Not just global rhetoric: Japan's substantive actualization of its human security foreign policy

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Abstract

While there is much theoretical and academic discussion of human security, as well as regional expressions of human security by the Organization of American States, African Union, and the European Union, little of this is translated into substance except for Japan, which has incorporated human security into foreign policy. This paper examines Japan's definition and aspiration for human security, especially its plans to expand development aid through this modality

in Southeast Asia. This scrutiny will encompass Japanese human security foreign policy and its substantive action through the Japan International Cooperation Agency and the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. Thus, the potential for Japanese human security cooperation with Southeast Asian partners will be reviewed in light of Japan's projected trajectory. The paper concludes by positing that bilateral engagement might be expected for the considerable future and suggests policy consolidation before regional engagement can be effected.

1 Introduction

Human security remains a controversial concept since its emergence in 1994, when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) posited a new paradigm in thinking about security and development in its *Human Development Report* (UNDP, 1994). The Report advocated a 'people-centered' security encompassing freedom from 'chronic threats [like] hunger, disease and repression [and] sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life' rather than the limited purview of military and state security (UNDP, 1994, pp. 22–23). Human security swiftly evolved to embody two key concepts – 'freedom from fear' concerned with conflict and security and 'freedom from want' emphasizing human development (Ogata, 2004; Amouyel, 2006; Jolly and Ray, 2006). Although meant to be taken as a whole, the twin concepts cleaved apart as supporters favored one concept over the other. Unsurprisingly, this sparked off wide debates of whether human security pertained more to the military aspects, including humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect, or whether it ought to focus more on human development aspects like employment, environment, and health and, if so, whether such inclusion undermined policy efficacy. This occurred even as human security proponents argued that security in conflict zones was not limited to military might but also to access to food, water, and other vital human needs (Paris, 2001, 2005; Jagerskog, 2004; Pettman, 2005; Kermani, 2006; von Tigerstrom, 2007).

Despite the continuing debate over the definition and different emphases on the freedoms from wants and fear, human security has

been enunciated by many states and institutions.[1] For instance, Japanese and Canadian foreign policies have actively promoted it; there exists the *Human Security Report Project* funded by various Western governments; the multinational groupings of the *Human Security Network* and *Friends of Human Security*; as well as regional expressions of human security by the Organization of American States (OAS), African Union (AU), and the European Union (EU) (OAS, 2003; Kaldor *et al.*, 2004; AU, 2005). At the multinational level, encouraged by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the UN (www.un.org) has also emphasized human security (Timothy, 2004; MacFarlane and Khong, 2006). Yet, notwithstanding the wide range of modalities available and numerous human security proponents, it remains largely theoretical. Even Annan's *High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change*'s report – *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* (UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel, 2004) and his five-year progress report on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration – *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All* (UN Secretary-General, 2005) seldom referenced the term 'human security'. It is only now that the UN has promulgated a handbook stipulating guidelines for those interested in incorporating the human security concept into their field operations (UN, 2009b).

The only consistent human security actor is Japan, which puts action to word at both the state and UN levels. What this article seeks to do therefore is to examine Japan's definition and modality of human security, especially with regard to its aim of moving beyond bilateral engagement and engaging Southeast Asia as a whole on issues of Official Development Assistance (ODA). This will analyze Japanese human security foreign policy and substantive action first through its domestic vehicle, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA, http://www.jica.go.jp/english/), and second, under the UN auspices of the Trust Fund for Human Security (TFHS). To that end, the potential for

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1   Granted that this separation of the two freedoms may sound overly simplistic; however, this differentiation has often been employed and rings true to some extent even now. The different emphases on the freedoms from want and fear have been observed in how countries carry out policies. For instance, Japan has been noted for emphasizing the development aspects of human security, while Canada and other Western nations include more militaristic aspects (Bosold and Werthes, 2005; Konrad, 2006). For a clear analysis of the occidental–oriental positions on human security, see Fukushima (2009).

Japanese human security cooperation with Southeast Asian partners will be reviewed in light of Japan's projected trajectory. The paper concludes by positing that bilateral engagement might reasonably be expected for the considerable future and suggests areas for policy consolidation before regional engagement can be effected.

2 Japan's international role in championing human security

Human security consciousness first arose in Japan with the onset of the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Then, Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi raised a clarion call for Asian regional solidarity to tackle future crises (Obuchi, 1998), following this with a 500 million yen sponsorship for the TFHS establishment within the UN in March 1999 and declaring human security explicitly as part of Japanese foreign policy (Japan MOFA, 1999, Chapter 2(3A)). Obuchi's successor, Prime Minister Yoshihiro Mori, subsequently responded to Annan's UN Millennium Summit call to strive for freedom from want and freedom from fear by declaring the expansion of the TFHS and established the Commission on Human Security (CHS, http://www.humansecurity-chs.org) under the leadership of the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, and Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen, to investigate the key causes of global human insecurity in January 2001 (Japan MOFA, undated (b)).

Concluding its findings with the report *Human Security Now* (HSN) (CHS, 2003), the CHS emphasized the freedoms from want and fear by defining the principles of human security as the protection and empowerment of the human person to live in dignity with his basic needs satisfied and without fear. It unequivocally stated that human security is meant

> to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity (CHS, 2003, p. 4).

To achieve human security, a holistic approach encompassing human rights, humanitarian law, and development utilizing 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' (state and grassroots) initiatives to effect progress in the six main areas of armed conflict, human displacement, post-conflict building, economic security, health, and education would thus be necessary (CHS, 2003, p. 4, pp. 7–10, 133–141). Subsequently clarified and supported by years of field experience, human security has notably stood up to concerns that it did not add value to international relations in a realm already advocating traditional security, human development, and human rights approaches. It has been recently reiterated that human security 'brings together the "human elements" of security, rights and development' and displays the characteristics of being 'people-centred, multi-sectoral (i.e. addressing intertwined insecurities of economic, food, political et al., natures), comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-oriented' (UN, 2009b, p. 7).

With the CHS mandate successfully completed, the Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS) was thereby formed to follow up with the HSN report, while the Human Security Unit (HSU, http://ochaonline. un.org/Home/tabid/2097/Default.aspx) was established in May 2004 within the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to manage the TFHS and mainstream human security into all UN activities (UN, undated).

As the driving force for placing human security in the global arena, Japan naturally embraced the CHS findings and overhauled its policies by revising the Japan's ODA Charter (Japan MOFA, 2003) and enacting a *Medium-Term Policy on Official Development Assistance* (Japan MOFA, 2005) in line with the CHS' vision propounded in the HSN. Policy-wise, the Charter sought to: (1) support the self-help efforts of developing countries through human resource development and infrastructure building; (2) protect and empower people 'from the conflict stage to the reconstruction and development stages'; (3) ensure fairness in the formulation and implementation of ODA policies especially for vulnerable groups; (4) increase Japanese expertise employed in ODA projects; and (5) actively promote South–South cooperation and intra-regional projects (Japan MOFA, 2003, Article I(2)(1–5)). These priorities were further elaborated in the *Medium Term Policy on ODA* (Japan MOFA, 2005, paras 2 and 3).

Substantively, Japan has interpreted human security largely in terms of its longstanding development-oriented ODA projects in education,

healthcare, water, and sanitation; building socio-economic infrastructure, fostering private sector growth and employment through trade and investment; and tackling environmental degradation and transnational crime. To enhance the human security aspect of local community empowerment and freedom from want, small-scale infrastructure like rural markets, roads, irrigation, microfinance schemes, and unemployment programs were spearheaded with cooperation from international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), central and local government offices, and grassroots organizations of the recipient states to deepen local ownership of these projects. Most notably, however, Japan has sought to shed its oft-criticized reputation of being a mere monetary donor by increasing initiatives for conflict situations, thus promoting freedom from fear, though these admittedly remain development-oriented. These include curbing arms proliferation, post-conflict humanitarian assistance, and medium- to long-term reconstruction development like the construction of hospitals and schools. On the separate issue of appeasing domestic pressure that Japan receive greater global recognition for its ODA efforts, greater employment of Japanese expertise and know-how in field projects, technology sharing and training by dispatching Japanese experts overseas would be prioritized. Scholarships would also be offered to nationals of recipient countries to study at higher education institutions in Japan (Japan MOFA, 2003, 2005).

This overhaul of Japan's ODA was a result of not only governmental desire to promote human security but also for pragmatic and strategic reasons – there was huge domestic pressure to streamline Japanese ODA disbursement (Sunaga, 2004; Watanabe, 2006), while the Asian focus was because the proximity affected Japan's stability and prosperity profoundly. Using ODA to secure Japan's strategic interests, disbursements would be carefully aligned to the Asian states' socio-economic and developmental needs (Japan MOFA, 2003, Article I(4)). This was all enunciated in the 1999–2006 Diplomatic Bluebooks. Incidentally, the 2007 Diplomatic Bluebook bore no specific segment on human security[2]; what it promulgated was a 'new pillar for Japanese diplomacy' through

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2   This omission has been attributed to the effective translation of human security from the policy-making stage to the firm implementation phase. Interview with Dr Fukushima Akiko, August 2007.

the creation of 'an arc of freedom and prosperity' spanning the outer rim of the Eurasian continent. 'The realization of human security that Japan [had advocated]' to ensure basic human needs, democracy, civil institutions, and good governance would hence be met through trade, investment, and ODA (Japan MOFA, 2007a, p. 3).

After setting the above framework in place, this human security action plan has been channeled through three 'vehicles': the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) administered by the Japanese embassies in recipient countries; JICA – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MOFA, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/index.html) primary vehicle for the implementation of bilateral ODA; and at the UN level, the TFHS. As the GGP handles a relatively small sector of Japanese human security action, I shall concentrate on discussing human security efforts through the main drivers – JICA, at the domestic level, and TFHS, at the UN level.[3]

2.1 Human security through JICA

Following the legislative recalibration, the 2004 'JICA Reform Plan' weaved human security modalities prominently through all its ODA projects. Having completed the final phase of its reform with the successful merger with the Overseas Economic Cooperation Operations (OECO) in October 2008, JICA is now the world's largest development agency. Reflecting the CHS' and ODA Charter priorities, JICA abides by seven principles to achieve human security. These are primarily: assisting the needy using a people-centered approach; protection and empowerment of persons; prioritizing the most vulnerable individuals and groups; enabling freedom from want and fear; responding better to comprehensive threats using inter-sectoral techniques; working with the government and local sectors to bring about sustainable development; and partnering various actors to maximize efficacy of ODA (Ogata, 2007). As can be

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3 However, the GGP merits a brief mention. It is essentially non-refundable financial assistance managed by Japanese embassies for NGOs, hospitals, primary schools, and other non-profit associations to carry out their projects in the areas of primary health care, education, poverty relief, public welfare, and the environment. In recent years, many of the GGPs have been administered in conflict areas such as Iraq. The projects include those for water, sanitation, transport infrastructure, the provision of medical supplies and equipment, and emergency relief to internally displaced persons in Iraq and Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria. An example of details on GGP can be found at http://www.my.emb-japan.go.jp/EN/Economic/GGP.htm#application.

clearly seen, these principles mirror those that the UN again re-emphasized in its 2009 human security handbook (UN, 2009b).

As mentioned earlier, the mainstay of Japanese ODA remains focused on Asia for strategic reasons. The following case studies of JICA's presence in Southeast Asia exemplify how human security according to the Japanese model has been realized.

Bringing human security to post-conflict and conflict areas. In Timor Leste, where Japan has been carrying out years of extensive development assistance, JICA has implemented governance, capacity-building, civil infrastructure, and sustainable development programs to meet the human security objectives of protecting and empowering individuals and communities. One integral governance project is employing Japanese expertise to train a new generation of public officials – more than 300 Timorese civil servants have undergone JICA training in Japan (JICA, 2007a). JICA has also built institutional capacity in Cambodia by facilitating legal and judicial frameworks obliterated during the years of fighting. Japanese and Cambodian experts have worked together to revise the Cambodian Civil Code and Code of Civil Procedure, and trained legal professionals who will be responsible for implementing these new laws. Other projects in the pipeline include pro bono legal aid to improve the people's access to justice and heighten human rights awareness (JICA, 2008a).

Over in 'active conflict' zones, JICA President Ogata and Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo have discussed measures to facilitate peace in Mindanao, Southern Philippines, where the government and Islamic and communist rebels have been fighting for several decades. There, JICA has been a silent but significant peace-builder, assisting the Regional Government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). In May 2007, Ogata renewed JICA's commitment to peace-building in Mindanao and stated that JICA would extend help to areas controlled by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), especially at the local government level. This would begin with a needs assessment of the local communities, after which JICA would launch 'quick impact projects in education, healthcare, water supply, and economic improvement'. In the meantime, JICA is collaborating with grassroots NGOs to develop the local industry, particularly in rice cultivation and livestock farming, to improve security of livelihood (JICA, 2007 b, c).

Strengthening the human security of local communities and vulnerable groups through people-centered and bottom-up approaches. A survey of JICA's Southeast Asian projects would reveal a large proportion being committed to Indonesia. The reasons for this being the country's size, under-development, large numbers living in poverty, and the wealth of natural resources beneficial to Japan's interests (JICA, 2007d). One of the ways that JICA has been carrying out the top-down, bottom-up approach synonymous with the CHS' vision of human security is in the East Indonesian provinces. The three-year Community Empowerment Program with Civil Society (PKPM) began in 2004 in cooperation with Indonesia's National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS) and other state agencies educated locals on how to participate in community development. Such schemes helped to mitigate the distrust between central and regional governments, due to the geographical distance of this region from the seat of central power in Jakarta and other political and economic rivalries, which had contributed to regional poverty and underdevelopment (JICA, undated). It is hoped that by building closer ties between central and local governments, human security would improve.

Likewise, to alleviate the struggles of minority groups marginalized by the central authorities in Myanmar, JICA started a five-year project in October 2004 in conjunction with the Myanmarese government to provide the Kokang ethnic minority in Northeast Myanmar, which previously had engaged in conflict against the junta with alternative sources of income after their opium poppy farming tradition was banned in 2003. Not only does this attempt to heal societal rifts but the comprehensive social development plan underway is expected to provide alternative cash crops, basic education and healthcare, and vital institutional infrastructure in the Kokang Special Region of Shan State (JICA, 2005a).

As improvement to health increasingly becomes an integral part of human security, one of JICA's primary concerns is the eradication of healthcare problems for the vulnerable. A pilot project has been implemented in the *Nghe An* Province (one of the poorest regions in Vietnam) at the Vietnam–Laos border. Comprising mainly minority tribal communities, the population of 3 million has no access to proper healthcare, and childbirth endangers women's lives. To increase human security, JICA partnered local institutions and dispatched experts and

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) to improve the health-care provisions of mothers and infants. This project was deemed highly successful with the participation of 4,000 people and the healthcare training of over 9,000 in the commune. This has enabled more than 95 percent of pregnant women in the province to receive health checks, while healthcare workers are now involved in over 80 percent of all births. With public education on maternal and infant health rising, there are hopes that this project will eventually be replicated throughout Vietnam (JICA, 2005b, 2006a).

JICA has also striven to heighten the human security of disabled people, another key vulnerable group within society. In helping the Thai Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to establish the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability (APCD), disabled people in Asia are now given the opportunity to learn skills, discover self-worth, and independence, while disabled Japanese and Thai experts are able to teach and empower other disabled people. This has even resulted in a Filipino architect with disabilities spurring a large chain of shopping malls in the Philippines to make the malls disabled-friendly, raising social awareness as well as influencing other malls to adopt similar improvements (JICA, 2008b, p. 31).

2.2 Human security through TFHS

From the above, we have seen how Japan carries out bilateral ODA pro-grams in Southeast Asia, with JICA substantiating the CHS' human security mandate to protect and empower people through the use of people-centered approaches; prioritizing the most vulnerable; and working with the government and local sectors to tackle comprehensive threats. We next discuss the other avenue – at the multilateral level of the UN – where Japan promotes human security.

As the sole donor until Slovenia pledged US$20,000 in 2007, Japan exerts a considerable influence over TFHS which finances projects carried out by organizations within the UN system. The former co-chair of the CHS and incumbent president of JICA, Ogata, not only presides over JICA but also the ABHS, which advises the UN Secretary-General on the utilization of TFHS funds. As of March 2007, Japanese contri-bution to the TFHS totaled approximately 33.5 billion yen for more than 160 human security initiatives in at least 70 countries, dealing with

employment, migration, conflict and humanitarian issues, HIV/AIDS and other health matters, the basic needs of education, food, and other social issues. Japan's majority stake in the TFHS means that the Japanese government is heavily involved in the process of project approval (Japan MOFA, 2007b).

The TFHS progressive adoption of human security modalities largely mirrors the human security reform within Japan. Initially, TFHS projects did not reflect real human security objectives, and the 1999–2003 TFHS guidelines were criticized for being similar to other development approaches, with many projects focusing restrictively on health, education, and agriculture. Therefore, simultaneous to the domestic reform that began in 2003, Japan advocated the revision of the TFHS guidelines so that human security projects could adopt a 'holistic and integrative approach' and give particular weight to the vulnerabilities of women and children during the first ABHS meeting in September 2003 (UN, 2003). As the UNDP and UNICEF had erstwhile been the predominant UN agencies that enjoyed funding from the TFHS for their projects, the ABHS decided to emphasize the necessity of TFHS monies being allocated to a wider range of agencies to avoid inadvertent 'fund monopolization'. Thus, the ABHS decided to project the TFHS as not 'another source of funding for UN projects but a key instrument in dealing with critical and pervasive threats to human security requiring multi-faceted interventions'. To further embody human security aspirations, the ABHS suggested broadening the TFHS activities 'to include the active participation of the government leaders at the national and local levels' as well as at the grassroots level (UN, 2004, pp. 1–2, 4–5).

These multisectoral and protection and empowerment objectives of the TFHS have constantly been fine-tuned, with the fifth revision announced in May 2009. To ensure that human security is achieved through the TFHS projects, the ABHS is adamant that project proposers meet stringent criteria. These are, namely, providing sustainable benefit to vulnerable communities (e.g. children, women, and those affected by conflict) through top-down protection and bottom-up empowerment measures, and the partnering of grassroots groups to address the multifaceted exigencies of human insecurity. Differing slightly from Japan's focus on Asia in JICA projects, however, TFHS projects are to be distributed widely across the globe in the most critical situations, such as in the least developed countries and conflict zones. Another procedural

difference from JICA projects is that as the TFHS is primarily meant for UN agencies to build human security for large populations, multicountry and subregional projects that participate in the UN Funds and Programmes network are particularly encouraged (UN, 2009a).

Implementing these successive amendments to the Guidelines, the TFHS projects have attained certain success.[4] For instance, while grave threats obviously exist in conflict areas, the 'safe havens' where refugees flee to also face severe situations of fear and want. Recognizing this problem, the UNDP, UNICEF, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) have employed a framework to tackle illegal arms proliferation, vocational and skills training, education, HIV/AIDS awareness and health-related issues, access to clean water and sanitation, as well as bettering food security through enhancing animal husbandry techniques and agricultural practices. This is a seminal undertaking for the six UN agencies working as a 'single body' rather than a disparate group of actors to offer a multisectoral approach of humanitarian assistance and long-term sustainable development support to address the multifaceted problems of human insecurity (UN, 2006).

Another subregional project that has met with particular success is the UNDP's energy initiative for the countries of Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Guinea. This project promotes schemes where simple oil-powered electrical generators are owned by local women's groups to enable communities to climb out of poverty. With the generator, women do their chores – such as pumping water from wells and grinding grain – more easily, freeing more time to conduct businesses. For example, the generator enabled women to cook foodstuffs for sale in the marketplace, enabling them to gain business know-how and earn extra income. In turn, the income earned went into local healthcare and educational opportunities for themselves and their children, facilitating a better quality of life and jumpstarting local economies. It is notable that the UNDP credits women for the success of this scheme utilizing the multifunctional platform electrical generator. Regional project manager, Laurent Coche, observed, 'Women are the best vector of change ...

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4 Nine case studies (of which I have discussed three) have been chosen specifically by the HSU/OCHA for highlighting in their public education booklet – *Human Security for All*.

working through women, the impact you have on society is much bigger'. By directly improving the lives of women and their dependants, human security is achieved for a significant number of communities (UN, 2006).

3 Japanese human security foreign policy and its relationship with Southeast Asia

It is clear that Japan, through the TFHS, gives the 'green light' for more expansive projects than those undertaken by JICA – though both prioritize similar aims of providing sustainable benefit to vulnerable communities through integrative approaches met through the use of top-down protection and bottom-up empowerment measures and the partnering of grassroots groups to address the multifaceted exigencies of human insecurity. Quite obviously, while Japan safeguards strategic interests by executing human security programs via the TFHS and JICA, its intention to maintain balance of power in its immediate neighborhood through JICA projects would afford more flexibility and direct autonomy to act according to MOFA directives. As seen above, JICA human security projects with their development focus are suitable for the developing economies of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN, http://www.aseansec.org/). Japan has indicated it intends to move beyond the current bilateral human security projects to engage the ASEAN as a single entity (JICA, 2007e).

However, the response has not been commensurate (Abad, 2000).[5] Although JICA's projects have been implemented in Timor Leste and all ASEAN member states save Singapore and Brunei, none except Thailand has actively supported the human security concept. Thailand is the sole ASEAN member of the Human Security Network (HSN, http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/) and has a Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and incumbent ASEAN Secretary-General, Surin Pitsuwan, represented Thailand in his former

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5 To date, only the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has officially supported human security through the September 2007 joint statement on terrorism; trade and economic security; energy security, environment, and sustainable environment; health pandemics, avian influenza, and HIV/AIDS; food and product safety standards; and preparedness for calamities (APEC ministerial statement 2007).

status as Thai Foreign Minister. However, Thailand's human security activity is largely rhetorical.

This is unsurprising since it is hard to imagine ASEAN promulgating human security's tenet of prioritizing human over state interests in view of the 'ASEAN Way' of near-absolute state sovereignty (Katsumata, 2003; Caballero-Anthony, 2005). Even the ASEAN notion of 'comprehensive security', which takes an expansive view of security beyond the militaristic, continues to take the state as its referent (Caballero-Anthony, 2004a, p. 162). Excepting the Philippines, ASEAN members had earlier vociferously opposed Pitsuwan's 1998 proposal of 'flexible engagement' for open discussion of members' domestic matters bearing cross-border implications, such as the Indonesian fires and haze problem (Pitsuwan, 2002).

This preponderance upon the state has tended to stymie the regional growth of norms like human rights and other principles human security is founded on. Hence, despite the ratification of the ASEAN Charter and the potential establishment of its much-vaunted human rights body, there is little evidence that human security will gain much in the foreseeable future in the ASEAN region even if human security supporter and ABHS member, Pitsuwan, is the incumbent ASEAN Secretary-General and might promote human security during his tenure. If Japan intends to root human security in Southeast Asia, it needs to foster wider recognition and support its efforts in the region. While state support is unlikely for the time being, variations of the human security concept not limited to the Japanese model are gaining ground in Asian intellectual and advocacy circles and this would be helpful to Japanese human security foreign policy.

The major Southeast Asian crises – the 1997 Asian economic meltdown, 2002 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic and looming specter of a flu pandemic, 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, and pervasive terror threats post 9/11 – have brought to light how severe threats to human wellbeing of transnational magnitude can be caused through non-military occurrences (Curley and Thomas, 2004; Caballero-Anthony, 2004b, 2006; Acharya, 2007, pp. 27–35). Hence, issues like human rights, development and democracy, gender mainstreaming, free and fair information, and HIV/AIDS have been termed human security issues by Southeast Asian civil society groups such as the ASEAN-ISIS think-tank network and ASEAN People's Assembly (APA) (Caballero-Anthony,

2004a, p. 180). Chairperson of the Fifth APA, Carolina Hernandez, had stressed the importance of human security to ASEAN leaders at the Twelfth ASEAN Summit in January 2007 (Hernandez, 2007). Besides these civil society organizations, other possible vectors of human security could be regional NGOs championing freedom from want and fear-related causes such as *Forum-Asia*, *Focus on the Global South* and *Third World Network* (Acharya, 2007, p. 53; *Forum-Asia* website; *Focus on the Global South* website; *Third World Network* website). It must be noted, however, that these NGOs are mainly concerned with human rights and rarely reference human security modalities.

Discussion of human security has also increased at a more academic level. Thailand's Chulalongkorn University, together with other international partners, has organized three major human security symposia to discuss norms, policy-making, and project execution. At the most recent conference – *Mainstreaming Human Security: The Asian Contribution* – in October 2007, Asian academics and development practitioners propounded human insecurities arising from climate change and the environment, democracy and human rights, the economy, increased urbanization, forced and exploitative migration, armed conflict, the vulnerabilities of women; and how to better promote, protect, and enforce human security (Chulalongkorn University, 2007, Human Security papers).

It must be noted that while the above initiatives speak of human security, they do not all closely identify with the Japanese ideal and this is an area where JICA could work on to convince ASEAN of the value of human security. Perhaps an initial step could be an agreement of human security's core imperatives followed by a compilation of ASEAN agreements dealing with human security issues (Caballero-Anthony, 2002; Acharya, 2007, p. 57). These could comprise JICA proposals for tackling longstanding ASEAN concerns like drugs, transnational crime, piracy, education, health and nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and vulnerable groups like women, children, and migrant workers through human security modalities of protection and empowerment and inter-sectoral cooperation.

Aware of its pivotal foreign policy role vis-à-vis ASEAN, JICA has already convened a study to understand how development assistance can be implemented from a regional viewpoint. It acknowledged that moving beyond current bilateral schemes to engage the region as a whole is a

compulsory new paradigm. This emphasis is not only because of the ongoing ASEAN integration but also of the transnational nature of development. It was stressed that although Japan's key interests in ASEAN have been largely economic, JICA would actively foster the fulfillment of ASEAN's integration objectives by promoting human security through the avenues of peace and security, democracy and human rights, and environmental protection (JICA, 2007e).

The key areas which the Study Group highlighted were economic infrastructure; bridging the inequality gap between the ASEAN members; tackling transnational insecurities like human trafficking, health, and energy security; training of local personnel to facilitate future South–South cooperation; and the structuring of JICA's resources to better meet these challenges.

3.1 Deepening regional integration through economic initiatives

To boost trade and investment, private economy, and human resource movement, the Study Group advised JICA to expand into higher technology sectors like boosting information technology (IT) cooperation, increasing understanding of intellectual property rights, developing the financial sector including the development of bond markets, and fostering small and medium enterprises (JICA, 2007g).

JICA has conducted sophisticated projects in some ASEAN countries. Private sector development for trade and business enhancement has been carried out in Indonesia and Thailand to boost the competitiveness of local businesses, especially small to medium enterprises. In the area of national finance, JICA has also dispatched Japanese experts to assist and train Malaysian officials on how to strengthen its project management and risk management capacity at the state-owned financial body, *Bank Pembangunan Dan Infrastruktur Malaysia Berhad* (BPIMB). Furthermore, the possible avenues for JICA to assist in developing money markets by boosting the less developed ASEAN countries like Indonesia and Philippines so that they can more 'smoothly participate in regional financial trade are timely' (JICA, 2007e, pp. 73–74). This is especially important as Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia will establish the ASEAN Common Exchange Gateway alliance for regional trading, with the aim of fully integrating ASEAN

capital markets by the end of 2015, to entice foreign investors to the 'single' Asian market rather than dissipating their energies trawling through every local bourse [Six Asian nations planning common stock exchange – Thai official (Thomson Financial News, 21 November 2007); ASEAN stock exchange alliance supports regional integration of capital markets – Asian Development Bank (ADB) News Release, 24 February 2009].

In the area of IT, JICA has shared Japanese telecommunications and multimedia technology policies and technical know-how to foster Malaysia's national goal of building self-sustaining economic competitiveness. Above all, it was stressed that 'priority support' for the less developed ASEAN countries employing South–South cooperation to close the digital gap was of primary importance. (JICA, 2007e, pp. 80–81). It is noted that JICA's encouragement of South–South partnership within ASEAN will definitely boost regional cooperation. Singapore has already pledged another S$30 million for technical assistance programs under the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) [other ASEAN Summit highlights: economic partnerships and climate change (SEAPSNET, 2007)].

3.2 Eradicating poverty and intra-regional disparities

As real integration cannot be sustained without narrowing the inequality gaps among member states, JICA was exhorted to diminish poverty in the Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam (CLMV) region, as well as to focus efforts on the two subregional economic zones like the Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) and the Brunei–Indonesia–Malaysia–Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA). The CLMV has been a focal area for JICA assistance for many years and the continuation of such efforts in the development of transport, economic, power and telecommunications infrastructure, and the requisite human resources training would undoubtedly be desirable. As for the IMT-GT and BIMP-EAGA, JICA assistance could look toward cooperative efforts in alleviating poverty and peace-making to stabilize these zones. To further boost developmental efforts, JICA could also work in partnership with the ADB, which has been active in these countries (JICA, 2007e).

3.3 Tackling transnational crime

JICA has been urged to boost human resources development on the basis of its experience in the training of law enforcement officials in the areas of immigration control and maritime security. Japan has conducted training courses and seminars for the Indonesia civilian police force as well as the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) on piracy control (JICA, 2006b, p. 39). As ASEAN has undertaken its own domestic and regional efforts to tackle transnational crime, four likely avenues for potential JICA-ASEAN cooperation were mooted so that law enforcers could be trained to respect human rights in the course of duty, sharpen investigation techniques for sophisticated crimes like money laundering and cyberspace crimes, as well as alert communities to the illegality of participating or being complicit in terrorism. As information-sharing within ASEAN leaves much to be desired, it was suggested that 'installing Japanese staff or experts in the ASEAN Secretariat to develop a system capable of analyzing security situations and coordinating support programs on a daily basis' would be a worthwhile cooperative venture (JICA, 2007e, pp. 97–100).

3.4 Sustainable development, environmental protection, and energy security

Given the Japanese economy's size, Japan is likely to be the 'biggest user of the region's natural resources and energy, through domestic and overseas production and consumption as well as trade and direct investment'. To alleviate this profound impact upon the ASEAN environment, Japan needs to use natural resources responsibly and promote regional environmental protection (JICA, 2007e, p. 107). On the basis of JICA's experience and expertise in environmental conservation, the Study Group noted some key areas for future cooperation. First, from the human security perspective, empowerment of local human resources was imperative. At the grassroots level, it would be important to promote awareness and the benefits of environmental management processes so that local communities would actively participate in ensuring their own livelihoods and those of future generations. As before, South–South cooperation must be employed wherever possible. Second, it was also noted that these regional environmental efforts by JICA needs to be streamlined together with the ongoing global initiatives to

prevent any conflict of interests. Third, being mindful of the ASEAN economic integration, it would be necessary for JICA to facilitate support for the building of regional environmental and institutional infrastructure to ensure successful economic integration and enable trade and fair competition (JICA, 2007e).

As energy security is vital to maintaining regional stability, JICA needed to implement the environmental energy program – Green Aid Plan (GAP) – formulated by Japan for cooperation with Thailand, China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, India, and Vietnam. Additionally, JICA could help to foster initiatives to research into energy alternatives like fuel conversion, natural gas usage, as well as bio-ethanol-powered vehicles. At a more fundamental level, JICA could also help develop a regional supply network like gas pipes and power grids, and also to establish oil stockpiling systems to guard against global oil shocks. Again, to maximize results, these efforts should be activated at the public and private sector levels as well as encourage public–private partnerships and cross-border efforts (JICA, 2007e).

Having reviewed the possible avenues of promoting the human security concept within Southeast Asia via ASEAN, civil society groups, and academia, it might be asked whether JICA could work in partnership with other regional countries in the form of the ASEAN + 1, ASEAN + 3 (China, Japan, and South Korea), or with other Asia-Pacific bodies such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and APEC to broaden the reach of human security not only for Southeast Asia but as a diplomatic tool in relation to other Asian states also. However, one believes that in order for Japan to develop human security, options within the 'ASEAN + Japan' framework should be explored to the maximum, as it is unrealistic to expect the human security concept to move ahead rapidly in the 'ASEAN + 3' or East Asia caucus given the historical tensions and continuing rivalry among the three Northeast Asian behemoths. These forums while noteworthy remain mainly confidence-building measures at best. Moreover, Japan's relations with Southeast Asia have profound security ramifications as China and India rise and all three Asian powers are competing to increase their stake in this region to secure the available energy and economic opportunities (Lam, 2006).

This exigency is not lost on Japan. Aware of the rapidly changing strategic and geopolitical landscape, it has expressed hope to help

accelerate ASEAN's regional integration and the establishment of its regional economic area (ASEAN, 2007a, Article 7).[6] When Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and the ASEAN leaders finally concluded the long-awaited *ASEAN–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement* (EPA), which promised that about 90 percent of trade between Japan and ASEAN would be tariff-free within a decade at the November 2007 'ASEAN plus' meetings, Japanese officials were particularly triumphant as its first multinational free-trade agreement (FTA) apparently surpassed China's and South Korea's economic deals with ASEAN (ASEAN, 2007b). This served to assuage the earlier domestic sentiment that Japan was trailing China in engaging ASEAN (Nobutoshi, 2007). At the conclusion of the agreement, a Japanese official stated anonymously that the pact was comprehensive and covered tariffs on products as well as services and investment, and other aspects of economic cooperation, such that 'Japan [was] not behind moves by China and South Korea' [Japan–ASEAN welcome new trade deal (AFP, 2007)]. This EPA thereby reinforced the *Japan–ASEAN Plan of Action 2003*, which vowed to undertake financial and monetary cooperation; trade, transport, and human resource development; environmental protection and sustainable development (Japan–ASEAN, 2003).

Given that trade and investment as well as ODA are the means by which Japan aims to foster human security, if such efforts can be framed within human security modalities, Japan can then fully maximize its position as the global promoter of human security, especially through JICA, to engage ASEAN. There is considerable potential for Japan to explore the ample parameters of its relationship with ASEAN as the regional grouping moves toward greater cohesion (ASEAN, 1999, 2003).

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6   At the Thirteenth ASEAN Summit, the ASEAN leaders achieved a milestone when they inked the *ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint* (AECB) for substantive realization by 2015. This Blueprint is geared toward making ASEAN a unified single market, harmonizing business rules within the region and making it tariff-free. It also vows to increase development of its newer member by accelerating the integration of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam more firmly within ASEAN through initiatives such as 'human resources development and capacity building; recognition of professional qualifications; closer consultation on macroeconomic and financial policies; trade financing measures; enhanced infrastructure and communications connectivity; development of electronic transactions through e-ASEAN; integrating industries across the region to promote regional sourcing; and enhancing private sector involvement for the building of the AEC'.

4 Conclusion

Japan has been taking a lead role in promoting the cause of human security through generous donations and spearheading initiatives at the UN and domestic levels. Apart from its involvement in the TFHS, Japan is clearly keen to use its human security foreign policy to achieve its strategic interests especially by engaging ASEAN to bolster its presence in East Asia. The trajectory of its human security foreign policy as outlined by the seminal Study Group Report indicates that clearly. Much of the Report's recommendations are predicated upon translating the methodologies used in traditional JICA bilateral assistance frameworks into a human security structure suitable for engagement at a regional level.

However, the human security concept remains arguably in its infancy, and despite JICA's efforts, the Japanese framework of human security has not gained wholehearted purchase in ASEAN, much less the international community. Like every other policy promulgated at the global level, there is a risk that it might be manipulated by 'dominant states, institutional agendas and civil society' against the real interests of humanity (Jolly and Ray, 2006, p. 11). Presently, Japan is the only state which has activated human security objectives. Other human security supporters like Mexico, Chile, and Thailand are merely at the policy stage of convening meetings and drafting proposals with little to show by way of substantive action (Japan and Mexico, 2008), while Canada (www.international.gc.ca/glynberry/index.aspx) has 'already abandoned the concept' (Peou, 2009, p. 145).

What then can Japan do to strengthen human security, given that it is the bedrock of Japanese ODA and an integral part of its foreign policy? Fortunately, there is empirical basis for human security to continue. Jolly and Ray's study of national human development reports (NHDR) stressed that human security does 'much more than give new names to old problems' (Jolly and Ray, 2006, p. 25) and has indirectly affirmed the holistic human security concept Japan advocates.[7] Jolly and Ray advised against the simplistic segregation of military security and development, as both were intrinsically related, that the insecurities inherent in conflict affected human well-being related to food, water, employment, and the like; and

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7 The 13 countries are Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Macedonia, Moldova, Mozambique, the Philippines, Sierra Leone, the Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste.

for instance, terrorist acts undermined peace-building, accelerated refugee movements, and expelled aid organizations, leading to a vicious cycle of insecurity. Hence, human security as a comprehensive approach to problem-solving had merit. Jolly and Ray concluded that the 'security, human security and development' form an 'integrated whole' and postulated the 'need for a broad approach to security issues as an essential component of peace, reconstruction and development'. This was invariably applicable to all states in the 'tinderbox' of post-conflict situations (Jolly and Ray, 2006, p. 22, 25). This has been corroborated by a separate study on Aceh. Aid workers there found their hands tied by narrow directives. In one case, Oxfam staff felt that limiting operational funding to purely post-tsunami reconstruction by strictly forbidding the use of money for conflict issues undermined program effectiveness because proper development necessitated the quelling of conflict (Burke, 2008, pp. 55–56).

While multifaceted coordination through human security initiatives provides sizable benefit, practical difficulties such as the coherent coordination of diverse actors working on a project, convincing local communities to participate in their own empowerment, and engaging governmental collaboration will undoubtedly continue. Comprehensive assistance plans must be carefully thought out to overcome strategic incoherence (Takai, 2005, p. 4).

There are few studies of JICA human security operations available but the Japan Center for International Exchange's (JCIE) analysis on five TFHS projects in Southeast Asia is revealing (JCIE, 2004). It found that while multifaceted approaches are a hallmark of human security, the coordination of different agencies holding dissimilar views and modes of operation is problematic. Difficulties compound when international organizations cooperate with local communities as the latter have been conditioned to receive development aid from project agencies over the years and find it 'uncomfortable at first when asked to enter into more of an equal relationship with a development agency' and cooperate to achieve their own human security. Human security projects are implemented more easily in communities geared toward self-help. For example, after years of fighting the Indonesian army, the East Timorese adapted more easily to international-grassroots human security efforts compared with projects aiding Thai villagers who were accustomed to paternalistic governance and direct hand-outs. As domestic acceptance of human security modalities is influenced by the target country's socio-

political, economic, and cultural traditions, it is hoped that this 'embedded sense of dependency' will erode as bottom-up projects replace top-down ones (JCIE, 2004, pp. 15–17).

Another obstacle to human security lies in 'authoritarian' governments because they believe the empowering factor of human security undermines their control. To overcome this, the crux lay in striking 'an appropriate balance between strong government engagement and community empowerment'. Engagement of local leaders was of special importance because local communities' needs might be neglected where central governments were strong and suspicious of local governments' powers. Heightened sensitivity in dealing with local and central government officials was even more necessary in repressive regimes or in regions populated with ethnic minorities where biases would perpetuate severe human insecurities. Hence, winning over both local communities and governments of target countries with the merits of human security and the need for domestic participation in the modern-day development was crucial to the building of community as well as the long-term flourishing of human security (JCIE, 2004).

While the benefits of human security are indubitable, the lack of critical review of JICA's work dilutes the credibility of human security. The JCIE 2004 review of TFHS human security projects appears to be the sole critique (in the English language) which thoroughly reviews the challenges of the human security approach. To one's knowledge, there have not been independent assessments of JICA's human security policies. The case studies quoted by JICA, TFHS, and the Report are descriptive and rather simplistically take as a given how upholding the freedoms from want and fear, the compulsory use of multisectoral and multi-agency approaches, fostering grassroots level involvement and South–South engagement make a positive impact on the development of human security. These examples while encouraging are perhaps less than convincing, least of all to the ASEAN countries themselves. Detailed evaluations by different groups of actors discussing the pros and cons, as well as clearly stating the difficulties in the human security approach might help ASEAN countries understand better the human security concept and its potential, as well as enabling Japan a chance to proffer its human security practice as a global model (Jolly and Ray, 2006). It is extremely helpful, however, that JICA has made available various types of evaluation of many of its projects post-merger with JBIC. All such evaluative processes should include

surveys of public opinion as to the sources of insecurity so that JICA programs can be tailored to tackle these issues.

It might be better if JICA engages more on the bilateral level before embarking onto regional engagement with ASEAN on human security. Save for the Philippines, which assessed broadly the human insecurities stemming from the internal conflict in Mindanao, other developing ASEAN states bore only cursory mention (if at all) of human security and JICA in their UNDP Human Development National Report submissions. In particular, Thailand's silence is conspicuous. Another important point to note is if Japan wishes to promote human security further, it should consider seriously whether to pursue this under the 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity' policy as detailed in the 2007 Diplomatic Bluebook. The concept of the 'Arc of Freedom and Prosperity', and certainly the name, has the unfortunate connotation with the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' whom many in East Asia remember Japan promulgating as part of its imperialistic agenda during the Second World War.

Besides more groundwork in individual ASEAN countries, the Thailand-based *JICA Regional Support Office for Asia*, which is now working to boost South–South cooperation, must be mindful of regional complexities and should not overlap with projects that belong to solely the ASEAN sphere or other ASEAN partnerships, such as the ASEAN + 3 framework (JICA, 2007e). More importantly, JICA should ensure that all JICA-ASEAN undertakings translate into operative processes and not fall prey to ASEAN 'execution inertia'. Assuming that human security is undertaken both for strategic and developmental reasons, there is a lot of room for the human security concept to be made known through the present bilateral ventures with individual ASEAN countries so that momentum can be built for regional cooperation. Continued engagement by Japan in ASEAN is necessary at both the ministerial and technical cooperation levels by JICA if the human security concept is to be firmly anchored for the good of the peoples in ASEAN and for the security of Japan's strategic interests.

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