

Human Security in Practice: Canadian and Japanese Experiences

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It is nowadays the consensus among scholars and politicians that the demise of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the end of bipolarity have significantly changed the ways in which foreign and security policy are conducted. New types of violent conflict – mostly labeled »ethnic« or »intrastate« – have arisen and terrorism is threatening the liberal-democratic way of life. Furthermore, growing interdependence among states and societies due to economic globalization and environmental degradation have stimulated a reformulation of existing policies. This has been especially true of national security policies, even before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. National approaches to development assistance and the renewed focus of democratic states on fostering democratization and the promotion of human rights in unstable regions of the world are just three examples. In addition, the post-Cold War optimism concerning a peace dividend and a new world order has not been fulfilled. Interdependence or, more accurately, mutual dependence in the sphere of security policy is nowadays broadly accepted, even though degrees of vulnerability and sensitivity vary. Thus, new approaches to maintaining international order and security have been developed in the last decade.

Already in the 1970s and 1980s new concepts of security emerged, such as cooperative security, comprehensive security, and environmental security, most prominently promoted by the Brandt, Palme, and Brundtland Commissions and their respective reports.¹ Over the last decade a new notion has emerged, to receive world-wide attention: »human security.« However, what is meant by »human security« or what represents a human security policy is mostly unclear. This may come as no surprise given the fact that a commonly accepted definition (for academic purposes) or even a commonly accepted understanding of human security (for practical or political purposes) has yet to be worked out. The concept has been

1. Peter Stoett, *Human and Global Security. An Exploration of Terms* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 17–28.

the subject of ongoing criticism from both academics and policy-makers, but these actors may be underestimating its potential and, more particularly, the policy approaches to human security that have been undertaken by the governments of Japan and Canada. These middle powers are the first to have put the concept into practice in order to shape parts of a newly emerging international structure following the end of bipolarity.

An examination of Japanese and Canadian foreign policies will therefore make possible an evaluation of both the prospects and the pitfalls of a human security policy in practice. Moreover, a closer look at Japan and Canada reveals that *various* and very *different* policy approaches are possible in the broader framework of human security. However, it would be wrong to suggest that these varying approaches constitute an impediment to the establishment of a broadly and commonly accepted international human security agenda. We shall attempt to show that, despite their manifoldness, a politically accepted vital core is inherent in these concepts which makes possible concerted policy projects or at least multilateral and transnational cooperation and collaborative efforts.

Variants of Human Security

The intellectual origins of »human security« can be traced back to the 1970s, although most people refer to the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report as the publication which first really promoted the new concept. The overarching motive of the authors was the observation that the peaceful »end of history« mooted by Francis Fukuyama had not in fact been accomplished – the number of violent conflicts even grew at the beginning of the 1990s – although, paradoxically, the opportunities for more constructive international cooperation had increased after the end of the East–West confrontation and its ideological disputes. Thus, the authors pushed for a reconceptualization of security: »For too long, security has been equated with the threats to a country's border. ... For most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event. Job security, income security, health security, environmental security, security from crime – these are the emerging concerns of human security all over the world.«²

2. United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 1994. New Dimensions of Human Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 3.

The axiomatic assumption of the human security paradigm is that the referent object of security should be individual persons rather than the state. However, supporters of this concept always reiterate that human security cannot replace existing security policies which rely primarily on the ability to use military force as a last resort. Rather, they see it as an additional aspect of the too narrow equation of security with the inviolability of national borders.³

As a result, the potential for a human security approach can be identified in two distinct, but highly interdependent areas.⁴ In relatively narrow terms, human security can be conceived of as protection from physical violence and adherence to the law in respect of basic human rights, above all the right to life. This conception is regarded as a crisis-prevention or conflict-management tool and is mainly associated with the »freedom from fear« perspective which has been at the center of international negotiation processes, such as the deliberations on small arms trade and trafficking or the highly successful 1997 Ban on Anti-Personnel Landmines, better known as the Ottawa Treaty. The logic of this perspective is that economic development, order, and peace are not likely to take root in developing countries or failed states without a stable environment in which the disarmament of illegitimate combatants has taken place, that is, an environment in which political order can be fostered or at least restored as a prerequisite for development.

This new paradigm can be broadened by adding a combination of different development policies, all of which are attempts to attain sustainable human development. This is often referred to as the »freedom from want« perspective and obviously goes much further than »freedom from fear.« Correspondingly, issues of human security range from environmental degradation, satisfaction of basic human needs (for example, food and health care) to economic security, particularly a basic income. This second perspective is at the center of the UNDP's definition and argues that human security cannot be realized by prioritizing different issues, such as arms control, but only within a broad framework which takes into

3. For the most-detailed evaluation of the term as a field of academic research, see Roland Paris, »Human Security. Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?«, *International Security*, 26 (2) (2001): pp. 87–102.

4. The categorization resembles one found in the works of Fen Osler Hampson, see Fen Osler Hampson et al., *Madness in the Multitude. Human Security and World Disorder* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2002), Chapter 2.

account the impact of seven factors (physical security, political security, community security, food security, health security, environmental security, and economic security) which affect individual persons.

The juxtaposition of both approaches to human security reveals in the first instance their – seemingly – divergent character. However, the two approaches can also be seen as ideal-types. This explains not only the difficulties experienced in implementing the approaches at the policy level, but also the selectivity applied to issues in various national human security agendas, shaped by technocratic structures in the relevant ministries and different national foreign policy preferences. These differences and ambiguities can be highlighted by a comparison of the Canadian and Japanese approaches and the multilateral frameworks created by these countries.

The Concept Goes National – The Case of Canada

Notwithstanding widespread support for UNDP's analysis of global problems in the mid-1990s by politicians around the world, comprehensive implementation of the human security approach took root only slowly in national foreign ministries. One of the first countries to adopt the approach officially was Canada.⁵ In a seminal 1997 article, Canada's then foreign minister Lloyd Axworthy called for extension of the security framework to include a vast array of threats because the »end of the Cold War fail[ed] to enhance global stability.« Instead, he concluded, »human security is much more than the absence of military threat. It includes security against economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights. This concept of human security recognises the complexity of the human environment and accepts that the forces influencing human security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing.«⁶ He had already mentioned the term in speeches made after taking office in 1996 but this article presented the first comprehensive set of human security issues that Canada was to put on its national agenda. Paramount issues were the establishment of a peacebuilding capacity, the banning of anti-personnel landmines, the situation of children with regard to

5. George MacLean, »Instituting and Projecting Human Security: A Canadian Perspective,« *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 54 (3) (2000): pp. 269–76.

6. Lloyd Axworthy, »Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership,« *International Journal*, 52 (2) (1997): pp. 183–84.

sexual abuse, child labor and their protection from violence, and later on a renewed approach to development assistance, in addition to promotion of rules-based trade to spur economic development.

Human security represents not only a broadening and deepening of the security agenda, but also – and even more important – a different mode of diplomatic conduct, which can be described as an »unconventional bottom-up approach to diplomacy.«

Canada's strategy was twofold: (i) the country and its foreign minister tried to push forward policy initiatives on specific issues in multilateral forums, and (ii) Canada's diplomatic corps tried to build coalitions of like minded-states and actors drawn from transnational civil society⁷ that would support this new comprehensive approach to international security. More broadly, one might argue that Canada was trying to find partners for concerted human security policy projects at various stages and in different arenas. Critics, however, have often excoriated the new foreign policy approach as less substantial than the high media coverage seemed to show, emphasizing the decreased Canadian participation in UN peace-keeping operations and significant budget cuts in the foreign ministry and in Canada's official development aid. The need for financial restraint might have been one of the main reasons for Canada's emerging focus on the more narrowly defined »freedom from fear« perspective in contrast to the broader and more ambitious »freedom from want.«⁸ However, it is doubtful that financial cuts really led to decreasing engagement for and approval of the human security orientation, as these critics assumed: witness, for example, the ongoing commitment to the work of the Human Security Network (see below) of which Canada holds the chairmanship

7. On the evolution of transnational/global civil society see, for example, Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society. An Answer to War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004); John Keane, *Global Civil Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

8. See Michael Pearson, »Humanizing the UN Security Council,« p. 132, and Daryl Copeland, »The Axworthy Years: Canadian Foreign Policy in the Era of Diminished Capacity,« pp. 152–72, in Fen Osler Hampson, Norman Hillmer and Maureen Appel Molot (eds), *The Axworthy Legacy* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), as well as Fen Osler Hampson and Dean F. Oliver, »Pulpit Diplomacy. A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine,« *International Journal*, 53 (3) (1998): pp. 379–406.

from May 2004 until May 2005.⁹ However, it is obvious that the »freedom from fear« perspective favored by Canada (still) relies more on military capabilities than on economic development.

»To Walk Without Fear«? The Paradox of Protecting and Bombing

According to most scholarly work on human security by far the most important issue in Canadian human security policy has been the campaign against anti-personnel landmines which led to the signing of the Ottawa Treaty. Taking stock of the Ottawa Process, however, reveals that the Canadian government and like-minded countries favored a ban on landmines negotiated outside existing forums in contrast to unanimity on a watered-down agreement – whatever that might have been – signed by all members of the UN within existing disarmament frameworks. Statements by then foreign minister Axworthy show that strengthening the power of and working together with civil society groups, taking advantage of the revolution in information technology in terms of information sharing and negotiating procedures, and operating outside classic diplomatic channels, were favorable characteristics of »human security as a »new« diplomacy.« In that sense, human security represents not only a broadening and deepening of the security agenda, but also – and even more important – a different mode of diplomatic conduct, which can be described as an »unconventional bottom-up approach to diplomacy« in contrast to a »classic top-down, undemocratic approach.«¹⁰ From that point of view, human security can not only be characterized as a more or less specific »new« goal of foreign policy but also as a *diplomatic process* that operates with innovative negotiation tools and new actors, for example, civil society groups.

Besides the attention that the Ottawa Process received, another human security issue discussed extensively by the Canadian government was the question of how future instances of genocide could be prevented. This in-

9. See »Plan of Action for Canadian Chairmanship of the Human Security Network (May 2004–May 2005),« available at: <http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org/docs/ottawa_plan-c.php>, accessed on 15 November 2004.

10. See both Lloyd Axworthy, »Foreword,« pp. xv–xvii, and Richard A. Matthew, »Human Security and the Mine Ban Movement II: Conclusions,« in Richard A. Matthew et al. (eds), *Landmines and Human Security* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp. 270–72.

terest emerged in the aftermath of the tragic events in Rwanda in 1994 when peacekeepers under the command of Canadian General Dallaire were not able to halt the murdering.

The failure of the UN, it was argued by Canadian officials and Axworthy, called for a re-evaluation of the principle of state sovereignty vis-à-vis the moral and legal obligations of the UN to maintain international peace and security as laid out in the UN Charter. When it came to dealing with the Kosovo Crisis in 1999, Axworthy thus saw an obligation to intervene, not *despite* the national human security policy but *because* of Canada's implementation of the new policy paradigm. At the G-8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Cologne on June 9, 1999 he explained why: »Human security is going to have to be reconciled with the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of states. Kosovo illustrates this particular contradiction well. ... The norm of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states remains basic to international peace and security, and the intervention in Kosovo must not be held as a precedent justifying intervention anywhere, anytime, or for any reason. However, in cases of extreme abuse, as we have seen in Kosovo and Rwanda, among others, the concept of national sovereignty cannot be absolute.«¹¹

This perception of inadequacies in international humanitarian law led to the Canadian government's decision to create the »International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty« (ICISS). Their final report was presented in September 2001. It was entitled »The Responsibility to Protect« and was intended to address the experiences of Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Kosovo, and the questions of when to intervene, under whose authority, and how. The extent to which the creation of the ICISS was Axworthy's brainchild was also acknowledged in the foreword of the document – and thus the extent to which the issue of humanitarian intervention was related to the Canadian conception of human security.¹²

Comparison of these two topics on Canada's agenda reveals the somewhat ambiguous »arrière-plan« of its human security policy: in terms of

11. Cited by Don Hubert and Michael Bonser, »Humanitarian Military Intervention,« in Rob McRae and Don Hubert (eds), *Human Security and the New Diplomacy* (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 113. For additional information on Canada and Kosovo, see Paul Heinbecker and Rob McRae, »Case Study: The Kosovo Air Campaign,« in McRae and Hubert (2001), pp. 122–33.

12. ICISS, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001).

issues, Canada brought into its human security policy a great deal of the expertise gained since the Second World War in peacekeeping and disarmament. Examination of the Ottawa Process and other Canadian efforts in that area brings to light an innovative approach to neglected disarmament issues, as well as a strong willingness on the part of the government to engage in collaborative efforts with civil society groups and other middle powers. By calling for reconsideration of the norm of non-intervention and accentuating the need for intervention in cases of gross human rights violations Canada's human security policy reveals the country's historical commitment to ideas of liberal internationalism, that is, a strong commitment to global and international forms of governance.

In order to put an end to intra-state violence and to restore order, Canada calls for the promotion of conditions favoring strong and democratic states – if necessary by humanitarian intervention. The core assumption is that stable state structures represent an indispensable prerequisite of »freedom from fear.« However, one might critically reply that military (humanitarian) intervention not only in failed states, but also in formerly stable *and* totalitarian states (when they represent the greatest source of insecurity for their citizens) makes the prospects for implementing stability *and* promoting democracy rather bleak. Unfortunately, many of these newly-democratized countries have turned out to be highly unstable states, unable to provide for the basic security of their citizens. This situation is rather ironic because the stable state structures that were abused to create insecurity among citizens before the intervention might be useful in guaranteeing »freedom from fear« in the post-intervention period.¹³ Moreover, the problem of establishing criteria by which to determine when an internationally unacceptable state of repression or insecurity is reached which might pave the way for an internationally legitimized humanitarian intervention will be the main focus of the ongoing debate.¹⁴

The Canadian conception of human security thus seems to put particular emphasis on the prevention of physical violence and the promotion

13. On the discrepancies between good intentions and hard facts in relation to peacebuilding in post-conflict societies, see Roland Paris, *At War's End* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

14. As may currently be seen in the case of Sudan. See, for example, Cheryl O. Igiri and Princeton N. Lyman, »Giving Meaning to »Never Again.« Seeking an Effective Response to the Crisis in Darfur and Beyond,« CFR No. 5 (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, September 2004).

of stable and democratic states that provide human rights and have a legitimate monopoly over the use of force. Because the focus is limited to physical security and democratic state structures, it is difficult to apply the concept to tackling the structural causes of intra-state violence. Moreover, one can argue – if with some exaggeration – that it rests on the questionable simplification that democratic structures can develop without greater difficulties once disarmament and the reintegration of child soldiers and combatants have been achieved. Although these tasks are of primary importance for the creation of a secure environment such a policy is not comprehensive enough. However, Canada's emphasis also stems from the effort to differentiate between human security, human development, and, to a lesser extent, peacebuilding, and thus to establish a workable human security agenda with clear priorities.

Building Partnerships for Human Security

The success of the landmines treaty and the intention to build future ad hoc coalitions led Canada to try to build up a human security »alliance« in 1997. One Canadian author described it – rather inauspiciously as it turned out – as a »coalition of the willing« when commenting on the meeting between the then Norwegian foreign minister Vollebæk and his Canadian counterpart to institutionalize the network of actors that had successfully negotiated the landmine treaty. The result of their encounter was the signing of the Lysøen Declaration in 1998 which focused on issues both countries perceived as a vital part of a human security agenda. The bilateral agreement distanced itself from a developmental and environmental perspective and omitted Canadian efforts in the direction of rule-based trade. The content of the partnership agenda thus reflected the prominence of disarmament and human rights/rule of law issues: the effort to create an International Criminal Court, the role of human rights and international humanitarian law, especially in the context of organized violence. Furthermore, other agenda topics such as child soldiers, small arms, and gender-related issues in peacebuilding were related to conflict prevention. Particularly striking was the role intended for transnational civil society groups (for example, NGOs) which were to be prominent in negotiations in various fields named by the Lysøen Declaration. Additional support for a broader coalition was gained by forming the Human Security Network in 1999 together with Austria, Chile, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland, Thailand, and

South Africa (as an observer). The topics dealt with at the annual ministerial meetings and in the overview of the network's initiatives also emphasize a »freedom from fear« perspective. The most important issues named were small arms, children in armed conflict, and human rights education, faithfully reflecting the current Canadian human security agenda.¹⁵

As far as continued support for Canada's human security policy on the part of other nations is concerned the cases presented above tell an ambiguous story. While most countries strongly supported the ban on landmines – the number of ratifications has risen to more than 140 countries in the course of 2004 – the number of states opposing humanitarian intervention in general has remained high, even before the Iraq war. A definitive appraisal of the success or failure of the Human Security Network, however, seems premature. In addition, it should be noted that interest in human security has generally suffered a blowback because of a renewal of national security thinking in the aftermath of 9/11 and an increasing interest in disarmament and arms control related to weapons of mass destruction instead of the weapons used in »low-intensity wars.«

The Concept Goes National – The Case of Japan

The notion of human security found repeatedly in Japanese documents and speeches was first encountered in the address given by the then Prime Minister Murayama to the UN General Assembly in 1995. According to Murayama, human security was characterized by »respect for the human rights of every citizen on earth« and protection from »poverty, disease, ignorance, oppression and violence.« This view was largely shared by his successor Hashimoto, who reiterated Japan's commitment to the new principle in his General Assembly speech two years later: »I would like to stress two points: our responsibility to future generations, and global human security. Bearing those points in mind, it is necessary that each of us

15. Michael Small, »The Human Security Network,« in McRae and Hubert (2001), loc. cit., pp. 231–35. For recent developments and statements, see the network's website <<http://www.humansecuritynetwork.org>>. The current Canadian document is DEFAIT, *Freedom from fear* (Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 2002), available at: <http://www.humansecurity.gc.ca/pdf/freedom_from_fear-en.pdf>, accessed 26 April 2004.

develop a strong consciousness and shoulder our responsibilities. We must change our lifestyles.«¹⁶ It was due to the Asian financial crisis that former foreign minister and newly elected prime minister Obuchi, after taking office in 1998, slightly changed the focus of the new concept. In two speeches in December 1998, one at the »Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow« in Tokyo and the other at the ASEAN summit in Hanoi, he located the need for human security in foreign policy, primarily on the grounds of Asia's economic downturn: »The current economic crisis has aggravated those [social] strains, threatening the daily lives of many people. Taking this fact fully into consideration, I believe that we must deal with these difficulties with due consideration for the socially vulnerable segments of population, in the light of ›Human Security‹, and that we must seek new strategies for economic development which attach importance to human security with a view to enhancing the long term development of our region.«

The leitmotif of all programs is a perspective that highlights the »potential« of the individual.

As to the definition of human security he concluded: »Human security« is a concept that takes a comprehensive view of all threats to human survival, life and dignity and stresses the need to respond to such threats. ... In our times, humankind is under various kinds of threat. Environmental problems such as global warming are grave dangers not only for us but also for future generations. In addition, transnational crimes such as illicit drugs and trafficking are increasing. Problems such as the exodus of refugees, violations of human rights, infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, terrorism, anti-personnel landmines and so on pose significant threats to all of us. Moreover, the problem of children under armed conflict ought never to be overlooked.«¹⁷ Japanese human security policy, in contrast to that of the Canadian government therefore, stresses the importance of

16. All citations are taken from Bert Edström, »Japan's Foreign Policy and Human Security«, *Japan Forum*, 15 (2) (2003): pp. 212–14. For an overview of human security in Asia, see chapters 3, 6 and 14 of William T. Tow et al. (eds), *Asia's Emerging Regional Order: Reconciling Traditional and Human Security* (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2000).

17. Keizo Obuchi, »Opening Remarks by Prime Minister Obuchi at ›An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow‹«, Tokyo (12 December 1998), available at:

economic development and provision for basic human needs, a human security perspective summarized by the expression »freedom from want.« This concept is much closer to the idea of human development and thereby tries to address the structural causes of (human) insecurity.

»Human Security Now?« Combating Disease and Spurring Development

Japanese human security policy has been shaped more by ad hoc programs focusing on issues of economic development and community building than by a clear definition of what human security actually represents. It is thus remarkable that a catchword which characterizes the Canadian approach does not appear in Japanese definitions, namely »humanitarian intervention.« Although the protection of people is an important part of human security »in Japan's view ... human security is a much broader concept. We believe that freedom from want is no less critical than freedom from fear. So long as its objectives are to ensure the survival and dignity of individuals as human beings, it is necessary to go beyond thinking of human security solely in terms of protecting human life in conflict situations.«¹⁸

The overarching reason behind Japan's adoption of human security in its foreign policy was the Asian financial crisis. Working more closely with the UN and its programs and organizations was Japan's preferred way of implementing human security in deed. Instead of focusing on policy processes to negotiate new treaties to protect civilians, like Canada, the Japanese government in 1999 established a Trust Fund for Human Security at the United Nations whose budget had risen to some \$170 million by 2002. So far, the geographic focus has been primarily Southeast Asia and Africa. The spectrum of activity is broad, ranging from educational programs, HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, and repatriation of refugees to demobilization of former combatants. Not surprisingly, the fund is administered by several UN agencies, namely the United Nations Development

<<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/culture/intellectual/asia9812.html>>, accessed on 31 March 2004; and Keizo Obuchi, »Toward the Creation of A Bright Future for Asia«, Policy Speech by Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, Hanoi, Vietnam (16 December 1998), available at: <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/pmv9812/policyspeech.html>>, accessed on 31 March 2004.

18. This citation from an official of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is taken from Edström (2003), loc. cit., p. 216.

Program (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Lately, an additional program, the »Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects,« was established in order to support projects by locally engaged NGOs. What seems to be the leitmotif of all programs is a perspective that highlights the »potential« of the individual: this can be found in most official publications and statements by officials.¹⁹

Besides the establishment of the Trust Fund the Japanese government has been hosting symposia on several issues related to a human security perspective. These symposia have focused primarily on issues of development and health, and in 2001 addressed the possibility of combating terrorism by achieving human security. Recent articles by Japanese politicians seem to locate the primary aim of human security in crisis prevention and sustainable development: »Japan's official development assistance has long served as an effective means of promoting human security. This ODA is a valuable tool for fighting terrorism and consolidating peace as well.« Furthermore, »this [human security] is a concept that will play an extremely important role in helping us use our ODA program to counter the negative effects of globalisation.«²⁰

Multilateral Efforts for Human Security

Besides the channeling of »human security« ODA through multilateral settings such as the UN and APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation), the Japanese government initiated the independent Commission on Human Security (CHS) in early 2001, co-chaired by former UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen, which was strongly influenced by Kofi Annan's speech at the UN Millennium summit. The

19. Among others, see the Trust Fund for Human Security, *For the »Human-centred« 21st Century* (Tokyo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003), available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/t_fund21/t_fund21.pdf>, and the statements of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi and Shinako Tsuchiya at the 2001 and 2003 symposia on Human Security, available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/>, all accessed 26 April 2004.

20. Yoriko Kawaguchi, »A Foreign Policy to Consolidate Peace,« *Japan Echo*, 30 (2) (2003): p. 29, and Keizô Takemi, »A New Direction for Japan's Aid Program,« *Japan Echo*, 30 (3) (2003): p. 23.

Commission's work was financed by the Japanese government and its recommendations were eventually reported to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The Commission was intended »to promote public understanding,« to develop the concept as »an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation,« and to propose »a concrete programme of action to address critical and pervasive threats to human security.« The final report contained policy recommendations relating to people in violent conflict, people affected by either forced or economic migration, societies recovering from conflict, poverty alleviation, the provision of basic health care, and connecting basic education to human security.²¹ However, as with the efforts of the HSN the CHS Report has been marginalized by the ongoing war on terror and the unwillingness of key international actors to work through multilateral processes within international organizations. Probably the most substantial impediment to successful implementation of the recommendations is the vagueness and breadth of the CHS's definition of human security, covering almost every aspect of the security/development nexus.

Two Paths to Human Security

The ambiguity of the term »human security« is certainly evident when juxtaposing Canada's and Japan's human security policies. Although these conceptualizations have some aspects in common, the approaches differ in terms of both scope and content. Moreover, negotiation procedures and the forums in which these negotiations take place vary considerably.

Beginning with the issues, it is evident that Canada's human security agenda focuses on aspects which represent impediments to an end to violent conflict and successful transitions to democracy. The whole agenda is thus constructed on the assumption that human security can be guaranteed only by states that are liberal democracies, and in which the government and individuals can be held accountable. Issues of traditional development assistance play a minor role: efforts towards economic development and empowerment of the individual are seen as secondary when the biggest threat to the individual is posed by uncontrolled use of

21. Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now* (New York: United Nations Publications, 2003).

military force. Necessary steps for successful implementation of that agenda, therefore, include the promotion of international legal standards, both for individuals and states, micro-disarmament, and the use of sanctions or military force when states are gravely violating the rights of their citizens. Japan's human security agenda, by contrast, resembles more classical approaches to development assistance by focusing on health care, education, and economic security. While the Japanese conceptualization does share Canada's view that the spread of small arms and landmines, as well as a lack of stable state structures, are reasons for human insecurity, it does not share the perception that the former are the key factors in human insecurity. According to Japanese policy-makers, it is rather the comprehensiveness and interrelatedness of measures that improve the chances of human security.

Both countries relied on multilateral settings for promoting human security and sustaining international attention.

From a procedural point of view, further differences can be observed. Canada's human security policy, as exemplified by the Ottawa Process, is characterized by ad hoc coalitions of like-minded (middle) powers, NGOs, and civil society groups which use their *soft power* and the media to attain policy outcomes, such as the ban on mines. The degree of institutionalization is low, as these actors are not operating within the existing frameworks of international organizations. In addition, as the HSN is an intergovernmental body it is very vulnerable, among other things because it does not have an independent budget – rather, funding is limited to allocations from member states. On the other hand, Japan's human security policy is interwoven with several UN bodies and programs and hence better anchored institutionally. However, cooperation with civil society groups and NGOs is all but non-existent in terms of policy formulation.²² Similarities can also be observed, however. First, each country had a strong personal promoter of the concept.²³ Second, both countries tried

22. This is despite the new »Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects.« on which see Ian Neary, »Japan's Human Security Agenda and Its Domestic Human Rights Policies,« *Japan Forum*, 15 (2) (2003): pp. 283–84;

23. Bert Edström, Julie Gilson, and Phillida Purvis emphasize the leading role of Obuchi in promoting human security in Japan; see their contributions in *Japan Fo-*

to build up strategic partnerships to strengthen their respective national policies and to institutionalize and attract support for their policies. In this way, both countries relied on multilateral settings for promoting human security and sustaining international attention.

Prospects for Human Security

Does human security make a difference in national foreign policies? And is there potential for an international human security agenda? As we have shown, the potential of human security in the end does not allow a fully satisfactory answer. Most countries can incorporate human security as a leitmotif in their foreign policy because the term covers a wide array of potential issues. In other words, human security is still what states make of it. However, this does not mean that the content of a national human security agenda is arbitrary per se. As the Japanese and Canadian conceptualizations indicate, there are some vital core assumptions that characterize a human security policy: the object of security is not limited to the state but also includes the individual. People should have the opportunity to live decently and without threats to their survival. Safety threats must be addressed through multilateral processes and by taking into account the patterns of interdependence that characterize the globalized world in which we are living.

Making human security work, then, necessitates not only an incorporation of innovative approaches to »new« challenges, such as ongoing intrastate conflicts and inner-state violence, into national foreign policy documents, but also the more cooperative conduct of foreign affairs because the issues are simply too complex to deal with at the national level. Human security may therefore be one factor in a renewed effort to tackle global and regional problems within a multilateral framework. From this point of view human security is a shift not so much in terms of issues but rather in perception and responses and – in the Canadian case – the way

rum, 15 (2) (2003); for an evaluation of Axworthy's role in Canada's human security policy, see various contributions in Fen Osler Hampson, Norman Hillmer, and Maureen Appel Molot (eds), *The Axworthy Legacy* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001), and Greg Donaghy, »All God's Children: Lloyd Axworthy, Human Security and Canadian Foreign Policy,« *Canadian Foreign Policy*, 10 (2) (2003): pp. 39–56.

in which diplomacy is conducted. In other words, embedding the concept in the political realm will require development of a shared perception that the *individual* must be protected through *multilateral efforts* rather than efforts to address the question of *the kinds of threat* from which it is to be protected.

Because the concept is so ambiguous and multi-faceted, it represents a window of opportunity for most countries to work on issues of human security by contributing resources and expertise in fields of paramount importance to them. From a Canadian point of view, efforts to contain sources of insecurity, such as freely circulating small arms or landmines, are worthwhile initiatives which will likely prove to be valuable steps towards human security. The Canadian contribution to bringing about the Anti-Personnel Landmines Ban revealed that middle powers can influence global policy when conducting diplomacy in terms of a rather unconventional, bottom-up approach. The Ottawa Process exemplifies this in an extraordinary way. It taught the Canadians, citing Axworthy, »about their inherent capacity to play a leadership role.«²⁴

A key advantage of the Japanese conceptualization, on the other hand, is its holistic nature which allows for the sustainability of the process, intended to create human security at the micro-level. Due to the fact that development and empowerment increasingly have to be initiated at the grassroots level, the Japanese approach may bear fruit in the near future. What remains to be seen, however, is by what means states can be encouraged to provide for the safety of their citizens. As a matter of fact, progress in that direction may be slow because the means of achieving this goal are not commonly accepted.

Broadly speaking, the Canadian approach may have more potential as a short- to medium-term strategy concentrated on well formulated and seemingly more easily attainable goals, while the Japanese approach, as a medium- to long-term strategy, accentuates a broader variety of human security issues and the deeper causes of human insecurity. For better or worse, examples of potential pitfalls can also be observed. As the Canadian example shows, humanitarian intervention is rather a double-edged policy option for attaining human security in the short run because it eradicates sources of insecurity without creating a self-sustaining and secure environment in the aftermath. With regard to the Japanese concept it is questionable how far human security is to be achieved through initi-

24. Axworthy (2004), loc. cit., p. xvi.

atives that resemble classical development strategies. Neglecting – to a great extent – urgent questions of how to deal with the challenges posed by, for example, intrastate wars or inner-state violence, might be insufficient in today's security landscape. Moreover, it is currently hard to assess whether the existence of different human security approaches will be an advantage or a disadvantage in the future when it comes to concentrating the efforts of different actors on a single (international) human security agenda. For it is unclear whether one needs a concrete and coherent human security policy and, therefore, a common definition²⁵ and understanding of the term or solely a political leitmotif which does not have to stand the test of academic accuracy.

But one can argue that other »successful« ideas, like democracy or social welfare, have also exhibited a wide range of characteristics in different times, regions, states, and societies. Their unquestionable strength is their broadly accepted vital core of elements which nevertheless allows for flexible incorporation by various designs. The term human security, despite its ambiguity, contains enough broadly accepted substance to provoke global initiatives. As we have shown, even when juxtaposing the Canadian and the Japanese approaches one cannot deny that both concepts are rather complementary than contradictory, and there exists an intersection or a politically broadly accepted vital core inherent to both concepts. It is this vital core which permits collaborative efforts as long as political inventiveness is maintained, in either the Canadian, the Japanese or any other fashion.²⁶

25. The »threshold-based definition« by Taylor Owen offers a restricted but nevertheless encompassing conceptualization. See Taylor Owen, »Human Security – Conflict, Critique and Consensus: Colloquium Remarks and a Proposal for a Threshold-Based Definition,« *Security Dialogue*, 35 (3) (2004): pp. 373–87.

26. See, for example, Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe. The Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities* (Barcelona: Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, 2004.) Available at: <<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/Human%20Security%20Report%20Full.pdf>>, accessed on 15 November 2004.