HUMAN SECURITY IN ISLAM

(Draft, not to be cited without permission)

A paper presented at the

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES CONFERENCE
on
"Mainstreaming Human Security: The Asian Contribution"

at

Bangkok, Thailand

4th – 5th October 2007
by

Zarina Othman, PhD*

Program of Strategic Studies and International Relations
(School of History, Politics and Strategy)
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University)
Bangi, 43600 Selangor Darul Ehsan
MALAYSIA
Tel: (+6-03) 8921-3267 (Direct)
(6-03) 8921-5711/5829 (Admin. Office)
(+6016) 217-9030 (Mobile)
(6 03) 8921- 3290 (Fax)
zaiothman02@yahoo.com   or   *zo@pkrisc.cc.ukm.my*

Biography

*Zarina Othman is a senior lecturer at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (National University of Malaysia). Her PhD (in International Studies, specialization in International Relations, Comparative Politics and Security Studies) was from the University of Denver, Colorado (USA). Among her selected publications:

Zarina Othman, "Human Security Concepts, Approaches and Debates in SE Asia (AFES Press, forthcoming 2007);

Zarina Othman, "Neorealism and Neoliberalism in War and Peace' (UKM Publishers, 2006); (in Malay)

Zarina Othman, "Human (In)security, Human Trafficking and Security in Malaysia" (Lexington Press, 2006);

Zarina Othman (co-author), "Human Security and Social Safety Nets (UKM Publishers, 2005). (in Malay)

Table of Contents

Abstract

Although the Iranian Revolution, in 1979, sparked a debate about the rise of Islam and Islamic fundamentalism, international relations and human security scholars mostly continued to isolate it as a factor in understanding current international and inter-cultural conflicts. Likewise, even though the concept of 'ummah' is crucial in Islam, there has been lack of research done to understand it from the Western concept of human security. Nevertheless, the end of the Cold War-first marked by the reunification of Germany in 1989-in addition to longstanding conflicts among ethnic and religious groups in many Muslim countries, the unexpected September 11, 2001 tragedy in the US, and increasing transnational threats-i.e. human, weapons and illicit drug trafficking and smuggling-have together given new impetus for scholars to reexamine how religion, particularly Islam, acts as an ideational factor in humanity's overall quest for peace and security of the region and the world. It is the purpose of the paper to explore how Islam explains and understands human security, in particular the concepts of peace, security, justice, hu   man rights and development. In order to gain a comprehensive overview of the approach, both secondary and primary data will be collected. In-depth interviews was conducted with scholars in the field of international relations, security and in Islamic studies. By analyzing human security approach from the Islamic perspectives, it is hoped that the research will contribute to the contemporary debates concerning human security, thereby helping to enrich the disciplines and perhaps add to the knowledge base available to address some of today's most serious world conflicts.

Keywords: development; human rights; human security; justice; peace; *ummah*

1. INTRODUCTION

Is human security universal? Like other religions and cultures throughout the world, Islam has been seen by many to play only a minor role in scholarly efforts to explain many security issues in international relations. However, in reality, there are many cases of conflict involving Islamic countries and Muslims throughout the world. Furthermore, its historically and geographically close connections with two other major religions in the world, Christianity and Judaism, makes the study of Islam especially significant as a subject for study today.

For many years, religion, like culture in general, has tended to be studied as a domestic factor, rather than an external factor in explaining security issues. Although the Iranian Revolution in 1979 sparked a debate about the rise of Islam and Islamic fundamentalism (Piscatori 1986; Esposito 1991) in world politics, IR theorists have generally continued to isolate religion as an important factor in explaining international conflicts. Beginning with the reunification of Germany in 1989, and in addition to the longstanding ethnic and religious conflicts in many Muslim countries, plus the unexpected September 11, 2001 tragedy in the US, all together have once again given reason for IR scholars to reassess how religion- particularly Islam - plays a significant role as an ideational factor in the ongoing quest to explain peace and security issues of the world.

Focusing on Asia, in particular SE Asia and Malaysia, this research is designed to examine how IR scholars can gain a better understanding of human security by incorporating a religions perspective, focusing in particular on Islam- in their IR theory discourse. The research has two major objectives: 1) to assess and to document security and human security discourse in Asia-in terms of both traditional security concepts and the newer concept of human security; 2) to analyze how treating Islam as an ideational factor in security issues may help to form an updated alternative IR theory.

2. (STATE) SECURITY

As we all know, security studies have been dominated by the traditional, or Realist, paradigm in explaining war, peace and security. The famous phrases, "to be at peace, prepare for war," and "the more weapons, the better' (Sagan and Waltz 1995) are commonly accepted among proponents of the Realist school of thought. Realists, and later Neorealists, (i.e., Waltz 1979) have always seen security as only partial and temporary, because "war is inevitable." They believe the world is anarchical - that there is no world government above that of the states or nations. Furthermore, because they see the state as the highest authority, the security of states is the most important factor in seeking peace. Realists therefore defined peace as the absence of war and security as the absence of threats.

Thus, security has meant "national security" at least among those who were concerned with political science, government and international relations. It has referred to a set of defense mechanisms intended to protect a state (country), so that it can continue to exist as a sovereign entity. That of course includes protection from attacks and threats that originate from outside its national boundaries, and also usually includes protection from any actions that may seriously threaten the country's ruling regime from within. It has been assumed that such attacks could come at anytime, in any shape, but always in a military form, and therefore a standing military force is necessary. We are said to be "at peace," since neither war nor other armed conflict is occurring; and therefore, we are supposed to be "secure."

In Southeast Asia, the extended concept has been called "comprehensive security." Many non-state actors, including the NGOS, play influential roles in developing this concept. Comprehensive security goes beyond the traditional threats that come in a military form, or even in the form of internal violence and disorder such as that which arises out of ethnic conflicts. Comprehensive security includes threats that come in the form of environmental degradation, for example, a threat that carries security consequences far into the future. It also includes such things as drug abuse and drug trafficking, economic crises, the problems of illegal immigration, forced migration, and so on (Hassan 1996; Yamamoto 1996). The literature on security, however, has been dominated by a traditional point of view that defines security strictly in terms of military [and political aspects], which have been historically, almost by definition, chiefly the province of males, "to be at peace, prepare for war."

Challenging this Realism and Neorealism, scholars argue that conflict can be avoided and war can be prevented through the formation of international organizations. This "Idealist" school of thought-later known as Neoliberal Institutionalism - proposes that international organizations, e.g., the United Nations and ASEAN, can help to manage conflict and keep it from escalating into war. The establishment of the League of Nations in 1917, was partly due to the influence of this Idealism school of thought (Keohane 1989; Zarina 2006).

Nevertheless, World War II broke out in 1939 in Europe and then in East Asia, and that ended the life of this international organization. Following World War II, the United Nations was formed by the major powers of the

US, Britain, France, Soviet Union and China. The aim of the UN was to maintain "peace and security" of the world, and the increasing interdependence, that escalated even more from the 1970s onward, has seemed to many to have validated this Neoliberal approach. The UN has become an important mechanism, challenging the Realism and Neorealism views about peace and security.

Yet, recent events, such as the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center in New York, have once again caused scholars to reevaluate their theories of international relations, especially concerning violence conducted by non-state actors towards not only states but towards people in general - i.e, ultimately toward the whole human race, in as much as all people everywhere are now threatened by forces that are beyond the control of any state. Focus has largely remained on the state as the main entity to be protected. What we seem to be having trouble understanding is the growing interconnectedness. Issues that are important for one country so often have a spillover impact onto other countries.

3. HUMAN SECURITY

The idea of protecting survival of states was challenged, when the UN published its *Human Development Report 1994*. In the report human security as a concept emerged and began to attract academia and government officials attention. Since then, its slogan "freedom from fear and freedom from wants" became famous world wide. Human security refers to a kind of security that does not focus on either the traditional "national security" nor even on the expanded "comprehensive security," both of which are concerned first with the entity of the state. It focuses instead on the importance of protecting the well-being of the human race - not just the security of one's own people, but of all-cutting across distinctions and boundaries of nationality and ethnicity, class and culture, gender, and religion. UN human security included seven categories of security and wellbeing that are necessary to ensure those two freedoms: food, health, economic, environmental, personal, community and political security.

Following that in 1999, (at the state level) a group of foreign ministers met in Norway and formed Human Security Network (HSN). The aims of HSN is "… to energize political process aimed at preventing or solving conflicts and promoting peace and development" (http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/principle_e.php)(visited 5/07/2007). The shifting paradigm from protecting of the state to the protecting of the people continue to invite a hot debate among the academia. By focusing on people, human security does not mean that we totally exclude state, since many of the human security issues require state's action and commitment. What is needed is the serious commitment of state to protect the people, the backbone of a state. Other than the fourteen members of HSN, Japan is another major player that has adopted the human security approach in its foreign policy formulations. Unlike Canada, which has focused on human rights as important elements of human security, Japan's approach of human security has been more on development which has been exemplified in its Official Development Assistance (ODA) as well as displaced people and refugees. In 1999, Japan's initiatives has also helped to launch the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, where the funding goes to human development area such as education, health, and small scale infrastructure development
(http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?MenuID=9432&Page=1505) (visited 5/7/2007).

In the following year, at the UN Millennium Summit, Commission of Human Security was established. The aim is to address critical and pervasive threats to human security, among others. Interestingly, although visioning a world where human are more secured, Japan is not member of HSN. In 2003, Commission of Human Security submitted its report, "Human Security Now," which has emphasized " … protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations, building on their strengths and aspirations. It also means creating systems that give people the building blocks of survival, dignity and livelihood. Human security connects different types of freedoms - freedom from want, freedom from fear and

freedom to take action on one's own behalf. To do this, it offers two general strategies: protection and empowerment" (http://www.humansecurity_chs.org/finalreport/Outlines/outline.pdf)(visited 5 July 2007). Human Security Now thus is concerned about future generations.

In Southeast Asia, Thailand remains the only member of HSN. Following Asian Economic Crisis, between 1997-1998, that hit hard the region, Thailand established what is known as Ministry of Social Development and Human Security which is in charged the country's social affairs, including eradicating poverty. In 1998, at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) in Manila, ASEAN created an ASEAN-PMC Caucus on Human Security. Later another ASEAN-PMC Caucus was established on Social Safety Nets. ASEAN further took a proactive approach when it announced ASEAN Vision 2020, focusing on human security within a context of societal security (http://www.aseansec.rg/184.htm) (visited 20/6/2006). ASEAN continue to assimilate the approach of human security when it includes it in Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Bangkok 2003. Therefore we can sum up that even though human security focus on the survival of human, there is no common approach. In general, it can be conclude that SE Asian (in particular ASEAN) states have been especially concerned abut their sovereignty.

In SE Asia, the human security discourse appears to be a critique towards comprehensive security (Acharya 2002; Anthony 2002). States in Southeast Asia adopted the concept to defend their national boundaries from both military and non military threats. Malaysia, an Islamic country, for instance, declared illicit drug, what is today's nontraditional security issue, as a threat to its national security in 1983, during the Cold War. Closer assessment revealed that while many nontraditional issues, including HIV-AIDS, considered as threats, but there appears to be no common understanding of what human security is all about.

Similarly, the problems of diluting the concept of human security by making all issues somehow relate to it, presents another challenge. Like others, the author tends to agree that there should be a boundary to differentiate what constitute threats. As discussed, human security is about protection of the people. The author has mentioned elsewhere that threat to security of the people at least can be grouped into three categories. First, societal security, which includes security for the most vulnerable groups such as the impoverished, the disabled, ethnic minority groups, and women and children. The second category refers to the threats to human security due to the unevenness of globalization. The third refers to threats to the survival of individuals which include the preservation of the quality of life (Zarina 2006). In addition to those categories, in Asia, we should add another important term. This is what this author refers to as "human safety."

An important question that needs to be examined is the vulnerability of the people due to the many natural disaster such as volcanic eruptions, floods, tsunamis, hurricanes and may more. It is proposed that threats to these people can not be grouped under human security rather they are the victims of human safety.[i] Thus based on this definition, we can sum up that

human safety refer to the safety of the people due to the unintended threats while human security refers to the intended (controllable) threats one of which is the armed conflicts, illegal activities of organized crime, landmines, and others. Following the above definition, threats to human security is therefore preventable. (The above discussion can be summarize as follows)

Characteristics of Comprehensive Security and Human Security

| Components	Comprehensive Security	Human Security
Unit of analysis	State	People
Source of threat examined	External and internal	External and internal
Type of threat examined	Military and non-military	Military and non-military
Element of threat examined	State and non-state	State and non-state
Theoretical & empirical emphasis	Human needs	Human needs and rights

Source: Zarina Othman, "Human Security Concepts, Approaches and Debates in SE Asia" (AFES Press2007).
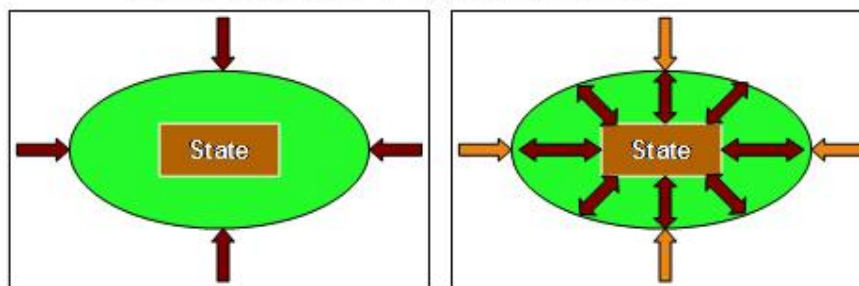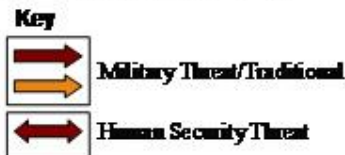
Source: Sity Daud and Zarina Othman (2005)

4. ISLAM AND HUMAN SECURITY

Having discussed security and human security in the region, an important question remains unanswered, in particular the role of religion in discussing about security in SE Asia. SE Asia is an important region located in a strategic location between East Asia and the Middle East. It is made up of diverse ethnic groups and religions. Almost all major religions of the world can be found here. However, international relations literature tends to ignore roles played by religion and this is true for SE Asia international relations as well (Fox and Sandler 2006).

If Asian Financial Crisis (1997-1998) was among major turning points for Thai's government to establish its Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the author would argue that it was September 11 incident that has made Malaysia government to establish *Islam Hadhari* in its 'human security' approach. In Malaysia, the concept of human security is new, especially to the policy makers. Instead human development has been used interchangeably with human security. This may be due to 'human rights' factor, that was clearly emphasis in human security approach which often been regarded as a challenge to state's sovereignty (national security). Nevertheless, closer examination reveals that Islam plays important role.

Peace Islam means submission to God, thus a Muslim means the one who submits. Islam is not only refers to as religion rather it is a comprehensive way of life. In other words, Islam instructs people on how they may live together in peace and harmony regardless of race, class or beliefs. By submitting oneself to God, it will lead to true peace-internally and externally. Thus, peace in Islam is beyond realism "absence of war." A goal of a Muslim is the Hereafter and to prepare one needs peace in order to submit his duty to God. Thus, peace and secured environment is important for human survival in Islam.

Ummah Like that of many SE Asian states, Islam also sticks to the idea that 'security begins at home.' Beginning with internal peace, it goes on to one's family and extends to the neighbors, the community and eventually to the whole *ummah. Ummah* means community (or Nation), thus it means the whole Muslim world (Al Maududi 2000). Peace and security are related and for security to exist, Islam emphasis on laws, including *shariah* (Islamic) law. The ultimate goal of Islamic law is to establish, strengthen and support the faith in individuals and in the community as a whole. Islam emphasis the spirit of brotherhood (spirit of community) to support each other. As discussed above, this faith brings peace into the heart, which immediately curtails violent feelings towards others.

Development Development in Islam means bringing balance and harmony, justice and peace, and beauty and prosperity. It is the development of the total human being: body, mind, and soul. Islam seeks modernization but discourage westernization. Thus development according to Islam also include spiritual, moral, economic, social, educational, and cultural.

Human Rights Human rights include the right to life for all human beings, regardless of race, religion, and nationalities; the rights to the safety of life where all Muslims have a duty to save every human life when they are in danger (Ali 2007). Islam also respects woman's rights. Woman

chastity must be respected and protected at all times, whether she belongs to one's own nation or to the nation of an enemy. Likewise, husbands must treat their wives well and mothers are honored. An important rights as prescribe by Islam is economic rights (rights for needy), which is part of human rights, thus anyone who is suffering from deprivation has a right to share in the property and wealth of a Muslim; irrespective of whether he belongs to this or to that nation. The next important rights in Islam is peoples' 'freedom.' Slavery for instance is forbidden in Islam.

Justice Muslims have to be just to both, their friends as well as to their enemies. Justice in Islam is not limited to the citizens of one's own country, or the Muslim community as a whole; it is meant for all human beings because God created human beings as equals. This leads to the *equality of human beings* in Islam. Islam recognizes equality between men irrespective of color, race or nationality. Therefore, no human race is more superior over others. Another important concept is cooperation in Islam. Islam prohibits cooperation for wrongdoings (i.e. aggression) but prescribe cooperation for virtue (good things) (Hamidullah 1970).

5. ISLAM HADHARI: MALAYSIA'S APPROACH OF HUMAN SECURITY

Islam Hadhari, or civilizational Islam emphasizes the need for balanced development, which covers both physical and spiritual development. This means Islam Hadhari emphasizes developing a thinking society, social harmony, and economic progress. It is an effort to bring the *Ummah* back to basics, back to the fundamentals, as prescribed in the *Qur'an* (Muslims Hollybook) and the *Hadith* (Prophets Muhammad pbuh words), that form the foundation of Islamic civilization. Islam Hadhari is merely an approach to foster an Islamic civilization built upon the noble values and ideals of Islam (Badawi 2006). It emphasizes development that is consistent with the tenets of Islam and that focuses on enhancing the quality of life for every citizen, regardless of his or her religion. Thus it suggests that Islam Hadhari is about empowering people or human security. This approach is also inspired by the Malaysian Muslims' firm belief that the tide of radicalism and extremism can be checked and reversed with good governance, healthy democratic practices, and employment of the citizenry through education, as well as equitable sharing of the benefits of economic growth.

There are ten main principles, which Muslim nations and communities must demonstrate, namely, 1. Faith and piety in Allah; 2. A just and trustworthy government; 3. A free and independent people; 4. Mastery of knowledge; 5. Balanced and comprehensive economic development; 6. A good quality of life; 7. Protection of the rights of minority groups and women; 8. Cultural and moral integrity; 9. Protection of the environment; 10. Strong defenses

The main characteristics of Islam Hadhari are as follows:

Universality: It is based on Islam, a universal message for mankind that is based on mercy; Godliness: It is based on divine scripture and works on bringing people closer to their Lord. Hence, it is a godly end and means, and has a divine source and reference; Morality: Its ultimate concern is maintaining a good character and good human relations; Tolerance: Tolerance is essential to create a society based on peace, stability, unity, cooperation, and solidarity among all it segments and with all its different traditions and beliefs. This kind of tolerance is based on trying to genuinely understand the other and respect cultural and religious convictions (ibid.).

In addition , Islam Hadhari also presents:

Comprehensiveness: It integrates both scripture-based sciences and modern sciences. Another feature is its all encompassing program to deal with the individual, society, and the state.

Moderation: This is the main methodology for the perspective, which is based on gradualism and easiness in implementation. Through this implementation, there will be a balance between the interests of all - the individual and the society, spiritual and worldly needs, and ideals and reality.

Diversity: The context of Islam Hadhari is wide ranging; it covers a wide range of interests on different levels; it is open to new adjustments and to other human experiments and experiences

Humanity: As a call, Islam Hadhari is focused upon people.

It is clear that the Islam Hadhari concept contributes towards overall human progress that is balanced between spiritual and material, between progress and moral values, between religion and worldly concerns. Islam Hadhari has the potential to curb the militant instincts among religious detractors. It is important for the Muslim Ummah to be guided in understanding and practicing Islam as a comprehensive way of life, as a means to build a civilization. A wholesome way of life will create the balance between a person's responsibilities in this world and in the Hereafter.

6. CONCLUSION

As discussed, there has been a shifting paradigm from state to human security. Yet, the dilemma continues as who are responsible to promote security to the people. In other words, the idea of human security does not ignore the importance of state entities. Rather, it holds the perspective that in the long run human security is essential to the well-being of the state itself. One entity cannot exist in a sustainably secure state of being without the other. When the people of a country suffer from a lack of safety, health, and overall well-being - in other words, when as individuals and groups they do not experience a state of being secure- then the country as a whole, including its sovereignty and ability to protect against outside threats, is put at risk. When there is poor health among the populace-not only their physical and mental health, but also poor economic and social health- then the health of the nation itself is also threatened. Providing protection and security to the people is thus seen as an essential means of providing security to the state.

The human security approach tells us that peace can no longer be defined as the absence of war. What is more important is the quality of life for people. The contribution of religion, in this paper - Islam, has helped to empower human (ummah). It also suggests that ummah is about the survival of people (human race). Thus, it is concluded that human security is universal because it cuts across national boundaries, etc. Malaysia' Islam Hadhari provides one of the empirical evidences about the important roles played by religion in human security thus help to bridge the gap between the western concept of human security and the Asian concept of human security.

7. REFERENCES

Acharya, Amitav. "Human Security: What Kind for the Asia-Pacific?" In David Dickens (ed). 2002. *The Human Face of Security: Asia-Pacific Perspectives.* Canberra: Australian National University.

Ali, Parveen S. 2007. *Human Rights in Islam.* New Delhi: Adam Publishers.

Al A'la Maududi, Sayyid Abu. 2000. *Proses pembinaan negara Islam.* (Trans.). Salehan Ayub. Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Salam Sdn. Bhd.

Al Turabi, Hassan. 1992. *Islam as A Pan-National Movement and Nation-states.*

Petaling Jaya: ABIM.

Anthony, Mely Caballero, 2002: "Human Security in the Asia-Pacific: Current Trends and Prospects", in: Dickens, David (Ed.): *The Human Face of Security: Asia-Pacific Perspectives.* (Canberra, Australia: Strategic Studies and Defense Studies Centre): 18-29.

Badawi, Abdullah Ahmad. 2006. *Islam Hadhari: A Model Approach for Development and Progress.* Petaling Jaya: MPH Group Sdn. Bhd.

Daud, Sity; Othman, Zarina, 2005: "Human Security and Social Safety Nets", in: Daud, Sity; Othman, Zarina, *Politics and Security.* Bangi, Malaysia: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Publishers.

Esposito, John L. 1999. *The Islamic Threat: Myth r Reality?* New York: Oxford University Press.

Fox, Jonathan and Shmuel Sandler, (Eds). 2006. *Religion in World Conflict.* London: Rutledge.

Hamidullah, Muhammad. 1970. *Introduction to Islam.* Paris: Center Islamic Culture.

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

Keohane, Robert and Joseph Nye. 1989. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition.* (2nd ed.). Boston: Little Brown.

Othman, Zarina, 2006a. "Neorealism and Institutionalisme in War and Peace", in Mayudin, Ghazali; Hamil, Jamie; Daud, Sity; Othman, Zaini (Eds.): *Democracy, Leadership and Security in Malaysian Politics.* Bangi, Malaysia: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Publishers.

Othman, Zarina. 2006b. "Human (In)security, Human Trafficking and Security in Malaysia." In Karen Beeks and Delila Amir (Eds.). *Trafficking and the Global Sex Industry.* Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.

Piscatori, James P. 1986. *Islam in a World of Nation-States.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Sagan, Scot D. and Kenneth Waltz. 1995. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate.* New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

UNDP, 1995: *Human Development Report 1994.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Waltz, Kenneth. 1979. *Theory of International Politics.* New York: McGraw Hills, Inc.

Yamamoto, Yoshinabu, 1996: "Institutional Infrastructure and Mechanisms for Implementing Comprehensive Security in the Asia-Pacific

Region", in: Hassan, Jawhar Mohamad; Ramnath, Thangam (Eds): *Conceptualizing Asia-Pacific Region.* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies.

8. INTERNET SOURCES

ASEAN Secretariat. http://www.aseansec.org
Human Security Network.
http://www.humansecuritynetwrok.org/principle_ephp
Human Security Now.
http://www.humansecurity-ch5-/finalreport/outline.pdf
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Japan).
http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2004/chapter 3_pdf
UN Trust Fund for Human Security.
http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Menu ID=9432&Page=1505

Note

i I owe this idea while having a conversation with Dr. Shunyo Liao, an associate research fellow of Taiwan Institute of Economic Research (TIER), Taipei, Taiwan (ROC), 21/4/06.