INTERNATIONAL TOURISM AND SECURITY

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April 17, 2012

Old wars

- The traditional definition of security focuses on the threat or use of military force or economic coercion by other countries. The result is the violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity and the growing vulnerabilty of the target.

- In interstate wars, the military and civilian persons lose their lives, and the wars may last for years. The flow of people in the war zones discontinues and is restricted mostly to journalists and spions.

- Today, interstate wars are rare and are usually associated with civil wars (e.g. Somalia and Mali) or involve transnational communities (e.g. Kurds and Tuaregs).

New wars and local violence

- Today, the nature of violence has changed. Even the number of civil wars has declined since the 1990s.

- The dominant form of violence is local: conflicts among the ethnic political communities (e.g. Sudan and DR of Congo) or in urban contexts where the state control has failed and power has been usurped by warlords and criminal gangs).

- In violent environments, there are physical risks even for outsiders who may be caught in crossfire, killed by terrorists or kidnapped for ransom (Karachi, Sao Paulo, Johannesburg, Mexican drug wars, Central American street gangs). The motives of violence are often economic.

- Local violence exists seldom in isolation, but is connected with refugee flows, diseases, and famines. The crises are not only political and economic, but also humanitarian. In such conditions, inoculation is a safety measure.

- There are various precautions against physical risks; one may take travel insurance, governments and other agencies issue travel advisories on places to be avoided, and cautious personal behavior is recommended.

- Sometimes a tourist can become an innocent victim as happened in the terrorist attack in a Mumbai hotel.

Comprehensive definition of security

- A comprehensive definition of security has gained ground since the 1970s. Security risks are not caused only by external or internal agencies with malign intentions, but also by global forces, such as environmental crises.

- Environmental problems reduce the quality of life, demographic imbalances cause (il)legal flows of people across borders, and national and cultural identies are jeopardized.

- The comprehensive definition of security has a broader view of the social conditions and human existence than the focus on physical risks.

The role of borders

- In the comprehensive definition of security, a pertinent question is what threats are activated ("securitized") by various actors as one cannot take the entire range of risks seriously.

- The role of "gatekeepers" also changes; customs officers and border guards are able to control the flow of people across the borders, but environmental threats must be tackled by policy means.

- The meaning of the borders change; in addition to territorial markers, there political, economic, and cultural borders which do not necessarily overlap and may be shifting. Economic globalization and multiculturalisn affect border definition.

More tourists to more places

- Tourism is the fastest growing industry and is becoming more diverse; tourists want to travel to new places and gain new experiences, even adventures. It is also much cheaper to fly even at the expense of the greenhouse gases (and economic conflicts between the EU, China, and the US).

- These general trends may increase risks faced by tourists, but also put pressure on the local natural and cultural milieus.

- In effect, there is a two-way street between tourism and security. Historically, a tourist went to an "environment" – a milieu and landscape as a "must" – and as a part of the "grant tour".

Sustainable tourism

- Today, the tourist is expected to also keep the nature and resources in mind, thus reducing the risk of negative environmental impact. The "democratic tourist" has also responsibilities to nature and human communities whose neglect would undermine security over the long term.

- Therefore, it is increasing interest in sustainable tourism or ecotourism (cf. Costa Rica). The idea is spreading, but it unlikely to become a mass phenomenon unless there are quantitative restrictions (cf. Bhutan) or higher prices are charged for travel, accommodation, and services.