

## CHANGES IN THE SECURITY AGENDA: AN OVERVIEW

*Nguyen Thuy Hang*\*

This article argues that security studies have evolved from the primary concern about states and how to prevent them from military attacks to its current diversity in which environmental, economic, human and other issues stand alongside military security. It begins by reviewing the traditional view of security before arguing that the security agenda has been broadened and deepened since the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> It becomes broader in that it includes not only military but also non-military security. It is deeper in that it moves down to look at individuals and groups within the State rather than the exclusive focus on the State. The article examines two influential perspectives labeled Critical Security Studies and Human Security which have made a considerable contribution to the development of the non-traditional security literature. Thus, the security agenda has embraced them as “alternative approaches” to security.<sup>2</sup> Next, it provides China as empirical evidence to back up the assertion that security has evolved beyond its traditional focus. It concludes that traditional security with a focus on the State and military power is insufficient in the new world order. Hence, a new way of thinking about security has emerged in policy and academic circles.

---

\* Lecturer, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam.

<sup>1</sup> R. Paris (2001), “Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air”, *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> A. Collins (2009), “Introduction: What is Security Studies?” in A. Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Oxford University Press, p. 2.

### Traditional View of Security

Traditional view of security is predominantly neo-realist one that sees states as unitary entities in the international system characterised by anarchy - no global government.<sup>3</sup>

States as “like units” differ from each other by their levels of capability.<sup>4</sup> In anarchy, increasing their military power ensures States “the ability to cope with the predations of others”.<sup>5</sup> Based on the neorealist assumptions, traditional study of security is understood as “military protection against the threats posed by the armed forces of other states”.<sup>6</sup> The state is what needs to make secure - the referent object of security. The top priority is given to military security which concerns about the perception of possible military threats from other States and the measures to deal with such threats.

Stephen Walt, an advocate of neo-realism, provides a much-quoted definition of security: It is “the study of the threat, use, and control of military force. It explores the conditions that make the use of force more likely; the ways that the use of force affects individuals, States, and societies; and the specific policies that states adopt in order to prepare for, prevent, or engage in war”.<sup>7</sup> Obviously, the crucial ingredient in

---

<sup>3</sup> K. Waltz (1979), *Theory of International Politics*, McGraw Hill.

<sup>4</sup> R. Jackson, G. Sørensen (2003), *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, Oxford Press University, p. 86.

<sup>5</sup> P. M. Morgan (2000), “Liberalist and Realist Security Studies at 2000: Two Decades of Progress?” in S. Croft and T. Terriff (eds.), *Critical Reflections on Security and Change*, London: Frank Cass, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> M. Sheehan (2009), “Military Security” in A. Collins *Contemporary Security Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Oxford University Press, p. 172.

<sup>7</sup> S. Walt (1991), “The Renaissance of Security Studies”, *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2, p. 212.

security from Walt's definition is military power. In other words, the traditional view of security is "a purely military understanding"<sup>8</sup> with a narrow focus on the State as the subject of security.

### Security Studies: Broadening and Deepening

The issue of extending the neo-realist notion of security has been debated since the 1980s. The 1983 article by Richard Ullman entitled "Redefining Security" was considered as an early call for widening security to include such issues as the growth of population and the scarcity of resources.<sup>9</sup> Ullman argued in this article that states' focus on military security "reduces their total security" and "contributes to a pervasive militarization of international relations that in the long run can only increase global insecurity".<sup>10</sup> Six years later, Jessica Tuchman Mathews' article also titled "Redefining Security" raised again the concern about expanding the concept of national security "to include resource, environmental and demographic issues".<sup>11</sup>

Especially, the year 1983 witnessed the publication of Buzan's landmark book *'Man, State and Fear'*. Buzan (1983) considers the individual as "the irreducible basic unit to which the concept of security can be applied".<sup>12</sup> He proposes that security studies agenda should stretch

<sup>8</sup> M. Sheehan (2009), "Military Security" in A. Collins (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) *Contemporary Security Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 182.

<sup>9</sup> S. Smith, "The Increasing Insecurity of Security Studies: Conceptualizing Security in the Last Twenty Years" in S. Croft and T. Terriff (eds.) *Critical Reflections on Security and Change*, London: Frank Cass, p. 77.

<sup>10</sup> R. Ullman (1983), "Redefining Security", *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 129.

<sup>11</sup> J. T. Mathews (1989), "Redefining Security", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 2, p. 162.

<sup>12</sup> Buzan, B (1983), *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, New York: Pearson Education, p. 36.

out to involve four more sectors: political, economic, societal and environmental rather than only military.<sup>13</sup>

These authors have contributed much to the security agenda when they raised the need to reconsider the concept of security and argued for the inclusion of non-traditional security issues rather than the traditional focus on military power. However, the shortcoming of the non-traditional security literature before the end of the Cold-War is that there is no radical break from the focusing only on the state as the referent object of security. For instance, Bill McSweeney (2004) criticises Buzan for insisting on states as the referent object in his writing. This shows that he is not radically separated from the traditional view of security.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, while appreciating Buzan's sectoral analysis of security, Booth (2005) shows its limitation: "This broadens the agenda, but only from within a basically neorealist perspective".<sup>15</sup> Similarly, according to Paris (2001), Mathews's 1989 article "*Redefining Security*" argues for the incorporation of non-military threats into foreign security policies but it still sees "the state, rather than sub-state actors, to be the salient object of security".<sup>16</sup>

Since the end of the Cold War, the security agenda has undergone a complete change.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>14</sup> B. McSweeney (2004), *Security, Identity and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 123.

<sup>15</sup> K. Booth (2005), "Critical Explorations" in K. Booth (eds), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> R. Paris (2001), "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?", *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 99.

This historical event shifted the concentration of security studies away from “security of the state from military attack by other states”. Terry Terriff et al. (1999) observe that “with the collapse of the bipolar confrontation between capitalism and communism, between the United States and the Soviet Union, the heart of the traditional conception of security has been removed”.<sup>17</sup> This is also what Buzan describes in his article “*Change and Insecurity Reconsidered*”: The end of the bipolarity “blew away” much of the familiar military and ideological structures which had existed for forty years. He adds that this remarkable change of the world order “took away what had seemed a deeply rooted geostrategic landscape, but also much of the theory that had been used to understand it”.<sup>18</sup> This implies that neo-realism with the power to explain the “violent peace” of the Cold War is now far from being the dominant understanding of security.<sup>19</sup> This is persuasively argued by King and Murray (2001) in their article entitled “Rethinking Human Security”. Scholars and policy makers started to realise that states which successfully secure their territories may not ensure the security of their people, for example the cases of North Korea and Rwanda.<sup>20</sup> Admittedly, the security literature has seen an increasing number of publications with

<sup>17</sup> T. Terriff et al (1999), *Security Studies Today*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> B. Buzan (2000), “Change and Insecurity Reconsidered” in S. Croft and T. Terriff (eds.), *Critical Reflections on Security and Change*, London: Cass, 2000. p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> P. Kerr (2009), “Human Security” in A. Collins (eds.), *Contemporary Security Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 121.

<sup>20</sup> G. King and C. J. L. Murray, “Rethinking Human Security”, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 116, No. 4, (2001), p. 588.

focal analysis on non-military threats<sup>21</sup> and people as individuals or as communal groups.<sup>22</sup>

This brief overview suggests that military power has become less important in the world politics. In such changing nature of security, two dominant perspectives labeled Critical Security Studies and Human Security have developed as challenges to the state-centric approach. They question the enduring priority given to the state and military power while highlighting the security of people in the state and critical issues such as economic, disease, environment and others. Their debates have made a significant contribution to developing the academic literature of security.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, T. C. Sorenson (1990), “Rethinking National Security”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 3; M.T. Klare (1992) (ed.), *Word Security: Challenges for a New Century*, New York, St. Martins Press; Z. Brezinski (1992), “The Cold War and its Aftermath”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 4; J. Kirschner (1998), “Political Economic in Security Studies after the Cold War”, *Review of International Political Economy*, Vol. 5, No. 1; N. P. Gleditsch (1998), “Armed Conflict and the Environment: A Critique of the Literature”, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35, No. 3; Jean-Marc F Blanchard et al (2000), eds., *Power and the Purse: Economic Statecraft, Interdependence, and National Security*, London: Frank Cass; T. F. Homer-Dixon (1999), *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, J. Mueller (2000), “The Banality of 'Ethnic War'”, *International Security*, Vol. 25, No. 1; B. Valentino (2000), “Final Solutions: The Causes of Mass Killing and Genocide”, *Security Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3; K. S. Amartya (1992), *Inequality Reexamined*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press; K. S. Amartya (1999), *Development as Freedom*, New York: Knopf; L. C. Chen, “Human Security: Concepts and Approaches” in T. Matsumae and L. C. Chen (1995) eds., *Common Security in Asia: New Concepts of Human Security*, Tokyo: Tokai University Press; C. Kaufmann (1996), “Possible and Impossible Solutions to Ethnic Civil Wars”, *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 4; M. E. Brown (1993), ed., *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; M. Krain and M. E. Myers (1997), “Democracy and Civil War: A Note on the Democratic Peace Proposition”, *International Interactions*, Vol. 23, No. 1.

### Critical Security Studies

Critical Security Studies (CSS) is viewed as “the most sustained and coherent critique of traditional security studies”.<sup>23</sup> The influential proponents of this perspective including Krause Keith, Michael C. Williams and Ken Booth, argue against the conventional study of security with a principal focus on the state as the referent object of security and military forces.

Krause Keith and Michael C. Williams are well-known for their co-edited book *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* recognised as a launch to “the label Critical Security Studies”.<sup>24</sup> They consider CSS as ‘a self-consciously critical perspective within security studies.’<sup>25</sup> First, Krause and Williams questioned who or what to be made secure.

The answer from the traditional security studies is the state because security traditionally has meant defending the state from military attack by other states. The editors argue that this neo-realist perspective posits security as “synonymous with citizenship”.<sup>26</sup> They point out “while to be a people without a State often remains one of the most insecure conditions of modern life (witness the Kurds or the Palestinians), this move obscures the way in which citizenship is also at the heart of many structures of insecurity and how security in the contemporary world may

be threatened by dynamics far beyond these parameters”.<sup>27</sup> According to the contributors of the book *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, security studies in “a new geopolitical configurations”<sup>28</sup> should be expanded to encompass individuals, community, and identity rather than only the State.<sup>29</sup> In addition, and more crucially Krause and Williams outlined the “epistemological implications”<sup>30</sup> drawn from the challenges to the traditional notion of security. In contrast to the traditional view of security “treats its referent object just that: an object”,<sup>31</sup> Krause and Williams underline the need for “a shift in focus from abstract individualism and contractual sovereignty to a stress on culture, civilization, and identity; the role of ideas, norms, and values in the constitution of that which is to be secured; and the historical context within which this process takes place”.<sup>32</sup>

Krause and Williams have made a significant contribution to broadening and deepening the security agenda when they attempt to question the referent object of security and how to achieve security in the new world order. Such attempts have laid the foundations for a change in security studies. The key move made in their coedited book is the concern about the lives of the people within the State. Their argument is that there were cases in which states were ignorant of some of their

<sup>23</sup> S. Smith (2005), “The Contested Concept of Security” in K. Booth (ed.) *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, p. 40.

<sup>24</sup> D. Mutimer (2010), “Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History” in A. Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Oxford University Press, p. 87.

<sup>25</sup> M. C. Williams and K. Krause (1997), “Preface: Toward Critical Security Studies” in K. Krause and M. C. Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London: UCL, p. vii.

<sup>26</sup> K. Krause and Michael C. Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London: UCL, p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> R. B. J. Walker (1997). “The Subject of Security” in K. Krause and Michael C. Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London: UCL, p. 64.

<sup>29</sup> K. Krause, M. C. Williams (1997), “From Strategy to Security: Foundations of Critical Security Studies” in K. Keith and M. C. Williams, (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London: UCL, p. 47.

<sup>30</sup> D. Mutimer (2010), “Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History” in A. Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: Oxford University Press, p. 89.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>32</sup> K. Krause, M. C. Williams (1997), “From Strategy to Security: Foundations of Critical Security Studies” in K. Keith, and M. C. Williams, (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London: UCL, p. 49.

people, in which states were the oppressors of some of their people, or in which States were incapable of securing their people.<sup>33</sup> In the logic, these scholars criticise the way traditional security studies for specially stressing on military power and call for an expansion of security studies agenda to other threats rather than military attacks.

Crucial in this move towards reconsidering security has been Booth's idea of "emancipation". Booth argues for security as "a derivative concept".<sup>34</sup> It means that our understanding of security is dependent on "the particular philosophical world-view we have".<sup>35</sup> Traditionally, the study of security is built on the understanding of an anarchical international system in which states struggle for as much power as possible. Consequently, "inter-state conflict is endemic and is destined to remain so".<sup>36</sup> This leads to the focus on protecting the state from external military attacks of traditional security studies. This view may have been popular among the Cold War security experts, yet this is no longer the only possible world-view.<sup>37</sup> When conceptions of security stem from such different approaches as Feminists, Marxists, World Order thinkers and others, very different ways of understanding "security" emerge.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> D. Mutimer (2010), "Critical Security Studies: A Schismatic History" in A. Collins (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) *Contemporary Security Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 86-87.

<sup>34</sup> K. Booth (1997), "Security and Self: Reflections of a Fallen Realist" in K. Krause and M. C. Williams, (eds.) *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London: UCL. pp. 83-115.

<sup>35</sup> J. R. Wyn and E. Stamnes (2000), "Burundi: A Critical Security Perspective", available at: <http://www.gmu.edu/academic/pcs/WJonesSt72PCS.htm>, (accessed 8 January 2010).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

Supporting "the derivative nature of security", Booth equates security with emancipation: "Emancipation is the freeing of people (as individuals and groups) from those physical and human constraints which stop them carrying out what they freely choose to do. War and the threat of war is one of those constraints, together with poverty, poor education, political oppression and so on. Security and emancipation are the two sides of the same coin. Emancipation, not power or order, produces true security".<sup>39</sup> Therefore, Booth advocates paying more attention to the individuals' security than states' security: "individual humans are the ultimate referent".<sup>40</sup> He persuasively explains that the state is featured by unreliability, illogicality and over diversity; therefore, it cannot be the ultimate referent object of security studies.<sup>41</sup>

More recently, Ken Booth and his colleagues have a thorough discussion on "security, community, and emancipation"<sup>42</sup> in their 2005 work titled "Critical Security Studies and World Politics" which can be seen as the successor to the volume *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* edited by Krause and Williams. Undeniably, concerted efforts have been made to call for the reconceptualisation of security studies: an emphasis should be placed on human emancipation.

However, the idea of emancipation is not without critics. Eriksson (1999) views the concentration on human emancipation as the continuation of the peace studies approach. For Eriksson, critical security studies "is more a method of asking questions than a theory of politics...

---

<sup>39</sup> K. Booth (1991) 'Security and Emancipation', *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 4, p. 319.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 313-26.

<sup>42</sup> K. Booth (2005) 'Critical Explorations' in K. Booth (ed.) *Critical Security Studies and World Politics*, pp. 1-17.

implications for political practice are not clearly discernible”.<sup>43</sup> Also, he sees that “its instinctive moralism... Like its idealistic forerunners, critical security studies implicitly assume that good ends must be met with good means”.<sup>44</sup> Another strong criticism of equating emancipation with security is from Ayoob. According to this scholar, “the problem with such semantic jugglery is that by a sleight of hand it totally obfuscates the meanings of both the concepts of security and emancipation”. He clarifies his argument by demonstrating that freeing “the Kurds in northern Iraq from Iraqi regime and the Chechen from Russian rule did not necessarily enhance the security of either population”.<sup>45</sup> Thus, he concludes that emancipation understood as the right of every ethnic minority to self-determination is able to cause instability and anarchy in most of the Third World states.<sup>46</sup>

### Human Security

The concept of human security originated in the *Human Development Report* published by the United Nations Development Programme in 1994. Since then it “has permeated much of the post-Cold War discourse on international peace and security”.<sup>47</sup> According to the 1994 Report, the notion of security “has for too long interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of nuclear holocaust... Forgotten were the legitimate

<sup>43</sup> J. Eriksson (1999), “Observers or Advocates? On the Political Role of Security Analysts”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 34, No. 2, p. 320.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321.

<sup>45</sup> M. Ayoob (1997), “Defining Security: A Subaltern Realist Perspective” in K. Krause and M. C. Williams, (eds.) *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, London: UCL, p. 126.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>47</sup> M. Martin and T. Owen (2010), “The Second Generation of Human Security: Lessons from the UN and EU Experience”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 1, p. 212.

concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives”.<sup>48</sup> In this document, human security is defined as: “first, safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life - whether in homes, in jobs or in communities”.<sup>49</sup> Seven key elements make up human security. They are economic, food, health, environment, personal, community, and political security. This is apparently a broader understanding of security. Virtually almost discomforts of daily life are considered as threats to the security of ordinary people. Human security equates security with people rather than territories, with development rather than arms. The concept of security has not been shaped by the potential for wars or armed conflicts between states. Security has not been equated with the threats to a country’s borders. Instead, “for most people today, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily lives than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event”.<sup>50</sup> The emphasis on the notion of human security underscores the view that threats to both the human being and the State “are changing and increasing”.<sup>51</sup> In addition to political violence within the State, there exist transnational issues of environment degradation, epidemics and economic crises.

Noticeably, all the proponents of human security hold that individuals are the referent object of security; however, they disagree on the scope of the concept. This has split them into two schools: the narrow

<sup>48</sup> The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 1994*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 22.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>50</sup> Human Development Report 1994 at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1994/> (accessed 2 December 2010).

<sup>51</sup> P. Kerr (2010), “Human Security” in A. Collins *Contemporary Security Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 123.

school and the broad school.<sup>52</sup> The former provides a narrow definition of human security as “freedom from fear”. The latter offers a broad definition of human security as “freedom from want”.

“Freedom from fear” was first mentioned by the former Canadian External Affairs Minister Lloyd Exworthy with a concentration on the reduction of “human costs of violent conflicts”.<sup>53</sup> Hence, human security in the narrow perspective can be defined as “the protection of individuals and communities from war and other forms of violence”.<sup>54</sup> This school tries to confine the practice of Human Security to defend individuals from violent conflicts. Mack, an advocate of this school argues that these violent threats are closely related with poverty, poor governance and other forms of inequities.<sup>55</sup> This school also holds that confining the emphasis to violence is a practical and manageable approach towards Human Security. This school views the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Geneva Conventions as the core elements of human security.<sup>56</sup>

The broad school argues that “human security is not only freedom from fear but also freedom from want”.<sup>57</sup> It means that the list of threats should be longer to include hunger, disease and natural disasters as Thakur (2004) points out “human security is concerned with the

---

<sup>52</sup> A. Acharya (2008), “Human Security” in J. Baylis, S. Smith and P. Owens, eds., *The Globalization of World Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 495.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> P. Kerr (2010), “Human Security” in A. Collins (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.), *Contemporary Security Studies*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 124.

<sup>55</sup> Mack, A. (2004), “A Signifier of Shared Values”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, p. 367.

<sup>56</sup> A. Acharya (2008), ‘Human Security’, p. 495.

<sup>57</sup> P. Kerr (2010), “Human Security” in A. Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 124.

protection of people from critical life-threatening dangers, regardless of whether the threat are rooted in anthropogenic activities or natural events, whether they live within or outside states, and whether they are direct or structural”.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, Alkiri (2004) provides a broader definition than Thakur’s when arguing that the goals of human security is “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that advance human freedoms and human fulfillment”.<sup>59</sup> The ground of the broad school is that human development is indispensable in addressing the root cause of human insecurity. Hunger, disease, natural disasters kill far more people than violent conflicts. Therefore, it is necessary to broaden the concentration beyond violence to include development and security goals.

A critical reading of human security shows that the narrow school and broad school are complementary to each other, though there are differences in their types of threats to human security. When combined together, they have the potential to offer a comprehensive understanding of human security. Acharya (2008) concludes “seeking freedom from fear without addressing freedom from want would amount to addressing symptoms without the cause”.<sup>60</sup>

The development of human-centric security reflected in the discourse of CSS and Human Security implies that the realist state-centric argument is not adequate to security in the contemporary world. However, it is certain that human-centric approach does not lead to “the erosion of the narrow, state-centric, militarised national security

---

<sup>58</sup> R. Thakur (2004), “A political Worldview”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, p. 347.

<sup>59</sup> S. Alkiri (2004), “A Vital Core that must be Treated with the Same Gravitas as Traditional Security Threats”, *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 35, No. 3, p. 360.

<sup>60</sup> A. Acharya (2008), “Human Security”, p. 495.

paradigm in policy and academic circles”.<sup>61</sup> Instead, it is believed that “both the human-centric and the state-centric perspectives are necessary but not sufficient to security”.<sup>62</sup>

### China: New Thinking about Security

During the Cold War period, China considered its national security primarily in regards of “its struggles against the hegemony of one of the two superpowers or even against that of both superpowers and their followers”.<sup>63</sup> Since the end of the Cold War, China still holds the traditional view of security. This is clearly reflected in its Defense White Paper: “China has always attached primary importance to safeguarding the state’ sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, and security”.<sup>64</sup> However, the introduction of “the New Concept of Security” in 1997 demonstrates a great change in China’s thinking about security.<sup>65</sup>

Like many other countries in “an interconnected world”<sup>66</sup>, China has encountered an increasing number of non-traditional threats, such as transnational crime, environmental degradation, epidemics, and economic crisis. It is required to pay due attention to such non-traditional security issues rather than concerning about military power and external

<sup>61</sup> E. Newman (2010), “Critical Human Security Studies”, *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1, p. 78.

<sup>62</sup> P. Kerr (2010), “Human Security” in A. Collins *Contemporary security studies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 128.

<sup>63</sup> How China thinks about national security, alliances, military balances and strategic policy: [http://epress.anu.edu.au/sdsc/rc/mobile\\_devices/ch09.html#d0e3158](http://epress.anu.edu.au/sdsc/rc/mobile_devices/ch09.html#d0e3158) (accessed 1 December 2010).

<sup>64</sup> The State Council Information Office, *China’s National Defense*, China Daily, July 28, 1998, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> S. Chu (2002), “China and Human Security”, *North Pacific Policy Papers*, No. 8, University of British Columbia.

<sup>66</sup> D. Held et al. (1999), *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

attacks. Hence, China’s leaders have taken new positions on security. For example, in his speech at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in 1999, Chinese president Jiang Zemin stressed that “history tells us that the old security concept based on military alliances and build-up of armaments will not help ensure global security.... We believe that the core of such a new concept of security should be mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation”.<sup>67</sup> In a paper entitled “China’s Position the New Security Concept” on the website of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is asserted that China is a proponent of the new concept of security and “the meaning of the security concept has evolved to be multifold with its contents extending from military and political to economic, science and technology, environment, culture and many other areas”.<sup>68</sup> This new perspective on security is distinguished from earlier Chinese understanding of security.

Following this new thinking about security, Chinese government has put forth Five-Year Plans which pay “a keener attention to the issues of humanity, society and the environment, as well as the economy”.<sup>69</sup> Noticeably, its achievements in human development exemplify the successful application of the new approach to security. China has strived for building “a harmonious society” in which priority will be given to employment, social security, poverty reduction, education, medical care, environmental protection and safety.<sup>70</sup> For instance, China’s per capita

<sup>67</sup> Jiang Zemin’s speech at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, 26 March 1999.

<sup>68</sup> China’s Position Paper on the New Security Concept, <http://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/gjs/gjzzyhy/2612/2614/t15319.htm> (accessed 15 December 2010).

<sup>69</sup> Key Points of the 11th Five-Year Guidelines, [http://www.china.org.cn/2006lh/2006-03/07/content\\_1160403.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/2006lh/2006-03/07/content_1160403.htm), (accessed 19 December 2010).

<sup>70</sup> Chinese Premier Calls for Building Harmonious Society, Xinhua News Agency October 9, 2005, [http://www.china.org.cn/features/guideline/2006-02/09/content\\_1157472.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/features/guideline/2006-02/09/content_1157472.htm), (accessed 19 December 2010).



GDP increased 12 times from 1987 to 2009. Such programmes as the New Rural Cooperative Medical Care System and the pilot New Rural Pension Insurance System have helped to improve the living standard of millions of Chinese farmers.<sup>71</sup> According to the 2010 HDR Report by United Nations Development Programme, China is one of the “top Human Development Index (HDI) movers” or “the countries that have made the greatest progress in improving the HDI”.<sup>72</sup> Admittedly, the way China conceptualises its views of security is still affected by long periods of historical and national experience, however, it really represents a departure from the old thinking of security.

### Conclusion

The study of security has evolved beyond its traditional emphasis on states and military power. With the transformation of the world politics, the understanding of security has changed fundamentally. The world is currently facing various threats such as “environmental degradation, economic welfare, transnational crime, and mass movements of people”.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to widen the concept of security.<sup>74</sup> New approaches, predominantly CSS and Human Security, have emerged in the security agenda. They offer individuals as referent

object of security and different ways of preserving security. Empirically, the case of China demonstrates that a new concept of security has been appreciated in today’s world. The challenge now is to translate more ideas of Human Security and CSS from words into deeds worldwide. This will necessarily involve measures to enhance the effectiveness of international institutions and human development in all countries especially in the Third World which has the most of the world’s people.

<sup>71</sup> The full speech by Minister of the State Council Information Office Wang Chen at the opening ceremony of the Third Beijing Human Rights Forum on Oct 19 2010, [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2010-10/21/content\\_11442362.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2010-10/21/content_11442362.htm), (accessed 8 January 2010).

<sup>72</sup> Human Development Report 2010, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010/> (accessed 7 January 2011).

<sup>73</sup> M. C. Anthony (2010) ‘The New World of Security: Implications for Human Security and International Security Cooperation’ in M. Beeson and N. Bisley, (eds.) *Issues in 21<sup>st</sup> Century World Politics*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 165.

<sup>74</sup> Human Security Initiative, <http://www.humansecurityinitiative.org/>, (accessed 7 January 2011).