

HUMAN SECURITY CONCEPT IN POLITICAL AND ACADEMIC CIRCLES

KONCEPT LJUDSKE SIGURNOSTI U POLITIČKIM I AKADEMSKIM KRUGOVIMA

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Abstract: *Human security is a concept that evolved from the shift that occurred in the political and security reality in the post-Cold War world. The new forms of conflicts emerged and changed the concept of security as well as the conventional notions of war. Human security is a very comprehensive concept consisting of two categories- 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear'. The first one represents the broader definition and includes threats such as hunger, disease, repression, and protection from sudden disasters. It was upheld by the 1944 UNDP Human Development Report and has since been also supported by the Japanese government and Human Security Commission. The latter one emphasizes violent threats against an individual (such as drug trade, land mines, ethnic discord, state failure, small-arms trafficking). The 'freedom from fear' approach focuses on immediate necessity and is for those reasons supported by the Canadian government and the EU.*

Key words: "freedom from fear", "freedom from want", human development, human security, security strategy

Stručni članak

Sažetak: *Pojam ljudske sigurnosti se razvio iz političkog i sigurnosnog pomaka u razdoblju nakon Hladnog rata. Nastale su novi oblici konflikta koji su promijenili pojam sigurnosti kao i konvencionalne pojmove o ratu. Ljudska sigurnost je vrlo opsežan pojam koji se sastoji od dvije kategorije – „sloboda od oskudice“ i „sloboda od straha“. Prvi pojam predstavlja širu definiciju i uključuje prijetnje poput gladi, zaraze, represije, i zaštita od iznenadne nepogode. Pojam podržava UNDP-ovo Izvješće o razvoju iz 1944. godine, i podržava ga japanska Vlada i Komisija o ljudskoj sigurnosti. Drugi pojam stavlja naglasak na prijetnje prema pojedincu (npr. trgovina drogom, mine, etnički sukobi, nefunkcioniranje države, trgovina lakim oružjem). Pristup „sloboda od straha“ fokusira se na neposrednu nužnost i stoga ga podržavaju kanadska Vlada i EU.*

Ključne riječi: ljudski razvoj, ljudska sigurnost, sigurnosna strategija, „sloboda od oskudice“, „sloboda od straha“

1. INTRODUCTION

Human security should be a “guiding principle of the vital need to protect civilian populations from the many insecurities generated by current threats and challenges.”ⁱ It is important to note that the emergence of human security since its accent is on human-centric approach to security. It could be broadly said that the concept includes ‘freedom from want’ and ‘freedom from fear’, under which terms are included safety from threats such as hunger, disease, environmental threats, terrorism, pollution, ethnic conflicts, crime, drug trafficking, but it also refers to daily threats people face- such as job security, education opportunities, social and cultural freedoms.ⁱⁱⁱ

2. INTRODUCTION OF HUMAN SECURITY CONCEPT IN THE POLITICAL ARENA

Ever since the UNDP’s Human Development Report in 1994 brought in the human security concept to the

security concept coincided with the change in the meaning of international security at the end of the 20th century, and especially so after the terrorist attack of 9/11. Against the threats of what Mary Kaldor calls ‘new wars’ⁱⁱⁱ the human security approach seems to be better suited to challenge the conflict situations today wider international community, there has been an ongoing debate (both political and academic) on what human security concept should really include. The UNDP’s definition of human security outlined seven elements that determine the human security concept: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Some of its essential characteristics are the universality of the concept, meaning that there are threats that are common to all the people. Secondly, the components of human security are interdependent, which implies that it transgresses all types of borders. Further on, it is easier to ensure the human security by means of prevention. Finally, it is a concept that is people centered and is thus focused on the well-being of an individual in the society. “Like other fundamental concepts, human security is more easily

identified through its absence than its presence.” The UNDP definition has to date remained one of the most widely accepted definitions despite the quite broad scope it includes.

3. POLITICAL DEBATES ON HUMAN SECURITY

From the political point of view, the countries that took the leading role in implementing human security concept into their national policies are Japan and Canada. They are also responsible for setting up a ‘human security network’ of nongovernmental organizations and states. Canadian formulation, although representing the narrower approach to human security (only ‘freedom from fear’), includes the following criteria: protection of civilians in a conflict, peace support operations, conflict prevention, governance and accountability, and public safety. On the other hand the Japanese definition belongs to the broad definition, adding the ‘freedom from want’ into its range. It is a more comprehensive approach towards human security and covers the fields such as threats to human survival, daily life, dignity, refugees, poverty, anti-personnel land-mines, infectious diseases, environmental degradation, and transnational organized crime.

Considering the evolvement of the political debates on human security there are several documents worth mentioning. Firstly, an important document is the Responsibility to Protect (the 2001 report by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty)^{iv} which provides the legal framework for humanitarian intervention. The traditional concept of territorial security moved to security through armaments, and then to security through human development (implying to access to basic resources such as food and water, and employment), and security through environmental safety. This naturally led to the emphasis on individual protection against threats and the prominence of the term of human security itself.

Secondly, there is the Commission on Human Security’s report from 2003 – Human Security Now^v, drafted at the proposal of the Japanese government. It naturally reflects the Japanese ‘broader’ approach to human security, and mainly focuses on empowering individuals so they could more aptly deal with the internationalized threats. Furthermore, A More Secured World: Our Shared Responsibility by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change from 2004^{vi} emphasized the importance of dichotomy between ‘state security’ and ‘human security’. It also puts an accent on the fact that the world is beginning to face the problem of collective security which rests on three pillars-boundaries to threats no longer exist, threats are connected, and should therefore be dealt with on global, regional and state level. This can be linked to the aforementioned R2P, which would bring to the fore the question of justifiability of using military force. In 2005 report entitled In Longer Freedom: Towards Security, Development and Human Rights for all by the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan^{vii} the ‘new security consensus’ was adopted which would also pave the way for the multilateralism approach to security issues.

Multilateralism is at the heart of the EU approach to security, preserving stability, and encouraging sustainable development. This point is supported by the EU’s Human Security Doctrine for Europe: The Barcelona Report, and further on in the Madrid Report.^{viii} Further on the human security approach is mentioned in the European Security Strategy, pointing to the fact that the concept is an important guiding principle in the EU’s foreign policy.

Finally, World Summit Outcome Document of September 2005 more specifically outlined the ‘freedom from fear’ and ‘freedom from want’ into the definition of human security. One of the more recent approaches to the definition is given by Gerd Oberleitner- it is the so-called ‘humanitarian approach’^{ix}. In this approach human security is used to deal with humanitarian issues such as war crimes, genocide, and humanitarian interventions. However it is also possible to link this approach to the responsibility to protect (2001 report).

4. ACADEMIC DEBATES ON HUMAN SECURITY

Having mentioned the political debates, it is equally important to analyze an array of academic debates on the human security concept, which mostly take the form of debates over the broadness of human security definition. With the publishing of a special issue of the Journal Security Dialogue in 2004, various academic definitions of human security were proposed. However, there has always been a lot of controversy around the concept. Different groups of academics gave it their own broader or narrower definitions. The main questions around the concept are whether it introduces a shift in approaching security, whether it is only a new name for the already existing solutions, or whether it is a utopian or practical concept.

The most usual critique of human security approach is the fact that it does not add any value to the debate on relevant security issues. Even more, if you put the label of individual security threat to all potential harms, prioritizing political action becomes impossible. Scholars such as Roland Paris^x and Andrew Mack^{xi} argue that threats are not easier to analyze when they are included in a holistic approach. Barry Buzan^{xii} puts forward the complaint of ‘reductionism’- individuals are also defined by their societies, so it seems that focusing too much on the human security concept can prove to disregard other dimensions, such as society and state.

One of the proponents of the human security concept is Amato Acharya who sees the concept “as a means of reducing the human costs of violent conflict, as a strategy to enable governments to address basic human needs and offset the inequities of globalization.”^{xiii} Ramesh Thakur believes that states alone cannot provide human security to their citizen. Additionally he underlines the importance of complementarity between human security and human development.^{xiv} Jennifer Leaning believes that the concept “includes the social, psychological, political and economic factors that promote and protect human well - being through time.”^{xv} This obviously refers to the broader definition of the human security concept and brings it in a very close

connection to the human development concept. Fen Olser Hampson's gives three different interpretations of the human security concept. The first one is a 'rule-based' approach which seeks to strengthen the normative legal framework at the international and regional levels. The second one focuses on the humanitarian conception of human security and is mostly concerned with the safety of people. Finally, the preventive approach deals with preventive and post-conflict peace building where the term 'sustainable development' includes various means of securing peace, development, and future prevention of conflict eruptions. According to Axworthy "the state has, at times, come to be a major threat to its population's rights and welfare, rather than serving as the protector of its people. This drives us to broaden the focus of security beyond the level of the state and toward individual human beings, as well as to consider appropriate roles for the international system to compensate for state failure."^{xvi} Human security finally allows for non-state actors such as NGOs and civil society groups to play a larger role in international fora.

Taking into consideration all the advantages and disadvantages of the concept itself, according to Wolfgang Benedek^{xvii} human security "strengthens the rule of law in international relations" and supports the development of public international law and multilateral diplomacy. The same thesis is supported by Antonio Franceschet in his article *Global Legalism and Human Security*, who additionally emphasizes that human security can be a motivating factor for the direct enforcement of human rights and humanitarian legal standards.^{xviii} However, he points out that human security norms are interventionist by their nature, and that they help the self-proclaimed liberal states to impose through force their multilateral moral judgments onto the weaker states. This can be considered as one of the critiques of the human security concept.

Different academics may put more or less accent on certain aspects of the human security definition but in the end they all agree that it is a people focused approach which identifies individuals as the biggest victims of security threats today. Sadako Ogata summarized this well in her lecture on human security^{xix} by saying that "studying the people with their different specificities leads to discovering political, economical, and social factors that put their security in danger."

5. CRITICISM OF HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

One of the most vocal critics of the human security concept is Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, the Director of the CERI Program for Peace and Human Security at l'Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris. In 2005, at a UNESCO forum entitled *Human Security: 60 minutes to Convince* prof. Tadjbakhsh outlined seven challenges that stand in front of the concept.^{xx} The first challenge is the missing consensus on the definition of human security which is obviously an obstacle in developing any coherent policy. The second challenge is the rise of national security that exists in most countries today. Since there is a lot of attention being paid to the war against terrorism, many development policies are subject

to the security agenda, and aid is being allocated according to geo-strategic priorities. The third issue concerns the responsibility of adopting the human security approach. The increased responsibility of states and international community is needed. Even though states such as Canada, Norway, and Japan include human security in their foreign policy, they still ignore it at their respective domestic levels. Additionally to that, the problem is that too little accent is put on empowerment, on the agency approach, or on the role of individuals as agents of change. Therefore the conclusion is that human security implementation should be the responsibility of both the state and the individuals themselves. At the fourth place is the question of priorities and trade-offs. Policy process requires prioritization, since it is the only way to operationalize the approach. However, the way in which priorities are made should come from a networked, flexible, and horizontal coalition of approaches. This challenge is connected to the fifth one- the challenge of inter-sectorality. Due to the lack of interdisciplinary approaches in international institutions, and among donors and governments, it is difficult to design an appropriate human security intervention. The sixth challenge concerns the need for understanding deeper causes of a conflict (such as political and economical greed, failures of communication, ethnic and religious hostility, economic and social grievances, horizontal inequalities, leadership, and so on). Finally the last challenge refers to the art of not doing harm, meaning that human security interventions should not harm, but instead provide a framework to assess impacts of developing interventions, their secondary effect, and externalities.

Another criticism of the human security approach rises in the article of Alyson J.K. Bailes^{xxi}, where she makes a critique of the EU and ESDP. She points to the fact that the EU and ESDP actually present two opposing views. On one side there is the realistic approach of the ESDP which supports national interests of its member states. On the other side the ESDP missions are motivated by the EU desire to 'do good', implying to the human security oriented approach.^{xxii} A conclusion is made that in ESDP and the EU's human security doctrine there is a contradiction between idealism and realism- the EU's wish to be a 'good' player, and the strategic priorities of its member states. These two currents are not so easily diverged into a unified EU action. In conclusion, the human security approach proclaimed in the EU documents has a very high chance of being looked upon with suspicion, ultimately leading to mistrust towards its usefulness for the practical implementation of the EU policies.

In the article by Janne Haaland Matlary^{xxiii}, a professor of International Politics at the Institute of Political Science at University in Oslo, the argument is that the EU security policy has its purpose only in crisis situations where its use of force is limited solely to crisis management situations. The article claims that ESDP is driven only by major European military powers whose interests it serves, and legitimacy for any actions is achieved through the rhetoric of multilateralism. Since human rights are at the hart of EU policy, human security is the approach of the EU to defend those proclaimed

interest. Despite the presence of the human security concept it is not visible from any concrete actions that it actually adds any additional value to the already existing EU approach. Therefore “if human security is paraded in rhetoric but has no policy effect, is not the rhetorical exercise itself the more unethical?”

The conclusion can be made that the success of human security should not be measured only in comparison to the presence of discourses on the concept, or only in comparison to the implementation of concrete policies and activities, but also by the improvement in the real and perceived safety of the populations.

6. CONCLUSION

From the presented overview of both political and academic debates on human security it is now very obvious that the lack of precision in its definition clearly stands as an obstacle to the operationalization of the concept. Nevertheless, the EU's European Security Strategy and the accompanying Barcelona and Madrid doctrines take the concept of human security as the guiding principle of the EU policy. Even though some concrete measures were suggested in the doctrines (such as the establishment of a HS Response Force, and deployment of civilian experts), it is still not clear whether and when such a strategy would be fully employed by the EU institutions. Having in mind the complexity of the EU foreign policy and its decision-making, the future of the advocated human security approach is at least uncertain.

A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that human security has the potential to bring the added value to the European Security Strategy but it lacks a serious commitment by the EU as a unified political actor.

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