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PRESENTATION THEME: *STATE OF HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA*

CONFERENCE THEME: HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH TO COUNTER
EXTREMISM IN SOUTH ASIA: RELEVANCE OF JAPANESE
EXPERIENCE

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■ CONCEPTUAL BASIS OF HUMAN SECURITY

Human security, in the last analysis, is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a woman who was not raped, a poor person who did not starve, a dissident who was not silenced, a human spirit that was not crushed. Human security is not a concern with weapons. It is a concern with human dignity.

Dr. Mahbub ul Haq, Pakistan's renowned economist and the founder of Human Development Center, Islamabad

DEFINITIONS

- Human security paradigm reflects genuine issues faced by human beings ranging from hunger, diseases, illiteracy, displacement, human rights, environmental degradation, social and gender biases, crimes, violence, terrorism and natural disasters.
- Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan defined human security as *absence of violent conflict. Human security encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care while ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her own potential.*
- Dr. Mahbub ul-Haq defined human security as *security of people not just security of territory; security of individuals not through arms; security of all the people everywhere, in their homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities and in their environment*
- Dr. Mahbub ul-Haq further defined human security that it is a *people's concept and a people's concern. Human (in) security is reflected in the anguished existence of homeless, in the constant fear of the jobless, in the silent despair of those without hope. Human security also means 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.*

- The Commission on Human Security co-chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen defined human security as, *"to protect the core of all human lives that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment."*
- Rajesh Basrur, an Indian security affairs expert says that, *the concept of security has evolved from a narrow focus on military-strategic security centered on the state to a broad and multidimensional understanding of human security. The latter encompasses basic economic needs, environmental equilibrium, cultural identity and political liberty.*
- 1994 Human Development Report, an annual publication of the UN Development Program defined *human security as safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression and it also means protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life, whether in homes, in jobs or in communities.*

THE CONTEXT

- This paper will examine human security from four angles:-
- The role of state actors in dealing with the issue of human security.
- How the marginalized sections of society respond to their disempowerment and to what extent the concept of human security can elevate their status?
- The role of civil society in understanding and practicing the concept of human security and the reasons for its failure to forcefully advocate the people's concept of security.
- How the process of conflict management and resolution can contribute to human security in South Asia?

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

- What is the linkage between extremism and human security?
- How by effectively reducing the menace of extremism one can ensure human security?
- What are the impediments which are present in South Asia for curbing extremism and how state and society can expect stability and peace by promoting tolerance and moderation?

MAPPING HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA

Akmal Hussain, a renowned Pakistani economist defined Human security in the South Asian context by stating that,

- Human security in terms of its economic, political and legal dimensions is essentially an element in the institutional framework of society where human functioning becomes possible. It is in the creative expression of their sociality and in the apprehending of their spiritual and aesthetic dimensions that human beings fulfill themselves. In this context, the challenge in South Asia is to seek peace for sustainable economic growth on the one hand and pursuing a new perspective on economic growth on the other.

- He further elaborates that the dominant threat to both human security and the integrity of state structures in South Asian countries is the threat posed by internal conflicts. These include conflicts arising from religious extremists and ethnic, communal, caste and linguistic sub-nationalism. These conflicts can be contained by building the institutions for a pluralistic society where not only diverse identities between individuals co-exist but where multiple identities can be maintained by each individuals
- The report on *Human Development in South Asia, 2005* gives a detailed account of human security by arguing that, “human security has acquired increasing centrality and urgency for South Asia. Two recent massive disasters have brought home the need to look deeply into this concept and to connect its relevance to South Asia’s socio-economic and political issues. The tsunami that hit parts of East Asia and South Asia in early 2005 and the massive earthquake in Kashmir and North West Front Province (NWFP), Pakistan, in late 2005, reportedly killed 100,000 people, injured more, destroyed property making millions of people homeless, and disrupted the life, livelihood and existence of the entire regions.

Four reasons could be given to explain why the concept of human security is still in its formative phase in South Asia.

- The dominant paradigm of security in South Asia is still state centric in which military security is perceived as an essential requirement.
- Human security is not elite centric as the privileged sections of society do not share predicament faced by majority of people on basic issues. Huge asymmetry in terms of elite and popular perceptions on security is the root cause of messing up of issues which should have been resolved long time ago.
- The role of mafias and the underworld in South Asia which is a cause of enormous insecurity to the people of the region.
- There is no strong constituency of human security in South Asia despite some obvious justifications for giving a serious and practical thought to this concept.

Why South Asia is still not able to pursue a scientific course of action on human security because of following reasons:-

- First, lack of proper leadership to take steps for augmenting human security particularly in those sections of society who are marginalized and thus deprived.
- Second, human security is not a priority even at the grassroots' level because of the failure of the less privileged segments of society to challenge established norms which tend to only promote and patronize the state centric approach of security.

Extremism and Human Security

- There are three important linkages between extremism and human security viz:
- Extremist and militant groups in South Asia have taken vast segments of society as a hostage thus augmenting insecurity among people.
- Whether it is ethnic or religious extremism and militancy, it means there is lack of tolerance in society. If human security is the priority on the part of state, the issues which promote hate, chauvinism and intolerance cannot get any viable support from any section of society.
- The younger generation is highly vulnerable to extremism and militancy because it feels insecure and susceptible to multiple threats like unemployment, displacement and violence.

Linkage between Conflict and Human Security

Dr. Mahbub ul Haq talked about linkage between conflict and human security by stating that,

- The world can never be at peace unless people have security in their daily lives. Future conflicts may often be within nations rather than between them – with their origins buried deep in growing socio-economic deprivations and disparities. The search for security in such a milieu lies in development, not arms.
- The absence of armed conflicts at the inter and intra-state level provides an opportunity for accomplishing the goal of human security.