nam*. Manila; ADB. 2005. *Country Strategy and Program (2005–2009): Cambodia*. Manila; ADB. 2005. *Country Strategy and Program Update (2006–2008): Lao PDR*. Manila; ADB. 2005. *Key Indicators*. Manila; International Monetary Fund. 2004. *Article IV Consultation Meeting*. Washington, D.C.; Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development of the Government of Union of Myanmar. 2005. *Millennium Development Goals Report of Myanmar*. Yangon. Available: <http://www.undg.org>; National Bureau of Statistics of China. *China Statistical Yearbook, various issues*. China Statistics Press; National Statistical Office of Thailand. 2003. *Thailand Development Indicators*. Available: <http://www.nso.go.th>; Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board and United Nations Country Team in Thailand. *Thailand Millennium Development Goals Report 2004*. Bangkok.

1.1.3 Non- Traditional Security Issues

Non- traditional security issues are, by no means, not the new ones and they are relative to traditional security issues such as wars, political or domestic conflicts which impose threats to survival or nation state and humanity. These issues threat directly or indirectly affect the social and economic methods. These non- traditional security issues include:

- Economic and financial security
- Resources security
- Environmental security
- International/ domestic terrorism
- Religion extremism
- Ethnic conflicts related secessionism
- Illegal migration

- Spread of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, SARS⁶, bird flu
- Drug trafficking and drug abuse
- Environmental degradation
- Human trafficking
- Natural disasters prevention
- Poverty
- Arms smuggling and trafficking in Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- Piracy
- Transborder organized crimes

It is important to note that non- traditional security issues are always transnational.

Here, the thesis intends to address the non- traditional security issues in the Mekong region.

Hence, it will explore the non- traditional security issues which affect the Mekong region's social and economic development. For the purpose of the study, cross border migration, human trafficking spread of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse and environment issues are taken as non- traditional security issues in Mekong region.

The historical background and the contributing factors for non- traditional security issues, given in the foreword of the book 'A Collection of Papers of the International Symposium on the Non- Traditional Security Challenges and Responses', 2005 as

1. The longtime unjust of international political order which spawn more conflicts and crisis both domestic and nation states. During the time of imperialism and colonialism, the oppression and exploitation of those who rule still left behind numerous historical issues to this day, resulting in conflicts and turbulence and creating breeding ground for incubating terrorism. Even nowadays, there are still some states pursuing hegemonism in international affairs, and practicing dual standards in fighting against terrorism and ignoring other countries, and ethnic group's interests while seeking for its own interests, this set off resistance of the weak communities and these were consequences of unjust international political order.

⁶ Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

2. The uneven development world's economy that long existed has spawned more insecurity factors. As the rising of opportunity to boost international cooperation and promote common development, economic globalization also widened the gap between developed and undeveloped as well as the rich and the poor. However, the dire poverty and slow-development in some countries were created by the uneven economic development which in some way develop the ideal of soil for terrorism to breed and spread, uprising the constant of the international conflicts in some countries and this resulting in increase of refugees and illegal migration.

3. The longtime paradoxical situation of mankind development and environment, which created environment security issues. The world was introduced to the concept of 'development first and improving environment later', since the industrial revolution in the Western countries. Therefore, this development pattern has led to the very large gap between mankind and nature and bringing an issue of over- growing environmental security such as climate changes, shortage of water resources and natural disasters.

4. The failure of the international counter crisis mechanism construction to match the rapid development of interstates that gives rise to the difficulties in reining in various non-traditional security issues promptly. Since the rapid growth of economic globalization have increasingly deepened the interdependence of all the nations and moreover turning the global economy into an organic interactive. This contributed to the ups and downs of economic development and financial risks, the international crime and the growth of communicative diseases etc. This is because of the failure in setting up the really effective counter crisis international mechanism.

Impacts and Implications for the GMS

For the purpose this study, 'Impact' can be defined as the extent to which a project or program has produced significant change in the people's life and community. It is therefore more than the immediate, predicted output of an intervention, project or program and much more focused on the implications of work in the medium and long term. This, crucially, should include examples of expected, unintended, positive and negative impacts (Santavasy 2005). In addition, a study that focuses on the program usually looks at the process and results of the program and then builds on this to understand what the impact is/or would be. Long- lasting change is often the result of a lengthy process of

development. However, significant change or progress towards long- term change can also be detected in the short- term.

In addition, impacts can be classified into at least two categories: direct impacts and indirect impacts. Direct impacts can be identified from a matrix of which project components interact with the biophysical and social environment components. These are the environmental components directly affected or linked to the project. Indirect impacts can be identified by making use of the networks of interconnections between components of the biophysical and social environment, developed in the scoping exercise (Sader, M. Husain 1996)

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines impact as: “A combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, program or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population”

Other definitions of impacts would be: “Assessment of the change in health risk reasonably attribute to a project, program or policy and undertaken for a specific purpose”; and “A systematic way of working to shed light on the health consequences of purposed policy decisions” (<http://www.who.org>).

It seems agreed that ‘impacts’ are the changes, effects, consequences and/or potential attributes that are produced by particular projects, activities and policies. In this context the impact and implication would include non- traditional security issues; cross border migration, cross border human trafficking, cross border spread of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, and cross border environment issue, that have tremendous consequence on the Greater Mekong Subregion economic cooperation.

With these definitions of impacts, this study will address the impacts and implications of non- traditional security issues in the Mekong region.

1.2 Purpose of Study

1.2.1 Research Question

The primary thesis question is:

- What are the extents of non- traditional security issues in the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation?

The secondary thesis question is:

- What are the impacts and implications of those non- traditional security issues on the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation?

1.2.2 Objective of the Study

To study the extent of the non-traditional security issues of cross border migration, cross border human trafficking, cross border spread of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse and cross border environment issues, and their impact and implications on Greater Mekong Subregion economic cooperation.

1.2.3 Hypothesis

The cooperation of Mekong countries started in 1957 with the establishment of Mekong Committee comprising Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, but the new phase of subregional cooperation began when China and Myanmar agreed to join the network in 1991. However, in 1992 the Asian Development Bank established the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation with all of six riparian countries namely Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and the Yunnan province and Guangxi autonomous region of China.

The ADB plays an important role in assisting the program of subregional economic cooperation, directing initially to nine specific areas: transport, energy, environment, human resource development, tourism, trade, investment, telecommunications, and agriculture.

After all, the operation of GMS focuses on economic and physical development and overlooks the non-traditional security issues within the region. This is because without addressing the non-traditional security issues such as cross border migration, cross border

human trafficking, cross border spread of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse and, cross border environment issues, the regional cooperation is not able to achieve its aims in facilitating sustainable economic growth and improving the people's standard of living in the Mekong region.

1.2.4 Scope of study

This study focuses on the extent of non- traditional security issues such as: cross border migration, cross border human trafficking and cross border spread of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, and cross border environment issues, which remains on a large scale as well as its complex linkage that has a deep impact on Greater Mekong Subregion's cooperation.

1.2.5 Significance and usefulness of research

This thesis will bring better understanding toward problems concerning the limitation of cooperation due to non-traditional security issues that affect the political, security, economic and social cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion. By learning these issues and their impact and implications on GMS, the ADB could formulate policies in order to uplift the social wellbeing of the people in the GMS region.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Concept of Non- Traditional Security

“Non-traditional security is the issues that have deep impact on the nations than traditional security, and threaten people's life, livelihood, health, wealth including human security (Than, 2005)”

In 1994, while the UNDP described the concept of “human security”, in terms of ‘freedom from fear and want’ it stressed both traditional security and non- traditional security problems as follows:

“The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy

or as global security from the threat of nuclear holocaust. It has been related to nation-states more than people... Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards” (UNDP, 1994)

Dosch (2005) tried to explain the term ‘non- traditional security in his edited volume Economic and Non- Traditional Security Cooperation in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)’ in the context of GMS. According to him most actors involved, as well as observers, tend to stress economic incentives as the Mekong state’s main motivation to intensify subregional cooperation and the same time, security has been an equally if not more important dimension. In an early essay on Mekong cooperation written against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, Black (1969) argued, “the most important aspect of the development of the Mekong Basin is to provide a means for inhibiting violence in the region, and evoking among the riparian countries a sense of what is possible if they cultivate the habit of working together” (p.12). Non-traditional security therefore highlights new dimensions of the security concept while still acknowledging that military/conventional security remains important. Terms such as ‘non-traditional’ and ‘alternative’ security are applied to security politics, however, in ways that challenge the foundational concepts in the realist perspective of military and state/regime security. The dichotomy of these terms, that tend to claim an exclusive purview over the security studies field, traditional/non-traditional, realist security and alternative security, assume the analytical characteristics of an IR level of analysis problematique: international, state, domestic, and individual levels of analysis tend to become blurred via their very frame of reference. By applying these various terms, issues that now understand to fall in the ‘non-traditional’ categories of security, have challenged the state centrality as the only route to understanding how security is affected. Structural realism, as a recent alternative to the realist paradigm, broadens the concept of security but remains firmly focused on the state as the main referent object.

While Non- traditional security is useful as an appendage concept term for International Relations, its traditional, self-referential qualities have certain drawbacks. Makinda (2001) argues the term ‘traditional’ security was coined in the 1990s by revisionists who sought to distance themselves from the security perspective that was

dominant during the Cold War. He notes that those regarded as traditional security theorists do not use this term, and cautions that the weakness of employing the term 'non-traditional security' is that it "makes traditional security the benchmark and thereby inadvertently helps to legitimize the paradigm that the revisionists seek to undermine" (Makinda 2001).

The term non-traditional security remains relevant, however, to the Northeast Asian region. Akaha (2001) argues that non-traditional security can be usefully and practically applied to the region for three reasons. Firstly, the distinction between traditional and non-traditional security remains an important one in the security culture of the region. There are a growing number of non-military concerns (cross-border, transnational, and human security concerns), which the state and its institutions cannot ignore. Secondly, the state retains a dominant role in both the domestic and foreign affairs of Northeast Asia, both in terms of a source and target of security threats, and as an instrument of combating such threats. Bearing this in mind, many security problems in the region "can be more appropriately defined and addressed through the dichotomy between traditional and non-traditional security". Thirdly, the non-traditional security concept can mediate between issues examined within a human security framework.

Significantly, Ahaka notes "an exclusive focus on human security would ignore many non-traditional issues that affect in important ways the interests of the state and its institutions, as well as their response to those issues" (Akaha 2001).

Three decades later, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace published a volume "The Greater Mekong Subregion and ASEAN: From Backwaters to Headwaters" based on a very similar premise. In the volume, cited Adam (2000) observation, "given the history of wars, aggressions and instability, when the Mekong River functioned largely as a dividing line, there is security dimension beyond economics that touches such issues as military build ups, border disputes, migration, environmental degradation and resource management that need to be tackled in a spirit of cooperation and good neighborliness". Similarly, Browder (2000) demonstrates that the establishment of the MRC was primarily guided by security considerations, namely Thailand and Vietnam's interest to build fruitful relations in the aftermath of the Cold War and contain conflict on water resources. These were Laos and Cambodia's motivation in reaching an accord to help procure aid. Overall,

“the Mekong resource regime is linked to more general concerns for political security and stability and may in fact reflect political concerns for subregional neighborhood maintenance” (Makim 2002). Many analysts seem to agree that the existence of subregional cooperation has contributed to a more peaceful and stable regional situation in the Mekong valley.

As Mya Than (1997) puts it, “the political benefits of ADB- led GMS cooperation are enormous... there is now peace and stability in most of the subregion, where this has rarely existed. Formerly the source of conflicts among participating riparian countries, the Mekong has become a source of cooperation”. However, as in the case of ASEAN, it seems to have significantly contributed to the avoidance of military conflict among its member states by simply existing. Thus it is difficult to establish a strong empirical link between cooperation in non- security areas and regional stability and peace. Then again, historical evidence suggests that stable and peaceful inter- state relations are indeed the result of quantitative and qualitative escalation of transnational activities in multiple policy areas and related inter- governmental institution- building.

Suchit Bunbongkarn also noted the non- traditional security problems. Even if the GMS could be economically and politically developed, and it would enhance peace, security and prosperity in the subregion and the ASEAN region substantially. He thought that it is not enough. According to him, however as Suchit Bunbongkarn (2000: 143) puts it “There remains a host of problems that the subregion is facing, which have serious implications on regional security (e.g. the smuggling across borders of the countries in the subregion, problem associated with illicit drugs, illegal migrant labor, problems associated with environmental degradation, plus with the increasing disparity in political development and the conflict of interest) These problems are considered as non- traditional issues even though he did not use the term. He concluded that peace and stability in the region cannot be secured and strengthened unless these problems are taken care of properly and effectively.

The author also suggests for the solution as concluded “confidence- building measures should be emphasized to foster cooperation and reduce the degree of mistrust and the nationalist sentiments. Multilateral and bilateral dialogues both at the first track and the second track levels should be further encouraged. Each country should accept that what

happens in one country will affect the other. Thus, one should not think in terms of its own interest only also in the spirit of regionalism and allow discussion of each one's internal problem in order to enhance cooperation, peace and prosperity in the GMS and ASEAN" (p.146).

In that sense if security is seen to include the fields of soft or non- traditional security i.e. the broad area of comprehensive security covering non- military areas such as human security, economic security and environmental security, some recent achievements of Mekong cooperation point towards growing subregional stability.

Another scholar, Akaha (2002), identifies six non- traditional security complexes in East and Southeast Asia which have already appeared on the radar screen of policy makers in the region:

- Environmental deterioration and its deleterious effects on human health and trans- boundary pollution problems.
- Growing pressures on natural resources due to expanding market demand, particularly with respect to forestry and fishery resources.
- Legal and illegal migration, as well as ethnic tensions.
- Increasing gaps in wealth and income within and between neighboring regions as a result of international and transnational economic exchanges, drug trafficking and,
- Mismanagement of national economies.
- And their vulnerability to the intensifying forces of globalization, resulting in the major economic and social dislocations among the local populations.

This concept seems to be slightly differed from previous authors. It is well accepted that the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s brought about profound changes in the way International Relations conceptualized security. The incorporation of new theoretical approaches and new empirical problems formed part of this process. Two factors have been instrumental here. First, 'new threats' to individuals quality of life proliferated in the 1990's, including ethnic violence, HIV/AIDS, increased migration, environmental degradation. Secondly, the strictures of the Cold War had provided little room for incorporating such factors into the IR discipline. Indeed many of the 'new threats' existed or were simmering before the 1990s, but were

only 'discovered' by International Relations in the freedom that the New World Order emerging from that conflict offered to the discipline (Dosch, 2005).

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

There are six chapters in this thesis;

Chapter one is the introduction, in order to gain a better understanding of the foundation and the historical background of the Mekong River and the Greater Mekong Subregion economic cooperation. It is also necessary to introduce the term of non-traditional security and its issues that impact on GMS cooperation.

Chapter two will be about the cross border migration in Mekong region including its history, importance of cross border migration in this subregion as well as recent broad issues related to the topic. The migration issue in the GMS is also analyzed in this chapter.

The third chapter focused on the human trafficking problems inside the region, besides the definition and background of human trafficking in the region, the supply and demand factors foster the growing situation of trafficking in GMS also discuss, as the trafficking issue is need for the regional approach.

The fourth chapter aims at examining the problems of cross border spread of HIV and AIDS, as well as drug abuse within the Mekong region. This chapter will be about the rapid economic growth and the spread of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, the need for regional and moreover the international cooperation.

Chapter five will focused on the cross border environment problems including the natural resource management that challenges for the GMS cooperation. The Mekong River and its environs is a precious and unique geographical, ecological, economic, human and cultural resource, rich in history and diversity which require more attention from the subregion.

The final chapter will be the summary of all findings from non- traditional security issues including the obstacles in addressing non- traditional security issues in the GMS economic cooperation. In addition, it will give the recommendation for all mentioned issues as a conclusion.

CHAPTER II

CROSS BORDER MIGRATION IN THE GMS

2.1 History of Cross Border Migration in the GMS

“While Migration can lead to improved livelihoods, increasing migration arising out of economic distress, without due preparation and protection of the law, can lead to illegal and often hazardous forms of employment, ending up in trafficking”

Manoshi Mitra(2005)⁷

Many of the current migration patterns in the GMS have long histories. This is probably due both to geographical factors and a kind of historical momentum that created ties between peoples now in different nations.

Some centuries- old trade (and thus to some extent migration) routes remain as important paths for migration and trade. For example, the major trade routes between Yunnan and Burma exist in the Bhamo and Ruili area, as well as the Jinghong area. For Yunnan and Vietnam, one major trade route passed through the Hekou- Lao cai area and another passed through the Malipo- Ha Giang area. All these areas remain very active.

The scope of ancient empires in the GMS probably influenced present- day migration patterns. The movements of traders, slaves, armies, etc centuries ago created much mixing of peoples in the GMS, leading to the formation of communities and ties which transcend current national boundaries. Vietnam was a kind of Chinese colony for centuries. The ancient Khmer empire’s influence once extended deep into present- day Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. Areas now in northwestern Thailand were once part of kingdoms located in what is now called Burma. Provinces such as Kedah in the Northern part of Malaysia were once under Thai control.

The migration that occurred during the era when France and Britain were major colonial powers probably has a much more noticeable connection with present day

⁷ www.adb.org/gms,2005

migration. One major reason for this is that the colonial governments in Cambodia, Vietnam, and Burma ordered the construction of transportation infrastructure to facilitate the movement of goods and make it easier to administer their colonies.⁸ Much of this infrastructure, including railways, continues to facilitate the movement of large numbers of people.

In sum, while this section has only covered the complexities of cross border migration history in a very superficial manner, it indicates that many of the patterns that characterize recent migration in the GMS have existed for centuries or have strong roots in events that occurred many years ago.

Massive population movements have occurred since the mid 1970s when the Indochinese War ended and the socialist regime came to power. In the lower Mekong region alone it was estimated that more than three million refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PRD sought refuge in other countries in the Southeast Asian region and the South China Sea, including Hong Kong and Japan (Chantavanich 1999). The flows reached a peak in 1980s then continued until the end of 1980s. It was only after 1992 that huge repatriations of these alyssum

2.2 Cross Border Migration in Mekong Region

The GMS is home of more than 350 million people, this region is rich in cultures and resources which Mekong river as a main stream that feeds such civilizations. As a long history of this region, through the time of peace and conflicts, the region will take decades and massive amounts of resources just to undo the destruction of the past conflicted years, much less to catch up with the rapidly globalizing and developing economies.

However, among the leading issues confronting the Mekong riparian countries, migration has become one of the more urgent and strategic, because of the magnitude, the attendant problems and the immediate and long term economic, political and human rights impacts such as labor migration inflows and outflows and including trafficking.

⁸

Laos was also a French colony but the French colonial administration invested little in its infrastructure.

As Asian Migrant Centre (2002)⁹ puts “while there are still significant refugee problems, the bigger bulk of the migration issues at present centers on migration for work and economic reasons- including both documented and irregular labor migration”. With the high unemployment rates in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Myanmar¹⁰, together with other push factors such as poverty in all sending countries; internal strife and repression in others, have created a huge pool of millions of men, women and even children who are seeking jobs or are vulnerable to opportunities agents who promise jobs across the border. These create an intense ‘push’ resulting in both documented and irregular migration. If not by their own accord, people seeking work or better lives in neighboring countries resort to syndicates or unscrupulous agents in order to cross the porous borders, especially to Thailand which represents the other end of the wealth disparity in the GMS.

Table 2: The migration statistic of GMS’s countries

| Country | Population (million) | Migrants Received (thousand) | Migrants Sent out (thousand) |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Myanmar | 48,080 | No data | 1,370+ |
| Cambodia | 11,670 | 65+ | 112+ |
| China(Yunnan) | 41,000 | No data | 111+ |
| Lao PDR | 5,410 | No data | 400+ |
| Thailand | 61,000 | 1,500 | 51+ |
| Vietnam | 77,310 | No data | 55+ |
| Total | 244,470 | - | 2,099+ |

Source: www.visit-mekong.com, Asian Migrant Yearbook (2001-2002)

As we can see from the Table 2, some basic statistics (2001 estimate), estimates that there are currently over two million migrants in the GMS. Meanwhile, the higher purchasing power and more vibrant economies of many countries in the GMS such as Vietnam, in relation to Laos, Myanmar; or Thailand in relation to the rest of the region, create the corresponding demand for labor or cheap labor attracting migrant men, women and children from the poorer neighbors. Demand is not only confined to cheap labor (for shops, factories, plantations fishery industry, domestic help services), but also to cheap and

⁹ Migration in the Greater Mekong Subregion, An Annotated Bibliography. By Asian Migration Centre, Mekong Migration Network, 2002, p 5-8.

¹⁰ Ibid, p 5.

young sexual services (see Table 3). Therefore, rampant irregular migration in the GMS also involves a lot of trafficking of girls, women and boys for prostitution.

Since governments in the region are not able to effectively monitor their mobile populations, it is obvious that the Mekong region has become hotbed of migration- both of political refugees and economic migrants, both documented and irregular.

Table 3: The Specific Migrant Groups

| Groups | Estimated Population |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Hospitality girls | 1,000 |
| Sex workers | 100,000-300,000 |
| Fishermen, seafarers | 100,000 |
| Migrant workers | 1,000,000+ |

Source: Based on ADB, 2000

2.3 Importance of Cross Border Migration in the GMS

There are a number of reasons why migration has become and will remain an important issue in the GMS.

First, many of those countries are coming under increasing scrutiny of governments, international organizations, and private investors. Major changes are inevitable and various parties have an array of ideas about how to direct this change and the benefits (and problems) that will result from it. They are opportunities for investment in transportation infrastructure, natural resource extraction, tourism, communications infrastructure, energy production, manufacturing and trade. There are also efforts to stem environmental damage, preserve historical sites, improve the health of local peoples, and generally ensure a fairly even distribution of wealth. All this efforts will strongly affect the willingness, need and ability of people to move between the GMS. Migration across some borders has expanded significantly over the past decade, predominantly due to economic factors. It is very likely to increase for the foreseeable future.

Second, the trend in all the GMS is towards increasing openness. This openness can take a variety of forms, particularly efforts to woo foreign investors. One facet of this

openness is the willingness of governments to use official land border checkpoints to promote trade, the movement of goods, and tourism. In the past few years, every GMS country has either opened new land border checkpoints or implemented regulations to ease the movement of people and goods across national borders. When the volume of migration and trade increases, local economies tend to expand, thereby creating vested interests among those benefiting from the growth (Stern, 1997). Closing a border checkpoint may require considerable political will or power; and once closed, pressure will always exist to re- open it.

Third, various governments of GMS countries have enhanced the infrastructure at crossing points during the past few years and most of them have projects underway to make further improvements. For example, Thailand and the Lao PDR completed the “Friendship Bridge” over the Mekong River at Nong Kai- Vientiane in April 1994. The Thai government is pushing for another bridge at the Mukdahan- Savannaket crossing. In addition, governments are improving transportation infrastructure between border areas and internal regions of their countries, adding to the volume of goods and people passing between countries. The Asian Development Bank is leading efforts to designate the transportation infrastructure priorities in the GMS and facilitate funding.

Fourth, migration has become a critical element of a number of GMS economies, generating a heavy reliance on migrants in some areas. Thailand currently hosts roughly one million migrant workers from Burma, Cambodia and the Lao PDR, employed as unskilled labor in many sectors of the Thai economy. They help to drive Thailand’s continued high rate of economic growth and provide their home countries with significant amounts of disposable income in the form of remittances. Chinese migrants reportedly exercise major economic control in northern Burma, especially trade between China and Burma. The same is probably true to some content in northern Lao PDR. When migrants make these sorts of inroads, it is very difficult and often harmful to limit their influence.

Fifth, since much of the GMS’ cross border migration is illegal, undocumented and/or uncontrolled, migrants are potential victims of various human rights abuses meanwhile potential responsible for serious crime, and authorities often find it difficult to trace them. Given the scale of cross border land- based migration in the GMS, it is likely that hundreds of thousands of migrants endure an array of problems such as:

- unsafe working conditions
- lower pay than local people performing similar work
- constant fear of arrest and a general lack of basic legal rights
- lack of access to formal educational facilities
- inadequate health care
- deception into prostitution

The high mobility of many cross border migrants in the GMS and the degree of corruption among government officials in areas with large concentrations of migrants makes addressing these sorts of problems very difficult (Stern, 1997). Even so, in many cases the problems migrants face may be not worse than those faced by non- migrant populations. In some situations, migrants may see the problems they encounter as the “price” of earning the higher wages or escaping from a dangerous situation at home.

Sixth, from the stand point of research into international migration, the vast majority of studies have focused on labor migration overseas, or on refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PDR. For example, many studies are available on labor migration to Japan, Taiwan and the Middle East (Stern, 1997). An even larger number of studies exist concerning refugee movements during the 1970s up to the early 1990s. These are both important topics in the context of the GMS. However, the migration landscape has changed significantly in the GMS and nobody can ignore the millions of migrants crossing the GMS land borders annually. However, very little academic research on cross border movements in the region is available, particularly in English.

It may seem that at the moment, the scope and magnitude of smuggling activities are not a serious threat to regional security as well as to risk economic cooperation, but it has potential for developing distrust among those who share borders, armed conflict and other illicit activities along borders that could affect regional security.

2.4 Recent Broad Issues Related to Migration in the GMS

As mentioned previously, various governments and investors both within and outside of the GMS have expressed increasing interest in seeking ways to profit from the

opportunities available in the GMS. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank are probably the leading bodies in this regard. They have financed or facilitated financing for major infrastructure projects in the GMS, particularly dams. The ADB has analyzed and prioritized the myriad of proposed projects for transportation infrastructure in the GMS and now seeks to mobilize funding for the projects seen as most viable. In 1995, the governments of the Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand formed the Mekong River Commission. They also signed the Agreement on the Cooperation on the Sustainable Development of the Mekong Basin in the same year. The Commission works closely with the ADB and has accomplished little since its inception. In addition, both China and Myanmar have not joined.

At the private level, an increasing number of Non- Governmental Organization (NGOs) are putting pressure on governments and organizations such as ADB to ensure that changes in GMS are economically well-balanced and environmentally sound. The environmental groups are probably the strongest and most well- organized. They frequently focus on dam construction, a major part of plans offered for harnessing the Mekong River's potential. With respect to migration, few NGOs work directly with migrants. For these NGOs, the main activity is assistance for girls and women trafficking into prostitution. Some countries, particularly Myanmar have very few NGOs, a product of strict government control over the non- governmental sector. Even so, the many NGOs operating outside these countries still put significant pressure on national governments to make policies that are relatively equitable and not overly destructive.

In Yunnan, the authorities are clearly pushing for greater connections with neighboring countries. They wish to improve transportation links, promote tourism and increase exports of goods from Yunnan to other countries in the region. Gaining access to ocean ports in Thailand or Vietnam is a major goal. Traffic of goods and people through most of China's existing border crossing has increased steadily and there are plans to open more such crossings. Yunnan is also investing in transportation infrastructure between border areas and internal regions, as well as trade markets and industrial facilities in the border areas. An educated guess would be that most of Yunnan's cross border migration involves Chinese nationals migrating to neighboring countries for trade, labor and various other purposes, rather than foreign nationals entering Yunnan.

The government of the Lao PDR has been decentralizing control over the Lao economy and promoting private enterprise to a limited extent since 1986. Even so, Laos is a landlocked country with no railroads and a poor road system, highly dependent on foreign aid. Laos has its strongest ties with Thailand, in both economic and ethnic terms.¹¹ However, there are still tensions between them, based particularly on official Laos concerns about Thailand's economic motives in Laos and the Thailand's "cultural" influence on Laos thinking. Following historical trends, China is expanding its influence in northern Laos. In terms of migration, the Laos government attempts to control strictly movements into and out of the country. Yet the country's extensive and porous border make it inevitable that there are significant numbers of cross border migrants, often meaning Laos entering Thailand.

Vietnam's real growth has averaged over 8% annually during 1990- 1995. Even so, there is a conflict within the country between efforts to accelerate reform and an ideological bias on the part of many state officials in favors of state intervention and control of the economy. Foreign investment, not trade within the GMS, has fueled most of Vietnam's growth; and internal, not cross- border, movements of people are the government's main migration concern. Yet, relations between China and Vietnam have gradually warmed and led to an active cross- border trade, much of which is illicit. Lao-Vietnamese relations are cordial and there is some trade and migration between the two countries. Relations with Cambodia remain tense, characterized by border demarcation disputes and the presence of significant numbers of Vietnamese nationals or their offspring in Cambodia.

Cambodia had elections in 1992 after a 1991 peace accord with Khmer Rouge resistance factions and a massive repatriation of refugees who had fled to neighboring Thailand. Since then, the country has had a highly fractious coalition government and an economy propped up by large influxes of foreign aid and illicit trade. The Khmer Rouge has split into many separate factions, many of which have defected from the remaining hard line group. The two main government coalition members are wooing Khmer Rouge defectors, increasing the level of conflict within the government and adding to the country's general turmoil. This situation makes it unlikely the overall economy will

¹¹ Much of what is now northeastern Thailand was once part of Lan Chang.

improve much (if at all) in the near future. The lack of chances to earn a reasonable income in Cambodia, plus the need for low- skilled migrant labor in nearby countries (particularly Thailand) , will likely drive large numbers of Cambodians to seek employment outside the country.

Thailand's rapid economic growth over the past 20- 30 years centered mainly on trade with and investments from richer countries such as the United States and Japan. With Thailand's emergence as the most powerful economy in the GMS, the government is increasingly pushing for links with the other GMS economies. The Thai authorities and businesses want access to natural resources of countries like Lao PDR and Myanmar, as well as to export Thai's products. At the same time, Thailand's rapid economic growth created a shortage of low- skilled labor which Burmese, Cambodians, and workers of other nationalities have filled that shortage. Therefore, Thailand is the largest receiving country of migrants in the GMS. The government never intended to employ such a large foreign labor force but since these workers drive a significant portion of the Thai economy, the authorities have adopted strategies to control their activities more than preventing them from working.

Myanmar remains under the State Law Order and Restoration Council, a military junta that came to power in September 1988 in a post election coup. After years of relative isolation, the government is gradually promoting greater formal links with Myanmar's neighbors, particularly China and Thailand. As a result, there has been a significant rise in trade with Myanmar by both these countries, accompanied by a greater volume of cross border migration. ASEAN is considering whether to make Myanmar a member, a difficult decision given the government's bad image as a major human rights abuser and the poor state of its economy compared to other ASEAN members.

2.5 National Policies versus Local Realities

Stern (1997:14) states in his paper that there are often major gaps between the terms of national policies governing migration and what actually happens at border areas. There are a variety of reasons for these gaps.

Firstly, national policies may not account for many vested interests in border areas. Thai law requires people from neighboring countries to cross at official immigration checkpoints and to have a passport or border pass. However, this does not stop thousand of Burmese, Laotians and Cambodians from simply walking or taking a boat across the border at a variety of places with no immigration officials in sight. This phenomenon does not bother local people in border areas and may often be welcomed because it provides opportunities for trade and other business.

Second, corruption among immigration and border officials is well- known, despite national pronouncements to the contrary. Smuggling of goods to avoid taxation, the drug trade, illegal log exports and particularly the trafficking of women and girls for the sex trade could not occur without substantial bribes and payoffs. Many migrants, mostly illegal labor migrants, can relate stories about paying bribes to avoid arrest or to obtain transportation to a job site.

Third, national policies often ignore the strong historical links at border areas that impel migration. Many communities with strong kinship and other ties were split by the creation of national borders, where national borders are essentially lines that show up on maps but not on the ground. Since the border do not reflect the need for these communities to remain in contact, the members of these communities often visit one another “illegally” by crossing without the proper documentation.

2.6 Issues and Challenges

Since the years of devastation, time of disputes and conflicts both internal and external of each GMS's countries have destroyed many legal and justice processes in many GMS countries. While these processes and capacities are being rebuilt, many countries in the GMS are not equipped or prepared to manage the migration flows. Therefore, there is a high level of irregular/ illegal migration in the region, perhaps the highest multiracial migration in Asia.

The resulting problems faced by migrants in the Mekong, such as abuses, human rights violations, lack of redress channels or services, absence of legal protection, are immediately apparent. There are hardly any labors contracts governing the work of

migrants in the GMS, thus, migrants are highly vulnerable and are probably subjected to widespread abuses, labor rights violation and exploitation. Work in dirty, dangerous and disdained jobs expose migrants to constant threats to their health and well being. Trafficked and irregular migrants are among the worst situated, since they can not complain for fear of their lives or of being arrested. In the GMS, migrants are barely organized. Nor are there effective and accessible laws or mechanism protecting migrants' rights.

In sum, there is an urgent need to closely examine the realities of migration in the GMS. There is a need to answer and findings the ways out together for these following questions:

- What is the situation of the migration of the migrants both legal and illegal? What are their needs, issues and problems?
- What are the migration related policies, programs and strategies of governments including other agencies in the GMS?
- What are the programs, responses and strategies of NGOs and advocates?



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CHAPTER III

CROSS BORDER HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The United Nations defines trafficking as “... the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments and benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”¹².

In short, trafficking can be seen as the illegal trading of men, women and children for the purpose of exploiting their labor.

3.1 Background of Cross border Human Trafficking

For those who stand to benefit from this crime, human trafficking remains almost the perfect business. Supply is constant, with large numbers of people crossing countries and borders in search of better opportunities, and intermediaries along the way willing to deliver them to factories, brothels, fishing boats and private homes, or onto the streets to beg. Costs are low, and mostly include an initial one-off investment to ‘buy’ the victim, or a loan to pay back the debt they have incurred in transit, to be recovered at extortionist rates plus perhaps a small, regular ‘tax’ to law enforcement authorities. For those at the end of the trafficking chain, human trafficking is almost the perfect business. Supply is constant, with large numbers of people crossing countries and borders in search of better opportunities, and lots of intermediaries willing to deliver them to factories, brothels, fishing boats and private homes, or onto the streets to beg.

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www.un.or.th/TraffickingProject/index.html

Unlike drug trafficking or human smuggling, revenues are ongoing and potentially long-term, as the benefits of another person's 'labor' are appropriated indefinitely. Rather than hinder the business, authorities often help, inadvertently or intentionally, through targeting not the owners but the victims themselves, as illegal migrants (and/or illegal sex workers), and/or the small-scale, 'trafficker' or people-mover. The "people-movers", mostly women, are generally poor, easily replaceable and sometimes even unknowing links in a larger process. The owners, those who generally oversee the worst abuses and who stand to make the most profit are often over-looked, some practitioners even suggesting that these owners fall outside the rubric of trafficking responses. In a particularly perverse aspect of the business, even well-meaning members of the public, giving money to small children begging and selling flowers, are contributing to this trafficking 'business'. In the GMS, where estimates of trafficked victims range into the hundreds of thousands, there are few cases of any of these owners being brought to justice.

Conceptually, trafficking a crime against individuals continues to be confused with smuggling a crime against the state, rather than equated more accurately with slavery (the term 'trafficking' itself implying movement but not the exploitative aspects). In some areas, trafficking is equated solely with prostitution, ignoring the range of other end points and dividing anti-trafficking efforts between those who seek to eradicate the sex trade and those who seek, to the extent possible, to reduce the harm within it.

The global response to human trafficking is in a nascent stage and to date has been characterized more by lessons learnt than major success stories. Although the GMS is widely regarded as a leader in terms of the developing world, progress in this region has also been limited to date in overall terms. Considerably more is now known, however, about this issue and what needs to be done to address it.

3.2 Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion

Since the growing international focus and a growing number of projects in the GMS do not yet appear to have had a significant impact on the reduction of human trafficking. Poor regulatory frameworks, poorly targeted law enforcement and limited recognition of the rights of many groups have put a large number of people in extremely vulnerable situations. Poverty and economic disparities between countries, limited job prospects in many rural areas, and lack of safe migration channels have further contributed

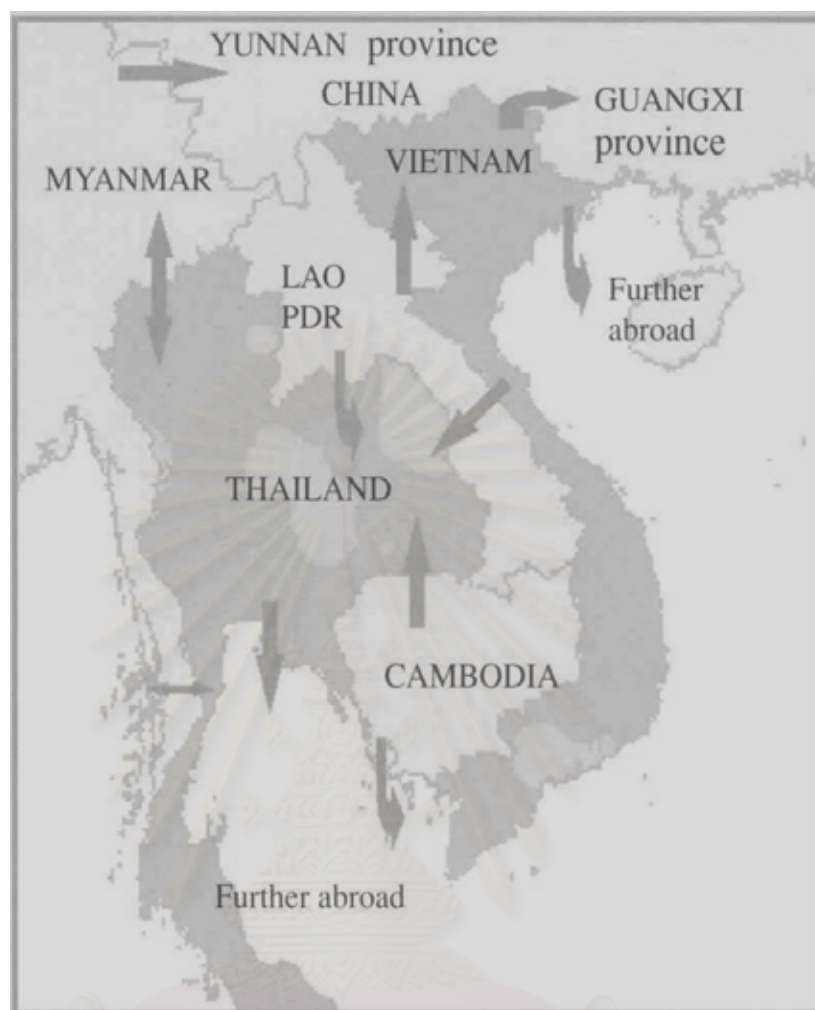
to increasing vulnerabilities and risks. Despite its horrendous consequences on victims (consequences which include rape, physical and emotional abuse, torture, severe health risks, discrimination, exploitation and even death), trafficking in the GMS remains by and large a profitable and almost risk-free business.

While trafficking is always for the purpose of exploitation, exploitation takes many forms. In the GMS, children are trafficked from Cambodia to beg or sell flowers on the streets of Thailand. Adults and young people in search of better opportunities come to Thailand from Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia and find themselves in factories, brothels, houses or fishing boats, in debt bondage or physically unable to escape. Single Vietnamese women go to China in search of marriage, to find themselves sold as domestic slaves. Newly married Vietnamese women go to Taiwan to find their husband is actually a pimp. Chinese boys, and increasingly those on the other side of the Vietnamese and Myanmar borders, are stolen to be sold to those looking to adopt a son. Cambodian babies are abducted and adopted to well-meaning couples from the United States, unsuspecting that their \$20,000 adoption fee has fuelled demand for non-orphaned babies and can easily cover all necessary bribes.

As the nature of trafficking varies, so too does the nature of traffickers, ranging from those in organized networks able to produce or buy fake documents, clear immigration requirements for their victims, and conduct trafficking operations spanning thousands of kilometers, to individuals seizing an opportunity to cheat, sweet-talk or coerce their victim into a situation of exploitation.

Most activities to date have tended to focus on supply-side interventions, helping communities to protect themselves against trafficking by offering choices and alternatives, supporting education of children and adults as well as improved protection mechanisms at community level. However, trafficking is a dynamic phenomenon and traffickers can quickly adjust to changing environments. Research from several countries has indicated that some community-level trafficking interventions which appear successful on the surface may simply be shifting the problem from one community to another, leading to a displacement in trafficking rather than an overall reduction. This is sometimes referred to as the 'push-down, pop-up' phenomenon.

Figure 2: Human trafficking flows in the Greater Mekong Subregion



Source: www.un.or.th/TraffickingProject/index.html

According to the map, show the flows in and flows out patterns of human trafficking in the Mekong region. This is not only flows within the region but also to further destination outside the region, as to support the demand and supply of these human traffickers.

Anh (2005:76) describes both supply and demand factors foster the growing situation of trafficking in GMS as follow;

Table 4: Supply and Demand Factors of Trafficking in GMS

| Demand Side | Supply Side |
|---|--|
| <i>Demand by employers and enterprises for cheap labor, women's labor is usually in</i> | <i>Poverty, women are the minority among the poor and their poverty is increasing.</i> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>low status work in the domestic and entertainment spheres thereby putting them at risk.</p> <p><i>An expanding commercial sex industry</i> in the subregion and increased demand for the services of sex workers. Male clients' preferences are for younger women and girls because of the fear of HIV infection.</p> <p><i>Development policies</i> promoting tourism, and patterns of development that depend on temporary migrant workers, particularly males.</p> <p><i>Male attitudes</i> and perceptions of women in society, and women's unequal socio- economic status.</p> | <p><i>Inadequate education</i> and employment opportunities.</p> <p><i>Economic disparities</i> within countries and between countries and regions, fuels the demand for trafficking from low income to high income areas.</p> <p><i>Globalization</i> and economic liberalization have relaxed controls, opened borders between countries, facilitating population mobility.</p> <p><i>Civil and military conflicts</i> push people to flee their countries, encouraging cross- border trafficking.</p> <p><i>Erosion of traditional family values</i> and the pursuit of consumerism encourage the sale of women and children.</p> <p><i>A lucrative business</i> with high monetary returns attractive to crime syndicates.</p> <p><i>The growth of transnational crime</i> and the expansion of drug trafficking networks act mechanism for other forms of exploitation.</p> <p><i>Weak law enforcement</i> mechanisms and measures to penalize offenders, exploitation by corrupt law enforcers and officials.</p> |
|--|---|

Source: Anh (2005: 76-77)

As Anh mentioned above, the trafficker or person who do the trafficking, can ranges from transnational organized criminal groups that works in huge network as able to produce or buy fake documents, clear immigration requirements for their victims and conduct trafficking operations spanning thousands of kilometers, to those who systematically exploit the vulnerabilities of irregular migrants.

3.3 Sex Work and Human Trafficking

In many cases, the GMS borders and urban areas are also sites for the booming sex industry in Southeast Asia. Mobility, increased tourism, the presence of peacekeeping forces, the opening up of formerly centrally planned economies, human trafficking, a lack of educational and economic opportunities for women and girls, and other factors have all facilitated the growth of sex industries.

Related to this industry are the problems of human trafficking and illicit drug use as these issues commonly co- exist in areas with a high concentration of sex work. The mobility of people to and from areas providing access to sex work and illicit drugs increases the potential risk of HIV infection.

Human trafficking has grown exponentially over the last decade. Increasingly sophisticated networks have developed which rival illicit drug trafficking networks. The interlocking relationships between poverty, health, education and ethnic status contribute to the problem of human trafficking as young minority people are lured away by the promise of high paying jobs. Those who end up in the sex industry are particularly at risk of sexual transmitted infections, including HIV infection, as well as physical and sexual abuse. At present, the minority groups of the Thailand, Myanmar, Lao PRD and China periphery are most seriously affected by the trafficking that fuels the sex industry.

3.4 The Need for Regional Cooperation and Challenges

Due to an increased recognition of the need for a broader response, the existence of a range of promising initiatives and greater commitment by governments to deal with trafficking, cautious optimism for a more comprehensive regional response to counteract the work of traffickers is warranted. At the heart of this response is a host of networks, involving governments, NGOs, community- based, religious and multilateral organization, academic institutes and moreover regional cooperation.

There are several important reasons to pursue closer regional cooperation on the trafficking issue. These include:

- Much, though certainly not all, trafficking takes place across borders. The crime of trafficking is in fact a series of defining acts and circumstances. In most cases, these various acts (which, by themselves may constitute separate crimes but not necessarily the crime of trafficking) take place in more than one location and in more than one country. In order to gain a full picture of what has happened in a particular case, law enforcement agencies and other components of the criminal justice system must cooperate across cross- borders. Cross border or regional cooperation is therefore crucial.
- As much trafficking is cross- border in nature, the provision of appropriate support services, including the safe return of trafficking victims to their country of origin, requires close cooperation between States.
- Within the Greater Mekong Subregion, as elsewhere, a large magnitude of trafficking takes place within the framework of a large degree of irregular, but often mutually beneficial, labor migration. The development of an effective and responsible migration management system across the sub region, which accounts for the needs of individual migrants, employers, and the governments, is an important step both in promoting continued regional economic development and in reducing the opportunities for traffickers to exploit vulnerable migrant workers.
- The effectiveness of regional responses will ultimately depend upon strong national capacities. Sharing success, good practices and lessons learnt between Greater Mekong Subregion countries will greatly strengthen the respective national responses to the problem of trafficking.
- The Greater Mekong Subregion is increasingly becoming a source region for trafficking to Western and other higher income countries. Many of these countries to date have paid limited attention to identification of, and support for, trafficking victims. There is an opportunity for collective lobbying by Greater Mekong Subregion countries on this issue.

CHAPTER IV

CROSS BORDER SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS AND DRUG ABUSE

Beyond the common border, these areas are connected in many ways. Trade and migration networks are not recent developments and new and accelerated forms of cross-border movements are constantly emerging. As these countries from GMS open up their frontier to tourism, trade, investment and development, increased cross-border movement in the GMS countries has in turn resulted in an increase in high-risk behavior, human trafficking, drug abuse and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Addressing such problems is complicated by the fact that the region is characterized by wide-ranging ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism and linguistic complexity.

4.1 Mekong Subregion and HIV/AIDS Situation

The subregion is faced with a rapidly growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS caused through a variety of factors that transcend national borders such as migration, drug abuse and the use and provision of commercial sex. The relatively untouched, but large, populations of Vietnam and Southern China are increasingly vulnerable to the epidemic¹³.

The World Health Organization and UNAIDS estimate that over 40 million people are now living with HIV infection. Worldwide, this means that the overall rate of infection is that one in every hundred adults is likely to be HIV positive, but this is concentrated in the sexually active ages of 15 to 49. Everyday 16,000 new infections occur: eight thousand of these are in the 15- 24 year old age group. The estimate of the rate of overall infection disguises the fact that there are very high concentrations of infection in specific regions. According to 1999 estimates, South and Southeast Asia are suffering the most rapid increases in HIV infection globally, with an estimated number of 1.3 million new

¹³ South East Asian Subregion Response to AIDS, a Strategy for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care in the Mekong Subregion 1998- 2000, February 1998.

infections in 2000. By the end of 2003, almost two million people who living with HIV/AIDS were from the GMS countries¹⁴.

Table 5: HIV/AIDS Situation in the GMS Countries

| | Estimated Number of People with HIV/AIDS | Adult Infection Rate (%) | Dominate Mode of Transmission ¹⁵ | Epidemic Trend ¹⁶ |
|-----------------|---|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Cambodia | 220,000 | 4.04% | Heterosexual | Increasing rapidly |
| Lao PDR | 1,400 | 0.05% | Heterosexual | Low, stable |
| Myanmar | 530,000 | 1.99% | IDU ¹⁷ & Sexual transmission | Growing |
| Thailand | 755,000 | 2.15% | Sexual Transmission | Stable |
| Vietnam | 100,000 | 0.24% | Sexual Transmission & IDU | Increasing |
| Yunnan Province | 600,000,all PRC | 1.18% | IDU & Sexual Transmission | Increasing |

Source: UNAIDS 2000, and Mobility and HIV/AIDS in the Greater Mekong Sub- region, Supang Chantavanich with assistance from Allan Beesey and Shakti Paul, Asian Research Center for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, 2000.

An important contributing factor to the spread of HIV/AIDS in the GMS is the degree and nature of mobility both within and between countries in the region. Political instability and displacement have uprooted thousands of families and individuals for example, refugees from Myanmar in Thailand. People are also drawn to border and urban areas in search of improved economic opportunities. Refugees escaping political instability

¹⁴ South East Asian Subregion Response to AIDS, a Strategy for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care in the Mekong Subregion 1998- 2000, February 1998.

¹⁵ Epidemiological data jointly gather by UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, Bangkok, 2000

¹⁶ Ibid,

and displacement, and economic migrants in search of improved opportunities are both two of the many examples of mobile populations.

HIV/AIDS is not confined by national borders. The borders between Vietnam, Lao PRD, and the People's Republic of China are porous, as are those between China and Myanmar, and between Cambodia and southern Vietnam. In some areas, border points record a relatively high incidence of HIV as goods, service and people move in large number between neighboring countries along selected route. Increased mobility can turn towns along these routes into local nodes of economic activity and the increase economic opportunity can, in turn, facilitate the growth of sex industry. In other cases, people migrate across borders from nearby poor districts, acquire HIV infections, and when they return serve as bridges of HIV transmission in their home- border districts, causing local prevalence levels to rise and fuelling further transmission.

4.2 HIV/ AIDS Risk Situation in the GMS

The risk situations that make mobile people vulnerable to HIV/AIDS are complex and must be determined through an understanding of particular situations. Being away from their family and community where social and sexual norms are prescribed and followed to varying degrees they must adapt to new situations. In their new setting they may have more freedom, new experiences and opportunities, and increased peer pressure, which influences their thinking and behaviors. On the other hand, their activities may be curtailed by remote living conditions, or otherwise restricted by their employers, local residents and law enforcement authorities. They often live in crowded housing with little privacy and, outside of their community, face language and cultural differences and difficulties in accessing information about health risks and health care. Out of boredom, and with few choices for rest and recreation, many young men, as well as older men, will choose whatever entertainment facilities are available. This will usually mean drinking and, sometimes, drugs as well as commercial sex and, when the opportunity arises, casual sex relationship. Migrant workers, from Myanmar or Cambodia, coming into Thailand, and from Vietnam into Cambodia, are the obvious grouping of migrants that run the risk of HIV (Chantavanich, 2000).

Overseas workers are a special group who will certainly face some of the above difficulties that could make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Thailand has the largest number followed by Vietnam. For many they may be moving from areas of higher prevalence of HIV/AIDS than the locations they move to, however, in many countries there is not much information on the particular migrant or local communities of which they become a part. The potential for vulnerability to poor health, or social and psychological difficulties, is real but their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS is uncertain.

The situation of cross border migrants, described above, is relevant to internally mobile people but generally not to the same extent, with language and cultural differences being minimal and usually they are not illegal. Many cross border locations or border areas in general have recorded high HIV prevalence, e.g. Kawthaung and Tachilek of Myanmar bordering Thailand; Muse and Keng Tung of Myanmar bordering China; Poipet and Koh Kong of Cambodia bordering Thailand; and Au Giang of Vietnam bordering Cambodia. Some border sites have high prevalence due to women returning from working in the commercial sex industry. This was a major contributing factor to the epidemic in northern Thailand but can be observed in women returning from Thailand to Myanmar and to Yunnan and in women returning to Vietnam from Cambodia. Many of these women were trafficked into the industry, and trafficking is still a major business in the region.

Particular occupational groups and other internally mobile population groups, however, can certainly have a heightened risk for HIV/AIDS. These groups include transport workers, fishermen and seafarers, mobile traders, state officials and uniformed personnel. Migrant students and other young people moving to cities may also be vulnerable. High levels of HIV prevalence are being detected among various migrant and mobile population groups where surveillance is in place, for example, fishermen and uniformed personnel in some countries. Known prevalence data is generally adequate for understanding transmission patterns and thus the focus should be on determining risk situations and gaining a greater understanding of population groups.

It is necessary, therefore, to classify population groups by their patterns and degree of mobility, as well as characteristics of age, gender, marital status, occupation, income etc. to assess their HIV risk situations. It is also crucially important to understand in some

detail particular geographical locations, the so called Hot Spots of HIV vulnerability. These Hot Spots require careful analysis to determine the HIV vulnerability of specific population groups, as well as the whole community. Each location varies significantly and it is the behavioral norms and the existence of entertainment venues, coupled with HIV prevalence or potential for HIV spread that determines whether a location can be ascertained to be a hot spot. Some areas in the region may not experience a rapid explosion of HIV. The more gradual spread of HIV, however, is still of considerable importance and any gradual spread could lead to a rapid spread given the right mix of risk factors. It should never be taken for granted that all similar geographical locations have equal vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

The link between population mobility and HIV/AIDS is clearly established through various studies. Migrants and mobile populations experience risk situation that make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. If we take a border location as an example, there can be a convergence of many different mobile groups. They in turn are serviced by a range of service providers. Add local populations and you have the entire population. It is this convergence and the mix of services and people that have given rise to a risk situation. Thus, it is the risk situation that is of utmost importance rather than any particular group, even though groups can be singled out for determining the appropriate means to reach them. In first taking stock of the total risk situation, then creating mechanisms for a dialogue between key groups and institutions, it is possible to create an ‘enabling environment’¹⁸ for a cooperative and coordinated response. As Supang (2000: v) and her researchers’ key findings are as follows:

- i. *Major population mobility and migration trends*
 - Refugees and displaced persons 1970s and 1980s- Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. Resettled or repatriated- 1980s.90s-120,000 still on the Thai- Myanmar border.
 - Uniformed personnel during war and conflict situations in Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar; and still active and mobile the region.

¹⁸ “Mobility and HIV/AIDS in the Greater Mekong Sub- region”, Supang Chantavanich with assistance from Allan Beesey and Shakti Paul, Asian Research Center for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, 2000.

- Resettlement and relocations for crop stabilization and substitution; for infrastructure development; and to more fertile areas.
- Greater political openness- less restriction on internal movement.
- Facilitation of trade and travel across borders.
- Economic development- increased trade, infrastructure development, transport links, and job opportunities for internal, cross- border, and migration abroad.
- Major growth in tourism allowing large numbers of foreigners- Asians and non- Asians- to move into all countries of the region.

ii. *Characteristic/ typology of migrant and mobile populations*

- More economic migrants but greatest increase is in short- term mobile populations
- More internal than external migrant and mobile populations.
- Both emigration and immigration in all countries.
- Most flows dominated by young men and women but also many middle aged and some older people, especially among internal mobile populations
- More men than women but the volume of women is increasing rapidly, and women are moving into a wider range of occupations.
- Most economic migrants move without family, but family members may join them later.

iii. *Population mobility and HIV/AIDS*

- Risk behaviors of the individuals and/or population groups are heavily influenced by the risk situations they are in.
- Rapid transmission of HIV occurs through commercial sex and, sometimes, intravenous drug use, but slow transmission occurs through casual and regular partner sex is of great concern.
- Some specific population groups are very vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because of work situations, living conditions and other risk situations e.g. fishermen, transport workers, sex and entertainment workers, but can also include uniformed personnel, state officials, (some) migrant workers.

- Hot spots, outside of cities, emerge from the convergence of mobile populations, and the rise of entertainment and sex establishments, and unsafe sex.
- Many ports, truck stops, towns and border locations fit the definition of a hot spot and most do not have well targeted HIV intervention projects.
- Each location has its own unique configurations that make- up a hot spot- an area where there is a sex trade and many clients may not be a hot spot if there is high condom use; if there are safe needle- use practices; if women are empowered.
- Hot spots are risk situations for people who are unaware of the risk, such as cross- border migrants who are new and poorly informed about HIV/AIDS populations.
- Discrimination against migrants in a foreign country may increase their HIV vulnerability¹⁹ .

Rapid Economic Growth and the Spread of HIV/AIDS

With the exception of Thailand, the GMS were not long ago characterized by primarily centrally planned and state- owned production means. This resulted in low levels of productivity, inadequate amounts of goods and severe economic problems. However, this scenario is rapidly changing as the Governments of the GMS countries are stimulating an increase in privatization and have realized the necessity of allowing the business sector to play a greater role in economic development.

To further stimulate regional growth, the GMS countries adopted the “Economic Corridor²⁰,” approach in 1998. This strategic framework will stimulate nodes of economic activity, such as tourism, special production and trade zones, from the existing

¹⁹ Mobility and HIV/AIDS in the Greater Mekong Sub- region, Supang Chantavanich with assistance from Allan Beesey and Shakti Paul, Asian Research Center for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, 2000.

²⁰ At the beginning the GMS program focused much on building the basic infrastructure to link remote areas. After the 1990s, the program shifted its focus to the environment, human resource development, trade and investment, telecommunications and tourism. To facilitate the implementation of the strategic thrusts of the program, the concept of the “economic corridor ” was launched and three such corridors; East- west, North- south, and Southern identified in its ten- year GMS strategic framework.

opportunities and endowments along selected cross- border routes in the GMS. This approach includes the improvement of available infrastructure to facilitate the creation and growth of such nodes and the routes that connect them.

Building of transport and other infrastructure often involves mobility of truck drivers, migrant construction workers, engineers, and close interaction with local and sometimes isolated communities. The high concentration of primarily male workers often creates a demand for sex work that is subsequently met by local communities as a means of economic gain. This has the potential to increase the occurrence of HIV transmission for both clients and sex workers.

At present, goods, services, labor and tourists are moving in increasing numbers along numerous routes between neighboring GMS countries, a sign of economic progress in the region. However, the development of the transport sector and the required infrastructure has the same potential to contribute to the increase of HIV transmission as it has contributed to trade and development.

4.3 Mekong Subregion and Drug Situation

Since the Nineteenth century colonial era, opium poppies were extensively cultivated in the mountainous regions of southern China and its adjacent territories. This has continuous adverse effect on the GMS. By the late 1980s, and early 1990s, Southeast Asia had become one of the major opium and heroin producing and trafficking regions in the world. The greatest output occurred in Laos and Myanmar and to a lesser extent, Thailand. Increasing supplies of domestically produced opium and heroin as well as growing imports of different illicit drugs from external areas were contributing to rising abuse problems, primarily among the youth in several of the region's countries. Increasing trade, commerce and travel, while largely beneficial, had made it much easier for drug traffickers and other transnational criminal organizations to develop and thrive in the Subregion.

The Mekong subregion is a major source of illicit production for opium, heroin, cannabis and synthetic drugs. The production in Myanmar and Laos has decreased in the past 5 years. In 2000, Myanmar was the second and Laos, the third largest producers of

opium with the total annual production of 1087 tons and 167 tons respectively. The situation in 2001 has changed dramatically because of the Taliban ban on opium production in Afghanistan, which almost eliminated opium production in the same year. This dramatic decrease of production in Afghanistan made Myanmar the largest producer of opium in 2001.

The seizures of heroin in China, particularly in Yunnan province bordering Myanmar, have increased significantly in the past 5 years. The Yunnan provincial Narcotics Control Committee reported total provincial seizures of 8,000 kg in 2001, almost 3 times more than the previous year. In the past, Thailand was the main destination and transiting route for heroin produced in the “Golden Triangle” area. While China has now taken over that role, Thailand still plays an important part as a transiting country. Europe and USA are no longer dominant destinations for heroin originating from the Mekong subregion as Australia has emerged as a new major destination.

In the production of Methamphetamine, essential precursors, for example ephedrine, pseudo ephedrine and other chemicals are smuggled mainly from China, India and Thailand to the production sites. Due to the simple production process, there are also an increasing number of small illicit laboratories hidden in major cities of some countries (Yem, 2005). The region is fast becoming the source of production for other new synthetic drugs, particularly ecstasy. According to the statistic of UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) in 2001, seizures of Methamphetamine in Mekong subregion made up nearly 80 percent of total seizures in the world (China: 45%, Thailand: 27%, Myanmar: 3%), China, Thailand and Myanmar was also reported to be immense sources of Methamphetamine (China: 29%, Thailand: 24%, Myanmar: 14%) and Ecstasy (China: 4%, and Thailand: 4%).

In the new millennium, the ATS (Amphetamine- Type- Stimulant) abuse trend has continued to prevail as one of great concern among the drugs abused in the region. Youthful abusers are often associated with the ATS trend, including the predominant abuse of methamphetamine and ecstasy to a comparatively lesser extent. In some countries, the trend has also been increasingly associated with crime and juvenile misdemeanors. However, the historical trend toward ATS abuse among older occupational groups is also

evident. That trend is directly related to abuse for instrumental purposes, primarily, the duration of work performance for economic incentive.

Formerly, drug users often used traditional drugs such as opium and residues of opium; or cannabis and some regular addictive pharmaceutical drugs. At present, however, heroin and synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine, amphetamine, and ecstasy, etc, are being used. Patterns of drug use have also become diversified, changing from smoking to other forms such as injecting and inhaling. Relapse rate for treated users remain rather high at 80- 90%. In some areas, 100% of treated addicts relapse²¹.

The issue of spread of HIV/AIDS and other diseases easily transmitted through Intravenous Drug Use (IDU) is serious. The number of persons infected through IDU accounts for 65% of HIV/AIDS infections²². The issue of ATS drug abuse tends to increase.

Young people of the Greater Mekong Subregion region are facing many challenges associated with rapid social and economic changes. Many find it hard to avoid the temptation to experiment with drugs that have become easily available. Living in poverty and experiencing violence at home or on the streets may drive certain young people to take drugs to escape from their problems. A number of young people slip into drug abuse, delinquency and crime as part of their victimization in sexual abuse and exploitation²³.

As Yem (2005) mentioned in his Paper “the complicated drug situation in the Mekong region in particular requires the strengthening of cooperation so as to systemically push back the drug menace from the society”.

²¹ Data from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2001

²² Ibid.

²³ <http://www.unescap.org/esid/hds/projects/drugs/index.asp>

4.4 Mekong Subregion and Drug Abuse

Drug abuse is a global phenomenon. It affects almost every country, although its extent and characteristics differ from region to region. Drug abuse trends around the world, especially among youth, have started to converge over the last few decades.

The most widely consumed drug worldwide is cannabis. Three-quarters of all countries report abuse of heroin and two-thirds report abuse of cocaine. Drug-related problems include increased rates of crime and violence, susceptibility to HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, demand for treatment and emergency room visits and a breakdown in social behavior.

Demand reduction strategies seek to prevent the onset of drug use, help drug users break the habit and provide treatment through rehabilitation and social reintegration.

At the 1998 UN General Assembly special session on the world drug problem, Member States recognized that reducing the demand for drugs was an essential pillar in the stepped-up global effort to fight drug abuse and trafficking. They committed themselves to reduce significantly both the supply of and demand for drugs by 2008, as expressed in the Political Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction²⁴.

The United Nations also explain about ‘what is drug abuse’ as follows:

“People have taken psychoactive drugs for curative, religious and recreational purposes for hundreds of years. At the end of the last century, however, due to advances in the field of chemistry and pharmacology, stronger and highly addictive substances such as cocaine and heroin were synthesized. In addition, the invention of hypodermic syringes enabled people to inject these drugs, making their effects more powerful and the risk of addiction more serious”²⁵.

Over the years, various United Nations Conventions have restricted the sale and use of different substances to medical purposes. These conventions were amalgamated in the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. This in turn was supplemented in 1972 by a Protocol stressing the need for treatment and rehabilitation services. In 1971 the

²⁴ http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug_demand_reduction.html

²⁵ Ibid,

Convention on Psychotropic Substances established an international control system for a list of pharmaceutical drugs and other substances that affect the mind. For the purposes of international drug control, the term "drug abuse" refers to the illicit, i.e. non-medical, use of any of the substances listed in the above conventions. A 1988 Convention addressed drug trafficking and included provisions against money laundering and the diversion of chemicals used in the manufacture of illicit drugs ("precursor chemicals")".



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CHAPTER V

CROSS BORDER ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

5.1 GMS and Environment Issues

At present day, the world has obviously seen many environmental changes. As the groundbreaking Millennium Ecosystem Assessment found that in the last 50 years humans had altered the world's ecosystem more fundamentally than any period in human history, and more than 60 percent of the world's ecosystem are being degraded or used unsustainably. The man made carbon dioxide emissions have quadrupled, and evidence mounts that we are approaching tipping points of catastrophic climate change. The current rate of species extinction is increasing 1,000 times greater than the typical history rate. Moreover, the steady increase in nitrogen releases from cars and fertilizers is creating deserts of lifelessness in our oceans and lakes. Also, half of the world's fish stocks are being fished at their biological limits and another quarter are beyond that point.

In 20 years, if current trends continue, three and a half billion people will live in countries that facing the water stresses or having less than 1,000 liters of water per person a years. And worse, each day 6,000 people which mostly children, die from diseases cause by lack of access to clean water or sanitation. Environmental damage has been driven at least in part by our increasing population, which at present day about two and a half times since 1950 up to 6.4 billion, and projections for 2050 have us adding the 1950 world population again, or another 2.5 billion²⁶.

This also happens in the GMS, as in the world, impacts and implications of environment on the Mekong region are substantial. Shared water resources epitomize the dilemmas surrounding common pool resources, whose use by one party diminishes the potential benefits to the other. Rivers are particularly subject to these conflicts in terms of upper or mid stream pollution, abstraction or impoundment, which may reduce the quality and quantity of water that available for down stream users.

Furthermore, as in the case of international river like Mekong, the incongruence between hydro- ecological and political boundaries leads to conflicts between the principle of sovereignty as opposed to common resource issues of ownership, allocation, security and environmental degradation.

As 90 percent of the riparian population or more about 80 million people depend upon the Mekong river as an important resource ranging from drinking water, fish, transport, irrigation water to the fertile land and forest products of its catchments area, mainly agriculturalists who rely on the wild freshwater fish as a key source of protein in their diets. However, the Mekong River has development potential lies in hydropower and large scale irrigation projects. These potential resources have been relatively undeveloped until now because of civil strife and wars, but the relative peace and subsequent economic development drive in the region in the 1990s which has boosted a range of national, bilateral and multilateral plans for building dams on the mainstream and major tributaries of the Mekong to provide electricity and irrigation water.

However, as from the troubled experiences in other major transboundary rivers like the Niles, the Jordan and the Tigris- Euphrates suggest that these development projects will have significant impacts on the environmental security and particularly the relations between the six Mekong riparian²⁷. Meanwhile, the development of the Mekong river also represent a truly regional challenge for main land Southeast Asia in terms of scope and complexity.

5.2 Environment Situation in Mekong Subregion

The Mekong subregion embraces flora and fauna that have expanded northward along the Malay Peninsula into Thailand, encroached upon the high mountains from the Himalayas, or advanced along the broad river valleys as dry deciduous forests similar to

²⁶ Data from 'Environment and Trade, A Handbook', by United Nations Environment Programme, second edition.

²⁷ For a survey and analysis of these three cases, see Nurit Kliot, 'Water Resources and Conflict in the Middle East' London: Routledge, 1994.

those of India. Ten million years of changing sea levels have left a rich legacy of unique life forms that have evolved in isolation on the Cardamom and Annamite Mountains of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

These resources provide both income and sustenance to the great majority of people in the subregion who are leading subsistence or near subsistence agricultural lifestyles. The land yields timber, minerals, coal, and petroleum, while water from the many rivers supports agriculture and fisheries and provides energy in the form of hydropower. The coal reserves of the subregion are abundant, and the oil and gas reserves considerable. Most of these are in Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam. These abundant energy resources are still relatively underused.

However, there are several environmental related issues in GMS region. Let us see those issues country by country.

*The case of Cambodia*²⁸

Sustainable use of Cambodia's natural resources is a key factor to the country's development. Approximately three-quarters of the population are directly engaged in agriculture and depend upon the land for their daily subsistence. Agriculture and forestry contribute nearly 40 percent of the country's GDP. Tourism, which is based on the country's cultural and natural wonders, also contributes significantly to economic development. Reliance on these industries means that sustainable management of natural resources and other aspects of the environment are vital for improving rural livelihoods and for economic growth.

The forests of Cambodia are diverse and comprise a variety of evergreen, deciduous, mixed and mangrove forest types. Current estimates of remaining natural forest cover vary considerably, but the consensus is that about half of Cambodia's land area has some form of forest cover. Weak governance and unsustainable resource use, shifting cultivation in the upland areas, especially in the northeast of the country, and forest

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Most information about environmental issues of Cambodia are from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/EASTASIAPACIFICEXT/EXTEAPREGTOPE NVIRONMENT/0,,contentMDK:20266625~menuPK:537827~pagePK:34004173~piPK:34003707~theSitePK:502886,00.html>

clearing for agriculture are causing rapid deforestation. As a result, Cambodia's rich natural habitats have been significantly degraded, affecting the quality and quantity of habitat for biodiversity and non-timber forest resources, both important elements of food and livelihood security.

Cambodia's coastal, marine and freshwater resources are also being degraded by a combination of river and coastal sedimentation (often linked to illegal logging and mining), conversion of mangroves, poorly managed shrimp aquaculture and salt farming and dynamite fishing. Pressures on aquatic resources and on environmentally-significant wetlands are also increasing rapidly, most notably from over-fishing, illegal fishing practices, increasing use of hazardous pesticides, and conversion of flooded forests, as well as swamp drainage for agriculture.

As the country grows economically, more and more people gravitate towards urban centers in provinces such as Phnom Penh, Kandal, Prey Veng, and Takeo. The resulting higher quantities of untreated urban domestic sewage, industrial effluent and solid waste are polluting surface and ground water in many of Cambodia's cities and towns. Throughout the country, sewerage system coverage is limited and/or no longer functioning, resulting in increased health risks to urban and peri-urban populations, including higher incidences of diarrhea and cholera.

In addition, the growth of unplanned settlements outside of Phnom Penh is increasing pressure on the city's existing wastewater infrastructure and the system of natural drainage, which to date has served as the traditional environmental safeguard against flooding. Many flood protection sleeves have been occupied by migrants, restricting water flows and compounding the sanitation problem.

The disposal of hazardous (mostly industrial) waste is also a growing problem in Phnom Penh. There are no special landfills or other treatment facilities for toxic, hazardous or medical waste, which is often burned at open dumpsites, together with solid waste.

Between 1993 and 1996, the Government of Cambodia enacted several key pieces of environmental legislation to establish the legal framework to control, use and manage its natural resources and urban environment. The Ministry of Environment (MoE) is the key

agency responsible for environmental protection and natural resources conservation, while the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) are responsible for forest management. Roles and responsibilities among different government agencies overlap in functional areas such as land tenure administration, coastal and marine resource management, wildlife conservation, and protected area management. These overlaps, as well as shortages in skilled staff and insufficient budget allocations, constrain the government's ability to sustainably manage its natural resources and environment. However, Cambodia's environmental institutions have become more open to public participation.

The case of People's Republic of China

China's rapid growth is now a driving force in the global economy and is achieving unprecedented rates of poverty reduction. However, growth is also seriously damaging the natural resource base and generating major environmental liabilities. The country's environmental problems include land degradation, deteriorating water quality and water scarcity, severe air pollution and declining natural forest cover. These problems threaten the health and prospects of current and future generations and are undermining the sustainability of long-term growth.

Demographic trends in China indicate that; the urban population of about 430 million (2001) will reach 850 million by 2015, and the number of cities with over 100,000 people will increase from 630 in 2001 to over 1,000 by 2015. Government measures to address pollution, including industrial water and air pollution (mainly from state-owned enterprises), have achieved significant results. However, problems remain with the implementation and enforcement of environmental regulations, and the balance between reducing emissions and increasing production has not yet been satisfactorily achieved. China's urban population has grown in cities of all sizes. However, townships of between 5,000 and 10,000 people are witnessing the fastest growth. While some aspects of the urban environment have improved in China's mega and large cities, environmental management in the expanding towns and townships remains a major challenge. Pollution in these smaller urban settings is not well monitored and their development plans contain only limited provisions to address it.

China is the World's 3rd largest consumer of coal and oil, but much of its energy producing and using equipment is both inefficient and highly polluting. As a result, China

experiences severe urban air pollution that has a significant impact throughout the region. It is also the World's second-largest source of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Improving energy efficiency and accelerating the development and application of new and renewable energy and clean coal technologies are therefore very urgent sustainable development and environmental priorities.

Unfortunately, some of China's growth and development has been achieved at the expense of its natural resource base. For example:

- Land degradation is widespread and increasing. China has huge tracts of rapidly degrading grasslands, some of the worst water erosion problems and the highest ratio of actual to potential decertified land in the world.
- Thanks to large investments in tree plantation and shelterbelt development and a natural forest logging ban, China has successfully turned the tide of formerly rapid deforestation. However, the country's natural forests had been in a continuous decline for over 50 years and the return of many forest ecosystems to a sustainable condition is still a long way off.
- Despite the establishment of a national system of nature reserves, the stresses on them have put the country's unique and globally significant biodiversity under serious pressure.
- Water availability and quality continues to be a critical problem, particularly in northern China, and the situation is likely to deteriorate over the next decade, especially in the rivers north of the Yangtze. In order to equitably resolve the conflicting claims for water and other natural resources there is a need for both technical progress and improvements in institutional, administrative and regulatory arrangements²⁹.

The case of Lao PDR

²⁹Most information about environmental issues of PRC are from

Lao PDR is a landlocked and mountainous country, surrounded by Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. About 70 percent of the country's 5.7 million people live on less than US\$2 per day. With an average per capita GDP of US\$731, it is one of the poorest countries in the East Asia and Pacific Region. However, Lao PDR has a wealth of natural resources: forest cover that is substantially higher than in surrounding countries; the largest per capita volume of (internal) renewable water resources in the region; and considerable mineral resources, such as gold, lignite and copper. Lao PDR is also one of the most biodiversity-rich countries in the region. A relatively low population density and a moderate rate of natural resource exploitation relative to neighboring countries have allowed significant natural and cultivated biological resources to survive.

These natural resources have catalyzed past economic growth throughout Lao PDR, playing a significant role in supporting rural livelihoods and contributing towards the national economy. For example, over 80 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture and fisheries and are, thus, directly dependent on the natural resource base. Timber and hydropower are Lao PDR's primary exports, accounting for two-thirds of total export value.

The Government of Lao PDR recognizes the importance of this natural resource base for economic development and poverty reduction. This recognition is reflected in the country's current five-year plan and the large number of laws and decrees regarding Natural Resource Management (NRM) that have been enacted. However, unsustainable NRM practices are causing significant environmental damage, and have begun to reverse this favorable situation. For example, forest cover has declined from 70 percent to 43 percent over the last 50 years, largely due to clearing of lowland forest for permanent agriculture and unsustainable logging. Furthermore, rapid urbanization, increasing industrial pollution and highway construction are imposing stresses on the urban environment. Upstream dam construction on and extraction from the Mekong River, which is Lao PDR's major source of fish and a key transport route, is also threatening long-term sustainable development.

The Government has attempted to address the deforestation problem with policy initiatives, but has made little progress on the ground. Lack of clarity in procedures for

plantation establishment, limited financial resources and human capacity, and weak enforcement are the main obstacles.

The institutional structure for environmental management in Lao PDR consists of: national committees that guide inter-sectoral coordination among agencies; the national-level ministries and agencies, which have a core role in environmental protection and conservation; the provincial and district entities that have devolved responsibility for environmental protection; and mass organizations which support the government in promoting public participation and awareness. The Government has formulated a wide array of legislation and regulations for environmental conservation and protection. The Environmental Protection Law (1999), supported by its Implementing Decree (2002), is the country's principal environmental legislation. It includes measures for the protection, mitigation and restoration of the environment, as well as guidelines for environmental management and monitoring³⁰.

However, the capacity of the various institutions to implement and enforce environmental regulations is weak. Capacity constraints at the local level, a lack of practical implementation guidelines, overlapping responsibilities and jurisdiction, insufficient or non-existent budgets, and inadequate disciplinary options contribute to poor implementation of existing legislation and regulations. This process is also undermined by low awareness of the need for environmental protection among the general public.

The case of Thailand

Thailand's economic growth over the last three decades has been fueled and accompanied by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and by intensified agricultural production and fishing. This growth, which has relied extensively on the country's abundant and diverse natural resources, has degraded land and water quality, caused the loss of natural habitats, and generated increasing levels of air and water pollution. In response, the Government and people of Thailand have launched new

³⁰ Data from the GMS Countries Firm Up Components of the Core Environment Program (CEP) and Gear Up for the GMS Environment Ministers Meeting (WGE-11, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 15-16 March 2005)

initiatives to improve air and water quality, reforest degraded land, adopt energy efficient technologies and invest in pollution abatement schemes.

Rapid industrial expansion and population growth have outpaced environmental management, resulting in sharply increased pollution levels (e.g. solid and hazardous waste, air, noise, and water). For example, fine particles in Bangkok's air exceed WHO standards by 2.5 times, and other air pollutants are also causing major health impacts. Overall, it is estimated that air and water pollution costs the country 1.6 - 2.6 percent of GDP per year³¹.

The Government's decision to phase out leaded gasoline has reduced ambient levels of lead, and there are also signs of greater private sector interest in environmental quality. For example, the country's oil and gas conglomerate (PTT), is investing in Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), a much cleaner fuel source, and has said that CNG will account for 10 percent of all fuel used in the next five years.

Volumes of untreated domestic sewage, industrial wastewater and solid hazardous wastes have risen dramatically in recent years. The result is that roughly one third of Thailand's surface water bodies are considered to be of poor quality. Clearly Thailand needs to focus on more effective enforcement of environmental laws; stronger institutional capacity, both national and local; and increased investments in pollution prevention and control, with private sector participation.

Land conversion, slash-and-burn agriculture, and intense exploitation of water have led to rapid deterioration of natural resources. Forest cover fell drastically from 53 percent in 1961 to 25 percent in 1998. Measures taken by government in the late 1980s to prohibit logging have begun to pay dividends, and the deforestation rate has fallen to 0.2 percent/year. However, the legacy of deforestation is creating other environmental problems, such as conversion to dry lands, sedimentation of rivers, and loss of natural habitats. In the fisheries sector, over-harvesting of marine fisheries has reduced fishing yields by 90 percent, and coastal areas have been seriously degraded by expansion of

³¹ Data from the GMS Countries Firm Up Components of the Core Environment Program (CEP) and Gear Up for the GMS Environment Ministers Meeting (WGE-11, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 15-16 March 2005)

capture fishing, shrimp aquaculture, industry and tourism. Of particular concern is water scarcity, which occurs against a backdrop of low availability, high pollution, and increasing per capita consumption. There is tremendous pressure on Thailand's water resources, as the country ranks the lowest in Asia for annual per capita water availability, but it ranks 14th in the world in industrial organic water pollution.

In order to improve the balance between conservation and exploitation of natural resources, the country needs to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable resource management, to eliminate harmful subsidies (e.g. for pesticides and over-fishing), and to assist in the capacity building of local institutions and communities.

The case of Vietnam

Vietnam's environment is under considerable stress from rapid economic growth, urbanization and rising human pressure on relatively scarce natural resources. While it has gradually improved its environmental regulatory framework, Vietnam has very limited capacity for implementation. It is, therefore, feared that continued rapid growth will cause further environmental degradation.

In an effort to address its environmental challenges, Vietnam has considerably improved the policy framework for environmentally sustainable development. Examples of recent action include amendments to the Law on Environment to raise Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements for project appraisal and to strengthen regulations on the country's most serious polluters³².

Progress has also been made in natural resource management by expanding reforestation programs and steps to tighten control of illegal wildlife trade, and mechanisms for integrated river basin management are being established under the Law on Water Resources. However, policy and institutional progress is undermined by a lack of human capacity and financial resources.

³² <http://www.vnmc.gov.vn/>

Industrial production grew from 20 to 37 percent of GDP between 1990 and 2000, with some of the fastest growth generated by state owned enterprises (e.g., oil and gas, electricity, and cement). These enterprises have poor environmental records due to old equipment, lack of adequate controls, and inadequate treatment of wastewater and air emissions. Many industrial pollutants have a high environmental health cost. The Government of Vietnam has implemented fees on wastewater pollution and introduced a Prime Ministerial Decision to reallocate, close down or adapt cleaner technologies, but these policies need to be enforced effectively.

Land degradation is a major problem, particularly in upland areas. Its major causes are insecure land tenure, poor logging practices, drought, Salinization and acidification. Degraded steep slopes and deforested landscapes, especially in the northwest region, are now very susceptible to soil erosion during heavy rains. Despite recent increases in forest area, forest quality remains a concern. Closed canopy forests still make up only 13 percent of the total forest area, while poor/regenerating forests account for 55 percent. Plantation forests, on the other hand, have more than doubled from 0.7 mha in 1990 to 1.6 mha in 2000.

Fisheries output, which more than doubled from 1990 to 2001, is now experiencing declining rates of catch per unit effort. Rapid expansion in aquaculture activities has caused a substantial decline in mangroves and wetlands, raising concern about coastal fish yields. Coral reefs are under pressure, and more of Vietnam's reefs are classified as at "very high risk" than in any of the other 11 countries in the Southeast Asia region. The World Bank is supporting environmentally-responsible aquaculture and helping Vietnam establish its first Marine Protected Area.

Vietnam's surface, ground and coastal waters are threatened by pollution. Although the quality of upstream river waters is generally good, downstream sections of major rivers reveal poor water quality and most of the lakes and canals in urban areas are rapidly becoming sewage sinks. Rapid urbanization and industrialization in coastal areas, expansion in coastal tourism, and an increase in the number of oil spills are all contributing to the deterioration of coastal water quality. World Bank assistance focuses on expanding access to sanitation and waste water treatment.

Vietnam is one of the world's top 10 biodiverse countries, but it is facing serious problems with illegal wildlife trade. It is a central international market for endangered plant and animal species, both as a supplier and as a trade route for items collected in neighboring countries. Action plans to address this problem have been developed, but their implementation is constrained by inadequate resources.

Urbanization is proceeding at a rapid rate, and significant investments in urban infrastructure and environmental services are required to keep up. A large and growing part of the urban population lives in poorly serviced slum areas with inadequate water, sanitation, drainage, and paved access. In Ho Chi Minh City alone, 300,000 people live in such slums.

In spite of the abundant rainfall, water supply falls short of demand in urban and rural areas due to inadequate infrastructure and confusing jurisdictional responsibilities. Clean drinking water is now provided to 60 percent of Vietnam's population, and the target is 80 percent by 2005. Irrigation places the largest burden on water resources, 76.6 billion m³ in 2000, and accounting for 84 percent of total demand. Between 1999 and 2003 about 6 million cases of (six varieties of) water-borne disease were registered and incurred costs of at least 27 million USD.

Wastewater and run-off from urban areas, industrial centers, and agricultural land, pollute surface, ground, and coastal waters. Water bodies such as lakes, streams, and canals increasingly serve as sinks for domestic sewage and industrial wastes. Air quality in nearly all urban and industrial areas is affected by various pollutants, such as particulates, lead and nitrous oxides, sulfur dioxide and carbon monoxide emitted by sources including vehicles, factories, power plants, and households. Sulfur dioxide levels near some factories occasionally exceed national standards by several times. Household waste collection efficiencies remain low, and there is no separate treatment for hazardous wastes.

The policy and institutional framework for environmental management is improving, but the capacity to plan and actually achieve environmental sustainability outcomes remains low. The recent establishment of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MoNRE) is a positive step, but it must be complemented by clearer

institutional mandates, capacity building and better environmental coordination across sectors. Furthermore, environmental management capacity at the provincial and local levels remains very low.

The case of Myanmar

In Myanmar, environmental degradation is low. Like other developing countries, the major source of environmental problems in Myanmar lies in the problem of underdevelopment rather than in industrial pollution and unsustainable lifestyle. Therefore, central to Myanmar's approach to the environment issue is the protection and conservation of environment in the national endeavor.

Myanmar is basically an agricultural country, and the Myanmar people fully understand and appreciate the value of nature. Myanmar people traditionally try to avoid extremes that might hurt nature and prefer instead to live in harmony with it. The practice and protection of nature is therefore ingrained in the hearts of the Myanmar people.

Nevertheless, the growing population, increased urbanization and industrialization will exert increasing pressure on the natural resources of the country. While some of the resources such as forests, flora and fauna, fisheries and marine resources are renewable, mineral resources like petroleum, coal and gems are effectively non-renewable. Therefore, Myanmar's environmental considerations are properly integrated with development planning, keeping in mind the need for environmentally sound and sustainable utilization of our natural resources³³.

In Myanmar the principal environmental threat comes from cyclones and flooding during the monsoon season, and regular earthquakes. Deforestation for farming or illegal economic gain is the most persistent ecological effect of human encroachment. In 1985, 405 square miles were lost through deforestation. By 1994, two-thirds of Myanmar's tropical forests had been eliminated. However, the nation still had the world's eighth largest mangrove area, totaling approximately half a million hectares.

Little information is available about the long-term effects of industrialization on the natural environment, although evidence of industrial pollutants has been found in the air,

³³ <http://www.adb.org/Documents/CAPs/MYA/0100.asp?p=ctrymya>

water, soil, and food. Myanmar has 880.6 cubic kilometers of renewable water resources. Only about 89% of city dwellers and 66% of the rural population have pure water. Inadequate sanitation and water treatment are leading contributors to disease. Environmental concerns have been given low priority by the government.

Endangered species in Myanmar include the tiger, Asian elephant, Malayan tapir, Sumatran rhinoceros, Fea's muntjac, river terrapin, estuarine crocodile, and four species of turtle (green sea, hawksbill, olive ridley, and leatherback). The Javan rhinoceros is extinct. Out of a total of 251 species of mammals, 31 are endangered; of 867 breeding bird species, 44 are endangered. Twenty reptiles in 203 species are threatened along with one type of freshwater fish. Myanmar also has 6 threatened species of plants in a total of 7,000. Threatened species include the banteng, pink-headed duck, freshwater sawfish, Sumatran rhinoceros, Siamese crocodile, hawksbill turtle, gaur, and sun bear³⁴.

To coordinate environmental matters in the country, the Government of the Union of Myanmar formed the National Commission for Environmental Affairs (NCEA) in February 1990 with the Minister for Foreign Affairs as its Chairman. The Commission coordinates the work of various government agencies and departments and also acts as the national focal point for environmental matters vis-à-vis other countries and international organizations. It reports directly to the Cabinet³⁵.

The Commission is presently focusing on the promotion of public awareness for environmental protection and to secure the active participation and cooperation of the public in environmental conservation efforts. The NCEA, now a fully operational national commission, is in the process of building an environmental database with linkage to the Global Resources Information Database (GRID) through the assistance of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). One of its more recent activities is cooperating with the UNDP for the development of a national environment policy for Myanmar.

Myanmar's commitment and concern for the global and national environment is reflected in the signing of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Environmental protection and conservation

³⁴ www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Asia-and-Oceania/Myanmar-ENVIRONMENT.html - 5k

³⁵ <http://mission.itu.ch/MISSIONS/Myanmar/basicfacts/environm.html>

occupy a place of special significance on the national agenda of Myanmar, and Myanmar's National Commission for Environmental Affairs will continue to strengthen its efforts for preserving and protecting the environment while participating and cooperating in the global effort.

To get better understanding of the situation of environment in GMS, environment indicators by country in GMS are shown in Appendix I and II. As Appendix I and II show environment indicators in 1990 and the latest available year for each member country. When compared with both tables, it is obvious that all member countries recent environment situation is much worse than that of 1990- two years before the riparian countries became the members of the GMS.

In sum, all member countries in the Mekong region have the same impacts and implications from the environment degradation in the region such as rapid deforestation, land erosion, ecological destruction, climate changes, degradation of natural habitat for biodiversity which affect the food and livelihood security and air pollution which affects the health of the population.

The reasons for the environment degradation are not only the man- made activities but also the natural disasters such as flooding, storms, cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes etc.

To address these issues, governments of the GMS countries established the ministries of environment or commissions for environment. However, environment degradation in the region seems to be going from bad to worse.

5.3 Environmental Problems, Issues and Challenges

Human life depends on natural resources. However, consumption of natural resources has to take into account their diversity and preservation. The preservation and utilization of natural resources are two important sides of development and are closely related to human life. In order to achieve a happy, wealthy, stable and civilized life, mankind has to preserve the natural resource pool and build up an ecologically sustainable economy.

The sustainability of natural resources and environmental quality refers to the concept that non- recyclable resources must be used in the extent where their quantity and quality could be recovered either artificially or naturally. In a sustainable development

course, natural environment, encompassing atmosphere, land, water, landscape and social environment such as health, life, work and study of the people are not threatened or polluted by human activities. Industrial and household wastes are processed and recycled in time; sanitary condition is ensured and people can live in a pure environment.

A main feature of environmental sustainability is that resources are used without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In other words, non- recyclable resources are used while ensuring that the future generations still have easy access to them. Sustainable development requires non- recyclable energy be consumed only to an extent that society is given enough time to change and adapt to recyclable resources.

Sustainable development requires the preservation and development of human, natural and artificial capitals. It ensures that economic growth coincides with social equity and forecasts an increased quality of living for the people.

The six GMS countries agree that their increasing cooperation is important to each country's development strategy. GMS cooperation creates a favorable condition to improve their international stature. It also provides better opportunity for economic development at both the national and subregional levels.

In the subregion, the environmental issues include deforestation, land erosion, salt intrusion, water contamination, ecological destruction, climate change, and loss of biodiversity, urban environment degradation, haze crisis³⁶ and air pollutions and other threats to people's health. As most of these problems are interrelated, there is an increasing need for a coordinated approach to address these challenges.

Despite the need for a subregional approach to the management of natural resources and environment, recent environmental cooperation within the GMS has been limited. However, at present, the initiative to consider the Mekong riparian area as a whole or a planning unit is becoming increasingly evident. Mega damming projects in the Lancang

³⁶ The haze problem was recently and seriously affect to the health and livelihood of people in the north of Thailand, northern Myanmar and some part of Laos, which needed the international cooperation to solving it.(Bangkok Post, March, 27, 2007)

river³⁷ of Yunnan province, China, which seriously effect to the water level in the lower Mekong's countries during recent dry season and particularly effect to the life's circle of fish and animals. As Dosh puts "similarly, the costs of some dam projects have increased during the course of the projects to levels far above those predicted. Also, the environmental impacts of the dams have differed markedly, qualitatively and quantitatively, from those predicted³⁸," or dredging projects in Laos and Myanmar for transport can affect the seasonal main water flow in all six countries, most particularly, it can destabilize the water supply mechanism in rice growing and other agricultural activities including livelihood of people along the river. The pollution in the Great Lake of Cambodia has a potential negative impact on the fish stock in the whole river because fish are moving along the river from Chinese to Vietnamese sections and caught in all six riparian countries.

In short, the Mekong River is an integrated system; as such, development planning should take into consideration that any development effect in one section is likely to have an impact on the whole river system.

Therefore, the ecosystem and environment issues of the Mekong River should be introduced to all six riparian countries, as well as to people who live along the river to take care and reduce the damage that may happen, particularly, to those who are the policy makers and private sectors who invest related to the river basin and ecosystem.

As far as environment challenges are concerned, the environment and natural resource management are challenges for the GMS. The Mekong River and its environs from a precious and unique geographical, ecological, economic, human and cultural resource, rich in history and diversity, and possessing great potential for development and growth. It also has a complex recent history of conflict and adversity for its people, and, as a result, possesses a very poor recent history of environmental and natural resource management. Major environmental and resource management challenges include water

³⁷Another name of the Mekong River used in China.

³⁸ Dösh, Jorn. *The Security Dimension of Co- operation in the Greater Mekong Subregion*, Background paper prepared for regional workshop on "Economic and Non- Traditional Security Cooperation in Greater Mekong Sub- Region: perspectives, Opportunities & Challenges" Hanoi, Vietnam 20- 21 May 2004.

resource management and what some describe as hydro- politics, including the sensitive issue of the damming of the Mekong, forest exploitation resulting in severe deforestation through both legal and illegal logging, the environmental impact of major infrastructure development and energy generation, and environmental pollution.

As previously mentioned, these challenges share certain features. These features can and do seriously impact on the livelihoods and wellbeing of the peoples of the subregion, particularly rural communities; they are complex technically and scientifically, and in their policy implications, because they are often cross border in their nature and impact. As such, they have the potential to cause tensions and conflict in the subregion; action to resolve them involves several major stakeholders including local communities, the governments of the subregion, multilateral development institutions, scientific and technical experts, both local and foreign, research and policy institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations.

The increasing interdependence of the GMS naturally means increasing shared challenges, and both opportunities and imperative for the deepening of collaborative cross border responses. These challenges and their responses are reflected in the Asian Development Bank's recently released Regional Strategy and Program 2004- 2008: The GMS Strategy Plan- The GMS Beyond Borders. The plan recognizes that improving living standards in the GMS will largely depend on how well the GMS can establish cross border infrastructure linkages and reduce impediment to cross border movement of goods, services and people to create integrated markets. However, these imperatives generate related concerns as to the potential adverse environmental impacts of investment projects promoting cross border trade and investment, including illegal logging, trafficking of wildlife and degradation of common environmental resources, watersheds, wetlands and many more other ecosystems. A critical issue will be flood control in the broader context of water management cooperation, as the ADB has made a commitment to collaborate with ASEAN and the Mekong River Commission to develop an integrated water management system for the Mekong. This issue, however, continues to have real potential to generate tension and conflict in the geopolitics of the subregion as well as Mekong dam building in Southern China.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

6.1 Findings

In this part will discuss the focus of the study - the impacts and implications of the non-traditional security issues in the Mekong region, particularly of cross border migration, cross border human trafficking, cross border spread of HIV/AIDS and drug and cross border environment issues. They are as follows:

(i) There are several categories of cross border migration in the Mekong such as undocumented migrants including both political refugees and economic migrants and both documented and irregular. Those are mainly from Myanmar, Lao PDR and Cambodia to Thailand which has become the central destination of many of the migrants in the region. A small group of undocumented migrants from China could be found in Thailand too. It is estimated that there are more than 2 million cross border migrants in which over one million migrants come from Myanmar. Most of them could be considered as irregular migrants in the Mekong region, and there is the highest level of irregular migration in Southeast Asia. Many of the economic migrants send remittances to their families back home. On the other hand, according to the Asian Migration Center Report, “the resulting problems faced by migrants in the Mekong (e.g., abuses, human rights violation, lack of redress channels/services, absence of legal protection) are immediately apparent. There are hardly any labor contracts governing the work of migrants in the GMS; thus, migrant laborers are highly vulnerable and are probably subjected to wide spread abuses, labor rights violation and exploitation.” (2002:7). Many of the severe physical abuses, including deaths of migrants occur in the region.

(ii) As far as cross border human trafficking is concerned, there is no data on how many victims in the Mekong region although it has grown exponentially over the last decade. The traffickers can range from transnational organized criminal groups that work in huge networks and are able to produce or buy fake documents, clear immigration requirements for their victims and conduct trafficking operations spanning thousands of

kilometers, to those who systematically exploit the vulnerabilities of irregular migrants. Most of the women and children become the victims of human trafficking. Poverty and development gap between countries, limited job prospects, and lack of safe migration channels have further contributed to vulnerabilities and risks. Consequences of the human trafficking include rape, physical and emotional abuse, torture, severe health risks (e.g. HIV/AIDS), discrimination, exploitation and even death. On the other hand, human trafficking in the GMS is still intact and by and large a profitable and almost risk-free business; after deductions by the organizers, the remittances of sex workers, beggars, domestic workers, factory workers, agricultural workers, etc., do help their relatives from their villages (Anh, 2005:).

(iii) According to World Health Organization (WHO) and UNAIDS estimates, There are over 40 million people now living with HIV infection. Worldwide, the overall rate of infection is that one in every hundred adults is likely to be HIV positive, but this is concentrated in the sexually active 15-49 age group. There are almost about 2 million people living with HIV/AIDS who were from the Mekong region in 2003. The impacts and implications of HIV/AIDS are most horrible; just over three million victims had died out of a world wide total of 18.8 million. In the Asia-Pacific region alone in 1999, 478,000 died of the disease and there were 920,000 new infections among adults and children. Moreover, most victims affected by the disease are avoided by people due to the fear of the spread of the deadly HIV/AIDS. In other words, the affected victims have become the outcasts of the society.

Another menace to the society is the drug abuse. The Mekong region is the major source of illicit production of opium, heroin, cannabis and synthetic drugs. Myanmar and Lao PDR were the second and the third largest producers of opium in 2000 after Afghanistan. Thailand is the main destination and transiting route for heroin produced in the notorious “the Golden Triangle” area. Yunnan alone seized 8,000 kg of heroin in 2001, not to mention other drugs such as methamphetamines and ecstasy. According to UNODC, the relapse rate for treated users remain rather high at 80% and in some areas, 100% of treated addicts relapse. The users of drugs are easily affected by HIV/AIDS since such diseases are easily transmitted through Intravenous Drug Use (IDU). The number of persons infected through IDU accounts for 65% of HIV/AIDS infections. A number of

young people slip into drug abuse, delinquency and crime, apart from their victimization in sexual and exploitation.

(iv) The impact of environmental issues affects the Mekong region from both man-made activities (e.g. construction of dams in Yunnan and Vietnam and the blasting of reefs in the river on the Laos- Myanmar and Thai- Laos borders) and climate change such as rapid deforestation, land erosion, ecological destruction, degradation of natural habitat for bio diversities which affects the food and livelihood security and air pollution which affects the health of population. Moreover, low level of water also affects the agricultural land. At present, water shortage has seriously threatened. Some parts of some country in the region, even inhabitant's drinking water can not be guaranteed. To make worse water pollution caused by organization and industrialization is threatening the population.

In some, non- traditional security issues have direct implications on the overall security not only in the Mekong region but also in the Asia- Pacific and on the wellbeing of individual states and society.

Clearly, the full potential of the Mekong countries can be realized only if the problems are adequately addressed.

6.2 Obstacles in Addressing Non- Traditional Security in GMS

To address the non- traditional security issues into the GMS Cooperation, requires supportive, seriousness and sincere of each country members, funding sources and everyone to collaborate.

The experience of ASEAN suggests that economic integration among developing countries of a region is a slow process. It took ASEAN 25 years to reach an agreement on the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area. It is likely to be more difficult for the six riparian countries in the Mekong because of the differences in political, economic, accounting and legal systems and levels of development. It is important to note that although China and Myanmar are actively participating in ADB- initiated development projects in the Mekong region, they are yet to become members of the Mekong Commission.

Obviously, the differences between the six riparian countries remain: conflicts of national and regional priorities, unequal distribution of benefits among riparian countries, illegal cross border labor migration, human trafficking, illicit drugs, spread of HIV/AIDS and environmental problems, among others.

To solve these issues, there are several obstacles in the GMS relating to non-traditional security issues.

(i) Politically, Thailand is a democratic country (even though at present under the military consultation). But China and two Indochinese states are still communist countries ruled by a single party; Myanmar is still under a military regime which is under attack by the West for alleged human rights abuse; Cambodia is still struggling to become a democratic society. These ideological differences can create mistrust. And there is at least a possibility that hard-liners in the ruling communist parties may reverse course.

(ii) Another obstacle to dealing with the non-traditional security threats, in the region may be the riparian states' natural resistance to giving up part of their sovereignty for effective cooperation and coordination. There are still territorial disputes among members.

(iii) Security problems in the Mekong region continue to present a risk factor. In and around the Golden Triangle area of Myanmar, there is frequently fighting between the government forces and armed minority groups, and also in some parts of Cambodia and Laos armed clashes have occurred between the government and the Hmong ethnic dissident group.

(iv) Another obstacle is that national borders are porous and some non-traditional security threats such as illegal migration, human trafficking and organized crimes could be found.

(v) The legal systems of the transnational economies are very ambiguous; clear-cut property rights and transparent laws relating to companies, bankruptcy and anti-monopoly are needed. In addition, there are different accounting systems in the Mekong region which cause difficulties for foreign investors. It will take time to overhaul the existing legal and institutional framework and enact new legislation to smooth the transition process.

However, there are still exist differences between the six riparian countries; conflicts of national and regional priorities, unequal distribution of benefits among them. There also create obstacles in solving the non- traditional security threat. Moreover, the status of the nation vis- a- vis the region is an obstacle that every member country is facing. One can accept as natural a country's resistance to giving up part of its sovereignty. Since the length of the Mekong is shared by six countries, not to mention the borderland areas, the management, use and distribution of shared resources become potentially controversial issues, that not only heighten national interest but also block cross border infrastructure.

Furthermore, the complexity of the Mekong region's multi- country, transborder nature, and its varied political, legal and economic, environment make project preparation and implementation difficult (Than, 2006:167)

Despite all these problems, the region has the potential to develop on the basis of mutual trust built after the cold war, geographical proximity, cultural affinity and urgent needs and the efforts of all governments of the region to develop their countries. The economic potential of the subregional whole could well be greater than the sum of its individual national parts, but, of course, such venture in regional cooperation requires a sustained display of political will by the governments concerned.

6.3 Challenges and Recommendations

The overall challenges at the regional level of the GMS will be discussed first. One of the foremost important challenges for the GMS's countries is to seek the resources to finance the several projects that the members have identified and prioritized, which at present estimate to cost more than \$10 billion.

The second one is to establish a regional cooperation mechanism in order to solve the non- traditional security issues such as cross border migration, human trafficking, cross border crimes etc. Just like one example, as several complains on construction of dams and reef's blasting in Yunnan and Vietnam but they could not find any regional forum to discuss about such issues.

Thirdly, the most important challenge is the poverty issues in the region since it is one of the main reasons which cause the non- traditional security threats in the Mekong region. It is obviously that poverty is the main cause to create more illegal migration, human trafficking, spread of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse including organized crimes, environmental security and resource security. In other words, one of the most difficult and overriding challenges is to reduce poverty as to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in 2015.

Fourthly, due to the historical baggage, governments of PRC, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam continue to take the control- oriented approach and bureaucracy in these countries has not changed yet. As a result, bureaucracy creates obstacles in the delays for approval and implementation of the GMS projects and corruption along the border areas along the Mekong river make it easier for smuggling of goods, trafficking of drugs, women and children.

There are several ways to solve the non-traditional security issues recommended by scholars and practitioners. For examples, Bunbongkarn (2000) gave the following suggestion, “Confidence- building measures should be emphasized to foster cooperation and reduce the degree of mistrust and the nationalist sentiments. Multilateral and bilateral dialogues both at the first track and the second track levels should be further encouraged. Each country should accept that what happens in one country will affect the other. Thus, one should not think in terms of its own interest only also in the spirit of regionalism and allow discussion of each one’s internal problem in order to enhance cooperation, peace and prosperity in the GMS and ASEAN”.

As mentioned above, there is no regional cooperation mechanism for the Mekong region to solve the non- traditional security issues. Therefore it is essential that there should be established such regional cooperation mechanism to work against transnational or cross border non- traditional security threats. Thus, bilateral or multilateral cooperation mechanisms should be introduced to manage and solve the problems as alternatives in case that the regional cooperation mechanism has fails to do so.

In some cases when security issues and non- traditional security issues are related together, the security cooperation should be carried out by making full use of a bilateral as well as multilateral mechanism such as various international organizations (e.g. ASEAN, ASEAN Forum or ASEAN +1 framework) and through diplomatic channels.

One interesting proposal suggested in the Foreword of the book “A Collection of Papers of the International Symposium on Non- traditional Security Challenges and responses” is as follows, “The sovereignty of other countries can not be encroached upon. If a certain country has not yet taken effective measures to counter the non- traditional security threats it is facing, other countries should render it help but not intervene by making use of the situation, let alone solve the problem with traditional military means and the way of war” (p.166). At the same time, the book also suggests preventing the seeking selfish benefits since non- traditional security is always transnational and any one country can not keep itself well protected when other countries are threatened.(ibid)

Last but not least, whether or not Mekong cooperation will evolve into a full *pluralistic security community* (Dosch, 2004) will depend on two main factors. Firstly, the willingness of state actors to develop a wider set of integrative formal and informal institutions (e.g. agreements, treaties, codes of conduct, commissions, MOU, regular high level meetings on various issues and policy areas) using the existing and politically promising institution built within the GMS framework as a nucleus. Second, a more prominent participation from societal actors, ranging from the private sector to NGOs. It remains to be seen whether these will transpire in a full and effective sense.

In short, intensification of the GMS cooperation is needed to address these non- traditional security issues. Only then will the goal of achieving a balanced, integrated and sustainable development paradigm become a reality which would lead in the end to more durable cooperation, coexistence and peace.



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APPENDICES

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

APPENDIX I
The GMS Countries

Cambodia

Table 1: General Characteristics of Cambodia

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Capital (and largest city) | | PhnomPenh 11°33'N 104°55'E |
| Official languages | | Khmer |
| Government | | Democratic constitutional monarchy |
| - | King | Norodom Sihamoni |
| - | Prime Minister | Hun Sen |
| Independence | | from France |
| - | Declared | 1949 |
| - | Recognized | 1953 |
| Area | | |
| - | Total | 181,035 km ² (89th) 69,898 sq mi |
| - | Water (%) | 2.5 |
| Population | | |
| - | July 2006 estimate | 14,971,000 (63rd) |
| - | 1998 census | 11,437,656 |
| - | Density | 78 /km ² (112th) 201 /sq mi |

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| GDP (PPP) | 2006 estimate |
| - Total | \$36.82 billion (89th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,600 (133rd) |
| HDI (2004) | 0.583 (medium) (129th) |
| Currency | Riel ¹ (KHR) |
| Internet TLD | .kh |
| Calling code | +855 |
| Local currency, although US Dollars are widely used. | |

Source: www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

The Kingdom of Cambodia is a country in Southeast Asia with a population of almost 15 million people, with Phnom Penh being the capital city. Cambodia is the successor state of the once powerful Hindu and Buddhist Khmer Empire, which ruled most of the Indochinese Peninsula between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries.

A citizen of Cambodia is usually identified as "Cambodian" or "Khmer", which strictly refers to ethnic Khmers. Most Cambodians are Theravada Buddhists of Khmer extraction, but the country also has a substantial number of predominantly Muslim Cham, as well as ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese and small animist hill tribes³⁹.

The country shares a border with Thailand to its west and northwest, with Laos to its northeast, and with Vietnam to its east and southeast. In the south it faces the Gulf of Thailand. The geography of Cambodia is dominated by the Mekong river (colloquial Khmer: *Tonle Thom* or "the great river") and the Tonlé Sap ("the fresh water lake"), an important source of fish. The low geography of Cambodia's fertile areas means much of the country sits nearly below sea level, and consequently the Tonle Sap River reverses its water flow in the wet season, carrying water from the Mekong back into the Tonle Sap Lake and surrounding flood plain.

Cambodia's main industries are garments and tourism. In 2006, foreign visitors had surpassed the 1.7 million mark. In 2005, oil and natural gas deposits were found beneath

³⁹ www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Cambodia's territorial water, and once commercial extraction begins in 2009 or early 2010, the oil revenues could have a "profound" impact on the future of Cambodia's economy.

History

The first advanced civilizations in present day Cambodia appeared in the 1st millennium. During the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries, the Indianised states of Funan and Chenla coalesced in what is now present-day Cambodia and southwestern Vietnam. These states, which are assumed by most scholars to have been Khmer, had close relations with China and India. Their collapse was followed by the rise of the Khmer Empire, a civilization which flourished in the area from the 9th century to the 13th century.

Though declining after this period, the Khmer Empire remained powerful in the region until the 15th century. The empire's center of power was Angkor, where a series of capitals was constructed during the empire's zenith. Angkor Wat, the most famous and best preserved religious temple at the site, is a symbolic reminder of Cambodia's past as a major regional power.

After a long series of wars with neighboring kingdoms, Angkor was sacked by the Thai and abandoned in 1432. The court moved the capital to Lovek where the kingdom sought to regain its glory through maritime trade. The attempt was short-lived, however, as continued wars with the Thai and Vietnamese resulted in the loss of more territory and the conquering of Lovek in 1594. During the next three centuries, The Khmer kingdom alternated as a vassal state of the Thai and Vietnamese kings, with short-lived periods of relative independence between.

In 1863 King Norodom, who had been installed by Thailand, sought the protection of France. In 1867, the Thai king signed a treaty with France, renouncing suzerainty over Cambodia in exchange for the control of Battambang and Siem Reap provinces which officially became part of Thailand. The provinces were ceded back to Cambodia by a border treaty between France and Thailand in 1906.

Cambodia continued as a protectorate of France from 1863 to 1953, administered as part of the French colony of Indochina. After war-time occupation by the Japanese empire from 1941 to 1945, Cambodia gained independence from France on November 9, 1953. It became a constitutional monarchy under King Norodom Sihanouk.

In 1955, Sihanouk abdicated in favor of his father in order to be elected Prime Minister. Upon his father's death in 1960, Sihanouk again became head of state, taking the title of Prince. As the Vietnam War progressed, Sihanouk adopted an official policy of neutrality until ousted in 1970 by a military coup led by Prime Minister General Lon Nol and Prince Sisowath Sirik Matak, while on a trip abroad. From Beijing, Sihanouk realigned himself with the communist Khmer Rouge rebels who had been slowly gaining territory in the remote mountain regions and urged his followers to help in overthrowing the pro-United States government of Lon Nol, hastening the onset of civil war.

Operation Menu, a series of secret B-52 bombing raids by the United States on suspected Viet Cong bases and supply routes inside Cambodia, was acknowledged after Lon Nol assumed power; U.S. forces briefly invaded Cambodia in a further effort to disrupt the Viet Cong. The bombing continued and, as the Cambodian communists began gaining ground, eventually included strikes on suspected Khmer Rouge sites until halted in 1973. Estimates of the number of Cambodians killed during the bombing campaigns vary widely. The Khmer Rouge reached Phnom Penh and took power in 1975, changing the official name of the country to Democratic Kampuchea, led by Pol Pot.

Estimates vary as to how many people were killed by the Khmer Rouge regime. Depending on whether or not one includes deaths from starvation and subsequent deaths in refugee camps, estimates range anywhere from 1.7 million to 3 million Cambodians. Many were in some way deemed to be "enemies of the state", whether they were linked to the previous regime, civil servants, people of education or of religion, critics of the Khmer Rouge or Marxism, or simply offered resistance to the brutal treatment of the cadres. Hundreds of thousands more fled across the border into neighboring Thailand.

In November 1978, Vietnam invaded Cambodia to stop Khmer Rouge incursions across the border and the genocide of Vietnamese in Cambodia. Violent occupation and warfare between the Vietnamese and Khmer Rouge holdouts continued throughout the 1980s. Peace efforts began in Paris in 1989, culminating two years later in October 1991 in a comprehensive peace settlement. The United Nations was given a mandate to enforce a ceasefire, and deal with refugees and disarmament.

After the brutality of the 1970s and the 1980s, and the destruction of the cultural, economic, social and political life of Cambodia, it is only in recent years that reconstruction efforts have begun and some political stability has finally returned to

Cambodia. The democracy established following the conflict was shaken in 1997 during a coup d'état,^[11] but has otherwise remained in place.

Politics

The politics of Cambodia formally take place, according to the nation's constitution of 1993, in the framework of a parliamentary, representative democratic monarchy. The Prime Minister of Cambodia is the head of government, and of a pluriform multi-party system, while the king is the head of state. The Prime Minister is appointed by the King, on the advice and with the approval of the National Assembly; the Prime Minister and his or her ministerial appointees exercise executive power in government. Legislative power is vested in both the executive and the two chambers of parliament, the National Assembly of Cambodia and the Senate.

On October 14, 2004, King Norodom Sihamoni was selected by a special nine-member throne council, part of a selection process that was quickly put in place after the surprise abdication of King Norodom Sihanouk a week before. Sihamoni's selection was endorsed by Prime Minister Hun Sen and National Assembly Speaker Prince Norodom Ranariddh (the new king's brother), both members of the throne council. He was crowned in Phnom Penh on October 29. The monarchy is symbolic and does not exercise political power. Norodom Sihamoni was trained in Cambodian classical dance and is unmarried. Due to his long stay in the Czech Republic (then known as Czechoslovakia) Norodom Sihamoni is fluent in the Czech language.

Table 2: International rankings of Cambodia

| Organization | Survey | Ranking |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Heritage Foundation/ <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> | Index of Economic Freedom | 68 out of 157 |
| Reporters Without Borders | Worldwide Press Freedom Index | 108 out of 167 |
| Transparency International | Corruption Perceptions Index | 151 out of 163 |
| United Nations Development Programme | Human Development Index | 129 out of 177 |

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| World Economic Forum | Global Competitiveness Report | 103 out of 125 |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|

Source: [www./en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), 2007

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Table 3: General Characteristics of Lao PDR

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Capital (and largest city) | Vientiane 17°58'N 102°36'E |
| Official languages | Lao |
| Government | Socialist Republic |
| - President | Choummaly Sayasone |
| - Prime Minister | Bouasone Bouphavanh |
| Independence | from France |
| - Date | 19 July 1949 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 236,800 km ² (83rd) 91,429 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 2 |
| Population | |
| - 2005 estimate | 5,924,000 (103rd) |
| - 1995 census | 4,574,848 |
| - Density | 25 /km ² (177th) 65 /sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | |
| - Total | \$12.547 billion (129th) |
| - Per capita | \$2,124 (138th) |
| HDI (2004) | 0.553 (medium) (133rd) |
| Currency | Kip (LAK) |
| Internet TLD | .la |

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Calling code | +856 |
|---------------------|------|

Source: www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Laos, officially the Lao People's Democratic Republic, is a landlocked socialist republic in southeast Asia, bordered by Myanmar (Burma) and the People's Republic of China to the northwest, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the south, and Thailand to the west. Laos traces its history to the Kingdom of Lan Xang or *Land of a Million Elephants*, which existed from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century. After a period as a French colony, it gained independence in 1949. A long civil war ended when the communist Pathet Lao came to power in 1975.

Private enterprise has increased since the mid-1980s, but development has been hampered by poor communications in the heavily forested and mountainous landscape.^[1] Despite this, the economy of Laos grew at 7.2% in 2006, 35th fastest in the world. Eighty percent of the employed practice subsistence agriculture. The country's ethnic make-up is extremely diverse, with only around 60% belonging to the largest ethnic group, the Lao.

History

Laos traces its history to the kingdom of Lan Xang, founded in the fourteenth century, which lasted until the eighteenth century, when Siam invaded and assumed control of the separate principalities that remained. To avoid a costly war with the French, the Siamese king ceded lands now known as Laos to them, and these were incorporated into French Indochina in 1893. The French saw Laos as a useful buffer state between the two expanding empires of France and Britain. Under the French, the name of the capital (Vieng Chan) was changed to Vientiane. Following a brief Japanese occupation during World War II, the country declared its independence in 1945, but the French re-asserted their control and only in 1950 was Laos granted semi-autonomy as an "associated state" within the French Union. Moreover, the French remained in *de facto* control until 1954, when Laos gained full independence as a constitutional monarchy. Under a special exemption to the Geneva Convention, a French military training mission continued to support the Royal Laos Army. In 1955, the U.S. Department of Defense created a special Programs

Evaluation Office to replace French support of the Royal Laos Army against the communist Pathet Lao as part of the U.S. containment policy⁴⁰.

Political unrest in neighboring Vietnam dragged Laos into the Second Indochina War, a destabilizing factor that contributed to civil war and several coups d'état. The North Vietnamese Army invaded and occupied portions of eastern Laos. The North Vietnamese army, with its heavy weapons including heavy artillery and tanks was the real power behind the Pathet Lao insurgency. Significant aerial bombardment by the United States occurred because of that country's attempt to eliminate North Vietnamese bases in Laos in order to disrupt supply lines on the Trường Sơn Trail (known to Americans as the Hồ Chí Minh Trail).

In 1968, the North Vietnamese Army launched a multi-division attack against the Royal Lao Army. The attack resulted in the army largely demobilizing and leaving the conflict to irregular forces raised by the United States and Thailand. In 1975, the communist Pathet Lao, backed by the Soviet Union and the North Vietnamese Army (justified by the communist ideology of "proletarian internationalism"), overthrew the royalist government, forcing King Savang Vatthana to abdicate on December 2, 1975. He later died in captivity.

After taking control of the country, Pathet Lao's government renamed the country as the "Lao People's Democratic Republic" and signed agreements giving Vietnam the right to station military forces and to appoint advisors to assist in overseeing the country. Laos was ordered in the late 1970s by Vietnam to end relations with the People's Republic of China which cut the country off from trade with any country but Vietnam. Control by Vietnam and socialization were slowly replaced by a relaxation of economic restrictions in the 1980s and admission into ASEAN in 1997. Nonetheless, Vietnam still wields political and economic influence in Laos. In 1995, after a twenty-year embargo, the United States established Normal Trade Relations with Laos.

Politics

The only legal political party is the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP). The head of state is the President, elected by parliament for a five-year term. The head of government is the Prime Minister, appointed by the president with parliamentary approval.

⁴⁰ www.en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Government policies are determined by the Party through the all-powerful eleven-member Politburo and the 55-member Central Committee. Important government decisions are vetted by the Council of Ministers.

Laos adopted a new constitution in 1991. The following year, elections were held for a new 85-seat National Assembly with members elected by secret ballot to five-year terms. This unicameral parliament, expanded in the 1997 elections to 99 members, approves all new laws, although the executive branch retains authority to issue binding decrees. The most recent elections took place on 30 April 2006 when 175 candidates in sixteen electoral areas competed for 115 seats.

Remnants of a Hmong group allied with the United States during the Vietnam War have been in armed conflict with the communist regime since 1975. With surrenders reported in the international media, this conflict appears to be on the wane. Most Hmong are integrated into or at least at peace with the existing government, with some Hmong occupying high-ranking positions in the state system.

Table 4: International rankings of Lao PDR

| Organization | Survey | Ranking |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Heritage Foundation/ <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> | Index of Economic Freedom | 149 out of 157 |
| Reporters Without Borders | Worldwide Press Freedom Index | 156 out of 167 |
| Transparency International | Corruption Perceptions Index | 111 out of 163 |
| United Nations Development Programme | Human Development Index | 133 out of 177 |

Source: [www./en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), 2007

Myanmar⁴¹

Table 5: General Characteristics of Myanmar

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Capital | Naypyidaw ¹ 19°45'N 96°12'E | |
| Largest city | Yangon | |
| Official languages | Myanmar (Burmese) | |
| Government | Military junta | |
| - | Chairman, SPDC | Sr. Gen. Than Shwe |
| - | Prime Minister | Soe Win |
| Independence | from the United Kingdom | |
| - | Date | 4 January 1948 |
| Area | | |
| - | Total | 676,578 km ² (40th) 261,227 sq mi |
| - | Water (%) | 3.06 |
| Population Area | | |
| - | July 2005 estimate | 50,519,000 ² (24th) |
| - | 1983 census | 33,234,000 |
| - | Density | 75 /km ² (119th) 193 /sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | | |
| - | Total | \$93.77 billion (59th) |
| - | Per capita | \$1,691 (150th) |

⁴¹ The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) rename “Burma” to “Myanmar” in the English language in 1989 and by 1997 SLORC was renamed the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| HDI (2004) | 0.581 (medium) (130th) |
| Currency | kyat (K) (mmK) |
| Internet TLD | .mm |
| Calling code | +95 |

¹Some governments still recognize Yangon as the national capital.

²Estimates for this country take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.

Source: www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

History

The Mon people are thought to be the earliest group to migrate into the lower Ayeyarwady valley and by the mid-90s was dominant in southern Burma.

The Pyu arrived later, in the 1st century BCE, and established several city kingdoms which traded with India and China. The most powerful Pyu kingdom was Sri Ksetra, which was subsequently abandoned in 656 CE. The Pyu re-established themselves, but in the mid-800s were invaded by the Nanzhao kingdom.

The Burmans, or Bamar, began migrating to the Ayeyarwady valley from present-day Tibet sometime before the ninth century CE. By 849, they had established a powerful kingdom centred on Pagan. During the reign of Anawratha, Burman influence expanded throughout much of present-day Myanmar. By the 1100s, large portions of continental Southeast Asia were controlled by the Pagan Kingdom, commonly called the First Burmese Empire. In the late 1200s, Mongols under Kublai Khan invaded the Pagan Kingdom, but by 1364 the Burmans re-established their kingdom at Ava, where Burmese culture entered a golden age. However, in 1527, the Shan pillaged Ava. Meanwhile, the Mon re-established themselves at Pegu, which became a major commercial and religious centre.

Burmans who had fled from Ava established the Toungoo Kingdom in 1531 at Taungoo, under Tabinshwehti, who re-unified Burma and founded the Second Burmese Empire. Because of growing European influence in Southeast Asia, the Toungoo Kingdom became a major trading centre. Bayinnaung expanded the empire by conquering the states of Manipur, Chiang Mai, and Ayutthaya. But internal rebellion and lack of resources to control the acquisitions led to the downfall of the Toungoo Kingdom. Anaukpetlun, who had expelled Portuguese invaders, founded a new dynasty at Ava in 1613. Internal rebellion by the Mon, aided by France, led to the kingdom's downfall in 1752.

Alaungpaya established the Konbaung Dynasty and founded the Third Burmese Empire in the 1700s. In 1767, King Hsinbyushin conquered Ayutthaya kingdom. The Qing Dynasty of China, fearful of growing Burman power, invaded four times from 1766 to 1769 without success. Later monarchs lost control of Ayutthaya, but acquired Arakan and Tenasserim.

During the reign of King Bagyidaw, in 1824, Burmese general Mahabandoola captured Assam, adjacent to British territory in India, leading to the First Anglo-Burmese War. The Treaty of Yandabo in 1826 ceded control of the coastal territories of Rakhine (Arakan) and Tanintharyi to British interests. In 1851, King Bagan imprisoned some British officials for murder, which the British used as an excuse for the Second Anglo-Burmese War. This time, the British annexed the remaining coastal provinces - Ayeyarwady, Yangon and Bago. In 1885, Burmese tax collectors, acting for the King, discovered that the Bombay-Burma Teak Company had been illegally logging and hiding teak in the hope of evading taxes. King Thibaw Min fined the company, which was seen by the British as a pretext to annex the rest of Burma. In November 1885, the Third Anglo-Burmese War was waged, for a period of only two weeks. Thibaw Min and the royal family were exiled first to Madras, and then to Ratnagiri.

Burma became a province of British India by late November 1885, and was given as a New Year present to Queen Victoria on 1 January 1886. On 1 April 1937, Burma became a separately administered territory, independent of the Indian administration. The vote for keeping Burma in India, or as a separate colony "khwe-yay-twe-yay" divided the populace, and laid the ground work for the insurgencies to come after independence. In the 1940s, the Thirty Comrades, led by Aung San, founded the Burma Independence Army. The Thirty Comrades received training in Japan.

During World War II, Burma became a major front lines in the Southeast Asian Theatre. Initially the Japanese-led Burma Campaign succeeded and the British were expelled from most of Burma, but the Allies counter-attacked. By July 1945, the Allies had retaken the country. The Burmese fought for both sides in the war. Although many Burmese fought initially for the Japanese, some Burmese also served in the British Burma Army. In 1943, the Chin Levies and Kachin Levies were formed in the border districts of Burma still under British control. The Burma Rifles fought as part of the Chindits under General Orde Wingate from 1943-1945. Later in the war, the Americans created American-Kachin Rangers who also fought for the Allies. Many other Burmese fought with the British Special Operations Executive. The Burma Independence Army under the command of Aung San and the Arakan National Army fought with the Japanese from 1942-1944, but rose up against the Japanese in 1945.

In 1947, Aung San became Deputy Chairman of the Executive Council of Burma, a transitional government. But in July 1947, political rivals assassinated Aung San and several cabinet members. On 4 January 1948, the nation became an independent republic, named the *Union of Burma*, with Sao Shwe Thaik as its first President and U Nu as its first Prime Minister. Unlike most other former British colonies, it did not become a member of the Commonwealth. A bicameral parliament was formed, consisting of a Chamber of Deputies and a Chamber of Nationalities. The geographical area Myanmar encompasses today can be traced to the Panglong Agreement, which combined Burma Proper, which consisted of Lower Burma and Upper Burma, and the Frontier Areas, which had been administered separately by the British.

In 1961, U Thant, then Burma's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and former Secretary to the Prime Minister, was elected Secretary-General of the United Nations; he was the first non-Westerner to head any international organization and would serve as UN Secretary-General for ten years. Among the Burmese to work at the UN when he was Secretary-General was a young Aung San Suu Kyi.

Democratic rule ended in 1962 with a military coup d'état led by General Ne Win, who ruled for nearly 26 years and pursued policies under the Burmese Way to Socialism. In 1974, the funeral of U Thant led to anti-government protests that the military violently suppressed.

In 1988, the 8888 Uprising led to widespread pro-democracy demonstrations throughout the country. In response, General Saw Maung staged a coup d'état. He formed

the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In 1989, martial law was declared after widespread protests. Plans for People's Assembly elections were finalized on 31 May 1989.

In 1990, free elections were held for the first time in almost 30 years. The NLD, the party of Aung San Suu Kyi, won 392 out of a total 489 seats, but the election results were voided by SLORC, which refused to step down. SLORC renamed Burma 'Myanmar' in the English language in 1989. Led by Than Shwe since 1992, the military regime has made cease-fire agreements with most ethnic guerrilla groups. In 1992, SLORC unveiled plans to create a new constitution through the National Convention, which began 9 January 1993. In 1997, the State Law and Order Restoration Council was renamed the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

On 23 June 1997, Myanmar was admitted into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The National Convention continues to convene and adjourn. Many major political parties, particularly the National League for Democracy, have been absent or excluded, and little progress has been made. On 27 March 2006, the military junta, which had moved the national capital from Yangon to a site near Pyinmana, officially named it Naypyidaw, meaning "city of the kings". In September of 2006, The U.S. led effort to include Burma on the United Nations Security Council Agenda finally passed allowing the U.N.S.C. to discuss officially how it will deal with the human rights situation in Burma. In November of 2006, the International Labor Organization announced it will be seeking charges against Myanmar over the continuous forced labor of its citizens by the military at the International Court of Justice⁴².

Politics

The Union of Myanmar is governed by a military regime. The current Head of State is Senior General Than Shwe, who holds the posts of "Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council" and "Commander in Chief of the Defense Services". General Khin Nyunt was prime minister until 19 October 2004, when he was replaced by General Soe Win, after the purge of Military Intelligence sections within Myanmar Armed Forces . The majority of ministry and cabinet posts are held by military officers, with the exceptions being the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of

⁴² www.en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Labor, and the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, posts which are held by civilians.

Some of the elected delegates in the 1990 People's Assembly election formed the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), a government-in-exile since December 1990, with the mission of restoring democracy. Dr. Sein Win, a first cousin of Aung San Suu Kyi, has held the position of prime minister of the NCGUB since its inception. The NCGUB has been outlawed by the military government.

Major political parties in Myanmar are the National League for Democracy and the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, although their activities are heavily regulated and suppressed by the military government. Many other parties, often representing ethnic minorities, exist. The military government allows little room for political organizations and has outlawed many political parties and underground student organizations. The military supported the National Unity Party in the 1990 elections and, more recently, an organization named the Union Solidarity and Development Association.

Several human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have reported on human rights abuses by the military government. They have claimed that there is no independent judiciary in Myanmar. The military government restricts Internet access through software-based censorship that limits the material citizens can access on-line. Forced labor, human trafficking, and child labor are common.

In 1988, the Burmese army violently repressed protests against economic mismanagement and political oppression. On 8 August 1988, the military opened fire on demonstrators in what is known as the 8888 Uprising and imposed martial law. However, the 1988 protests paved the way for the 1990 People's Assembly elections. The election results were subsequently annulled by Senior General Saw Maung's government. The National League for Democracy, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won over 60% of the vote and over 80% of parliamentary seats in the 1990 election, the first held in 30 years. The military-backed National Unity Party won less than 2% of the seats. Aung San Suu Kyi has earned international recognition as an activist for the return of democratic rule, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. The ruling regime has repeatedly placed her under house arrest. Despite a direct appeal by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to Senior General Than Shwe and pressure by ASEAN, the Burmese military junta extended Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest another year on 27 May 2006 under the 1975 State Protection Act, which grants the government the right to detain any persons on the grounds

of protecting peace and stability in the country. The junta faces increasing pressure from the United States and Great Britain. Myanmar's situation was referred to the UN Security Council for the first time in December 2005 for an informal consultation. In September 2006, ten of the United Nations Security Council's 15 members voted to place Burma on the council's formal agenda. On Independence Day, 4 January 2007, the government released 40 political prisoners, under a general amnesty, in which 2,831 prisoners were released. On 8 January 2007, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the national government to free all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi. Three days later, on 11 January, five additional prisoners were released from prison.

ASEAN has also stated its frustration with Myanmar's government. It has formed the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus to address the lack of democratization in Myanmar. Dramatic change in the country's political situation remains unlikely, due to support from major regional powers such as India, Russia, and, in particular, China.

In January 2007, the United States submitted a draft Security Council resolution, backed by the United Kingdom, in an effort to end political repression and human rights violations to the United Nations Security Council. Belgium, France, Ghana, Italy, Panama, Peru, Slovakia, the UK and the US voted in favor of the resolution, while China and Russia vetoed, and South Africa voted against the resolution. Indonesia, Qatar, and the Republic of the Congo abstained. Chinese Ambassador Wang Guangya stated that domestic problems in Myanmar were largely internal affairs, while Russian Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said that the issues would be better handled by other UN organs, such as the Human Rights Council and humanitarian agencies, rather than the Security Council. The Indonesian Ambassador, who abstained from the vote, deplored the situation in Myanmar, but said that the ASEAN, did not believe the problems in Myanmar were threats to security and peace in the region⁴³.

In the annual ASEAN Summit in January 2007, held in Cebu, the Philippines, member countries failed to find common ground on the issue of Myanmar's lack of political reform. During this summit, most of the ASEAN foreign ministers asked Myanmar to make greater progress on its roadmap toward democracy and national reconciliation⁴⁴. Some member countries contend that Myanmar's human rights issues

⁴³ www.en.wikipedia.org, 2007

⁴⁴ www.en.wikipedia.org, 2007

were domestic affairs of Myanmar, while others contend that Myanmar's poor human rights record is an international issue.

However, the researcher found difficulty in finding the statistic data of Myanmar; therefore, there is no international ranking index of this country in this paper.

Vietnam

Table 6: General Characteristics of Vietnam

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Capital | Hanoi 21°2'N 105°51'E |
| Largest city | Ho Chi Minh City |
| Official languages | Vietnamese |
| Government | Socialist republic ¹ |
| - General Secretary | Nông Đức Mạnh |
| - President | Nguyễn Minh Triết |
| - Prime Minister | Nguyễn Tấn Dũng |
| Independence | |
| - From China | 938 |
| - From France | September 2, 1945 |
| - Recognized | 1954 |
| Area | |
| - Total | 331,689 km ² (65th) 128,065 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 1.3 |
| Population | |
| - July 2005 estimate | 85,238,000 (13th) |
| - 1999 census | 76,323,173 |
| - Density | 253 /km ² (46th) |

| | | |
|---|------------|------------------------|
| | | 655 /sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | | 2005 estimate |
| - | Total | \$251.8 billion (36th) |
| - | Per capita | \$3,025 (123rd) |
| HDI (2004) | | 0.709 (medium) (109th) |
| Currency | | đồng (₫) (VND) |
| Internet TLD | | .vn |
| Calling code | | +84 |
| 1. According to the official name and its 1992 Constitution | | |

Source: www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Vietnam, officially the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, is the easternmost nation on the Indochina Peninsula. It borders China to the north, Laos to the northwest, and Cambodia to the southwest. On the country's east coast lies the South China Sea. With a population of over 85 million, Vietnam is the 13th most populous country in the world. The country is listed among the "Next Eleven" economies; according to government figures GDP growth was 8.17% in 2006, the second fastest growth rate among countries in East and Southeast Asia.

History

In 939 CE a Vietnamese lord named Ngô Quyền defeated Chinese forces at the Bạch Đằng River and gained independence after 10 centuries under Chinese control. They gained complete autonomy a century later. Renamed as Đại Việt, the nation went through a golden era during the Lý and Trần Dynasties. During the rule of the Trần Dynasty, Đại Việt repelled three Mongol invasions of Vietnam. Following the brief Hồ Dynasty, Vietnamese independence was briefly interrupted by the Chinese Ming Dynasty, but was restored by Lê Lợi, the founder of the Lê Dynasty. Feudalism in Vietnam reached its zenith in the Lê of the 15th century, especially during the reign of Emperor Lê Thánh Tông. Between the 11th and 18th centuries, the Vietnamese expanded southward in a process

known as *nam tiến* (*southward expansion*). They eventually conquered the kingdom of Champa and much of the Khmer Empire.

Towards the end of the Lê Dynasty, civil strife engulfed much of Vietnam. First, the Chinese-supported Mạc Dynasty challenged the Lê Dynasty's power. After the Mạc Dynasty was defeated, the Lê Dynasty was reinstated, but with no actual power. Power was divided between the Trịnh Lords in the North and the Nguyễn Lords in the South, who engaged in a civil war for more than a hundred years. The civil war ended when the Tây Sơn brothers defeated both and established their new dynasty. However, their rule did not last long and they were defeated by the remnants of the Nguyễn Lords with the help of the French, who established the Nguyễn Dynasty.

Vietnam's independence ended in the mid-19th century, when the country was colonized by the French Empire. The French administration imposed significant political and cultural changes on Vietnamese society. A Western-style system of modern education was developed, and Christianity was introduced into Vietnamese society. Developing a plantation economy to promote the exports of tobacco, indigo, tea and coffee, the French largely ignored increasing calls for self-government and civil rights. A nationalist political movement soon emerged, with leaders such as Phan Boi Chau, Phan Chu Trinh, Emperor Ham Nghi and Ho Chi Minh calling for independence. However, the French maintained dominant control of their colonies until World War II, when the Japanese war in the Pacific triggered the invasion of Indochina. The natural resources of Vietnam were exploited for the purposes of Japan's military campaigns into Burma, the Malay Peninsula and India.

In the final years of the war, a forceful nationalist insurgency emerged under Ho Chi Minh, committed to independence and communism. Following the defeat of Japan, nationalist forces fought French colonial forces in the First Indochina War that lasted from 1945 to 1954. The French suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu and shortly afterwards withdrew from the country. The countries that fought the Vietnam War divided the country at the 17th parallel into North Vietnam and South Vietnam during the Geneva Accords⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ www.en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Vietnam War

The communist-held North Vietnam was opposed by the United States for its close association with the Soviet Union and China. Disagreements soon emerged over the organizing of elections and reunification, and the U.S. began increasing its contribution of military advisors even as Soviet-supplied arms and munitions strengthened communist forces. The alleged attack in 1964 on U.S. ships in the Gulf of Tonkin triggered a U.S. military assault on North Vietnamese military installations and the deployment of more than 500,000 troops into South Vietnam. U.S. forces were soon embroiled in a vicious guerrilla war with the Viet Cong, the South Vietnamese communist insurgent militia. North Vietnamese forces unsuccessfully attempted to overrun the South during the 1968 Tet Offensive and the war soon spread into neighboring Laos and Cambodia. With casualties mounting, the U.S. began transferring combat roles to the South Vietnamese military in a process known as Vietnamization. The effort had mixed results. The Paris Peace Accords on January 27, 1973 formally recognized the sovereignty of both sides. Under the terms of the accords all American combat troops were withdrawn by March 29, 1973. Limited fighting continued, but all major fighting ended until the North once again invaded in strength and overpowered the South on April 30, 1975. South Vietnam briefly became the Republic of South Vietnam, a puppet state under military occupation by North Vietnam, before being officially reunified with the North under communist rule as the *Socialist Republic of Vietnam* on July 2, 1976⁴⁶.

Upon taking control, the Vietnamese communists banned other political parties, arrested people believed to have collaborated with the U.S. and sent them to reeducation camps. The government also embarked on a mass campaign of collectivization of farms and factories. Reconstruction of the war-ravaged country was slow and serious humanitarian and economic problems confronted the communist regime. Millions of people fled the country in crude boats, creating a humanitarian crisis. In 1978, the Vietnamese Army invaded Cambodia to remove the Khmer Rouge from power. This action worsened relations with China, which launched a brief incursion into northern Vietnam in 1979. This conflict caused Vietnam to rely even more heavily on Soviet economic and military aid.

⁴⁶ www.en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Đổi Mới

In a historic shift in 1986, the Communist Party of Vietnam implemented free-market reforms known as *Đổi Mới* (*Renovation*). With the authority of the state remaining unchallenged, private ownership of farms and companies, deregulation and foreign investment were encouraged. The economy of Vietnam has achieved rapid growth in agricultural and industrial production, construction and housing, exports and foreign investment. It is now one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

Politically, reforms have not occurred. The Communist Party of Vietnam retains control over all organs of government.

Politics

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a single-party state. A new state constitution was approved in April 1992, replacing the 1975 version. The central role of the Communist Party was reasserted in all organs of government, politics and society. Only political organizations affiliated or endorsed by the Communist Party are permitted to contest elections. These include the Vietnamese Fatherland Front, workers and trade unionist parties. Although the state remains officially committed to socialism as its defining creed, the ideology's importance has substantially diminished since the 1990s. The President of Vietnam is the titular head of state and the nominal commander in chief of the military of Vietnam, chairing the Council on National Defense and Security. The Prime Minister of Vietnam is the head of government, presiding over a council of ministers composed of 3 deputy prime ministers and the heads of 26 ministries and commissions.

The National Assembly of Vietnam is the unicameral legislature of the government, composed of 498 members. It is superior to both the executive and judicial branches. All members of the council of ministers are derived from the National Assembly. The Supreme People's Court of Vietnam, which is the highest court of appeal in the nation, is also answerable to the National Assembly. Beneath the Supreme People's Court stand the provincial municipal courts and the local courts. Military courts are also a powerful branch of the judiciary with special jurisdiction in matters of national security. All organs of Vietnam's government are largely controlled by the Communist Party. Most government appointees are members of the party. The General Secretary of the Communist Party is perhaps one of the most important political leaders in the nation, controlling the party's national organization and state appointments, as well as setting policy.

The Vietnam People's Army (VPA) is the official name for the three military services of Vietnam, which is organized on the lines of China's People's Liberation Army. The VPA is further subdivided into the Vietnamese People's Ground Forces (including Strategic Rear Forces and Border Defense Forces), the Vietnam People's Navy, the Vietnam People's Air Force and the coast guard. Through Vietnam's recent history, the VPA has actively been involved in Vietnam's workforce to develop the economy of Vietnam, in order to coordinate national defense and the economy. The VPA is involved in such areas as industry, agriculture, forestry, fishery and telecommunications. The total strength of the VPA is close to 500,000 soldiers. The government also organizes and maintains provincial militias and police forces. The role of the military in public life has steadily weakened since the 1980s.

Table 7: International rankings of Vietnam

| Organization | Survey | Ranking |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Heritage Foundation/ <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> | Index of Economic Freedom | 142 out of 157 |
| <i>The Economist</i> | Worldwide Quality-of-life Index, 2005 | 61 out of 111 |
| Reporters Without Borders | Worldwide Press Freedom Index | 155 out of 167 |
| Transparency International | Corruption Perceptions Index | 111 out of 163 |
| United Nations Development Programme | Human Development Index | 109 out of 177 |
| World Economic Forum | Global Competitiveness Report | 77 out of 125 |

Source: www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Yunnan Province, and Guangxi autonomous Region, People's Republic of China

Table 8: General Characteristics of People's Republic of China

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| Capital | Beijing 39°55'N 116°23'E | |
| Largest city | Shanghai | |
| Official languages | Mandarin Chinese | |
| Government | Socialist republic | |
| - President | Hu Jintao | |
| - Premier | Wen Jiabao | |
| Establishment | | |
| - PRC declared | October 1, 1949 | |
| Area | | |
| - Total | 9,596,960 km ² (3rd) 3,704,427 ³ sq mi | |
| - Water (%) | 2.8 | |
| Population | | |
| - 2006 estimate | 1,315,844,000 ³ (1st) | |
| - 2000 census | 1,242,612,226 | |
| - Density | 140 /km ² (72nd) 363 ³ /sq mi | |
| GDP (PPP) | | |
| - Total | 2006 estimate \$10 trillion (2nd) | |
| - Per capita | \$7,600 (84th) | |
| GDP (nominal) | | |
| - Total | 2006 estimate \$2.68 trillion (4th) | |
| - Per capita | \$2,000 (110th) | |
| HDI (2004) | 0.768 (medium) (81st) | |

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Currency | Renminbi (RMB¥) (CNY) |
| Internet TLD | .cn |
| Calling code | +86 |

Source: www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Table 9: Yunnan Province's Profile

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Origin of name | <p>☐ yún - cloud</p> <p>☐ nán - south</p> <p>"South of the Cloud Mountains"</p> |
| Administration type | Province |
| Capital (and largest city) | Kunming |
| CPC Ctte Secretary | Bai Enpei |
| Governor | Xu Rongkai |
| Area | 394,100 km ² |
| Population (2004) | 44,150,000 |
| - Density | 112/km ² |
| GDP (2004) | CNY 295.9 billion |
| - per capita | CNY 6700 |
| HDI (2005) | 0.657 (medium) |
| Major nationalities | <p>Han-67%</p> <p>Yi-11%</p> <p>Bai-3.6%</p> <p>Hani-3.4%</p> <p>Zhuang-2.7%</p> <p>Dai-2.7%</p> <p>Miao-2.5%</p> <p>Hui-1.5%</p> |
| Prefecture-level | 16 divisions |
| County-level | 129 divisions |
| Township-level | 1565 divisions |

Source: www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

Table 10: Guangxi Autonomous Region's Profile

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Origin of name | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ guǎng - region name ☐ xī - west "western Guang" |
| Administration type | Autonomous region |
| Capital (and largest city) | Nanning |
| CPC Ctte Secretary | Liu Qibao |
| Chairman | Lu Bing |
| Area | 236,700 km ² |
| Population (2004) | 48,890,000 |
| - Density | 207/km ² |
| GDP (2004) | CNY 332.0 billion |
| - per capita | CNY 6790 |
| HDI (2005) | 0.731 (medium) |
| Major nationalities | Han - 62% |
| | Zhuang - 32% |
| | Yao - 3% |
| | Miao - 1% |
| | Dong - 0.7% |
| | Gelao - 0.4% |
| Prefecture-level | 14 divisions |
| County-level | 109 divisions |
| Township-level | 1396 divisions |

Source: www./en.wikipedia.org, 2007

With a population of 1.3 billion and a huge landmass, the mainland of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is the dominant region to the immediate north of the GMS. While the PRC is not part of the GMS per se, the Province of Yunnan is its proxy. With a population of 44 million, the Province has a far greater population than Lao PDR and Cambodia. As the most southwesterly province of China, bordering three countries of the GMS- Myanmar, Lao PDR and Vietnam forms the northwestern region of the GMS.

China was not badly affected during the Asian financial crisis, maintaining over 6% GDP growth throughout, after highs of around 10%. The high growth economies within the country have been on the east coast, leaving the large cities, towns and rural areas of the inland provinces lagging behind. The rapid economic growth has occurred as a result of dramatic shifts in the economic system. China has moved rapidly from an agriculturally

based socialist economy to an industrial nation with market economy reforms that are transforming the landscape of the country. With the movement of people far less restricted than before, millions are leaving their rural homes for the city. This well documented movement of people is reportedly over 100 million. Farming is no longer considered profitable and, despite reforms to support farmers, they are still leaving to find work elsewhere. At the same, further reforms of state owned enterprises are laying off workers, causing a surplus of workers in urban center as well.

Yunnan is the eighth largest province in China, with a total area of 394,000 square kilometers. It is a mountainous province on the Yunnan- Guizhou plateau, and shares a 1353 kilometers border with Vietnam. It has areas of high poverty but, with border trade and tourism, it is developing rapidly. Once populated by non- Han population groups, migratory waves of Han people have settled here since the end of World War II and following the communist victory in 1949. The population is 42 million, with non- Han ethnic groups totaling over 13 million. There are 25 ethnic groups with each exceeding 5000. The Yi has the largest population, numbering more than 4 million, and three other groups- the Bei, Hani and Dai- have populations over 1 million.

Despite lagging behind the rapid growth on the coastal provinces, Yunnan has experienced significant development in recent years. Large investments have been made in health and education. Nine years of compulsory education is mandatory in 34 countries and cities, with six years compulsory education in 90 countries and cities. The attendance rate of school age children is reportedly 98%, with admission into secondary school 76%. Illiteracy is reported to be 14% of the adult population⁴⁷.

In recent years there has been a surge in road building throughout the province and dams for hydroelectric power are under construction. The province remains an agriculturally based society despite recent industrial development. Tobacco has been one of the staple crops of the province but, with reduced government support and anti- smoking campaigns, the future prospects are not bright.

The capital city, Kunming, is home to approximately 3 million people and has undergone significant change. Infrastructure development is in evidence through modern roads and amenities. Whole suburbs have been replaced with new buildings. Main roads out of Kunming lead west to Dali, a major tourist center, and then on to Ruili on the Myanmar border; to the southeast and another expanding border area, Hekou, on the Vietnam border; and south to Jinhong, another growth area and popular tourist center in Sipsongpanna Prefecture.

The 13th GMS Ministerial Conference held in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic in December 2004 agreed to include Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (Guangxi) of the People's Republic of China in the Greater Mekong Subregion Program. With a total land area of 236,700 square kilometers bordering the PRC's Guangdong, Hunan, Guizhou, and Yunnan provinces and Viet Nam, Guangxi is one of two provinces in the PRC that share borders with other GMS countries. Like Yunnan province, Guangxi has strong linkages with the GMS in, among other things, resources, culture, trade, transport, and tourism.

Guangxi's participation in the GMS Program is seen as a natural northward extension of the GMS' geography—a clear outcome of strengthening economic relations between the PRC and other GMS countries. The value of total trade between Guangxi and other GMS countries expanded from \$327 million in 2001 to \$822 million in 2004, or about 20% of Guangxi's total foreign trade. Cross-border tourism is flourishing, with an estimated 2 million tourists crossing the PRC (Guangxi)–Viet Nam border in 2004. In recent years, Guangxi and its immediate GMS neighbor, Viet Nam, have entered into contracts on joint natural resource development and manufacturing. The prime ministers of the two countries have also agreed to embark on the “Two Corridors and One Belt” initiative involving Yunnan province and Guangxi in the PRC, and the northern part of Viet Nam. Technological and cultural exchange programs between the PRC and other GMS countries have also accelerated in recent years, including at the annual PRC–ASEAN Expo, which is regularly held in Guangxi's capital city of Nanning.

A study that the Asian Development Bank conducted in November 1995⁴⁸ concluded that the closer integration of Guangxi into the GMS will be a “win-win” situation for both the PRC and other GMS countries. On the one hand, this would foster even closer economic relations between the PRC and other GMS countries, and support the establishment of the PRC– ASEAN Free Trade Area. Guangxi’s closer integration would enhance the overall attractiveness of the GMS as a large and growing market, as an appealing investment and tourist destination. It would also allow other GMS countries to strengthen their linkages with and capitalize on the wealth of opportunities offered by the relatively prosperous coastal provinces of the PRC.

History

The Chinese Civil War ended in 1949 with the Communist Party of China in control of the mainland, and the Kuomintang (KMT) retreating to Taiwan and some outlying islands of Fujian. On October 1, 1949 Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China, declaring "the Chinese people have stood up." Red China was a frequent appellation for the PRC between the Communist ascendance and the mid-late 1970s with the rapprochement between China and the West (generally within the capitalist/Western bloc).

Following a series of dramatic economic failures, Mao stepped down from his position as chairman in 1959, with Liu Shaoqi as successor. Mao still had a huge influence over the Party, but was removed from day-to-day management of economic affairs, which came under the control of Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping.

In 1966, Mao and his allies launched the Cultural Revolution which led to a major upheaval in Chinese society.

After Mao's death in 1976 and the arrest of the Gang of Four, Deng Xiaoping quickly wrested power from Mao's anointed successor Hua Guofeng. Although Deng never became the head of the Party or State himself, his influence within the Party led the country to economic reforms. The Communist Party subsequently loosened governmental control over people's personal lives and the communes were disbanded with many peasants receiving multiple land leases, which greatly increased incentives and agricultural

⁴⁸ http://www.adb.org/Documents/Periodicals/ADB_Review/2006/vol38-1/broadening-benefits.asp

production. This turn of events marked China's transition from a planned economy to a mixed economy. The PRC adopted its current constitution on December 4, 1982.

Despite market reforms, the Communist Party of China remains in sole control, requiring the registration and supervision of all civic organizations. The CPC suppresses groups that it claims are threats to social stability and national unity, such as Falun Gong and the separatist movement in Tibet. Supporters of these policies claim that they safeguard stability in a society that was torn apart by class differences and rivalries, has no tradition of civil participation, and limited rule of law. Opponents claim that these policies severely curtail human rights and that they have resulted in a police state, creating an atmosphere of fear and ignorance.

In 1989 the death of the pro-reform official, Hu Yaobang, helped to spark the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, during which students and others campaigned for democratic reform and freedom. The protests were soon put down on June 4 when PLA troops and tanks entered and forcibly cleared the square, resulting in hundreds of deaths and casualties, thousands according to the Red Cross. This event was famously videotaped and brought worldwide condemnation and sanctions against the PRC government. The June 4th Incident has been a taboo subject within the government, though the dictatorship did defend its actions by saying that it was necessary for the continued stability and economic development of the country.

President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji, both former mayors of Shanghai, led post-Tiananmen China in the 1990s, bringing unprecedented wealth and international standing to the country. Under Jiang Zemin's ten years of administration, China pulled an estimated 150 million peasants out of poverty and sustained an average annual GDP growth rate of 11.2%. The country formally joined the WTO in 2001.

Although China needs economic growth to spur its development, the government has begun to worry that rapid economic growth could negatively impact the country's resources and environment. Another concern is that many people are not benefiting from China's economic miracle. As a result, the PRC, under current President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, have initiated policies to address these issues, but the outcome remains to be seen. For much of China's population, living standards have seen extremely large improvements, and freedom continues to expand, but political controls remain tight.

Politics

While the PRC is regarded as a communist state by many political scientists, simple characterizations of China's political structure are controversial. The PRC government has been variously described as authoritarian, communist, and socialist, with heavy restrictions remaining in some areas, most notably on the Internet and in the press. The country is ruled under the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Its incumbent Paramount Leader is President Hu Jintao and premier is Wen Jiabao with people's congress and Communist Party of China.

The country is mainly run by the Communist Party of China (CPC), but there are other political parties in the PRC, referred to in China as "democratic parties", which participate in the People's Political Consultative Conference and the National People's Congress, while serving mainly to endorse CPC policies. There have been some moves toward political liberalization, in that open contested elections are now held at the village and town levels, and that legislatures have shown some assertiveness from time to time; however, the Party retains effective control over governmental appointments. This is because, in the absence of meaningful opposition, the CPC wins by default in most electorates. The CPC has been enforcing its rule by clamping down on political dissidents while simultaneously attempting to reduce dissent by improving the economy and allowing public expression of personal grievances so long as they are not organized. Current political concerns in China include lessening the growing gap between rich and poor and fighting corruption within the government leadership. The support that the Communist Party of China has among the Chinese population in general is unclear because there are no consistently contested national elections. Also, private conversations and anecdotal information often reveal conflicting views. However, according to a survey conducted in Hong Kong, where a relatively high level of freedom is enjoyed, the current CPC leaders have received substantial votes of support when residents were asked to rank their favorite Chinese leaders from the mainland and Taiwan⁴⁹.

For much of China's history, the state had been ruled by some form of centralized imperial monarchy, which was followed by a chaotic succession of largely authoritarian Chinese Nationalist governments as well as warlord-held administrations since the last few years of the Qing Dynasty in 1912.

⁴⁹ www.en.wikipedia.org,2007

Thailand

Table 11: General Characteristics of Thailand

| | |
|---|---|
| Capital | Bangkok (Krung Thep) 13°44'N 100°30'E |
| Largest city | Bangkok |
| Official languages | Thai |
| Government | Military junta under Constitutional Monarchy |
| - King | HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej |
| - Prime Minister | General Surayud Chulanont |
| - President of the Council of National Security | General Sonthi Boonyaratglin |
| Formation | |
| - Sukhothai kingdom | 1238–1368 |
| - Ayutthaya kingdom | 1350–1767 |
| - Thonburi kingdom | 1767 to April 7, 1782 |
| - Ratanakosin kingdom | April 7, 1782 to date |
| Area | |
| - Total | 514,000 km ² (49th) 198,115 sq mi |
| - Water (%) | 0.4 |
| Population | |

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|
| - | July 2006 estimate | 64,631, 595 ¹ (19th) |
| - | 2000 census | 60,916,441 |
| - | Density | 126 /km ² (80th) 326 /sq mi |
| GDP (PPP) | | 2005 estimate |
| - | Total | \$560.7 billion (21st) |
| - | Per capita | \$8,300 (69th) |
| HDI (2004) | | 0.784 (medium) (72nd) |
| Currency | | Baht (฿) (THB) |
| Internet TLD | | .th |
| Calling code | | +66 |

Source: www.en.wikipedia.org, 2007

The Kingdom of Thailand lies in Southeast Asia, with Laos and Cambodia to its east, the Gulf of Thailand and Malaysia to its south, and the Andaman Sea and Myanmar to its west. The country's official name was Siam until 24 June 1939. It was again called *Siam* between 1945 and May 11, 1949, when it was once again changed by official proclamation. The word *Thai* means "freedom" in the Thai language and is also the name of the majority ethnic group.

History

Due to its geographical location, Thai culture has always been greatly influenced by China and India. However, different indigenous cultures have also existed in Thailand since the Baan Chiang culture. *Siam*, the Sanskrit name of the people means, "Dark Skin," its referral is to the indigenous Khmer people who were the majority of the land. When Ramkhamheng took power and conquered the Siamese area, he brought with him the Lao language into the region that subsequently mixed with the local Khmer language, and as a result became the modern Thai Language we hear today, a mix of Lao and Khmer tones.

The first Siamese/Thai state is traditionally considered to be the Buddhist kingdom of Sukhothai founded in 1238, following the decline and fall of the Khmer Empire in the 13th - 15th century.

A century later, Sukhothai's power was overshadowed by the larger Siamese kingdom of Ayutthaya, established in the mid-14th century. After Ayutthaya sacked Angkor itself in 1431, much of the Khmer court and its Hindu customs were brought to Ayutthaya, and Khmer customs and rituals were adopted into the courtly culture of Siam.

After Ayutthaya fell in 1767, Thonburi was the capital of Thailand for a brief period under King Taksin the Great, until a coup d'etat in 1782. The current (Ratthanakosin) era of Thai history began in 1782 following the establishment of Bangkok as capital of the Chakri dynasty under King Rama I the Great.

European powers began traveling to Thailand in the 16th century. Despite European pressure, Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been colonized by a European power. The two main reasons for this is that Thailand had a long succession of very able rulers in the 1800s and that it was able to utilize the rivalry and tension between the French and the British. As a result, the country remained as a buffer state between parts of Southeast Asia that were colonized by the two colonial powers. Despite this, Western influence led to many reforms in the 19th century and major concessions to British trading interests. This included the loss of the three southern provinces, which later became Malaysia's three northern states.

In 1932, a bloodless revolution resulted in a new constitutional monarchy. During the war, Thailand was allied with Japan. Yet after the war, it became an ally of the United States. Thailand then went through a series of coups d'état, but eventually progressed towards democracy in the 1980s.

In 1997, Thailand was hit with the Asian financial crisis and the Thai baht was soon worth 56 baht to the U.S. Dollar compared to about 25 baht to the dollar before 1997. Since then the baht has regained some strength and currently trades around 36-39 baht to the dollar⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ www.en.wikipedia.org,2007

Politics

From the start of Rattanakosin era, 1782, Thailand's politics was under absolute monarchy. Since the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932, Thailand has had 17 constitutions and charters. Throughout this time, the form of government has ranged from military dictatorship to electoral democracy, but all governments have acknowledged a hereditary monarch as the head of state.

The 1997 Constitution was the first constitution to be drafted by a popularly-elected Constitutional Drafting Assembly, and was popularly called the "People's Constitution".

The 1997 Constitution created a bicameral legislature consisting of a 500-seat House of Representatives and a 200-seat Senate. For the first time in Thai history, both houses were directly elected. Many human rights are explicitly acknowledged, and measures were established to increase the stability of elected governments. The House was elected by the first-past-the-post system, where only one candidate with a simple majority could be elected in one constituency. The Senate was elected based on the province system, where one province can return more than one Senator depending on its population size. Members of House of Representatives served four-year terms, while Senators served six-year terms.

The court system included a constitutional court with jurisdiction over the constitutionality of parliamentary acts, royal decrees, and political matters.

The January 2001 general election, the first elections under the 1997 Constitution, was called the most open, corruption-free election in Thai history. The subsequent government was the first in Thai history to complete a 4 year term. The 2005 election had the highest voter turnout in Thai history and was noted for a marked reduction in vote-buying compared to previous elections.

A military junta overthrew the elected government of Thaksin Shinawatra on 19 September 2006. The junta abrogated the constitution, dissolved Parliament and the Constitutional Court, arrested several members of the government, declared martial law, and appointed General Surayud Chulanont as Prime Minister. The junta later wrote a highly abbreviated interim constitution and appointed a panel to draft a permanent constitution. The junta also appointed a 242-member legislature, called by one critic a "chamber of generals." The head of the junta was allowed to remove the Prime Minister at

any time. The legislature was not allowed to hold a vote of confidence against the Cabinet and the public was not allowed to file comments on bills.

Marital law was partially revoked in January 2007. The junta censors the media and has been accused of several other human rights violations. The junta has also banned all political activities and meetings⁵¹.

Thailand remains an active member of the regional Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Table 12: International rankings of Thailand

| Organization | Survey | Ranking |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Heritage Foundation/ <i>The Wall Street Journal</i> | Index of Economic Freedom | 71 out of 157 |
| <i>The Economist</i> | Worldwide quality-of-life index, 2005 | 42 out of 111 |
| Reporters Without Borders | Worldwide press freedom index | 122 out of 167 |
| Transparency International | Corruption Perceptions Index | 63 out of 163 |
| United Nations Development Programme | Human Development Index | 74 out of 177 |

Source: [www./en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), 2007

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

⁵¹ [www./en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org), 2007

BIOGRAPHY

Kuboon Charumanee was born in Khonkean and grown up in Mahasarakham since 1981. She received B.A. in English (2nd class Honors) from Mahasarakham University in 2003. After finished her bachelor's degree, she received a scholarship from Collage of Politics and Governances, Mahasarakham University to further her study in M.A. in Southeast Asian Studies, Faculty of Arts, at Chulalongkorn University. Her research area is the Impacts and Implications of Non- Traditional Security Issues on Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation” Focusing on cross border migration, human trafficking, spread of HIV/AIDS and Drug and environmental issues. After her graduation, she will start her career as a lecturer in Department of International Relations, at Collage of Politics and Governances, Mahasarakham University



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