

Human Security Concepts, Approaches and Debates in Southeast Asia

A paper presented at the

Fifth Pan-European International Relations Conference
on
“Constructing World Order”

The Hague, Netherlands
September 9-11, 2004

by
Zarina Othman, PhD

Lecturer
Programme of Strategic Studies and International Relations
Centre for History, Politics and Strategy
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Bangi, 43600 Selangor Darul Ehsan
MALAYSIA
Tel: (6 03) 8921-3267 (Direct line)
(6 03) 8921- 3646 (Administrative Office)
013-639-2886 (Mobile)
Fax: (6 03) 8921-3290
Email: zo@pkrisc.cc.ukm.my
zothman@du.edu

Abstract

The end of the Cold War not only has resulted in many non-traditional security issues becoming a focus in international relations, but it also set the stage for a comprehensive re-evaluation of the whole concept of security. Although the long-held Realist and Neo-realist view has been that the overarching goal of security is the survival of the state, it has become clear that most victims of both traditional and non-traditional security threats are the individual people who live in a given country. The UN took the lead in spotlighting this view in their *1994 Annual Human Development Report*. The concept of human security acknowledges that basic human needs and human rights, along with social equity--with strong support from the state's governing systems, policies, and laws-- is essential for stability and security at any level of society, from local to global. In this paper I will present a summary of how this idea of human security has evolved so far within Southeast Asia, especially within the ASEAN nations, and how new approaches and debates regarding related issues are emerging there. Emphasis will be on the logical conclusion that peace must be sought concurrently with efforts to improve the security and well-being of the individual human beings in each country.

Keywords: human security, non-traditional threats and peace.

Human Security Concepts, Approaches and Debates in Southeast Asia

(Draft only)

(Please do not cite without author's permission)

Introduction

The end of the Cold War in 1989 not only marked the end of rivalry between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, but it set the stage for security scholars to do an in-depth re-evaluation of the whole concept of security. Before the end of that Cold War era, the focus of national security was understood to be the protection of the state, which meant that states must be well-equipped with a military infrastructure adequate to defend their national boundaries from foreign attack. The threat of attack could be real or imagined, but either way the result would be a military buildup.

It was simply assumed that if a state continued to exist, by preparing for and surviving threats and attacks, that state would be considered “secure” and would automatically be providing security for their people. The sad truth is that the people in a state often are anything but secure, regardless of how strong the state’s military preparedness is, or how successful the state/country has been in thwarting attacks from foreign enemies. In fact, in some cases the people’s insecurity is being caused by the power of the state itself-- whether directly and intentionally, or not-- as for example when a state’s policies and laws discriminate against certain minority groups, or when representatives of the state mistreat or discriminate against certain groups or individuals in defiance of the law, and are allowed to get away with it. In other cases, it is the inability of the state —whether through ineptitude, unwillingness, or lack of needed resources and infrastructure-- to provide conditions of safety, health, justice, basic human

rights, and general opportunity to receive an education and to develop the abilities that lead to economic and social well-being.

Another group of non-military threats do actually come from outside the state, and some also involve cooperation between outside forces and people within the state. These kinds of threats include environmental degradation, forced migration, contagious diseases, famine, ethnic conflicts, and civil strife in general.

In addition, there is the increasing role of so-called “non-state actors,” who do not represent any sovereign state and feel free to ignore national borders as they carry out their legal and/or illegal activities. They may be acting out of either economic or political motives, or both. The sources of these threats include transnational organized crime syndicates (who traffick in humans, drugs, and weapons), and international terrorist groups. It is usually difficult or impossible to hold them accountable for their actions, and in general they have little interest in the common good. Instead they focus on their own gain of profits and power, sometimes hiding behind a specific cause they promote at the expense of everyone and everything else. They are capable of severely threatening national, regional, and global security through a complex web of cause-effect relationships. (Even transnational corporations may fit into this category. They are non-state actors of a different sort, in that their motives and activities are usually more benign. However, the fact that they are able to work around efforts of individual national governments to monitor and control their activities means that they may present some unknown degree of threat to the security of any given nation.)

Thus, the end of the Cold War has allowed us to focus more on various kinds of non-military security threats. Addressing those threats has become more prominent on

many security agendas. The fact that non-state actors play such an important role in creating *insecurity* in today's world leads to the conclusion that to obtain peace, security, and stability requires much more than the mere absence of war. What's more, the biggest concern today may be the increasing threats to the survival of the whole human race, not only the survival of states and their ruling regimes.

This state of affairs therefore leads us further to conclude that our traditional security measures are not well-equipped to counter all these relatively new concerns that threaten our security. We need to reassess our definitions of security and our security measures on a global scale, to create a strong new framework from which to address a full range of potential and actual threats.

The shifting of the security paradigm from focusing on the state to focusing on the human beings within the state began to attract attention with the end of the Cold War, especially after the United Nations published its *1994 Annual Human Development Report*, in which the term "human security" was presented. One succinct definition of human security is "freedom from fear and freedom from want,"¹ which has become a well-known global slogan since then. The UN concept of human security has focused on putting "humans first" in developing long-term security strategies, and in considering the impact of various actions and activities involved in implementing those strategies. Such a focus forced people to think of more alternatives for reaching security goals, in an effort to minimize or reduce—perhaps even eliminate—negative consequences for the individual and groups of people who live in this world, regardless of their nationalities and background, and also actually make up what we call as states.

¹ UNDP. *Human Development Report 1994*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Many developed countries, including Canada, Norway, the Netherlands, and Japan, have adopted this newer thinking about human security, deciding to focus on providing security to their people first as they draft their respective foreign and domestic policies. In the larger Asia-Pacific region, Japan and Thailand have been the major champions of a human security approach in their foreign as well as domestic policy implementation. Other than in these two countries, there appears to be little acknowledgment of human security concepts, and thus little thinking about how to approach it in the region. Nevertheless, closer examination reveals that the subregion of Southeast Asia has at least adopted the Neo-liberal approach known as “comprehensive security.” Furthermore, the 1997-1998 Asian economic crisis, gave rise to some interest in the human security approach in the region, because of the plight of many individuals hit hard by the crisis. Countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia are among the countries that have been forced to deal with the additional human poverty and misery that spread rapidly throughout the region. They are more ready now to see how the fallout from an economic crisis affects their whole country’s well-being and security.

This paper discusses human security concepts, approaches, and issues now being debated within the context of Southeast Asia, especially among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries.² A central theme of the paper is that although human security is a relatively new concept, the SE Asian sub-region has long been influenced by the notion that “security begins at home.” Political stability, economic development, and social harmony have been considered important elements to ensure national security, even though there has been little systematic effort to integrate

² SE Asia consists of eleven states. All, except the newly independent Timor Leste, are ASEAN members.

these elements into policy decisions. Yet, the countries in the region continue to perceive states, rather than people, to be the major object of protection. Human rights issues, for example, are generally given less attention than development issues, and development policies do not generally include much about the quality of life of the human beings involved.

Having said that, this paper first discusses the SE Asian concept of “comprehensive security,” which has sparked much debate in the region, though it falls short of including all aspects of the human security focus. Second, the paper explores the SE Asian human security approach itself, how it has begun to evolve and some specific projects, issues and policies involved with it so far. Finally, the paper concludes its discussion with some suggestions on what needs to be done to promote and strengthen the concept in SE Asia.

The SE Asian Concept of Comprehensive Security

Like developing states in other parts of the world, SE Asian states have been especially concerned about their sovereignty, and so have mostly defined their security in a conventional way. However, most of their security threats have actually originated from within, from domestic issues and from the encounter of those issues (such as poverty and lack of economic opportunity for individuals and for certain groups) with outside forces that have insidiously infiltrated the general population.³

³ Literature on the security of developing countries focuses on internal issues that can have security implications. See for example: Abdul Monem Al-Mashat. *National Security in the Third World*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985); Caroline Thomas. *In Search of Security: The Third World in International Relations*. (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. 1987); Brian L. Job, ed. *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of the Third States*. (boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner, 1992); Mohamed Ayoob. *The Third World Security Predicament: State making, Regional Conflict and the International System*. (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner, 1995).

Other security issues in the region result from long-standing political disputes, both with neighboring countries and with groups within a state. This category of issues has claimed most of the attention of those leaders who are most attached to the conventional, or traditional, state-focused security approach.

Some of the Unresolved Conflicts in Southeast Asia

- The claim of the Philippines to the Malaysian states of Sabah and its adjacent waters.
- Conflicting claims by China, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and the Philippines to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.
- Border disputes between China and Vietnam
- Boundary dispute between Indonesia and Vietnam over their demarcation line on the continental shelf near Natuna Island, in the South China Sea.
- Boundary dispute between Vietnam and Malaysia over their offshore demarcation line.
- The Aceh independence movement in northern Sumatra of Indonesia.
- The dispute between Malaysia and Singapore over the ownership of the island of Pulau Batu Putih (Pedra Branca) in the Strait of Johore.
- The pro-democracy rebellions and separatist armed movements in Myanmar.

Source: Adapted from Desmond Ball, "Arms and Affluence: Military Acquisitions in the Asia-Pacific Region." *International Security*, (Winter 1993/1994), pp. 78-112.

What makes SE Asia different from other developing regions is that it adopted a comprehensive concept of security as early as 1987, before the end of the Cold War. With this approach countries of the region have looked at external and internal threats-- both military and non-military-- that have the potential to destabilize their world and put their survival as nations at risk.⁴ This SE Asian comprehensive security concept is an expanded version of the traditional Realist concept of security, in that it considers threats

⁴ Although their security definition are somewhat different defined as the survival of the regimes (see Ayoob)

caused not only by “high politics” such as military attacks, but also threats originating from the arena of “low politics, “ such as economic issues.⁵

The comprehensive security concept was originally coined by Japan in the 1970s. Being a state made up of several islands, Japan had discovered a smart way to reduce its vulnerability and not to depend too much on other countries, especially in matters related to its survival. As reported by one respected security analyst in a 1980 publication,

“Japan’s confidence in the efficacy of its omni-directional foreign policy had been severely shaken by the US defeat in Vietnam, and the oil shock of 1973. Painfully aware of its dependence on overseas materials and energy resources, the Japanese developed a new concept of “comprehensive security,” designed to preempt economic as well as strategic threats to national security.”⁶

Japan therefore has interlinked its internal and external security issues, seeing them also as closely related to regional concerns. Their comprehensive security went farther than the traditional Western Realists’ view of security, and yet it did not discount the importance of defense or territorial security. “At a minimum level, comprehensive security seeks to arrive at common and shared definitions of threat, such as threats caused by destruction of the environment, dealing with nuclear waste, unstable energy sources, and economic-political-social problems that threaten not only the country involved, but the stability of the region as a whole.”⁷

⁵ Realists view security in general as “high politics,” and other national issues as “low politics,” and thus it has been difficult for them to consider as important the many complex “peripheral” issues related to the security agenda.

⁶ Comprehensive National Security Group, *Report on Comprehensive National Security*, July 2, 1980, pp.: 19-24 as cited in Alan DuPont, “New Dimension of Security,” p. 35. In Denny Roy, ed. *The New Security Agenda in the Asia Pacific Region* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

⁷ Kurt Radtke, “Issues Affecting the Stability of the Region, in particular that of Japan, East and SE Asia Viewed at the Regional Level.” In Kurt Radtke and Raymond Feddema, eds. *Comprehensive Security in Asia: Views from Asia and the West on a Changing Security Environment*. (Boston: Brill, 2000), p. 2.

In the mid-1980s, a decade after the Japanese introduced its comprehensive security concept, the ASEAN member states adopted “comprehensive security.”⁸ As in Japan, the idea of comprehensive security is broader than the more traditional concept, including “high” as well as “low” political issues. It goes beyond the traditional threats that come in a military form, or even in the form of internal violence and disorder, such as that which arises out of ethnic conflicts. It includes other issues such as illicit drug trafficking, maritime piracy, famine, environmental pollution, illegal immigration, illicit drug and weapons trafficking, and trafficking in human beings--to name just a few--as threats to the stability of the region. The SE Asian concept of comprehensive security thus acknowledges the potential of both internal and external sources, military and nonmilitary issues, as threats to their survival.

At the same time, comprehensive security does not neglect the importance of military security.⁹ The external threats in the region are considered, including the overlapping claims of the Spratly and Paracel archipelagoes in the South China Sea, nuclear issues in North Korea, the impact of economic growth issues (e.g., illegal immigration), and conflicting interests between India and China. Consistent with the notion of comprehensive security, SE Asian leaders have begun to understand that “security begins at home;” that “we have to be strong on the inside in order to be stronger

⁸ Track II institutions have also played a crucial role in the concept into the forefront of ASEAN security agenda. These include Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) and Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP).

⁹ Others have also adopted a liberal perspective of security, such as Common Security (originated in Europe) and Cooperative Security (developed in Canada). Cooperative security is broader and more flexible than comprehensive or common security. It recognizes the value of existing bilateral and balance-of-power arrangements in contributing to regional security. The key focus of cooperative security is the habit of having dialogue and moving toward inclusive participation in addressing any given conflict. See David Dewitt, “Common, Comprehensive and Cooperative Security.” *The Pacific Review* 7, (1994), 31, pp. 1-15.

on the outside.” Singapore, for example, adopted the concept of “total defense.” Indonesia has a concept called “*ketahanan nasional*,” while Malaysia has realized the importance of domestic issues, and as early as 1983 its government officially declared illicit drug trafficking to be a threat to national security, at a time when most other countries were still struggling to understand how illicit drugs and related issues could possibly affect a nation as a whole, not just the individuals who are directly involved. To show its seriousness, Malaysia has adopted a mandatory death penalty for convicted drug traffickers.¹⁰

All of these countries are focused on domestic matters as important to meet their national security goals, and those goals generally include political stability, economic well-being and social harmony.¹¹ Preserving the territory is still a main objective of national security for these countries, recognizing that they are still vulnerable to both internal conflict and external intervention. Therefore, their responses are multidimensional in that they encompass political, legal, socio-economic, military and diplomatic measures—and inevitably must include cooperation with other countries for bilateral and multilateral security, as well as cooperation regionally. Although comprehensive security is common among SE Asian states, with political stability, economic development and social harmony continuing to be important elements of their survival, they do not have a common perception of external threats.¹² This is not

¹⁰ However, until today illicit drug (*dadah*) is still a major problem and a threat to Malaysia’s national security.

¹¹ Muthiah Alagappa, “Comprehensive Security: Interpretations in ASEAN Countries.” In Robert Scalapino, et. al., eds. *Asian Security Issues: Regional and Global* (San Francisco, CA.: University of California, Berkeley, 1988).

¹² Carolina Hernandez, “Comparative Security Needs in the SE Asian and Pacific Regions,” *Disarmament*, (1990), 23, #2, pp.: 100-101.

surprising, given the fact that there is no one definition agreed upon among these countries for the concept of security. Thus, it is not “one size fits all.”

Reviewing the literature on comprehensive security, one finds that several scholars have incorporated the notion of “people’s security” when discussing SE Asian comprehensive security. In one essay by Mohamad Jawhar Hassan there is provided another overview of the concept of comprehensive security, suggesting that it should consider a wide variety of issues, which is consistent with the wide diversity found among the nations in the region.¹³ He proposed that the concept of comprehensive security should encompass the security of individual persons and their families and communities, as well as the security of the state.¹⁴ Thus, a threat to the well-being of individual human beings is ultimately considered a threat to comprehensive security of the state, signaling that comprehensive security includes interdependence among various dimensions of society, and the security of a state is not assured until it is secure and resilient in every dimension

In a similar vein, Jim Rolfe has also looked at the linkage between national and regional concepts of comprehensive security. Comprehensive security includes political and social stability, economic development, migration, and the health of the population.¹⁵ Regional comprehensive security can be achieved, he said, when states consider each other’s needs and cooperate. Nearly all problems interlink with each other and efforts to solve them mutually reinforce each other. He suggested formal and informal institutions

¹³ Mohamad Jawhar Hassan. "The Concept of Comprehensive Security." In Jawhar Hassan and Thangam Ramnath, eds. *Conceptualizing Asia-Pacific*. (KL: ISIS, 1996).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁵ Jim Rolfe. "Pursuing Comprehensive Security: Linkages between National and Regional Concepts, Some Applications." In Mohamad Jawhar Hassan and Thangam Ramnath, eds. *Conceptualizing Asia-Pacific Security*. (KL: ISIS, 1996).

as means to improve security, and further proposed that security should be focused on the individual as a member of a society, aiming to produce a society that meets the needs of its members.

In short, although the comprehensive security concept enlarges security to include the nonmilitary issues, few scholars and writers have actually specified that individual human beings should be the focus of security rather than states. The overview of comprehensive security shows that ensuring the survival of the state continues to prevail. The ASEAN group has two most important principles regarding regional security, “sovereignty” and a “non-interference” policy (the latter referring to the agreed-upon policy of not intervening in each other’s domestic affairs). These principles together have served as a “gatekeeper” when considering new and different views of policy-making. What the region seems to be having trouble understanding is that the growing interconnectedness in the world--the growing interdependence between and among states, both poor and rich, developed and developing countries—mandates a different approach. Issues that are important for one country so often have a spillover impact onto other countries. Likewise, increasingly many issues have impacted the general population more than the ruling powers.

Although threats to stability in the region include non-military sources, little has been discussed about how any of these threats specifically have more impact on this particular region more than others. In other words, the concept remains underdeveloped in many ways. The primacy of the state and its territory still dominates, even though states in the region have come to see security issues somewhat differently than those who have the Realist perspective.

SE Asia and Human Security

In this paper, human security is defined as first acknowledging and protecting human rights; and second, as meeting the basic needs of all the people. By human rights, it means the freedom to participate in all legal aspects of community life, including government; and to express their culture, practice their religion, and integrate other manifestations of their identity with their daily life. It includes the granting and protection of other rights necessary to ensure freedom from fear of threats to their human survival, health and well-being. By basic needs, it means adequate food and nutrition; clean air and water; sanitation and other measures that protect from the spread of disease; shelter that is safe, protects from the elements, and provides enough space and privacy for each occupant to live healthfully; basic health care and education; and the opportunity to create, belong to, and participate in family and community groups. It also means the opportunity for each person to engage in legal work activities that develop and use his or her abilities for personal economic sustenance, while contributing to the society. It means adequate care by others during the most vulnerable times of life—in infancy, old age, and when incapacitated by illness, injury or disability.

Fully discussing human security issues in SE Asia is currently quite difficult, for several reasons. First, resources for study and research are limited, and access to what is available is not allowed to everyone. In addition, because countries in this region have been generally slow to place human security on their general security agenda (except for Thailand, which is currently the only country in the region that has taken membership in the Human Security Network, a group that works on the issues that affect human

security).¹⁶ The recent rise of many non-military issues, such as the Asian financial crisis, Indonesian forest fires, the Bali terrorist bombing, and the outbreak of SARS, has called attention to the inadequacy of the entrenched combination paradigm of traditional and comprehensive security in the region, and this has made discussion of the issues very sensitive and controversial. It is hoped that this reluctance to discuss the issues will soon give way to the urgent need for free and open discussion, in the interest of resolving differences. Without such discussion it is impossible for cooperative efforts to be effective in strengthening stability and security in the region.

In this next section I focus on three major points. First, I discuss the definition and approaches of human security within the context of ASEAN; second, I explore the major issues concerning human security that currently are being debated within the ASEAN; and finally, I examine how the human security concept and approach has so far had an impact on state policy-making in the region.

The Evolution of the Human Security Approach in SE Asia

The Asian financial crisis, 1997-1998, appears to have served as the turning point which brought the issues of human security to the attention of a wider group of Asian scholars.¹⁷ Major affected countries in the region include Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand. Although it began in one country, it quickly spread, and the impact was felt regionally. The effect on individual people and families was strong, and

¹⁶ See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand. <http://www.mfa.go.th>. Human security network includes NGOS and experts, who participate in the ministerial meetings. Members are: Austria, Canada, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, and South Africa, other than Thailand.

¹⁷ The crisis, which began in Thailand, started as monetary crisis and then became financial crisis, and sometimes referred in a bigger context, economic crisis.

it has caused tension between and among different sectors in the society.¹⁸ The impact has included a rising unemployment rate, declining productivity and consumption, a widening gap between rich and poor, rising inflation, etc.—all of which in one way or another has worked against the well-being of the people and caused severe human insecurity. As people were desperately for the means of survival, population movement across boundaries increased. In some countries, ethnic tensions also have increased, as seen in Ambon and Lombok of Indonesia. “*Reformasi*,” or pressure for political change, and street demonstrations are seen in Malaysia and Indonesia, threatening the stability of the regime in power.¹⁹

Thailand, the first and only country in the region that has officially adopted the approach of human security, has called for a common approach to address the issues of human security in a balanced and comprehensive way.²⁰ Thailand has defined it in a way that is similar to the United Nations’ original definition--promoting “freedom from want and freedom from fear.” According to this policy, the government of Thailand is committed to eradicating poverty and to improving the quality living of its people. In addition, Thailand has acknowledged that HIV/AIDS is a serious threat not only in their country but also in the Greater Mekong sub-region (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia) where prostitution continues to rise.²¹ Thailand’s effort extended to the regional level when it proposed the concept of human security to ASEAN. Thailand has argued that poverty, illiteracy, and economic dislocation can all lead to violence, rebellion, instability, and

¹⁸ Withaya Sucharithanarugse, “The Concept of ‘human security’ extended: ‘Asianizing’ the Paradigm,” in William Tow, Ramesh Thakur, and In-Taek Hyun. (Eds.). *Asia’s Emerging Regional Order: reconciling Traditional and Human Security*. (Tokyo; UN University Press), p. 49.

¹⁹ Sung Han Kim, “Human Security and regional Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific,” in *Korea and World Affairs* (1998). 22, 1-4, pp. 95-107.

²⁰ David Capie and Paul Evans. 2002. *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon*. (Singapore: ISEAS), p. 144.

²¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand. <http://www.mfa.go.th>

general insecurity, which threatens the region as a whole. It suggested that ASEAN should adopt a more people-centered approach to development. ASEAN responded positively in the 1998 at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) in Manila, where it created an ASEAN-PMC Caucus on Human Security. Later another ASEAN-PMC Caucus was established, on Social Safety Nets.²²

Some Asian scholars have argued that within their region human security debates are by definition actually a criticism of the SE Asian concept of comprehensive security. Mely Anthony has drawn attention with her comparison of human security with comprehensive security. She pointed out that the former is more concerned with “what” [the referent object of security is] , while the latter has focused more on the “who” of security.²³ Issues that are being confronted by ASEAN members illustrate that there still is no single regional approach to human security. Rather, based on the ASEAN Vision 2020, its human security has focused mostly on the larger society rather than on the individual people within the society.²⁴ However, human security in the region is coming to be understood as “freedom from want, freedom from fear, and freedom for future generations”--a definition put forth by the UN. Interestingly, ASEAN’s idea of “security begins at home” has led them to begin looking at ways economic development can strengthen countries’ internal security. Although it did not focus on development for the people, the approach is to empower states to be able to provide more freedom for developing and taking advantage of economic opportunities.

²² Capie and Evans, *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon*, p. 144.

²³ Mely Caballero-Anthony, “Human Security and Comprehensive Security in ASEAN,” in *The Indonesian Quarterly*, 28, 4:

²⁴ The perspectives on security include all the fundamental needs and vital interests of **human beings--** society and **the** state; the political, social, economic, cultural, environmental, personal **and** physical **climate of that state and society** (national resilience and national security); the mutuality and interdependence of all dimensions of security; and threats from **both** the domestic and external environments.

Amitav Acharya is another scholar who has outlined the differences between comprehensive and human security. First, he says that comprehensive security focuses on human needs, while human security focuses on human rights. Second, comprehensive security focuses on “which threats to security?” while human security focuses on “whose security?” Third, comprehensive security focuses on stability and order, while human security focuses on justice and emancipation.²⁵ Comparing the two, it is clear that human rights is the main missing element in comprehensive security. Although the concept of human rights is still not well-defined, it is slowly gaining acceptance among scholars. The awareness of the need for human security has been increasing, due to such things as the prosecution of war crimes; an increase in general violence among people around the world; and human suffering caused by landmines, small arms and the proliferation of child soldiers. In human security, protecting the dignity and safety of the people is seen as an end in itself, while in comprehensive security protecting the people serves as a means for achieving national security. He suggested that democracy and human rights should be essential components of human security.

Peter Chalk, in discussing “Gray Area Phenomena,” (GAP)--what he defines as “threats without enemies”--argued that such threats are events and practices, (e.g., illegal immigration, the sex trade, piracy, illicit drug trafficking, famine, transnational spread of disease, etc.) that are not controlled by states. These threats may be carried out either for political or economic purposes, but either way they undermine the stability, cohesion and

²⁵ Amitav Acharya, “Human Security in the Asia Pacific: Puzzle, Panacea, or Peril?” <http://www.cpsindia.org/globalhumansecurity/puzzlepanacea.htm>

overall fabric of a society.²⁶ He argued that the impact of these threats is felt most by the people rather than by the state. Globalization and interdependence have provided advantages to non-state actors—thereby also causing many problems for the rest of society.²⁷ Therefore, Chalk has proposed more involvement of NGOs as well as civilian law enforcement, among other things, to help eliminate or reduce such threats.

Focusing specifically on the Asia-Pacific region, Sung Han-Kim defined human security as including a lack of economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights.²⁸ “At a minimum, human security requires that basic human needs are met, and acknowledges that sustained economic development, human rights and fundamental freedoms...[are required for] lasting peace and stability.”²⁹ Based on this definition, Sung attempted to show how the recent Asian financial crisis has become a threat to human security. He proposed regional cooperation in forming knowledge communities, building coalitions among like-minded countries, and taking preventive measures, as a way to help solve their problems.

In their essay Woosang Kim and In-Taek Hyun agreed that the concept of security should include environmental, economic, societal and political security.³⁰ In other words, they have incorporated comprehensive security in their discussion. However, security should focus on the individual human as the unit of analysis. Therefore, issues such as human rights and the welfare of the people who live in a state deserve to be given more

²⁶ Peter Chalk, “Grey Area Phenomena and Human Security.” In William Tow, Ramesh Thakur and In Taek-Hyun, eds. *Asia’s Emerging Regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security* (Tokyo: UN University Press, 2000), p. 124-127

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137

²⁸ Sung Han Kim, “Human Security and Regional Cooperation.” *Korea and World Affairs*, 23, (Spring 1999), 31, p. 96.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Woosang Kim and Taek Hyun, “Towards a New Concept of Security.” In William Tow, Ramesh Thakur and Taek Hyun, eds. *Asia’s Emerging regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security*. (Tokyo: UN University Press, 2000), p. 33.

attention. Threats to human security occur when quality of life is degraded.³¹ Conversely, improving human security means upgrading the quality of life—through economic growth, improving access to resources, and social and political empowerment. They have also shown how threats to human security can spread across national borders. Calling their approach the “human realist” way, they analyze their definition as being a combination of human security and traditional security. Their key human security issues include human rights, democracy, and market economy.³² As far as democracy is concerned, they have put forward an argument that although democracy, as compared to other political ideologies, will promote human rights, still the installation of democratic institutions in a society does not automatically guarantee all human rights, especially the rights of minorities.

Sources of human security have originated in underdevelopment and chronic poverty; human rights abuses by the state apparatus; internal communal strife; and environmental degradation. All of these sources affect all human beings-- men and women, children and the elderly, the majority and minority groups.³³ Dewi Fortuna Anwar also criticizes the way that religions and traditions have been used by many groups to discriminate against women. Second, the author cites a lack of resources to reduce the problems, lack of important skills; and lack of institutional capacities as causes for the problem. Third, she contends that there is little political will to address human security problems, and in some cases states themselves are the source of the threats. Fourth, it is difficult to shift from the focus on the state to a focus on human security. Fifth, in general, civil society remains relatively weak Sixth, the ability of the

³¹ Ibid., p. 39.

³² Ibid, p. 41.

³³ Dewi, p. 538

international community to promote and to protect human security within national boundaries continues to be limited. The problem with a state-centered security approach is that they tend to neglect human rights, an important element in human security, or at least see human rights as less important.³⁴

Dewi Fortuna Anwar commented that human rights have often been regarded as alien and as a challenge to the supremacy of the state (the ruling regime). She sees human rights and human security as the two sides of the same coin. She further argued that human security can only be assured if human rights are guaranteed. She divides human rights into four categories: civil, political, social and economic rights. She did not reject the idea that most countries are trying to meet the basic needs of their citizens, and she acknowledged pursuing economic development as one of the important components of human security. Finally she points to the major role played by NGOs in helping to provide security for both the individual and society.

Human Security Issues

The difficulty of making all issues as related to human security is another challenge. Sadako Ogata once contended that human security could be a term that runs the risk of including nothing or everything.³⁵ In general, human security issues extend from human rights issues, development issues, human trafficking issues, environmental issues, etc. In Southeast Asia, although most issues revolve around human, they do not categorize them as human security issues.

³⁴ Dewi Fortuna Anwar. "Human Security: An Intractable Problem in Asia." In Alagappa, Muthiah. 2003. *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*. (Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press), pp.: 536-567.

³⁵ Keynote Speech by Sadako Ogata at the International Symposium on Human Security (28 July 2000. (Tokyo).

Looking at the weaker ASEAN members, resource conflict has become human security issues.³⁶ Another important spill over impact in the region is trafficking in women and children. Currently, the almost sovereign states of Southeast Asia have served at once as a source of trafficked people, as an area through which trafficked persons are transported, and as a destination for those who are trafficked. Trafficking continue to involves the ongoing exploitation of the victims where they would be manipulated and become the victims of the syndicates, organized or disorganized.³⁷ The United States government, in statistics published in 2002, estimated that the largest number of victims of trafficking—about 225,000--comes from Southeast Asia, and another 150,000 are from the countries of South Asia³⁸. These numbers are likely to have increased during these past two years. Certainly this is a problem that should be considered a threat to all of humanity. Especially we should be concerned about the children--anyone under 18—who are trafficked and forced into work in the sex industry and other exploitive and slavery like jobs, such as forced labor, forced prostitutions, pornography, forced begging, forced domestic maids and other unthinkable jobs that can endanger the health, morals as well their safety.

Human Security Policy

One of the major research projects that involved empirical human security approaches is called, “Whose security Counts: Participatory Research on Armed

³⁶ Kamal Malhotra, “Resource Conflict in the Lower Mekong,” in *Peace Review*. 11, 3.387-392.

³⁷ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

http://www.undoc.org/unodc/trafficking_victim_consent.html (visited on 5/10/2003)

³⁸ CRS report for Congress. *Trafficking in Women and Children: The US and International Response*. (March 18 2002).

Violence and Human Insecurity in Southeast Asia.”³⁹ The project started in 2001, focusing on the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Myanmar (Burma) and Cambodia. The research has looked at the impact of weapons on civilians (human security). Mainly their research seek to understand how people are affected by small weapons. The use of weapons here include violence to resource exploitation, dam-related development to state and insurgency-directed bloodshed. The study highlights the participatory methods for better understanding the implications of small weapons misuse on people security.

Another is “Human Security in Southeast Asia: A Case Study of Illicit Drug Trafficking as a Transnational Threat in Myanmar (Burma).”⁴⁰ Based on the primary and secondary interview, the research explored why Myanmar continue to produce illicit drug (mainly opiate) and how this can be a threat to the regional security as a whole. The study discovered that illicit drug was produced by the people due to human insecurity that they were facing. Poverty caused people to depend on drug as it market ready. Meanwhile, many of the insurgents along the border and in the Golden Triangle are continue to produce or to tax drug traffickers in order to survive in the deep jungle. The researcher question, as why they become insurgent in the first place later suggest that human rights abuse by the current Burmese military regime exacerbate their hatred to the regime, as most of these insurgents are the minorities themselves.

In Indonesia the programs include of distributing cheap rice, community based program, and scholarships for poorest students. Malaysia has adopted active labor market by expanding training for the unemployed. A similar case can be seen in the

³⁹ Chutimas Suksai, Raymund Narag, Daraaceh, Keng Menglang, Keng. 2003. *Whose Security Counts? Participatory Research on Armed Violence and Human Insecurity in Southeast Asia*. (Bangkok: Small Arms Survey and Nonviolence International.

⁴⁰ Zarina Othman. 2002. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. (Denver, CO.: University of Denver).

Philippines where computerized job assistance network was launched. Thailand, has been very active in introducing social transfer for the elderly and expanding cash transfer to needy families, community based programs, health and education program was provided for the poor, voluntary health insurance card, installments for school fees, fee waivers and free uniforms for students, employee welfare fund for workers from bankrupt firms, extended training for the unemployed as well as self-employment loans. The efforts done by those states showed their concern about the impact on the people.

Malaysia has established Malaysian human rights Commission in October 1999. Although Malaysia argue that the UN concept of human security is actually give more sovereignty to the people and it would justify the UN or any other country to violate territorial integrity and sovereignty of any nation for the sake of sovereign individual.

Conclusion

Before the financial crisis , the region has enjoyed an impressive economic growth, with GDP averaging 7% among the ASEAN countries (except the Philippines). The region has enjoyed political stability, peace and prosperity. States have played important role in pursuing the economic policies. However this peaceful scene changed with coming of economic crisis. The incidence of poverty increased and continue to remain the most single important issue that need attention. Poverty can actually make people vulnerable and insecure. The effect form the crisis has made countries in the region establish and strengthened their social safety nets programs.⁴¹

⁴¹ For an overview of the socials safety nets in Southeast Asia, see *The Poor at Risk: Surviving the economic Crisis in Southeast Asia: Final report of the project Social Safety Net Program in Selected SE Asian Countries: 1997-2000.*” <http://www.iar.ubc.ca/centers/csear/SSN/TOC.htm> (visited: 15 August 2004).

In SE Asia human security concepts of national security have been expanded to include nonmilitary threat as can be seen with the adoption of comprehensive security in the region. Comprehensive security trend has been to broaden security concepts to include a wider range of internal threats to the state and to the well-being, safety, and freedom of its citizens. Increasingly SE Asian states have begun to realize that traditional security measures are ill-equipped to deal with issues that have the potential to increase threat, such as poverty, human rights abuse, environmental degradation, illegal immigration etc. Thus many states have slowly begun to shift to the expanded concept of human security. The need for human security has seemed more urgent especially after the end of the Cold War and the increase in terrorist attacks that followed in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

The discussion tells us that debates on human security in the SE Asian region reveal the complexity of the issues involved. First, the basic controversy surrounding the meaning of security itself, along with the question of whose security should be provided for, exemplifies the lack of cohesion among the states in the region. Despite the fact that the concept of human security is slowly gaining ground, traditional thinking about security continues to dominate in the region. Confusion on the concept of human security resulted with human sufferings. Enhancing human security would strengthen the legitimacy of the state.

With regards to ASEAN, its policy of non-interference in each other's domestic affairs, has blocked the implementation of human security approach. This can be seen the difficulty of ASEN to help resolve the Burmese nobel pace laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi's home arrest issue. While the ruling regime continues to survive and thrive, the

Burmese people are victimized, suffering severe hardship at the hands of their own government and of the international community as well.

Another, there is the issue of the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement. The impact of this free trade may seem positive for a country as a whole, but already we see negative impacts on the people in terms of new inequities and a growing gap between the very affluent and the impoverished. Another related issue is the human trafficking where the poorest people become the victims while the organized crime syndicates prosper. As elsewhere in the world, the nations of SE Asia do not know what to do about the increasing role played by “non-state actors” such as these crime syndicates, but it is becoming very clear that no nation acting alone can be effective against them. ASEAN therefore must enhance greater cooperative efforts to respond to this humans misery.

It is in the best of interests of the ruling regime and for the peace and stability of the region, that “freedom from fear” that the protection of human rights could be adopted in the region. For that matters, the region should implement what is known as SE Asian regional human security network that would be made up of state actors, NGOS and academia that act like the early warning system, where states do not fearing of losing security. A true state of peace and security can exist only when basic human needs and rights are provided for and protected. Peace and stability therefore must be sought by state entities concurrently with efforts to improve the security of the individual human beings within their states. Only by establishing policies based on these premises can the SE Asia region have a chance to counter the unintended negative side effects of globalization, while also strengthening their countries and reducing specific security threats common to all.

By making humans security concept as the principle of ASEAN, it will make state obey them and it will also put pressure for nondemocratic countries to improve it, such as Myanmar. Human rights is by no cut across national borders. It is a universal concept that one has to respect. Insecurity to the people can in turn create insecurity to state and to the region. So, by focusing on human security does not mean that states security is not important but we have to change our mind set rather than state security will provide human security it is the opposite, human security is actually the one that provide security for the state. Obviously, like comprehensive security in ASEAN, nonmilitary threats, threats that have human impact, can not be tackle by one country alone, even though it originate in the source country. Cooperation, understanding are necessary tools to fertilize human security within ASEAN context. Bilateral or multilateral can serve as the channels to implement human security. Another creating civil society will also help to create awareness within a state.

Bibliography

Alagappa, Muthiah Alagappa. 1988. "Comprehensive Security: Interpretations in ASEAN Countries" in Scalapino, Robert Scalapino, et. al., (Eds.). *Asian Security Issues: Regional and Global* (San Francisco, CA.: University of California, Berkeley).

Al Mashat, Abdul Monem. 1985. *National Security in the Third World*. (Boulder: Westview Press).

Anthony, Caballero Mely. 2000. "Human Security (and) Comprehensive Security in ASEAN," in *The Indonesian Quarterly*, 28, 4: 411-422.

Anwar, Dewi Fortuna. 2003. "Human Security: An Intractable Problem in Asia," in Alagappa, Muthiah (Ed.). *Asian Security Order*. (CA: Stanford University Press): 536-570.

Ayoob, Mohamed. 1995. *The Third World Security Predicament: State making, Regional Conflict and the International System*. (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner).

Ball, Desmond. 1993/1994. "Arms and Affluence: Military Acquisitions in the Asia-Pacific Region," in *International Security*, Winter, : 78-112.

Capie, David and Evans, Paul. 2002. *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon*. (Singapore: ISEAS).

Chalk, Peter. 2000. "Grey Area Phenomena and Human Security." In William Tow, Ramesh Thakur and In Taek-Hyun, eds. *Asia's Emerging Regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security* (Tokyo: UN University Press).

Dewitt, David. 1994. "Common, Comprehensive and Cooperative Security" in *The Pacific Review* 7, 31, pp. 1-15.

DuPont, Alan. 1997. "New Dimension of Security," in Roy, Denny. (Ed.). *The New Security Agenda in the Asia Pacific Region* (New York: St. Martin's Press), p. 35.

Hassan, Mohamad Jawhar. 1996. "The Concept of Comprehensive Security," in Hassan, Jawhar and Ramnath, Thangam. (Eds.). *Conceptualizing Asia-Pacific*. (KL: ISIS).

Hassan, Jawhar and Ramnath, Thangam. (Eds.). 1996. *Conceptualizing Asia-Pacific*. (KL: ISIS).

Hernandez, Carolina. 1990. "Comparative Security Needs in the SE Asian and Pacific Regions," in *Disarmament*, (1990), 23, #2, pp.: 100-101.

Job, Brian L. (Ed.). 1992. *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of the Third States*. (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner).

Kamal, Malhotra. 1999. "Resource Conflict in the Lower Mekong," in *Peace Review*, 11, 3 (September): 387-392.

Kim, Sung Han. 1999. *Korea and World Affairs*, 23, (Spring), 31, p. 96.

Kim, Woosang Kim and Hyun, Taek. 2000. "Towards a New Concept of Security," in Tow, William; Thakur, Ramesh and Hyun, Taek Hyun. (Eds.). *Asia's Emerging Regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security*. (Tokyo: UN University Press).

Muggah, Robert; Puangsuwan, Moser, Yeshua. 2003. *Whose Security Counts? Participatory Research on Armed Violence and Human Insecurity in Southeast Asia*. (Bangkok: 101 Freelance).

Ogata, Sadako. 2003. "Human Security-Protecting and empowering the People," in *Global Governance*, 9, 3 (Jul-Sep): 273-283.

Othman, Zarina. 2002. *Human Security in Southeast Asia: A Case Study of Illicit Drug Trafficking as a Transnational Threat in Myanmar (Burma)*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Denver, Colorado, USA).

Radtke, Kurt. 2000. "Issues Affecting the Stability of the Region, in particular that of Japan, East and SE Asia Viewed at the Regional Level" in Radtke, Kurt and Fedema, Raymond. (Eds.). *Comprehensive Security in Asia: Views from Asia and the West on a Changing Security Environment*. (Boston: Brill).

Rolfe, Jim. 1996. "Pursuing Comprehensive Security: Linkages between National and Regional Concepts, Some Applications," in Hassan, Mohamad Jawhar and Ramnath, Thangam. (Eds.). *Conceptualizing Asia-Pacific Security*. (KL: ISIS).

Roy, Denny. (ed.). 1997. *The New Security Agenda in the Asia-Pacific Region*. (New York: St. Martin's Press).

Radtke, Kurt and Fedema, Raymond. (Eds.). 2000. *Comprehensive Security in Asia: Views from Asia and the West on a Changing Security Environment*. (Boston: Brill).

Scalapino, Robert Scalapino, et. al., (Eds.). 1988. *Asian Security Issues: Regional and Global* (San Francisco, CA.: University of California, Berkeley).

Thomas, Caroline. 1987. *In Search of Security: The Third World in International Relations*. (Boulder, CO.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.).

Tow, William; Thakur, Ramesh; In-Taek Hyun (Eds.). 2001. *Asia Emerging Regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security*. Tokyo: United Nations University Press.

UNDP. *Human Development Report 1994*. 1994. (New York: Oxford University Press).

Wigberto, Tanada. 1999. "Human Security from a Filipino Perspectives," in *Peace Review*, 11, 3 (September): 443-446.

Working Title: Human Security Concepts, Approaches and Debates in Southeast Asia

By: Zarina Othman, PhD

Lecturer

Programme of Strategic Studies and International Relations

Centre for History, Politics and Strategy

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Bangi, 43600 Selangor Darul Ehsan

MALAYSIA

Tel: (6 03) 8921-3267 (Direct line)

(6 03) 8921- 3646 (Administrative Office)

013-639-2886 (Mobile)

Fax: (6 03) 8921-3290

Email: zo@pkriscc.ukm.my

zothman@du.edu

Biography

Zarina Othman earned her PhD in International Studies from University of Denver, Colorado (USA). Her dissertation entitled, "Human Security in Southeast Asia: A Case Study of Illicit Drug Trafficking as a Transnational Threat in Myanmar (Burma)." Her fields of study are International Politics, Comparative Politics and International Security Studies with research interests center on Islam; gender and development issues; Southeast Asia regional security studies; as well as the area of human security, human trafficking and other nonmilitary threats. She is now a lecturer at the School of History, Politics and Strategy, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Her publications include "Understanding Ethnic Conflict in Myanmar (Burma) from a Human Rights Perspective." (Forthcoming, *Jebat* Vol. 31, 2004); "Trafficking in Women and Children in Southeast Asia: Focus on Malaysia." (Forthcoming, *Journal of Population*); "War and Peace from Neorealism and Neoliberalism Perspectives." Forthcoming as a chapter in book, October, 2004; *Political Science: Theory and Applications*; "Social Constructivism in International Relations Theory." Forthcoming, published as a chapter in a book, December 2004: *International Relations in the Post Cold War: Perspectives and Challenges*; "New Security Issues." Forthcoming as a chapter in a book, December 2004: *International Relations in the Post Cold War: Perspectives and Challenges*.