

WMP Book Project – Interim Funder’s Report:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Project Title: Human Security in Asia: A Status Report
(An ARENA Book Project for the Peace and Security Programme)

II. Rationale

The concept of national security is about the means that states use for the maintenance of territorial integrity, internal cohesion and political order. Towards these ends, states spend much of their time and budgets to enhance this.

On the other hand, the human security concept starts at the opposite pole. The protection and enhancement of individual and communal human rights is the starting point in this alternative paradigm. “Freedom from fear and freedom from want” is the cry of human security proponents including ARENA. This has evolved into “a life of dignity” and encompasses security, development and human rights.

The project therefore, seeks to:

- Show the need to change the conception of national security;
- Show the importance and reality of human security;
- Show how militarized notions of security add to insecurity of people and states;
- Show the need for discussion of security policies in civil society;
- Engage in debates on the dominant concepts of security and the nature of particular politics evolved from security approaches in order to demystify state security and ground people’s aspiration for a secure life; and
- Popularize the conception of human security that stands on the three principles of human development, human rights and dignity to live a secure life for all.

II. Preparations

We started the invitation process by sending out the “Call for paper” through NGO networks and ARENA internally in early of March. The outline proposal was also sent to those identified as writers with the timeline for the project given. We first started with those who worked on the militarization book. We got one writer for each country and a draft of each chapter / country report by the concerned writer was ready for the writers’ workshop in which inputs of intense discussions from the selected writers helped finalize the drafts for the Status Report on Human Security in Asia as the final output. Revision of papers was done in the light of the discussions.

After the workshop, the writers had 3 weeks to finalize their papers and include suggestions. After this we started the final editing for the book and the publication work. Among the writers we have ARENA’s fellows such as Francis Daehoon Lee (who is also the co-convenor of the project) and Clarence Dias, and we also get some new writers – M.B. Naqvi, Alice Raymundo; Surabhi Mathur, Sit Tsui, Pratubjit Neelapaijit, Eakarín Tuansiri. Their diverse backgrounds and research interests help to enrich the themes of ‘human security’, in this sense; the notion of ‘human security’ of this project is further deepened and broadened.

Japanese fellows such as Kinhide Mushakoji and Muto Ichiyo have been engaging in human security discussions and advocacy for long time, and they have developed a notion of "people's security" as differentiated from UNDP-developed human security. Their concern is with the possibilities of the people themselves emerging as the vital factor bringing peace (peace as new alternative relationships).

We have seen obviously a debate is there, and ARENA wanted to create a platform for this intellectual debate / exchange and include the Japanese angle in the book adequately and fairly. Unfortunately, our Japanese fellows were too busy to contribute any paper for the book. Yet, Prof. Anu still thinks Japanese perspective should not be simply disregarded and she has been adapting and collating the "People's Security" notion into the introduction section of the book.

Ed Legaspi of Forum-Asia attended the writers' workshop as guest participant / observer; Isabel Vadivu Govind of GAATW (Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women) attended the writers' workshop as guest participant / observer and helped with documentation; Sumie Arima of ActionAid International Asia, our funding partner, also attended the internal roundtable discussion.

The open forum, which was reformatted into an internal roundtable discussion was indeed very good for the two young Thai researchers, they engaged in a deeper understanding of various thoughts / ideas concerning human security issues. The research team headed for the field research in the Patani Province in the Southern part of Thailand after the workshop. Now their research papers are being translated into English for the book project.

Meanwhile, another additional book project is also planned with CCOS group (Coordinating Committee of Civil Society Organization for Southern Provinces). "Human Security" as a central framework links up this Southern Thailand Research reports with other 4 papers concerning relatively similar topics of conflict reconciliation through people's power and agency. The publication, that to be printed in Thai and Malay, aims at bringing a critical understanding of human security and seeking for alternatives to the conflicts in Thai and Malay communities.

IV. The Writers' Workshop and Open Forum

The workshop was held from 26 to 28 May 2006 in SASA International House inside the campus of Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. It was attended by six notable personalities – academicians, a lawyer, a journalist and activists – all human security practitioners plus five technical support staff (*see Appendix X for details of the workshop participants*). The writers were to refine the drafts of their papers on human security that will comprise the book and bring about a more unified and coherent understanding of the concept and practice of human security suitable for reading by human security practitioners in the field and those in the academe.

Informal Dinner. The first day saw the arrival and billeting of the writers and staff. In the evening, there was an informal dinner aimed at getting the people to know one another.

The Workshop. Arena felt the need to pursue this project in the light of the increasing number of conflicts in Asia and the militarist ideology prevailing in most of the developing countries of Asia even in times of peace and in times of crisis.

Presentation and Discussion of Draft Papers

1. Dr. Clarence Dias, *Human Security under Global Siege in Asia*

2. Mr. Francis Daehoon Lee, *National Security and Human Security in South Korea: Rights, Civil Society and Identity in Security Struggles*
3. Ms. Alice Raymundo, *Trade Liberalization and the Struggle for Food Sovereignty in the Philippines*
4. Mr. M.B. Naqvi, *Poverty in Pakistan* (tentative title)
5. Ms. Surabhi Mathur, *Securing a Livelihood in Marathwada*

(see Appendix Y for summaries of the workshop presentations and discussions)

Additional Papers Included after the Workshop

1. Dr. Sit Tsui, *What Make a Collectivity? Two Cases of Community Building in Rural China*
2. Ms. Pratupjit Neelapajit, *Disappearances in Thailand*
3. Mr. Eakarin Tuansri, *Student Movement and Violence in Southern Thailand*

An *open forum*, which was turned into an internal roundtable discussion, was held on the 29th, entitled “*Comparative Case Studies on Peace and Conflict Resolution in Asia*”, brought together the workshop participants, human security practitioners from Thailand and some Thai students working on a similar study on human security in South Thailand. Its purpose was to empower Asian solidarity for peace-building and call for the destruction of government/national/state machineries and apparatus and injustice social structure, militarist ideologies that intensify and enforce war, violence and intolerance. (See Appendix Z for details of the presentations and ensuing discussions)

VI. Beneficiaries of the Project

Ultimately, the project is intended to benefit its target audience comprising, but not exclusively, of grassroots activists, nongovernmental organizations, people’s organizations, social movements and trade unions, and students in the field of human development, human rights and human security. It is further hoped that higher-level human security practitioners, even those in state and international diplomacy and the academe, would greatly benefit from this project.

VII. Problems and Prospects

A. Problems encountered:

1. Conducting a workshop in a foreign place is very difficult especially if there is no local host to help out. Although we contacted some Bangkok-based regional NGOs for help; however, for some reasons such as a mismatch of research interests or lack of human resources, these have made collaboration difficult. After having evaluated this kind of mismatch, we discovered this was due to the fact that most regional or local NGOs are indeed doing something very closely related to “human security” but the notion or idea is just not adequately understood.

2. Some writers who were invited to join this project had expressed their intention to participate but unfortunately at the last minute, were not able to join for one reason or another. Among these were:
 - a. Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, who agreed to write on Central Asia, suffers from serious high blood pressure.
 - b. Irene Calis, Palestinian researcher, born and grown up in the Diaspora and now volunteering with the Peace Campaign in Palestine, completely loses contact with us probably because of server fights in Palestine now.
 - c. Arjun Karki, ARENA fellow (Nepal), withdrew in the middle because of his involvement in the people's resistance to the Gyanendra Regime.
 - d. Jayadeva Uyangoda, ARENA fellow (Sri Lanka), withdrew also in the middle because of his involvement in civil society peace initiatives in the new and uncertain political context in Sri Lanka.
 - e. Francis Loh, ARENA fellow (Malaysia), withdrew because the dates for the Bangkok meeting clash with some other prior commitments in Penang and pressured by heavy teaching chores.
 - f. Anna Trembath and Damian Grenfell, new writers, could not attend the writers' workshop because no flights available and could not commit to write a joint-paper due to the current crisis in Timor-Leste and resultant changes to their workplans.
3. Shortcoming of the open forum cum internal roundtable discussion was mostly due to the prematurity of the preparation work. Our plan was to form two-member research team heading for a field research in Southern Thailand where the conflicts are acutely severe and their findings will be reported in the Open Forum, which hoped to address more concerns within Thai community. However, we could get two Thai researchers commitment only at a very last point. We then reformatted the open forum to be an internal roundtable discussion, which further consolidated the discussions of the workshop and strategized networks, solidarity and peace in civil society in the Asian region.

B. Prospects for the Future

The book project is not the end-all-be-all of ARENA's involvement in human security concerns but the first step in a long and arduous journey to safeguard the rights of peoples from the forays and forages of the major powers and the global corporations.

The *Writers' Workshop* has brought together top-notch writers who are all qualified in their respective fields of involvement especially in the promotion and projection of concerns, issues and programmes involving human security in their own countries.

The *Open Forum*, on the other hand, has managed to bring out the similarities in the cases reported and how governments deal with them in a militarist way. Even movements themselves have become militarized. There is a spiral of militarization and therefore there is a desperate need for the human security approach in all these contexts.

Much remains to be done but it is hope that the first volume in this project will provide some tools for grassroots activists, international practitioners and the academe to seriously promote the concept of human security as an alternative to the national security paradigm and that the security of the state is enhanced by guaranteeing the human security of its people.

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