

The Concept of Security and the Developing World

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Abstract

Nowadays, the concept of 'security' generating much debate is 'Human Security'. Throughout the Cold War period, the essence of the concept of 'security' is 'National Security': protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states from military threats. In this case, states are the key guarantors in providing 'security'. Due to the challenges to that concept, after the Cold War, 'security' has been extended beyond state-centric notion of security to individuals-focus one. This is new, broadening and deepening concept of 'security', known as 'Human Security'. However, states remain the objects of 'security' or the entities to be protected. Under this concept, 'Responsibility to Protect (R2P)' becomes salient to intervene in other states' domestic affairs in compliance with two criteria. In fact, most of the world countries respectively, whether equally or unequally, suffer from non-military security threats such as poverty, diseases, environmental stress, human rights abuses, etc. In this context, this paper will explore why many security issues impact strongly on the developing world.

KEY WORDS: National Security, Human Security, R2P, developing countries

Introduction

The term 'security' is highly contested and considerably debating its definitions. Originally, it is derived from the Latin *se* (without) and *cura* (care), meaning the absence of a threat.¹ Traditionally, various definitions of security are concentrated within the paradigm of state and military security. Security is what a country does to safeguard its sovereignty.² Throughout the Cold War, the concept of 'National Security' dominated around the world. 'National Security' means protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states from military threats. In this case, states are the key providers for security. States must maintain security in two spheres: a common one in the domestic and other in the international. However, the main problem is 'sovereignty' since 'state sovereignty' facilitates the maintenance of inside security while it is deeply problematic to maintain outside security. As a result, it leads to insecurity rather than security in international affairs.³ This is known as the dualistic structure of a state having two faces_ one is looking inwards and the other looking outwards.⁴ Under the old concept of security, the traditional security strategies are defense, deterrence, détente diplomacy, and disarmament.⁵ In their article of "National Security and Insecurity", Roskin and Berry distinguish and describe these four primary strategies of National Security; defense means blocking an enemy's attack; deterrence refers to dissuading attack by showing its high costs to the attacker; détente diplomacy includes attempts to relax tensions between hostile countries; and disarmament is elimination of existing weapons.⁶ In formulating strategies for national security, most states endeavor to get most benefits at the least costs.

After the Cold War period, the emergence of new security issues have challenged the old concept of security _ "National Security". As the new security threats like poverty, natural

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¹ Jackson, Nicole: "Security", *Politics in the Developing World*, 2014, Oxford University Press, UK, p.289 (Henceforth, Jackson: "Security", *Politics in the Developing World*)

² Roskin, Michael G. and Berry, Nicholas O.: "National Security and Insecurity", *The New World of International Relations*, 2015 (tenth edition), Pearson, Boston, p.189 (Henceforth, Roskin and Berry: "National Security and Insecurity", *The New World of International Relations*)

³ Haywood, Andrew: *Politics*, 2013 (Forth Edition), Palgrave Macmillan, UK, p.400 (Henceforth, Haywood: *Politics*)

⁴ Haywood: *Politics* p.58

⁵ Roskin and Berry: "National Security and Insecurity", *The New World of International Relations*, p.199

⁶ *Ibid*, p.189

disasters, starvation and resource scarcity are not military in nature, the concept of 'security' has been extended beyond state-centric notion of security to individuals-focus one. This is new, broadening and deepening concept of 'security', known as 'Human Security'. Nevertheless, it does not mean that no states remain the objects of 'security' or the entities to be protected. A clear example is that even in the post-Cold War era, internal wars did not disappear and peaked in 1993, still number over a dozen and are still the greatest danger to national security.⁷ Eventually, the entire mankind has become more vulnerable than before. Almost every country suffers from the impact of new security threats in different degrees. Besides the meaning of 'National Security', there are also basic definitions of other kinds of security. Protection of a state's institutions and governing capacity from non-military threats is called 'Non-traditional security (NTS)'. East Asian countries accept the 'Comprehensive Security' which pluses 'National Security' and 'Non-traditional security (NTS)'. If people are free from fear, want and indignity caused by internal and/ or external sources, it is known as 'Human Security' which means to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment.⁸ 'Common Security' is security with a potential or actual adversary realized through transparency, mutual confidence and conflict resolution measures and mechanisms. After subtracting human rights from the above stated 'Common Security', Asia-Pacific region localizes the rest. This type of security is considered as 'Cooperative Security'. The latest definition of security is 'Homeland Security' which is internal security measures against terrorism.⁹ Among these various definitions, both comprehensive security and NTS are fundamentally state-centric, although comprehensive security is more regime security oriented. As regards the prevailing security paradigm in Asia, there is no single concept, but an interplay of national, non-traditional and human security ideas and approaches.¹⁰ In essence, the concept of transnational security including the above stated three concepts can be described as a new security concept for Asia and the world in the 21st century.

The term 'Developing World'

The term 'Developing World' is the same to the old term 'Third World'. There are three parts of the world during the Cold War. The term 'First World' is intended to the developed, industrial, capitalist countries, roughly, North America, Western Europe, Japan and Australia, 'Second World' to the communist ones, roughly, the Eastern bloc under the influence of USSR, now, Russia, Eastern Europe such as Poland and some of the Turk states like Kazakhstan as well as China and 'Third World' to the rest of the world. The less developed countries of Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America fell into third because of some factors which make a nation third world. The third world countries suffer from high infant mortality, low economic development, high level of poverty, low utilization of natural resources, and heavy dependence on industrialized countries. Moreover, they are developing and technologically less advanced nations, and generally characterized as poor with unstable governments and having high rates of population growth, illiteracy, and disease. More importantly, they lack a middle class with impoverished millions in a vast lower economic class, a very small elite upper class controlling the country's wealth and resources, and a very

⁷ *Ibid*

⁸ "Human Security in Theory and Practice", *An Overview of the Human Security Concept and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*, New York, Human Security Unit, United Nations, 2009, p.5

⁹ Acharya, Amitav: "Changing Conceptions of Security in the 21st Century: Power, Institutions, and Ideas", Conference Paper, Zhejiang University, 2009, p.1 (Henceforth, Acharya: "Changing Conceptions of Security in the 21st Century: Power, Institutions, and Ideas")

¹⁰ Acharya: "Changing Conceptions of Security in the 21st Century: Power, Institutions, and Ideas", p.12

large foreign debt.¹¹ They were non-aligned and have been the battleground of the geopolitical struggle between the 'First' and the 'Second' Worlds. However, since the 1970s, the term 'Third World' has gradually been abandoned due to its pejorative ideological implications, the receding significance of a shared colonial past, and economic development in third world countries. Now, instead, they are regarded as 'developing world' or 'less developed' or 'underdeveloped countries'.¹² Furthermore, the term 'Fourth World' is described for the most underdeveloped regions in the world. They are mostly the least-developed countries (LDCs) and poorest nations of the 'Third World', especially they lack mineral wealth. These countries consist of the collection of peoples, especially ethnic and religious minorities, which are not recognized as nations or are subject to economic or political discrimination.¹³ This term is also defined by Merriam Webster Dictionary as a group of nations, especially in Asia and Africa which are characterized by extremely low per capita income and an absence of valuable natural resources.¹⁴ According to UN's three criteria and its classification of 24 January 2014, there are 47 LDCs on the UN list, including Myanmar. However, there are also four LDCs graduated to developing country status.¹⁵ Hence, the developing countries have many and various defects which contribute them to be more vulnerable than the developed.

Causes of the Developing World being more vulnerable than others

(1) A misfit between theories and realities

As military issues and the interplay among 'great powers' are the traditional areas of the discipline of security studies, a sub-field of the study of security within international relations, the discipline has been criticized as being Western-centric. Undeniably, it has dismissed or marginalized the weaker developing world and the real threats to its people and societies.¹⁶ Moreover, despite practitioners of security studies focus on unique political and cultural conditions, the discipline of security studies has rare variety of other philosophical traditions such as Islamic thought, and Indian or Chinese philosophy. In the developing world, traditional policy-oriented circles dominated by strategic studies are academicians' specific security issues. However, under the recognition of more scholars and practitioners, there is a misfit between wider international relations theory and developing world realities. Similarly, there is a confrontation between traditional security focus on sovereignty, inter-state war, and abstract theory and the reality of interlinked political, economic, and social system, and internal and transnational conflicts. Particularly, such realities have been found in the developing world.¹⁷ Therefore, western-centric theories are the basis of the discipline of security studies but realities in the 'Developing World' are far removed from that security paradigm.

(2) Limitations of the concept of 'Human Security'

This concept is not free from critics. It focuses on the security of individuals rather than that of states. This can be divided into two types: narrow and broad or broader concept. According to its narrow concept, people enjoy freedom from fear and freedom from want. Freedom from fear means protecting people from violent conflicts through measures like a ban on landmines and child soldiers. Freedom from want means reducing threats to the well-being of people like

¹¹ Encyclopedia of World Geography, <<https://www.nationsonline.org>>

¹² Haywood, Andrew: *Global Politics*, 2011, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, p.36 (Henceforth, Haywood: *Global Politics*)

¹³ American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2016

¹⁴ Merriam Webster Dictionary, <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fourth%20world>>

¹⁵ World Trade Organization, <<https://www.wto.org/english/whatis-e/org7-e.htm>>

¹⁶ Jackson: "Security", *Politics in the Developing World*, p.289

¹⁷ Jackson: "Security", *Politics in the Developing World*, p.289

poverty and diseases. The broad or broader concept of 'Human Security' is provided in *the 1994 UNDP's Human Development Report* defining the terms of 'Non-traditional Security' and 'Human Security'. *The Report* states seven components of 'Human Security' _ personal, food, health, economic, community, political and environmental security.¹⁸ However, the concept itself is criticized by different redefinition of development economists. Unlike political scientists, development economists define 'Human Security' with an idea of human development. They increasingly reject the orthodox notion of development which emphasizes only on economic growth. Their concept of human development focuses on building human capabilities to confront and overcome poverty, illiteracy, diseases, discrimination, restrictions on political freedom, and the threat of violent conflict. The attempt to create a broader paradigm for development was the growing concern about the negative impact of defense spending on development, or the so-called 'guns versus butter dilemma' because the arms race and development are in a competitive relationship. The world understands that human security demands more resources for development and fewer for arms. For the Third World countries, security requires economic progress as well as freedom from military fear.¹⁹ Therefore, under the concept of 'Human Security', economic growth was rejected as the main indicator of development and the idea of human development was accompanied as empowerment of people. Accordingly, the developing world is still a far distance from both economic growth and empowerment of people.

Another limitation is that the scope of this concept is too broad to be analytically meaningful or useful as a tool of policy-making. As existing definitions of human security embrace everything from physical security to psychological well-being, it is extraordinarily expansive and vague. Therefore, it creates policy makers with little guidance in the prioritization of competing goals and academics have little sense of what is, exactly, to be studied. Similarly, another disadvantage of such a concept is about the costs and benefits of adopting it as an intellectual or a policy framework. Whenever finding the solutions of human security, carrying a Band-Aid only gives false hopes to both the victims of oppression and the international community.²⁰ Hence, the definition of human security is considered to be unrealistic and unattainable for it is too moralistic compared to the traditional understanding of security.

The worst point of human security is that it neglects the role of the state as a main guarantor of security. Undeniably, without the state, it is not clear what other agency is to act on behalf of individuals and thus, states are necessary for individual security. Realists ever assert that point. Even advocates of human security always count the importance of the state as a provider of security. Moreover, there is no claim that human security is directly opposite to traditional concerns.²¹ However, in developing countries, 'sovereignty' is very sensitive security issue and thus, state-centric or national security is always unavoidable and the state stands at the main provider of security.

Another major debate about human security is that although two conceptions of human security: 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want' are different in their definitions, they have some overlaps. Both regard the individual as the referent object of security; both perspectives stress safety from violence as a key objective of human security; both call for a rethinking of state sovereignty as a necessary part of promoting human security. Seeking freedom from fear without addressing freedom from want would increase addressing

¹⁸ *Human Development Report*, published for UNDP, New York, Oxford University Press, 1994

¹⁹ Acharya, Amitav: "Human Security", *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 2014, UK, Oxford University Press, p.449 (Henceforth, Acharya: "Human Security", *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*)

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.451

²¹ *Ibid*

symptoms but not the cause.²² Hence, both conceptions need to be fulfilled simultaneously. Which one should be more prioritized than other? is always controversial. As regards Human Security in the developing world, two conceptions of human security are difficult to be prioritized at the same time and even if so, it is vague to meet them because of a number of limitations.

(3) Difficulties in practicing the concept of 'Human Security'

Although 'Human Security' concept has been considered by scholars in Asia and Africa and even adopted in some regional security arrangements, for example, ASEAN, it has some difficulties in practice.²³ The main reason is that many security issues are existed in the developing world mainly because of being failed states. Among security issues, two main issues are violent conflicts which are committed by both state and non-state groups and international organized crimes like human-trafficking, narcotics, terrorism and so on. In fact, these two are widely perceived to pose immediate and pervasive security concerns across the developed and developing worlds.²⁴ Andrew Heywood provides the concept of 'failed state' in his book, *Politics*. Accordingly, a failed state is a state unable to perform its key role of ensuring domestic order by monopolizing the use of force within its territory. It has no longer ability to operate as viable political units, lacking a credible system of law and order. As it is incapable of providing for their citizens and has no functioning infrastructure, it is no longer able to operate economic units. Such failed states are situated in the developing world. In recent years, examples of failed states include Cambodia, Haiti, Rwanda, Liberia, and Somalia.²⁵ Failed states are few number, they may be ten or twelve at typical times. In essence, they lack security; they are unsafe, honor rules of law in the breach, are robustly corrupt, deny participation or voice most of the time to most of their people, discriminate within their countries against classes and kinds of citizens, offer sustainable economic opportunity only to ruling elites and other cronies, and provide human development (educational and health services) sparingly or not at all.²⁶ Violence and civil wars are their symbols and thus, it is sure that the safety and security of their people is impossible.

Similarly, 'weak' states, often called 'fragile' also create difficulties in practicing the concept of 'Human Security'. Under the old concept of security, 'National Security', states are the main providers of security for their own people. Absolute sovereignty belongs to the states to be more effective and efficient. Sovereignty is the most sensitive security issue in the developing world, especially in Asia. Reversely, under the concept of 'Human Security', the state cannot be regarded as the sole source of protection for the individuals because whether traditional state security and human security conflict with each other depends very much on the nature of the regime that presides over the state. In many countries, specifically in weak states, 'Human Security' can and does get threatened by the actions of their own governments.²⁷ Weak states are defined as the states which are not intrinsically weak, or weak because of geography of colonialism. They are weak because they supply lesser or less-than- adequate quantities of political goods, or poorer-quality political goods, or both. Weak states range from

²² Acharya: "Human Security", *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, p.452

²³ Jackson: "Security", *Politics in the Developing World*, p.291

²⁴ *Ibid*, p.289

²⁵ Haywood: *Politics*, p.76

²⁶ "Failed and Weak State Defined", *Africa and Asia: The Key Issues*, p.2

<<https://robertrotberg.wordpress.com/2013/02/11/failed-and-weak-states-defined/>⟩ (Henceforth, "Failed and Weak State Defined", *Africa and Asia: The Key Issues*)

²⁷ Acharya: "Human Security", *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, p.449

Fiji, with its many coups but its well-educated and prosperous population, westward through the fractious Solomon Islands and the violently corrupt Papua New Guinea to Laos, Bangladesh, many of the Central Asian polities, Lebanon, many of the Balkan polities, and across the Atlantic to much of Central America (barring Costa Rica) and parts of South America (Ecuador, Paraguay), or south to Africa, where nearly all of the sub-Saharan countries are classified as weak.²⁸ The growing number of weak or failed states poses a growing threat to human security.

Some very weak states, the dictatorship, appear strong. They mask their weaknesses through systematic repression and therefore display a fake strength. North Korea, Turkmenistan, Syria, Myanmar (before 2011), Equatorial Guinea, Uzbekistan, and Belarus are classified as very weak. Before 2011, this category also encompassed Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Tunisia. Iraq under Saddam Hussein was another such autocracy that managed by terror to control dissent and provide security of borders, project power throughout its territory, curtail insurgency, and curb crime. However, these states provide almost no political goods and North Korea (and Cambodia earlier) savaged and starved its own people. As the glue of security within these mock states dissolves as their legitimacy falters, they regularly fail.²⁹ The best example is Saddam's Iraq after the US invasion of 2003.³⁰ Therefore, Critical Security Studies assert that states are also the main source of the threat to 'Human Security'.

(4) The Rise of Humanitarian Intervention and R2P

These concepts contribute to take advantage of the various conceptualization of 'security'. Traditionally, intervention is rejected by the state-system because every state has its own sovereignty. International law has largely been constructed around respect for state sovereignty. It means that state borders are, or should be inviolable. However, there has been recognition of intervention justifiable on humanitarian grounds. According to Andrew Heywood's explanation, humanitarian intervention is military intervention that is carried out in pursuit of humanitarian rather than strategic objectives. However, the term is controversial, particularly, because it is considered to be legitimate and defensible by portraying an intervention as 'humanitarian'. In term of intention, humanitarian intervention is humanitarian if it is motivated primarily by the desire to prevent harm to other people. Here, some accept that there will always be mixed motives for intervention. But in terms of outcomes, an intervention is humanitarian only if it results in a net improvement in conditions and a reduction in human suffering.³¹ In fact, the concept of humanitarian intervention has been exercising since the early 19th century. Nevertheless, none of such military actions were recognized as forms of humanitarian intervention. These interventions are justified in terms of national interests and the need for independence or regional stability or something. However, the modern idea of humanitarian intervention was a creation of the post-Cold War period and the 1990s are seen as 'hey day' of humanitarian intervention.³² Moreover, the most widely used justification for humanitarian intervention is to stop or prevent genocide which was viewed as the worst possible crime against humanity, the 'crime of crimes'. As a result, in 2000, *the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Report* was established with just two criteria for justifiable military action. It is based on a large-scale loss of life, possibly due to ethnic cleansing, where the state in question is unwilling or unable to act itself. In this case, the

²⁸ Failed and Weak State Defined", *Africa and Asia: The Key Issues*, p.2

²⁹ "Failed and Weak State Defined", *Africa and Asia: The Key Issues*, p.3

³⁰ Krebs, Ronald R. & Lobasz, Jennifer K.: "Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq", Security Studies, Central European University, England, Mortimer House, 2007, p.439-40 (Henceforth, Krebs & Lobasz: "Fixing the Meaning of 9/11: Hegemony, Coercion, and the Road to War in Iraq")

³¹ Haywood: *Global Politics*, pp.318-9

³² *Ibid*, p.319

concept of 'sovereignty' needs to be reconsidered and the idea of 'Responsible sovereignty' is appropriate. 'Responsible sovereignty' is the idea that state sovereignty is conditional upon how a state treats its citizens, based on the belief that the state's authority arises ultimately from sovereign individuals. Unfortunately, the impacts of humanitarian interventions have been far less effective, may do more harm than good because replacing old dictators with foreign occupying forces may only increase tensions and create a greater risk of civil war. Consequently, civilians do subject to a state of almost constant warfare.³³ Hence, it is clear that most of the developing countries are the playground for great powers' interventions with the disguising labels of 'humanitarian intervention' or 'R2P' or others. In reality, states will always be able to cloak their expansionist ambitions in moral justifications. Undeniably, these concepts become new forms of imperialism and the concept of 'human security' is insecure for the developing.

(5) Misuse of 'Securitization' in the developing world

Securitization is another Western-defined concept applicable to the developing world. Its definition is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Its framework highlights how language is used to construct threats. It is a helpful descriptive and explanatory tool, at least in understanding how states elevate particular threats. Yet, there are some difficulties: critics about its focus on the state and for the difficulties in putting this concept into practice. Similarly, there are also fears that rulers could misuse securitization arguments, that is, the labeling of an issue as a security threat, for domestic purposes. As a result, some scholars have examined the opposite process of desecuritization which means the act of moving an issue back into the political realm. On the other hand, securitization is likely to allow for the efficient handling of challenges, and the mobilization of support and resources. Moreover, by applying this framework, scholars helpfully find the answers of such questions as who can securitize or desecuritize and the conditions and consequences of such actions. When China cooperated multilaterally and dialogued through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on a range of new security issues like terrorism and trafficking, a unique type of cross-regional cooperative thinking and action on non-traditional security issues was initiated.³⁴ Eventually, within the developing world, new and non-Western idea of security is being developed and put into practice.

(6) Perspectives of many developing countries and influence of the developed world

From the perspective of many developing countries, the developed world itself poses many security threats, at least the threat of military intervention and the projection of Western or Northern power through the process of globalization. 'Underdevelopment' is often viewed more in terms of the potential threat which poses to the security of powerful countries than in terms of the well-being of affected populations. Therefore, many Western governments and organizations consider 'underdevelopment' as threatening national and global security. Moreover, Western governments have always linked their aid policies to their strategic interests and neglected countries of lesser economic or political interest to them. Due to the impact of globalization, the West had a chance to dominate the security agenda, and to structure the way in which security issues around the world are perceived and challenged. This is of particular concern for the developing world, and is reflected in the partial merging of security and development policy agenda.³⁵ It means that the developing world is subject to the western security conceptualization.

³³ Haywood: *Global Politics*, p.326-7

³⁴ Jackson: "Security", *Politics in the Developing World*, p.291-2

³⁵ Jackson: "Security", *Politics in the Developing World*, p.291-2

Conclusion

Under the deeper and broader concept of 'Security', particularly 'Human Security', both the developed and developing world suffer from non-traditional security threats, with varying degrees and different issues. However, many security issues impact strongly on the developing world. The main finding is that western states and organizations have often structured global priorities according to their own security interests, generally traditionally defined. Those interests are mostly focused on the transnational effects of so-called threats to Western peoples and countries, rather than on the issues that directly threaten developing states and their peoples. It means every emphasis in security sphere is almost Western-centric. Under this circumstance, developing countries have limited means available to make their voices heard and little bargaining power. In the absence of a conventional military balance, some developing states with sufficient economic and technical capacity have sought weapons of mass destruction to level the playing field. Others engage in 'bandwagoning' with the dominant power, or join regional organizations and the Non-Aligned Movement to pool resources and project a unified response. The dilemma for the developing world continues to be how to promote its interests effectively in a world in which few listen to its voices.³⁶ In the future, the challenge for both worlds is to adopt a more holistic approach to security policy which bridges the increasingly artificial divide between traditional security and development studies.

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³⁶ Jackson: "Security", *Politics in the Developing World*, p.300