

In Quest of Human Security

JIA 40th Anniversary Symposium

The Japan Institute of International Affairs

The JIIA 40th Anniversary Symposium was held December 11–12, 1999,
at the United Nations University, Tokyo.

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Preface

It is with great pleasure that we publish the proceedings of the 40th Anniversary Symposium of the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), “In Quest of Human Security,” held December 11–12, 1999, at the United Nations University (UNU), Tokyo.

JIIA was established in December 1959 on the recommendation of Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida. Modeled on the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations and Britain’s Royal Institute of International Affairs, it was founded on the consensus of the intellectual elite of Japan at the time. As its charter states, JIIA aspired “to create a major research facility in cooperation with academe, the bureaucracy, politics, business, the press, and other spheres, and prepare a system for empirical research oriented toward advancing our new democratic diplomacy.” Ever since, JIIA has steadily expanded the scope of its activities as Japan’s premier think tank addressing international politics, the international economy, international law, and other areas related to international affairs and foreign policy.

The world today continues its search for a new world order following the end of the Cold War. Traditional relations between states and between the state and individuals are being transformed. In addition, the great wave of globalization, propelled chiefly by the information-technology revolution, is qualitatively altering international systems. In keeping with all these changes, the idea that security, too, needs to be addressed in terms of not only traditional national security but also so-called human security has been attracting growing attention.

That is why JIIA decided to commemorate its fortieth anniversary with an international symposium on the theme of human security. Keynote speeches were delivered by the late Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi and former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The participation of 16 distinguished authorities from both Japan and overseas ensured an extremely high level of discussion and debate. We pride ourselves that the symposium contributed to clarifying the theoretical framework of human security, a cause dear to the heart of Prime Minister Obuchi.

This volume includes the keynote speeches and the papers delivered by the session presenters, as well as remarks from the final session. We hope that it will serve to further raise the level of debate on human security.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest gratitude for the magnificent support and cooperation extended by UNU, which cohosted the symposium and provided the venue.

October 2000

Hisashi Owada
President, JIIA

Overview

The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) and the United Nations University (UNU) cohosted the JIIA 40th Anniversary Symposium, on the theme “In Quest of Human Security,” at UNU on December 11 and 12, 1999, with support from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Yomiuri Shimbun. Altogether, more than 500 people attended over the two days. The symposium opened with keynote speeches by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi and former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, after which an array of distinguished presenters and panelists from both Japan and overseas discussed and debated the relatively new concept of human security. The symposium incorporated both theoretical perspectives, such as definition of the concept of human security, and practical measures, addressing the issue of human dignity, the bedrock of human security, as well as development and conflict prevention, both of which are crucial to ensuring human security.

Prime Minister Obuchi, who had raised the issue of human security at the Group of Eight Cologne Summit earlier that year, noted that national governments need to “find ways to incorporate the perspective of human security into policy implementation, translating it into concrete action.” He also pointed out the importance of a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, in the sense of both seeing it as a series of processes—elimination of poverty, inequity, and other latent causes of conflict, conflict resolution, and postconflict reconstruction—and taking a comprehensive approach at each stage.

Dr. Boutros-Ghali spoke about the intricate connection among peace, development, and democracy. He noted that the broadening of both the targets and the duration of UN peacekeeping operations has enhanced the importance of development and democratization before and after conflict. He stressed the importance of the new concept of human security in the context of sustainable development, which focuses people’s energies on peace and growth and is highly effective in preventing conflict or its recurrence.

In his presentation at the first session, “Measures for Conflict Prevention,” Ambassador Hisashi Owada, president of JIIA, raised the issue of what is to be done when there is a clash between traditional national security, centered on justice for sovereign states, and justice for human beings, which is most directly threatened by conflict. With the collapse of the Cold War order at the beginning of the 1990s, the inter-

national system itself underwent a structural transformation. On the one hand, “the emergence of numerous internal confrontational factors that had previously been bottled up” led to the proliferation of regional conflicts. On the other hand, various nonstate actors, including individuals, began engaging in activities across national borders.

The panel discussion began by considering whether justice and security are for the state or for individuals. The consensus was that they are for both and should be addressed as such. Speakers urged the importance, for conflict prevention, of improving social infrastructure: tolerance of diversity, elimination of poverty, establishment of a participatory democratic system, and especially education that teaches the spirit of tolerance; and of implementing practical measures: an effective international early warning system, humanitarian assistance for victims of conflict, better reconciliation processes, and more rigorous penalties for those responsible for conflict. It was observed that no matter how the international system changes, an international community centered on states will persist, and that therefore thought and action relating to human security, which states tend to overlook, is needed. The point was also made that the issues of what kinds of conflicts can be prevented by what means and of how national democratization links up with democratization of the international community should be addressed from the perspectives of both national security and human security.

In his presentation at the second session, “Promotion of Sustainable Development,” Professor Jesus P. Estanislao, a former secretary of finance of the Philippines, declared that “each person is the alpha and the omega of development” and that “each person is the principal agent and instrument for the process of development to unfold on a sustainable and progressive basis.” In particular, he emphasized the importance of the family in development and thus of assistance targeting the basic human needs of the family as the basic unit of developing countries. In regard to the relationship between the state and the market, he said that if development is to be sustainable state economic policies need to supplement the market economy and called for stronger state supervision of development and of the economy as a whole.

The panelists emphasized that the elimination of poverty is crucial to human security and discussed the connection between conflict resolution and the elimination of poverty, as well as effective approaches for overcoming “donor fatigue” of developed countries. There was lively debate on a wide range of issues, including the relationship between human security and the downside of globalization, the balance between safeguarding cultural diversity and respecting universal values, the importance of issues of “ownership” and “partnership” in regard to assistance, and the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in development.

The third session, “Enhancement of Human Dignity,” began with messages from Sergio Vieira de Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for UNTAET (UN Transitional Administration in East Timor), and Dr. Bernard Kouchner, Special

Representative of the Secretary-General for UNMIK (UN Interim Administration in Kosovo). They conveyed the image of people living robustly, with hope and tolerance, in the direst of circumstances. These testimonials to human dignity moved the participants. In his presentation Dr. Hans van Ginkel, rector of UNU, discussed human dignity and alienation, stressing the need to eliminate poverty, which breeds alienation. He noted that the disparity in per capita income between the richest and poorest countries had tripled in the last 30 years. In addition to shortening people's lives and depriving them of health, livelihood, and knowledge, poverty in developing countries leads to political alienation and both national and social instability through violence. Therefore, he pointed out, eliminating poverty is the most basic means of making human security possible and emphasized that upholding the dignity of others safeguards one's own dignity.

In the panel discussion the point was made that human dignity is fundamental to human security. In actuality, however, there is no end to the cruelty that humans are capable of inflicting on fellow humans, and despite the lip service paid to human dignity and respect for human rights, they are still more honored in the breach than the observance. The increase in human rights violations, even in developed countries, was reported, as well as the degree of progress made in developing standards for protecting human rights in international law, which applies to sovereign states. Given the gap between standards and realities, it is, of course, important to establish national legislation that reflects international standards, but more important is the spread of a culture of tolerance and forgiveness.

Discussion in the fourth, wrap-up session, "A Strategy for Consolidating Human Security," built on the debate in the first three sessions, focusing on the kind of international community we should aim for and the kinds of changes we want to see. The following are the main points made during the discussion: The individual is the ultimate object of all forms of security. Ensuring human dignity requires the power of civil society, and it is hoped that civil society will play a new role in the international community. The role of civil society in development is to cultivate a sense in individuals that they can make a difference. In regard to human dignity, common values are necessary, but regional cultural diversity must also be respected. It is important that individuals think about the connection between personal and global issues; while individuals may be small, they play an important role in the state.

In his closing remarks Ambassador Owada made the point that the concept of human security does not conflict with that of national security but offers another perspective on the shared objective of citizens' security.

This symposium had three distinctive features. First, it addressed a new concept that is still being defined, aiming to contribute to further debate on its definition. In a changing international system, we cannot deal adequately with security issues solely within the traditional framework of national security, and a new framework is still

under construction. The symposium was of both scholarly and policy value in clarifying the concepts necessary for constructing this new framework.

Second, the importance of education was stressed repeatedly at all sessions. A clearer understanding emerged that people's attitudes are more important than systems and policies in securing human security. Many of the problems we face are rooted in emotion and thus cannot be resolved by ideology-driven politics or the coordination of economic interests. The value of education instilling respect for diversity and the spirit of tolerance was emphasized again and again.

Third, the symposium offered the viewpoint that often concepts that appear to be mutually exclusive should actually be seen as complementary. Some people think of the idea of human security as something that emerged in opposition to the idea of national security, but that is the wrong approach. The same point can be made in regard to numerous other issues, such as the roles of government and the market in the economy, the roles of government and NGOs in addressing poverty, and government supervision and individual freedom in participatory democratic systems. All these issues involve the relation between individuals and the state. As was cogently observed, the future should be built through collaboration, not confrontation.

Finally, the main contents of this report include the keynote speeches and the presentations delivered at the first three sessions. For reasons of space, the panel discussions of these sessions have been omitted, although remarks delivered at the fourth, wrap-up session have been included.

Hiroshi Matsumoto
Senior Research Fellow, JIIA