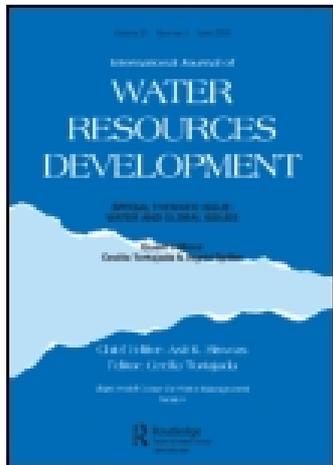


This article was downloaded by: [Cecilia Tortajada]

On: 23 June 2015, At: 06:34

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number:
1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street,
London W1T 3JH, UK



International Journal of Water Resources Development

Publication details, including instructions for
authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cijw20>

Introduction

Reizo Utagawa

Published online: 21 Jul 2010.

To cite this article: Reizo Utagawa (1999) Introduction, International Journal of
Water Resources Development, 15:4, 381-382, DOI: [10.1080/07900629948664](https://doi.org/10.1080/07900629948664)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07900629948664>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any

form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>



Introduction

REIZO UTAGAWA

Managing Director, Nippon Foundation, Sen-Paku Shinko Building, 1-15-16 Taranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105, Japan

With the fall of the Soviet Union, the resulting end of the Cold War and the waning of East–West tensions, a new type of international and regional peace and security issue that is primarily non-military in character is attracting increasing international attention from scholars and decision makers. The conventional military dimensions of peace and security still continue to exist, but this concern is now significantly lower than what has been witnessed in recent decades. To a significant extent this lowering of tensions has been compensated by unconventional security threats posed by emerging new concerns that are related to economic factors such as population growth, accelerated environmental degradation and mismanagement of scarce natural resources.

As the world becomes more and more complex and globalization become an increasingly important international, regional and national force, traditional peace and security considerations are becoming more ambiguous and amorphous with the passage of each year. Since unconventional security issues are gaining momentum, it is necessary to broaden our understanding of the concept of security to encompass ideas such as threats due to continued environmental degradation and resources scarcity which could endanger global and regional peace.

Considered historically, these emerging factors did not generally have direct and immediate linkages to traditional peace and security issues, as exemplified by the near total dominance of military considerations during the Cold War. However, if these emerging issues do not receive adequate international attention, and/or their potential impacts on regional peace and security continue to be ignored, the magnitude of the problems they could create is likely to intensify and thus threaten regional peace in the coming decades. Such neglects may multiply significantly the number of potential threats that are likely to be witnessed on a global basis in the near future.

Regrettably, very few people have realized the importance of these new and emerging factors as a serious threat to future national, regional and international peace and even fewer have a clearer understanding of where, how and when such threats could adversely impact on the continuation of existing regional peace and security. This clearly is an unsatisfactory situation that needs to be improved.

One area where the potential risk to regional stability is quite high is the improper management of international rivers and lakes, that is, those water bodies that are shared by two or more countries. At present, all the exclusively national sources of water that could be economically used have been developed

or are in the process of development in most countries. New sources of water that could be economically and sustainably developed have become scarce, even though total water demands in nearly all countries are continuing to increase. It is now an established fact that for a large number of arid and semi-arid countries, international rivers and lakes are the only major new sources of water which could still be economically developed. Such sources of water have not been developed in the past because of the political and institutional complexities associated with their utilization. However, as water scarcities in individual countries become more and more acute, certain countries may very well decide, often as a result of internal political pressures, that they have no other alternative but to use that water, even though no agreements have been reached between the co-basin countries on its allocation. Herein could lie a major threat to regional political stability.

The ever-increasing competition for the use of limited supplies of freshwater between neighbouring countries could lead to the development of serious political tension between them. Equally, discharge of the pollutants in international rivers which could affect current and/or future water uses could sour relations between the co-basin countries concerned. There are indications that such tensions are already occurring in many international river basins in certain parts of the world.

Fortunately, such problems do not surface overnight: they simmer for a number of years on the back burner before they reach critical proportions, then requiring urgent attention. There are many international rivers and lakes where the problems have still not become critical. I strongly believe that by raising the possibility now of such potential conflicts over the use of the water of international rivers and lakes, we can increase the awareness of senior decision makers, people of the river basins concerned and international organizations, in terms of the importance and critical nature of the issues, which, if ignored or neglected, could seriously affect regional peace and stability.

I am convinced that one of the major issues of the 21st century will be the availability of adequate quantity and quality of freshwater. Within this overall context, we need to see how the waters of international rivers and lakes could be peacefully and sustainably used to improve the lifestyle of the people living in such basins, and also to protect the associated environment and ecosystems. For these reasons, the Nippon Foundation is supporting a major project to assess the state of the world's waters. Led by Prof. Asit K. Biswas, President of the Third World Centre for Water Management in Mexico City, this project, for the first time, will produce a comprehensive assessment of the global freshwater issues on a scientific and multidisciplinary basis. Regrettably such assessments are not available at present, as a result of which rational decisions, especially at regional and international levels, often cannot be taken in a proper and timely manner.

As part of this overall project, one of the first documents produced is the current report on the assessment of major international rivers and lakes. Using the latest satellite data, advances in computer technology and the most up-to-date information available on national boundaries, Prof. Biswas's project has produced a scientifically reliable assessment of the world's international rivers and lakes on a scientific basis for the first time. Such reliable information simply did not exist previously. It is my fervent hope that the results of this assessment will go a long way to contribute to the peaceful and sustainable development of the waters of the vast majority of the world's international rivers and lakes.