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# Presentation for Session II: Human Security as a Policy Framework for New Cooperation in Asia

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Let me first, on behalf of the Commission on Human Security, thank the organizers for this important and timely dialogue on this vital issue. The Commission has been working very hard for more than a year, and we have one more year to go. We hope to hold a declaration meeting sometime in the middle of 2003 in either Geneva or New York.

My remarks today will touch on the Commission's working definition of human security. It took us a long time to come up with a definition, and we had to put the word "working" in front of "definition" because we are still in the process of refining and defining this guiding principle for the Commission. Contributions from forums like this from around the world would be helpful for the Commission to clarify what we are trying to understand here and how to make the concept both attractive and operational so that organizations, countries, governments, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world could sign on to and feel ownership in the concept.

This morning we listened to Takemi Keizo give an excellent summary of the Japanese perspective of the evolution of the concept of human security. I think, however, that we need to go back even further in history in order to understand clearly why we are where we are at this juncture—that is, why we are discussing human security rather than state security. From the First World War, into the Second World War, and until the founding of the United Nations, the international community was torn between

two driving forces. One was the moralism approach that led to the establishment of the League of Nations, when the international community naively believed that things would go well because humanity has the capacity to realize and fulfill its own responsibility and obligations for achieving world peace and development. Well, that failed miserably. The other force was realism. That realism somehow worked itself into the charter of the United Nations and is a sense that somehow we have to guard against the perversion of human desire that has led to dictatorships, wars, and tensions in the international arena.

The definition of freedom from want and freedom from fear in 1994 by the United Nations Development Programme was nothing new. It was a rehash of what Franklin D. Roosevelt discussed in his "Four Freedoms" speech in 1941. He discussed the freedom of speech and expression, the freedom of religion and worship, and the freedom from want, and the freedom from fear—the roots of what we are discussing today go back that far. These things were later incorporated into the charter of the United Nations. If you recall the preamble of the UN Charter, it is very clear that at the end of World War Two the international community was united in reaffirming its faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of all human beings, and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. The preamble also talks about promoting social progress and better standards of living through "larger freedom."

Today we have experienced half a century of trying to work together within the framework of the United Nations. Many specialized agencies, international organizations, and commissions have been created in order to address or to promote these abstract concepts that have driven the international community from the very beginning. But at the end of the 20th century, the international community was faced with the tremendous dilemma of how to interpret the concept of state sovereignty while protecting and promoting the larger freedoms of the world's citizens, who happen to live within the confines of nation states and under the sovereign powers of their governments.

At the UN General Assembly in 1999, Kofi Annan reflected on the prospects for human security and intervention in the 21st century. He drew upon the experiences of Rwanda, Kosovo, and many other cases when the international community failed to react to protect citizens and ethnic groups under threat within the framework of the states. Kofi Annan warned that if the collective conscience of humanity cannot find in the United Nations its greatest tribune, then there is a grave danger that it will look

somewhere else for peace and justice. He challenged the international community more forcefully in his millennium speech 2000 when he said that if humanitarian intervention is indeed unacceptable because it is an assault to state sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda or a Srebrenica? To solve the problems of systematic violation of human rights offers a great challenge to all humanity.

We are now challenged to create a new paradigm for viewing human security. That challenge has elicited two responses. One is what we call the Western response. This is the Canadian circle responding to the challenge of Kofi Annan. It calls itself the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. I was asked to serve as a member of the Advisory Board, and the first advice I gave to them was to use the term "humanitarian engagement" rather than "intervention." They didn't take my advice, but they produced an inspiring report that introduces a new concept into international cooperation for peace keeping for the protection of people under threat. They call their report "The Responsibility to Protect." They turned the concept around from the right to intervene—which some see as unacceptable and many see as controversial and contentious—to "the responsibility to protect."

The other response is, of course, the one that we are working on—the Commission on Human Security, which is the Japanese response. The guiding principle of the Commission on Human Security is to focus on issues fundamental to the human condition: health, the environment, education, and the empowerment of individuals to save themselves from the hostile environment that could develop anytime in our international community.

So, responses to Kofi Annan's challenge differ, and today we are in the process of setting forth recommendations. This dialogue is now charged with a question: Can we start here in Asia? Can we analyze our basic values, traditions, and style of diplomacy with the aim of fine tuning, adapting, and adopting the theme of human security for our international cooperation and development assistance here in Asia Pacific to begin with? I believe that there are three factors working for us in this regard. The first is the strong consensus that in the last three decades globalization has not succeeded fully. We have seen failed states, societies, communities, ethnic groups, and pockets of people within nation states who are negatively affected by the process of globalization. So, we need to improve upon the process of globalization—make it ethical, equitable, and human—and try to help those people who have not benefited from the process of globalization so far. Both this conference and the Commission on Human

Security, co-chaired by Ogata Sadoko and Amartya Sen, are seeking to work on these questions.

The second factor that has worked for us, ironically, is the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States. I think the international community has felt the interdependency very strongly, because there is no community that could be saved from the failure of globalization and the frustration that develops in failed societies. The implications would spill over to the international community no matter how far you are from those areas of failure. Who would have thought that Washington, D.C., and New York would be the targets of the spillover effects of failed states, societies, and communities, or the frustrations that developed from the inequitable process of globalization? I maintain that the events of September 11 were only symptoms of a deeper malaise in the international community, and if force and war are the only responses that we have, we are going to fail utterly because the root causes of terrorism, tension, and conflicts in the international community now are much deeper than just people wanting to use terrorism for their own purposes. There must be psychological, sociological, and economic reasons for those frustrations and tensions and conflicts. The terrorist attacks were the first common global experience ever in real time for every human being—all 6 billion of us—not only because they occurred in New York and Washington, D.C., but because the scenes were shown live on TV screens everywhere across time zones around the world. This very powerful experience is working for those of us who are looking for means to address problems associated with the state, the concept of sovereignty, and the formality of international community.

The third factor that is working for us is the global consciousness that was emerging even before September 11. The evolving global awareness that we are one, that we cannot be divided, that we are interdependent, and that we cannot stand aside and be isolated from the problems of other parts of the world was evident long before September 11. The terrorist attacks, however, certainly strengthened that consciousness that individuals and individual states are not islands unto themselves that could remain unaffected or undiminished by suffering, death, or destruction in another part of the world. We hope the concept of human security would be the guiding principle and the theme of international relations from now onward as a result of these factors that I have just outlined.

But there are problems—especially the problem of suspicion on the part of states and governments that there is now an opening for

interference from outside. I warn all of us not to underestimate the problems: there will be resistance, misunderstandings, doubts, and suspicion. In 1998, at the time the idea of flexible engagement was proposed at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ministerial meeting, I proposed the creation of a "caucus for social safety nets." None of my ASEAN colleagues supported me. Most of the support came from outside ASEAN, particularly the West—Australia, the United States, Russia, and even India. I proposed a caucus of social safety nets because all of a sudden millions of our people had slid back into poverty and they needed help to sustain them through the crisis. My colleagues thought the idea was another Western idea and another way of coming through the back door in order to interfere with the internal affairs of member states. So we should not underestimate the problems, the resistance, the doubt that could occur as we work to shift from the supremacy of the state to a focus on individuals. This is a tremendously sensitive point for many of us in the region.

We will have a problem of ownership. Who created this concept? Do we have any part in it? What the Commission or this Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow series of conferences has been trying to do is plan regional meetings in order to draw support, participation, and contribution so that everyone feels an ownership of the concept. The late Obuchi Keizo tried from the very beginning to make the process international, or at least beginning with Asia and ASEAN to make it local and home grown. I am glad to see that the Japanese human security concept has survived three prime ministers. It has continuity in Japan and it continues to send positive signals through various channels into the region. As we become more and more familiar with the idea, it will become less threatening, less foreign, less alien. I hope that efforts to make people feel ownership and partnership concerning the idea of human security will continue.

The issue of continuity or connectivity exists in the international arena as well, and we are fortunate that the Commission is now hooked into the existing structures of the United Nations. Because rather than thinking about the safety, security, and protection of men, women, and children in the environment of conflict—which is the work of United Nations High Commission on Refugees and is the expertise of Ogata Sadako—the Commission is working on poverty eradication, empowerment, and education. Being hooked into the existing structure of the United Nations guarantees continuity, acceptability, and contributions from those

organizations and institutions already seen as legitimate in the eyes of the international community.

This morning it was mentioned that the human rights concept was formal legalistically, and that in the past development cooperation was carried on at the level of state to state, government to government. The space was very narrow, but with the concept of human security, if we identified health, education, development, and environment as concrete areas that we should be working on, then the space is much wider. By definition, in consequence, the actors will be more pluralistic and larger in number. We will invite the NGOs because we are working on health, environment, and education, issues that are relevant at the grass-roots, village level. This is where the NGOs have their expertise, where civil society has been active and has been contributing, and we are doing it from the bottom up. In this sense, we guarantee ownership, participation, legitimacy, and support. So, the Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow and the Commission will have to make it clear from the beginning that our efforts are in tune with the emerging trend in the international community that no longer limits development issues to government agencies or UN agencies. It is NGOs, civil society, and voluntary organizations that will be involved. This is more democratic and more transparent, and let us hope it is more acceptable.

The problem will be, How open can we expect governments, states, and societies to be in allowing actors other than the state to foster the concept of human security, to work on the ground for the benefit of the people from the bottom up? In the end we will have to come back to the problems of governance, transparency, and participation. We will have to work on those, and that will not be easy.

An interview with George Soros in the March 14th edition of th*e Wall Street Journal* essentially confirms what I have just said, that in this process of globalization there is a lot of tension, conflict, violence, and confrontation. If we address those problems only by force and by war and without other alternative plans—development strategies and human development efforts—to deal with the basic problems of human suffering, we will not be able to eradicate conflict, violence, and terrorism. What the world is asking for and waiting for is an alternative view of development cooperation, and that is exactly what we are here to address. We are in a good position as this Fourth Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow begins because we have a history and the international environment seems to be working for us. We seem to have the attention,

interest, and eagerness of influential parties, including the United Nations. Many are anxiously waiting for the outcome of deliberations by this dialogue series and the Commission on Human Security. The NGOs are waiting. The donors—private and government—are waiting. All are waiting for a new paradigm of cooperation of working together in the international community. Even the private sector is awaiting the outcome of this deliberative process that would allow a new beginning for the international community to make that shift from the rigidity of state sovereignty, which has been followed for the last 50 years but with a lot of defects and failings, to a new beginning of a new paradigm called human security.

We still have a long way to go, but I think we have made a good start. Many positive factors are operating in our favor despite some resistance, doubt, and hesitation in the international community. What remains is for us to persevere to finish our deliberations Let us hope that Japan's stance that human security should be the theme of Japanese foreign policy and cooperation from now onward will continue. That will depend on our Japanese friends and on our joint deliberation here and in other places from now onward.

I wish you all a fruitful deliberation and thank you for your attention.