Japan and Human Security Revisited

by

Bert Edström

Asia Paper

November 2026



Institute for Security & Development Policy

Japan and Human Security Revisited

by

Bert Edström

Asia Paper

November 2026

© Institute for Security and Development Policy

V. Finnbodavägen 2, Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden

www.isdp.eu

"Japan and Human Security Revisited" is an Asia Paper published by the Institute for Security and Development Policy. The Institute is based in Stockholm, Sweden, and cooperates closely with research centers worldwide. The Institute serves a large and diverse community of analysts, scholars, policy-watchers, business leaders, and journalists. It is at the forefront of research on issues of conflict, security, and development. Through its applied research, publications, research cooperation, public lectures, and seminars, it functions as a focal point for academic, policy, and public discussion.

No third-party textual or artistic material is included in the publication without the copyright holder's prior consent to further dissemination by other third parties. Reproduction is authorized provided the source is acknowledged.

© ISDP, 2026
ISBN: 978-91-88551-85-6

Distributed in Europe by:

Institute for Security and Development Policy
Västra Finnbodavägen 2, 131 30 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden
Tel. +46-841056953; Fax. +46-86403370
Email: info@isdp.eu

Editorial correspondence should be directed to the address provided above (preferably by email).

Contents

Preface 5

Human Security, an Alternative Security Concept 7

Japan Adopts Human Security 13

Post-Cold War Japan 13

The Pioneer, Murayama Tomiichi 18

The Visionary, Obuchi Keizō 20

The Underrated Heir, Mori Yoshirō 30

The Millennium Summit 32

Mori and Africa 33

Japan's Two Key Tools in Its Pursuit of Human Security 35

The Commission on Human Security 35

The UN Trust Fund for Human Security 42

The Drive for Human Security Petering Out 46

Enter Koizumi Junichirō 46

The 2003 ODA Charter 51

Koizumi and Japan's Drive for a Permanent Seat in the UN Security Council 55

Human Security no Longer a Central Task for the Post-Koizumi Prime Ministers 59

Japan's Post-Koizumi Human Security Activities 64

Continuing on the UN Track 64

Questioned UNTFHS in Question 67

Two Over-riding Priorities with Ogata at the Rudder: Refugees and Peacebuilding 74

Post-Ogata Developments 80

Wanting Collaboration 92
The Domestic Level 93
The Bilateral Level 97
The Multilateral Level 103

Japan's Leadership Ambitions 109

The UHC Knowledge Hub 116

Concluding Remarks 122
The Life Story of Japan's 'Human Security' 122
Definitional Quagmire 128
Japan's Myopic Human Security View 129
The Static Snapshot of Japan's Pursuit of Human Security 132
What Next? 134

Bibliography 137

About the Author 160

Preface

This report focuses on Japan's pursuit of human security. It is a concept with a venerable history, which was launched in the United Nations in the mid-1990s as an alternative to the central security idea in the postwar period, national security. Foreign Minister Obuchi Keizō of Japan, later prime minister (1998–2000), embraced human security and made it a central idea of Japan's foreign policy. One step he took was to launch the idea of a trust fund within the United Nations, which was established in 1999. To clarify the new security concept and its implementation, his successor, Mori Yoshirō (2000–2001), took the initiative in 2001 to establish the Commission on Human Security (CHS), a policy-planning commission under the aegis of the United Nations.

In 2002, I wrote a paper on the introduction of human security into Japanese foreign policy for the conference 'Japan's Pursuit of a Human Security Agenda' at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London. It was published in a special issue of the *Japan Forum* in 2003, along with other contributions presented at the conference. With the benefit of hindsight, it is evident that this journal issue documented the peak of Obuchi's and Mori's idea that human security would constitute the basis of Japan's foreign policy.

I have previously written two reports on Japan's pursuit of human security. The first is *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security: The Founding of a New Policy, 1995–2003* (2008). Obuchi envisaged human security as the pillar of Japan's long-term foreign policy, and Mori foresaw it as the core of Japan's peace diplomacy for the 21st century. The CHS's report *Human Security Now* (2003) set the stage for the Koizumi government's downgrading of human security to a matter of Japan's ODA, codified in the 2003 ODA Charter. My second report is *Japan and Human Security: The Derailing of a Foreign Policy Vision* (2011). It outlined subsequent developments through

2010 when human security was a basic policy of Japan's ODA policy. The present report summarizes the main findings of my previous reports and outlines subsequent developments. Thus, it covers Japan's pursuit of human security from its inception to the present, highlighting its successes and setbacks.

In February 2025, the second edition of my study of Japan's postwar foreign policy was published. While the first edition covered the postwar period until 1993, the new edition, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine, The Long Postwar*, outlines the development up to 2020. I was struck by how the once-hyped concept of human security seemed to have fallen into the doldrums. While it was a central foreign policy idea and lodestar for Obuchi and Mori, their successor, Koizumi Junichirō (2001–2006), relegated it from the realm of foreign policy to a matter of ODA policy. Subsequent prime ministers joined Koizumi in that they mentioned or alluded to the concept of human security only occasionally.

To research developments since 2010, I spent two months at Keio University in autumn 2025 as a visiting scholar. I want to express my gratitude to Professors Inoue Masaya and Kokubun Ryōsei, who were instrumental in realizing and facilitating my stint at Keio University. I also want to thank three leading scholars *cum* practitioners, who shared their insights on how Japan's human security policy has evolved over the years: Professor Takemi Keizō, a central actor on human security and global health both in Japan and internationally; Professor Tanaka Akihiko, JICA President (2012–2015, 2022–); and Professor Kitaoka Shinichi, JICA President (2015–2022).

Human Security, an Alternative Security Concept

If one accepts as a starting point Arnold Wolfers' view that security is 'the absence of threat to acquired values,'[1] security policies are actions taken to reduce or limit the probability of damage to one's acquired values. After World War II, and especially with the emergence of the Cold War, national security was seen almost by definition as the absence of military threats to the state or the state's ability to repel them, and states used military force to counter threats. The end of the Cold War was seen as proof that world politics had changed, since the global bifurcation into two hostile blocs had gone down the drain. With the division of the world into two blocs, with neutral in between, gone, the lid put on regional and international conflicts was also gone.[2]

In the post-Cold War era, the front lines of war shifted, with armed conflicts occurring more frequently within state borders than across them. Armed conflicts shifted from wars to intermediate and minor conflicts, with an increasing number of conflicts involving control of territory and the breakup of states. Many low-level conflicts involved civilian casualties and displacement on an agonizing scale. The horrific situation in which civilians in conflicts found themselves, and the perpetration of crimes against human rights, were appalling. Wars were not what they used to be.[3] There was an increasing number of perceived threats to security that military measures could not counter.[4]

---

1 Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), p. 150.

2 Volker Franke, 'The Emperor Needs New Clothes: Securitizing Threats in the 21st Century,' *Peace and Conflict Studies* 9, no. 2 (2002), p. 5.

3 Mary Kaldor, 'Introduction,' in Global Insecurity: Restructuring the Global Military Sector, Volume III, edited by Mary Kaldor (London and New York: Pinter, 2000), pp. 3–8.

4 David A. Baldwin, 'Security Studies and the End of the Cold War,' World Politics 48, no. 1 (1995), p. 130.

The unrelenting human costs of violent conflict became one of the reasons why the discussion of the nature of security resurfaced. A redefinition of security was seen to be required by the near disappearance of conventional military threats to the major powers and by an increasing awareness of the costs of the new wars, both for affected countries and for the international community.[5] With the focus shifting towards threats so far neglected in the security discourse, the security concept itself, used in analyses and studies, national security, seemed increasingly dysfunctional.

In an influential contribution to the ongoing debate, Emma Rothschild described the extension of the security concept. She clarified the emerging understanding of its complexity by, beginning with the state, describing security as 'being brought down to the individual, brought up to the international system or supranational physical environment, broadened from a focus on the military to include the environment, society, and economy, and finally, diffused in all directions to include local governments, international agreements, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), public opinion, forces of nature, and the financial market as sources of responsibility.'[6]

In 1994, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) issued a path-breaking report manifesting the importance of the concept of human security. The core attribute of the concept is clear: the referent of security is the individual as opposed to the state.[7] This alternative security concept was broad and drew seemingly unorganized objectives into one overarching theme with a common goal of countering the multiplicity of threats, not to the state as in the case of national security, but to human beings, individuals, or a community of people.[8] The report identified

---

5 Joanna Macrae, 'Analysis and synthesis,' in *The New Humanitarianisms: A Review of Trends in Global Humanitarian Action*, edited by Joanna Macrae. Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group, HPG Report 11 (2002), p. 5.

6 Emma Rothschild, 'What is Security?' *Daedalus* 124, no. 3 (1995), p. 55.

7 Akihiko Tanaka, 'Toward a Theory of Human Security', JICA Research Institute, *JICA-RI Working Paper,* no. 91, 2015, p. 3.

8 Ramesh Thakur, 'From National Security to Human Security,' *The Japan Times,* October 13, 2005.

seven subcategories of security: environmental, economic, health, political, personal, food, and community security.

The new security concept did not emphasize values such as territorial integrity and national interest, but rather safety, well-being, and dignity. It was multilayered, with security considered from the state level down to the individual level. In contrast to the traditional interpretation of security as national security, the security referent in human security is people, not the country. Human security is a global and inclusive concept dealing with a universal concern to which national boundaries are irrelevant, and dealing with (1) security of people, not just security of territory; (2) security of individuals, not just security of their nations; (3) security through development, not security through arms, and (4) security of all people everywhere—in their homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities and in their environment.[9]

In 1995, the Commission on Global Governance opined, 'Too often in the past, however, preserving the security of the state has been used as an excuse for policies that undermined the security of people.'[10] However, human security adherents argued that the human security concept did not replace, but rather complemented, the traditional state-centered national security concept. It was made eminently clear by high-ranking MOFA official Takasu Yukio at a conference in Ulan Bator in 2000:

Human security efforts will not replace national security arrangements—the protection of territory and the life and property of the people remains the responsibility of government. While national security is a prerequisite for ensuring security—that is, the survival and dignity of the individual—it is not the only requirement. Even if a state becomes rich and strong, there is no guarantee that the individuals who live in that state will be safe and rich. The role of government is to provide a foundation or environment

9 Mahbub ul Haq, *Reflections on Human Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 39–43.

10 The Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 81.

that will enable individuals to take care of themselves and to develop their capabilities without undue restrictions.[11]

The traditional security concept, national security, emphasizes the protection of the state and national survival, prioritizing state security over that of individuals. Ogata Sadako, who was a figurehead for human security, emphasized 'that the task of the challenge to focus on the security of the people is not to replace state security. Security of the state has to be reinforced. Both are needed and they complement each other.'[12] Human security is a concept addressing threats to people and ways to overcome them. The CHS's report incorporates two approaches—bottom-up and top-down. The former focuses on empowering people through development programs, best attained in a community context, while the latter places the onus on the state to protect people's well-being through sound rule of law and judicial institutions.[13] With people as the security referent, human security is an umbrella concept encompassing threats to security, such as human rights violations, political instability, poverty, economic underdevelopment, terrorism, environmental degradation, and ethnic and religious violence. It is only too apparent that instruments traditionally employed in national security policy—such as soldiers and weapons—are inadequate for, or may even undermine, the advancement of human security.[14]

Defining human security so expansively that it seemed to capture almost everything that could be considered a threat to well-being was seen to be falling into the trap described by Daniel Deudney in 1990: 'If everything that causes a decline in human well-being is labelled a "security threat,"

11 Yukio Takasu, 'Statement by Director-General Yukio Takasu at the International Conference on Human Security in a Globalized World,' Ulan-Bator, May 8, 2000.

12 Sadako Ogata, 'From State Security to Human Security,' Brown University Ogden Lecture, May 26, 2002.

13 Benny Teh Chen Guan, 'Introduction; Human Security Development and the Future of East Asia,' in *Human Security. Securing East Asia's Future,* edited by Benny Teh Cheng Guan, 1–14 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), p. 7.

14 United Nations Development Program (UNDP), *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 37–40.

the term loses any analytical usefulness and becomes a loose synonym of "bad".'[15] This criticism hit the human security concept. The concept was found to be hard to pin down, even 'slippery', as it was described in Roland Paris' famous characterization.[16]

Many analysts commented initially that the human security concept was vague. One was the leading human security researcher Amitav Acharya. He presented a scathing indictment of the theoreticians' efforts to make the concept more precise and, by extension, more measurable. It was 'morally suspect and politically short-sighted. To speak of human security in Asia, where poverty and authoritarianism remain pervasive maladies, without bringing in the question of political rights and economic vulnerabilities, is to severely undermine the utility of the concept in moving the region away from the traditional understanding of security and devising policy tools to institutionalise the new understanding.'[17]

Human security became a contested concept seen as normatively attractive but theoretically weak.[18] It lacked the necessary precision to serve as a useful theoretical construct and was seen as an exercise in conceptual overstretch, which diminished its usefulness as a policy tool.[19] On precisely this point, others believed 'human security—despite its theoretical difficulties—may suffer in conceptual integrity but can work in practice.'[20] Roland Paris argued that 'human security is powerful precisely because it lacks

---

15 Daniel Deudney, 'The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 19, no. 3 (1990), p. 464.

16 Roland Paris, 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?' *International Security* 26, no. 2 (2001), p. 97.

17 Amitav Acharya, 'The Nexus Between Human Security and Traditional Security in Asia,' in *Proceedings. International Conference on Human Security in East Asia, June 16–17, 2003, Seoul, Republic of Korea* (Seoul: UNESCO, Korean National Commission for UNESCO and Ilmin International Relations Institute of Korea University, 2004), p. 78.

18 Edward Newman, 'A Normatively Attractive but Analytically Weak Concept,' *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004), pp. 358f.

19 Sakiko Fukuda-Pharr and Carol Messineo, 'Human Security: A critical review of the literature,' CRPD, University of Leuven, Working Paper 11 (2012), p. 29.

20 P. H. Liotta and Taylor Owen, 'Why Human Security?' *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 7, no. 1 (2006), p. 37.

precision and thereby encompasses the diverse perspectives and objectives of all the members of the coalition.' He even claimed that the concept was useful only as a unifying label for those who prioritized development and humanitarian issues and that the vagueness in its definition was deliberate, going so far as to suggest that the ambiguity was cultivated so that the term human security could hold together a fragile coalition of middle powers, international agencies, and NGOs, being an effective campaign slogan aimed at attracting public attention, political interest, and government money.[21]

Vagueness was not seen as a problem by Japanese proponents of human security. Clausen (2009) described how a part of the appeal of the human security concept in Japan lies in its vagueness,[22] while Bacon (2014) noted that its breadth and lack of precision were among the reasons for its success as the approved perspective in Japan.[23]

Two aspects of human security were outlined in the CHS's report: 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'.

In the wide-ranging intellectual debate around the human security concept, a narrow vs broad approach formed. Japan's broad approach to human security was largely drawn on the work of the UNDP, as well as subsequent work of CHS, the Japanese government, and numerous academics. The narrow conception was the so-called Canadian approach, which largely restricted the parameters of human security to violent threats against the individual, which could come from a vast array of issues, including the drug trade, landmines, ethnic discord, state failure, and trafficking in small arms.[24]

---

21 Paris, 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?' p. 95.

22 Daniel Clausen, 'Japan and Human Security: A Powerful Discourse or a Useful Coping Mechanism?' *electronic journal of contemporary japanese studies.* Discussion Paper 3 (2009).

23 Paul Bacon, 'The politics of human security in Japan,' in *Human Security and Japan's Triple Disaster: Responding to the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear crisis,* edited by Paul Bacon and Christopher Howe (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 28.

24 Liotta and Owen, 'Why Human Security?' p. 42.

Japan Adopts Human Security

Post-Cold War Japan

The changes Japan underwent in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War were impacted by legacies and conditions prevailing in its body politic. Craving for power and prestige, Japan's leaders during the Meiji era (1868–1912) embarked on a determined quest for great-power status which was singularly successful with victories in the wars with China (1895) and Tsarist Russia (1905), the annexation of Korea (1910), the occupation of Manchuria (1931), and the launch of large-scale military campaigns that brought much of the Asia-Pacific region under Japanese control. The imperialistic and aggressive approach toward its neighbors was patterned after the Western great powers that the Meiji fathers and their successors believed were a path to power and glory, but that, in the end, proved a path to disaster. The outcome of World War II led to nothing but misery and foreign masters trampling the soil of occupied Japan. Japan's defeat in the war was the very precondition of the foreign policy that took shape. In 1951, still occupied Japan signed a security treaty with the United States and a peace treaty with 48 other countries. Japan had to abandon its right to build up 'war potential' and forswore its right to use violence or the threat of using violence to solve international conflicts. The United States was granted the right to have bases in Japan, which served as a 'cork in the bottle' hindering any moves toward Japanese militarism. Had Japan been an aggressive warmonger before the war, it was now a country that, hamstrung by its past militarism in Asia, took pride in its pacifist constitution; had it been an expansionistic power harassing and trampling on the sovereignty of other countries, it was now a country solidly inward-looking, obsessed as a nation with economic pursuits, indulged in 'one-country pacifism,' *ikkoku heiwashugi*, that is, the pacifism prescribed by the constitution and its famous Article 9, the peace clause.

The end of the Cold War rocked the boat. The basis for Japan's security, the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, was questioned. Its premise was the partition of the world into two ideologically hostile blocs and the perception that Soviet-led world communism was the common enemy of both countries. Instead of abolishing the security treaty, Japan held on to what was generally termed its 'alliance' with the United States.

The prevailing Japanese interpretation of the 1947 constitution was that Japan was unable to 'put boots on the ground' in the Persian Gulf War (1990–91), so Japan applied its famous 'chequebook diplomacy', providing US$13 billion to the U.S.-led war effort against Iraq. This effort to contribute resulted in scathing criticism from the United States and other countries forming the 'coalition of the willing,' comprising countries participating in the UN-sanctioned war against Iraq. It made it clear to the Japanese that the notion that economic power inevitably translates into geopolitical influence—a widely accepted view in Japan—was an illusion.[25] Michael Blaker's assessment in an early analysis of the outcome of Japanese actions taken during the Gulf War was simple: 'Whatever opportunity the Japanese leadership might have had in the Persian Gulf case to seize the moment, to assert Japan's stated global interests in a fashion related to the situation—to demonstrate its heavy stake in Middle East stability and the depth of the commitment to the U.S. alliance—was lost at the outset.'[26]

In the entire postwar period so far, Japan's pacifist constitution and lingering regional animosity over Japan's historic role had constrained the options available to Japanese decision-makers.[27] The leading commentator Funabashi Yōichi wrote in 1992: 'Today, however, a more positive pacifism

25 Charles Krauthammer, 'The Unipolar Moment Revisited,' *The National Interest,* no. 70 (2002/2003), p. 5.

26 Michael Blaker, 'Evaluating Japanese Diplomatic Performance,' in *Japan's Foreign Policy after the Cold War: Coping with Change,* edited by Gerald L. Curtis (Armonk, New York, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 19.

27 Brendan Howe, 'Human Security, Peacebuilding, and the Responsibility to Protect in East Asia,' *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 7, no. 2 (2019), p. 187.

accompanied by a sense of international responsibility is spreading among the Japanese. The Japanese are now acutely aware of the need to participate more fully in international peacekeeping under the aegis of the U.N., a clear departure from the noncommittal neutralist tendencies that prevailed during the Cold War.'[28] This insight signalled the death toll for a venerable postwar political lodestar, one-country pacifism. It was an idea and concept that reflected an isolationist tendency rooted in a form of nationalism, an aversion to alliances, and an urge to be free of the Soviet-U.S. confrontation. It enabled Japan to pursue peace on its own, in splendid isolation. Its legacy persisted even as a more consciously 'proactive pacifism' began to form in the late 1970s, focusing primarily on non-military contributions and shaping the Japanese government's overall foreign and security policy approach.[29]

The Gulf War was a blow to Japan's foreign policy. It meant the end of Japan's one-country pacifism, since 'even liberals in Japanese society have begun to question the wisdom of postwar pacifism by criticizing it as "one-country pacifism" and arguing for a somewhat proactive pacifism. […] This phenomenon, however, did not cause the eradication of pacifistic elements, but rather the evolution of postwar pacifism into a new type of proactive pacifism with an internationalist bent.'[30] The United States and several other countries' adverse reaction to Japan's actions during the Gulf War was a setback, signalling the collapse of Japan's postwar foreign policy. Tadokoro Masayuki has likened it to what occurred with Japan's defeat in World War II.[31]

---

28 Yoichi Funabashi, 'Japan and America: Global Partners,' *Foreign Policy,* no. 86 (1992), pp. 37f.

29 Soeya Yoshihide, *Nihon no 'midoru pawā' gaikō: Sengo Nihon no sentaku to kōsō* [Japan's 'middle power' diplomacy: Postwar Japan's choices and conceptions] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 2005), pp. 104f.

30 Yoshihide Soeya, 'Redefining Japan's Security Profile: International Security, Human Security, and an East Asian Community.' Paper presented at IIPS International Conference 'A New Horizon for Japan's Security Policy—Basic Concepts and Framework,' November 30 and December 1, 2004, p. 2.

31 Tadokoro Masayuki, 'Japanese Diplomacy and the First Gulf War,' in *The First Gulf War in a Historical Perspective.* 2021 International Forum on War History: Proceedings (Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, 2021), p. 81.

In a reflection after the miserable outcome of the Gulf War for Japan, one of Japan's leading political entrepreneurs, Ozawa Ichirō, wrote in his bestselling *Nihon kaizō keikaku* [A reform plan for Japan] (1993, Eng. translation 1994): 'The fact is that, deep down, most Japanese want to be able to avoid that troublesome area called "foreign relations." They want to carry on with their peaceful, comfortable lives, and live with their age-old systems, practices and customs without having to worry about the future. Simply put, the Japanese people want the luxury of reacting only when necessary, and want as little participation as possible in international society.'[32]

Ozawa argued that Japan should become a normal country, *futsū no kuni*, casting off the constraints of the peace constitution, reviving patriotism, and assuming the international political and security responsibilities and political-military burdens commensurate with a great power status. Japan's inability to defend itself and what he saw as its submissive foreign policy were anathema to him.

It is a paradox that Japan's newfound assertiveness in the 1990s began at the nadir of its post-war foreign policy. After the Gulf War, Japan introduced previously unthinkable policies. The need to regain its confidence and ability to play an active political role in international affairs was pressing. Japan's one-country pacifism was no longer viable. It prompted the Japanese government to break with the policy established in 1956, when Japan in 1958, as a new member of the United Nations, refused to comply with UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld's request to send observers to Lebanon.[33] Failing to live up to its commitment was a flagrant violation of the solemn pledge made by the Japanese government in 1952, when it submitted Japan's application for UN membership.

After the Gulf War, one saw a political volte-face in the reappearance of

32 Ichiro Ozawa, *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation* (Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International, 1994), pp. 40f.

33 Tanaka Akihiko, *Anzen hoshō: Sengo 50 nen no mosaku* [National security: Fifty years of searching after the war] (Tokyo: Yomiuri shimbunsha, 1997), p. 210.

Japan's UN centrism, which implied that Japan should conduct its foreign policy in line with the objectives and principles of the United Nations. It was launched in 1958 by Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, but soon became more or less pure rhetoric and disappeared from the *Diplomatic Bluebook* already with its third issue in 1959.[34] It was revived in the aftermath of the Gulf War's traumatic effects on Japan.[35]

With one-country pacifism no longer an option, consolation for depressed Japanese and a source of pride for them was that Japan, in 1989, shortly before the resounding setback to its foreign policy during the Gulf War, gained the status as the world's largest donor of official development assistance (ODA). Scrutinized at a closer range, 'Japan appeared to be a responsible country with a strong social conscience. A statistical analysis, however, reveals a different picture. Despite being the largest donor in absolute terms, Japan in 1992–93, contributed only 0.26 per cent of its GNP, which was well below the average of other DAC countries.'[36] Yet, what was important to the Japanese was that Japan, as an ODA donor, was the world's No. 1.

Another path that was opened for Japan to gain respect was to participate in UN peace-keeping operations (PKO). It emerged as an attractive antidote to help Japan rid itself of the passivity others perceived it excelled at. The PKO Law was introduced on June 15, 1992. Based on this legislation, three civilian electoral observers were dispatched to supervise the 1992 national legislative and presidential elections in Angola, as part of the 2nd UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM 2). Subsequently, Japan contributed to several UNPKOs in other countries through the

---

34 Shinyo Takahiro, *Shinkokurenron: Kokusai heiwa no tame no kokuren to Nihon no yakuwari* [On the new United Nations: The roles of the United Nations and Japan for international peace] (Tokyo: Ōsaka daigaku shuppankai, 1995), p. 266.

35 Bert Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine, 2nd ed.: The Long Postwar* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2025), p. 371.

36 Marie Söderberg, 'Japan's Revised Development Cooperation Charter: National Interests and Security at the Core,' *Il Politico* 81, no. 2 (2016), p. 137. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD has 34 members, consisting of major donor governments, individual economies, and the European Union.

1990s and beyond. Japan had already been involved in the Cambodian peace process before the Gulf War. In 1992, 1,200 SDF and other personnel were dispatched to participate in the UN peacekeeping operation in Cambodia, the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).[37] The Japanese participated in civilian policing, electoral monitoring, and road and bridge reconstruction. The operation lasted from September 1992 to September 1993. In parallel with UNTAC, three personnel were sent to the election to monitor the UN Angola Verification Mission II (UNAVEM II).[38]

UNTAC was still ongoing when the LDP fell from power in 1993, and a newcomer on the national political arena, Hosokawa Morihiro, became prime minister. Participating in PKO was still controversial in Japan. However, in his second policy speech in parliament, Hosokawa said: 'I believe it is fully consistent with Japan's ideals of advocating international cooperation and aspiring to lasting peace that we actively contribute to United Nations peacekeeping operations under our peace constitution.'[39] His assertiveness initiated the long row of UNPKO in which the Japanese participated. Building on the experiences Japan gained from UNTAC and UNAVEM II, it began participating in various UN peacekeeping missions.

The Pioneer, Maruyama Tomiichi

The year after the UNDP issued its report, Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi became the first Japanese prime minister to endorse human security. He advocated in parliament that Japan, with its pacifist constitution, should pursue human security as one of its international policy approaches.[40] His support for human security can be seen as natural. He was a local politician who had been elevated to prime minister

37 Makoto Iokibe, ed. *The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 180.

38 MOFA, Record of Japan's International Peace Cooperation Activities based on the International Peace Cooperation Law (2005).

39 Policy Speech by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa to the 128th Session of the National Diet, September 21, 1993.

40 Kaoru Kurusu, 'Does the Concept of Human Security Generate Additional Value? An Analysis of Japanese Stakeholder Perceptions,' *JICA-RI Working Paper,* no. 122 (2016), p. 6.

from the post of chairman of the Japan Socialist Party (JSP) the previous year. The human security concept, which is non-military in nature, fitted his party's high-profile pacifist stance like a glove. At the UN World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, Murayama told the audience that Japan was trying to create a human-centered society and emphasized that human-centered social development was the focus of Japanese ODA.[41] In another speech in the United Nations General Assembly the same year, he went further and endorsed human security as an important idea for the UN.

On his first visit to Japan in May 1997 as the newly elected secretary-general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan gave a luncheon speech and lavished praise on his host country. Japan, he said, 'has long understood the centrality of development in building enduring peace and human security. In fact, it has been in the vanguard of such efforts. [...] I urge Japan to continue playing a leadership role in this area as the natural complement to its activities in humanitarian assistance and United Nations peacekeeping.'[42]

With the humiliating setback for Japanese diplomacy during the Gulf War, Annan's words must have been encouraging to his Japanese audience. Carefully crafted or not, the customary flattering from a polite guest or not, his encouragement of Japanese leadership must have sounded like sweet music.[43] No wonder that Murayama's successor, Hashimoto Ryūtarō, in his speech at the United Nations the following month, went on record as a supporter of human security, however, with mankind, *jinrui*, the security referent, not the individual human being as it had been for Murayama. There was a further difference. For Hashimoto, human security was

---

41 'Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the U.N., New York, October 22, 1995.

42 Kofi A. Annan, Speech at a luncheon hosted by the United Nations Association of Japan in Tokyo, May 13, 1997, UN Press Release SG/SM/6236.

43 Bert Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security: The Founding of a New Policy, 1995–2003* (Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2008), p. 209.

more or less equal to environmental security, one of the UNDP's seven human-security subcategories.[44] Moreover, unlike Murayama's focus on the United Nations, Hashimoto saw it necessary for 'each of us to develop a strong consciousness and shoulder our responsibilities. We must change our lifestyles.'[45]

The Visionary, Obuchi Keizō

While Murayama must be acknowledged as the human security pioneer in Japanese politics, Obuchi Keizō is seen by many as the actual pioneer. As a politician, he was soft-spoken, with a personal approach so low-key and modest that he was quite aware that he was even derided by some as a 'vacuum prime minister,' suggesting that he had no substance.[46] But he was 'a good listener,' which was decisive for Japan's human security policy.[47] In my interview with Obuchi's state secretary for foreign affairs, Takemi Keizō, he said: 'Obuchi recognized the importance of keeping the political momentum for pacifism in Japan. Japanese pacifism was endorsed by those who had wartime experience, but they were rapidly declining in number. Therefore, Obuchi said, we should have a new future-oriented pacifism. Then I responded: Maybe the idea of human security fits your vision of a future-oriented pacifism for the Japanese people? Obuchi adopted the idea on the spot. He said, OK, you try. And, I worked out a draft for the 2000 Millennium Summit' (author's interview with Takemi Keizō, October 14, 2025).

Obuchi saw human security as a useful, attractive concept that helped ease the prevalent negative feelings among the Japanese toward their

44 Ibid., pp. 80–82.

45 'Statement by Prime Minister of Japan Ryutaro Hashimoto at the Special Session of the General Assembly for the Overall Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of Agenda 21,' United Nations, New York, June 23, 1997.

46 See Obuchi's comment in 'Dialogue with Prime Minister Obuchi,' in Japan Center for International Exchange, *Community Building in Asia Pacific: Dialogue in Okinawa* (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 2000), p. 22.

47 Bert Edström, 'Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō and Human Security.' Paper prepared for presentation at the First NAJS Conference on the Study of Contemporary Japanese Society, Göteborg, Sweden, April 22–24, 2004.

own country, a legacy of Japan's harassment of its neighbors before and during World War II.[48] Takemi has expanded on the background to the new policy that took form: 'In 21st-century international politics, power politics, which uses military force to change the status quo, has become increasingly apparent. At the same time, a new form of power politics was emerging due to deepening interdependence in cross-border flows of people, goods, money, and information. This is a new power game in which countries seek to expand their influence in relevant fields by taking diplomatic initiatives to solve global challenges that a single country cannot solve. However, because this power game requires multilateral cooperation, it is necessary to have a policy concept grounded in universal values that many countries can accept. For this reason, Japan advocates "human security", which revolutionizes the concept of security and has made it the theoretical back-bone of proactive pacifism.'[49]

Takemi is also a well-known international relations scholar and has been a central proponent and supporter of human security from the very start. He was a member of a high-powered group tasked with developing policy proposals when Obuchi was appointed foreign minister. According to another member of the group, Yamamoto Tadashi, Obuchi took human security 'as his baby, since the concept was consonant with his ideas'.[50]

A factor contributing to Japan's adoption of human security was that the idea resonated with the emphasis on peace in Japan's postwar constitution. Pursuing human security was consistent with the venerable political ideas captured in the constitution, whose preamble declares: 'We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.' This lofty idea is the essence of human security, plain and simple, as it was presented in UNDP's seminal 1994 report. It was also consistent with Japan's long-standing ODA practices and non-military contributions

48 Takemi Keizō, quoted in Bert Edström, 'Japan and Human Security: The Derailing of a Foreign Policy Vision,' Institute for Security and Development Policy, Asia Paper, 2011, p. 50.

49 Takemi Keizō, 'Kaihatsu to anzen hoshō wo tsunagu Nihon no gurobaru herūsu senryaku' [Japan's global health strategy: Linking development and security], *Gaikō* 36 (2016), pp. 70–77.

50 Yamamoto Tadashi, in Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* pp. 85f.

to security building. Thus, it was no surprise that some Japanese officials and policymakers eagerly embraced human security when the UNDP launched its report. Pushing for this novel security concept might help Japan present itself as a norm entrepreneur, filling the bottle that was so empty—Japanese ideas of how the world could and should be run.

It was also important that many of the elements of the UNDP's human security concept were found in the concept of comprehensive security, which emphasizes contributions in ODA, debt forgiveness, and contributions to international and regional organizations as part of its security contribution and had been a pillar of Japanese security thinking since the 1973 oil shock and had frequently been marshalled as a defence against claims that Japan was an international security free rider.[51] It was adopted as national policy based on the famous report issued in 1980 by Prime Minister Ōhira Masayoshi's Comprehensive National Security Group, whose definition of security was broad: 'Security is to protect the people's livelihood from various threats.'[52] The threats were wide-ranging and included the disruption of food and natural resource imports, large-scale disasters, and conventional military attacks. The Japanese government was recommended to prepare both military and non-military means to secure its population's well-being.

Thus, for many Japanese, it was easy to interpret human security as a version of comprehensive security, modified to fit the post-Cold War world, in which there was a diversity of threats, especially those beyond the control of a single state.[53] Human security made economic insecurity and non-traditional security concerns important issues in their own right in a comprehensive security agenda context.[54]

---

51 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 63.

52 Seisaku kenkyūkai sōgō anzen hoshō grūpu, 'Sōgō anzen hoshō grūpu hōkokusho' [Report by the comprehensive security group], in Ōhira sōri no seisaku kenkyūkai hōkokusho [Reports of Prime Minister Ōhira's policy research groups] (Tokyo: Jiyūminshutō kōhō shuppankyoku, 1980), p. 304.

53 Yokota Yōzō, Ueda Hideaki, and Watanabe Akio, 'Zadankai. Kokka no anzen hoshō kara ningen no anzen hoshō e' [From state security to human security], *Gaikō fōramu* 12, no. 1 (1999), p. 21.

54 Christopher W. Hughes, 'Japanese Military Modernization: In Search of a "Normal" Security Role,' in *Strategic Asia 2005–06: Military Modernization in an Era of Uncertainty,* edited by Ashley J.

Obuchi's human security drive had its roots in his decision to work for Japan joining the international campaign against landmines. The impetus for his effort to promote human security came at the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction by 122 countries in Ottawa. At this conference, Obuchi announced Japan would launch a 'Zero Victim Program,' extending ¥10 billion over five years for anti-landmine measures.[55]

The first expression of Obuchi's adoption of human security as a key concern was the effects and repercussions of the Thai baht's collapse in May 1997, which triggered a financial crisis that evolved into the Asian economic crisis. Several of Japan's neighbors were severely hit, and Japan could not evade the negative impact of the crisis ravaging the region. Poverty and political instability increased, underscoring the crucial need for social safety nets for people experiencing poverty and a new understanding of security, one that focuses on Asian peoples rather than states.[56] As an 'economic Gulliver in a region of Lilliputs,'[57] Japan was seen by its neighbors as having both a duty and the responsibility to intervene to salvage hard-hit countries.

During the Cold War, Japan could not carve out a leadership role based on capacity or power according to the prevailing interpretation of the 1947 constitution. However, the Asian economic crisis became a window of opportunity for Japan. The Obuchi government responded quickly and resolutely. In September 1997, only two months after the outbreak

---

Tellis and Michael Wills (Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005), p. 108.

55 'Japan: Statement by Keizo Obuchi, Foreign Minister, December 3,' in *Ottawa Landmines Convention: Treaty Signing Conference and Mine Action Forum.* Signing Conference for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production, Transfer and Stockpiling of Anti-personnel Mines and their Destruction, and Mine Action Forum, Ottawa, December 2–4,' *Disarmament Diplomacy* 21 (1997).

56 Amitav Acharya and Arabinda Acharya, 'Human Security in Asia Pacific: Puzzle, Panacea or Peril?' *CANCAPS Bulletin* 27 (2000).

57 T. J. Pempel, 'Transpacific Torii: Japan and the Emerging Asian Regionalism,' in *Network Power: Japan and Asia,* edited by Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 69.

of the crisis, Japan proposed that an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF), an Asian counterpart of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), should be established to tackle the region's financial problems. The AMF did not materialize, however, due to a lack of U.S. support.

Obuchi's focus was on Asian countries that were hard hit by the economic crisis ravaging the region. During a visit to Singapore in May 1998, he declared that Japan felt a duty, despite its own difficult economic situation, to do everything it could to help its East Asian friends. He pointed out that the 'unprecedented' ¥16 trillion (about US$120 billion) Comprehensive Economic Measures, announced shortly before by the Japanese government, included support for Asian economies amounting to US$5.4 billion.[58] In October 1998, the Japanese government returned with a new idea for how Japan could help alleviate the problems caused by the Asian crisis, when Finance Minister Miyazawa Kiichi presented the idea of a US$30 billion program to assist Southeast Asian countries.[59] The aid effort he announced can be seen as both a traditional and an ad hoc measure to address the severe economic problems countries in the region faced in the wake of the Asian economic crisis.

Obuchi became involved in a flurry of activities that made human security a key element of Japan's foreign policy. Adopting human security could be seen as a move to counter the damage to Japan's foreign policy caused by Tokyo's dithering and dawdling during the Gulf War, and as a significant step for Japan to raise its international status within the international society of states. According to Soeya Yoshihide, 'What is peculiarly Japanese in Japan's context and approach to human security is that the motivation is closely tied to the desire to play a larger role in international society under the assumption of proactive pacifism. It was in this context that Japanese efforts toward deeper engagement in international security through taking part in international peace-keeping operations could be

58 Quoted in Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 90.

59 Ibid., p. 220.

regarded as a prelude to the Japanese approach to human security.'[60]

That Obuchi had developed his thinking on the subject was evinced by his speech in Tokyo on December 2, 1998: 'An unavoidable fact is that Asia's remarkable economic development in recent years also created social strains. The current economic crisis has aggravated those 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 the 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.' Noting that the theme of the Tokyo conference was human security, he went on: 'It is my ardent wish that creative intellectual interactions emerge in this area, as they involve many urgent issues, and that wise leadership will be exercised and lead to overcoming the current crisis.' He defined human security in a way that became the prevailing one in Japan and widely quoted in the international debate on human security: 'It is my deepest belief that human beings should be able to lead lives of creativity, without having their survival threatened nor their dignity impaired. While the phrase 'human security' is a relatively new one, I understand that it is the key which comprehensively covers all the menaces that threaten the survival, daily life, and dignity of human beings and strengthens the efforts to confront those threats.' In his speech, he outlined a strategy to cope with the problems under discussion: 'Since many of the problems affecting human security cross national borders, no country can solve such problems alone; the coordinated action of the international community is necessary. Moreover, since these problems directly affect the lives of human beings, and since it is this area where the activities of citizens through NGOs and others are most effective, governments and international organizations need to strengthen the linkages and cooperation with citizens' activities to cope with such problems.'[61]

---

60 Soeya, 'Redefining Japan's Security Profile,' p. 5.

61 Keizo Obuchi, 'Opening Remarks by Prime Minister Obuchi at the conference An Intellectual

There is a strong resemblance between Obuchi's areas of concern and the sub-categories of human security listed in the UNDP report—economic, food, environmental, personal, community, and political security. In his speeches in Tokyo and later in Hanoi in December 1998, Obuchi clarified his view on which areas were in focus: 'In our times, humankind is under various kinds of threats', he said in Tokyo. '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 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.' He said 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.'

In Hanoi, Obuchi returned to what was awaiting: 'We need urgently to implement measures for the socially vulnerable who are affected by the Asian economic crisis. […] At the same time, even in times of economic crisis, we should not forget cooperation on medium- and long-term problems such as environmental degradation, narcotics and international organized crime which need to be addressed if we wish to protect human survival, life and dignity.'[62] Furthermore, a vital aspect of Obuchi's understanding of human security was that threats to human security 'differ by country and region', indicating that threats had to be tackled differently across countries and regions. By extension, ways and means to tackle the threat had to be selected depending on the actual threat.

In his speeches, Obuchi also outlined the strategies Japan would pursue to advance human security. In his Tokyo speech, he stressed the importance

Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow,' in *The Asian Crisis and Human Security: An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow,* edited by Pamela J. Noda (Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1998), p. 19.

62 Keizo Obuchi, 'Toward the Creation of a Bright Future for Asia,' Policy speech at the Lecture Program hosted by the Institute for International Relations, Hanoi, Vietnam, December 16, 1998.

of cooperation with others: 'Since many of the problems affecting human security cross national borders, no country can solve such problems alone; the coordinated action of the international community is necessary. Moreover, since these problems directly affect the lives of human beings, and since it is this area where the activities of citizens through NGOs and others are most effective, it is important for governments and international organizations to strengthen the linkages and cooperation with citizens' activities to cope with such problems. […] To support Asian countries in this economic crisis … we have given, as one of the most important pillars of our support, assistance to the poor, the aged, the disabled, women and children, and other socially vulnerable segments of population on whom economic difficulties have the heaviest impacts.' In his speech in Hanoi two weeks later, he clarified some of the key instruments that were going to be mobilized in the pursuit of human security: 'Japan will continue to address this area utilizing its official development assistance and multilateral frameworks such as APEC.'

One idea MOFA officials had was that Japan should not limit itself to the kind of bilateral assistance outlined in the Miyazawa Plan presented during the Asian economic crisis. They realized that Japan should try to appeal to a global audience by promoting its ideas about its international contributions by establishing a trust fund under the multilateral auspices of the UN.[63] The idea of a trust fund is found in the 1994 UNDP report, which called for establishing a global human security fund with funding based on a proportion of reductions in global military spending, a fee on globally important transactions or polluting emissions, and overseas development aid.[64] Obuchi broached this idea in a speech in Singapore in May 1998.[65] In Hanoi, he announced that the Japanese government had decided to donate ¥500 million (US$4.2 million) for establishing a human security fund within the United Nations. The purpose of the fund was to

63 Kaoru Kurusu and Rikki Kersten, 'Japan as an Active Agent for Global Norms: The Political Dynamism behind the Acceptance and Promotion of "Human Security",' *Asia-Pacific Review* 18, no. 2 (2011), p. 123.

64 UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, pp. 8–9.

65 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* pp. 155f.

enable international organizations to provide support 'in a flexible and timely manner to projects that are to be implemented in this region.'[66] While Takemi Keizō later revealed that the purpose of the trust fund was to create a tool for launching ODA projects promoting human security,[67] the leading human security analyst Fukushima Akiko describes it as a 'pillar' of implementing Japan's human security policy.[68]

As Obuchi's statement clearly shows, he had in mind a fund with activities in Asia, operating under the United Nations' aegis. This focus aligned with traditional Japanese foreign policy, which emphasizes neighboring Asian countries. Obuchi and his team even considered placing the fund at the United Nations University in Tokyo. The scope of the trust fund was influenced by Ogata Sadako, one of the highest-ranking officials at the United Nations, who served as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from 1990 to 2001. She was consulted when Obuchi and his team considered establishing the trust fund. Her view was distinct: 'I was not interested in an Asian focus. I saw [the pursuit] as global,' she said.[69] When the fund was established under the aegis of the United Nations in New York, its geographical scope was global rather than limited to Asia. Moreover, the trust fund was established with the understanding that empowerment could serve as a strategy to address inadequacies of existing development models and economic threats to people's lives.[70]

MOFA and its officials began hammering in the new policy. In a 1999 policy document, 'Mid-term policy for the government's development aid,' MOFA declared that 'we will give full consideration to the perspective of "human security" in protecting people from various threats such as

66 Obuchi, 'Toward the Creation of a Bright Future for Asia'.

67 Takemi, in 'Roundtable: How to Safeguard People's Freedom,' in The Sasagawa Peace Foundation Annual Report FY 2004.

68 Fukushima Akiko, *Ningen no anzen hoshō. Gurōbaruka suru tayō na kyōi to seisaku frēmuwāku* [Human security: Multifaceted threats and policy framework under globalization] (Tokyo: Chikura shobō, 2010), p. 90

69 Ogata Sadako, in Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 31.

70 Sadako Ogata, 'The Human Security Commission's Strategy,' *Peace Review* 16, no. 1 (2004), pp. 25–28.

environmental degradation, hunger, drugs, organized crime, infectious diseases, human rights violations, regional conflicts, and anti-personnel landmines.'[71] The chief Japanese representative at an international conference on developmental issues in New York in September 1999, Takemi Keizō, stated: 'The Obuchi government is cultivating the concept of "human security" as a new element in its foreign policy.' Referring to Obuchi's speech in Hanoi, Takemi noted that the prime minister had defined human security as a key priority of Japan's foreign policy.[72] It was also the key message of a speech delivered by MOFA's Takasu Yukio at a conference on human security in Ulan Bator in May 2000. Taking Obuchi's Hanoi speech as the starting point for his remarks, he claimed that Japan accorded high priority to human security in its foreign policy.[73]

A stroke on April 1, 2000 incapacitated Obuchi, and he passed away after six weeks in a coma. A leading newspaper in the region editorialized: 'The vacuum created by the unexpected death of the Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi will be felt throughout Asia.' The headline of the editorial was: 'Obuchi left a lasting legacy.'[74]

In 1998, Japan's leading diplomatic historian, Ikei Masaru, wrote: 'What is required of Japan facing the twenty-first century is not being "a giant without a face" expanding only its economy, but to be a country developing a foreign policy with a clear idea and philosophy.'[75] As prime minister, Obuchi had emerged as a norm entrepreneur, an agent who actively advocates, disseminates, and seeks to institutionalize certain ideas and

---

71 MOFA, 'Japan's Medium-Term Policy on Official Development Assistance (ODA),' August 10, 1999.

72 Keizo Takemi, 'Capacity Building for Human Dignity: The Essence of the International Order in the 21st Century,' Address by State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Keizo Takemi at a Lecture Meeting Hosted by the Asia Society, New York, September 1, 1999.

73 Takasu, 'Statement'.

74 *The Nation*, May 16, 2000, quoted in Amartya Sen, 'Why Human Security?' Presentation at the International Symposium on Human Security in Tokyo, July 28, 2000.

75 Ikei Masaru, 'Rekishi ni miru Nihon gaikō' [Japan's foreign policy in the light of history], in *Reisengo no kokusai seiji: Jissen, seisaku, riron* [International politics after the Cold War: Practices, policies, theories], edited by Soeya Yoshihide and Akagi Kanji (Tokyo: Keiō gijuku daigaku shuppankai, 1998), p. 179.

practices in a specific issue area.[76] The human security policy he initiated can be seen as a response to the criticism often heard in the Japanese debate about Japan's role in the world. He devised a policy combining the past pride in Japan's foreign policy, chequebook diplomacy, with the new priority, human security. There were real problems that needed to be addressed through concrete measures, and human security served as a useful compass.[77] The trick was to pick measures and activities that reflected Japan's comparative advantages. Human security offered the Japanese government an opportunity to take actions that would benefit its role in the region and to present itself as an international good guy. Obuchi and his collaborators realized that pursuing human security could compensate for Japan's inability to participate in the management of international security through military means because of the prescriptions found in Japan's peace constitution, or, rather, the interpretation of its famous peace clause, Article 9. 'As you have pointed out,' Prime Minister Obuchi told a journalist in September 1999, 'we are abiding by the Japanese constitution, and thus we are forbidden to contribute to world peace by any military presence. We are trying hard to contribute to world peace by pursuing human security—that is, to achieve security for human beings.'[78]

The Underrated Heir, Mori Yoshirō

When the ailing Obuchi became unable to function as premier, a small group of party elders, what a respected political commentator called 'political bosses,' decided that the then LDP Secretary-General Mori Yoshirō should succeed Obuchi.[79] Mori himself took part in the backstage meetings deciding on Obuchi's successor. While the two premiers seemed kindred souls on human security as a foreign policy priority, Mori had to fight an uphill battle throughout his tenure due to widespread public and media disapproval of how he reached the top spot.

---

76 Kaoru Kurusu, 'Japan as an Active Agent for Global Norms: The Political Dynamism behind the Acceptance and Promotion of "Human Security",' *Asia-Pacific Review* 18, no. 2 (2011), p. 117.

77 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, pp. 257ff.

78 Tom Plate, 'The Japanese Prime Minister Defies His Critics,' *Los Angeles Times*, September 15, 1999.

79 Kenzo Uchida, 'The right leader for Japan?' *Japan Times*, May 19, 2000.

As prime minister, Mori did not have a strong personal agenda but rather left matters to be decided by his party or discussed in parliament.[80] Soon after he had been elevated to the political top spot, an opportunity to demonstrate that he was a statesman of global stature presented itself when the G8 Okinawa Summit took place on July 21–23, 2000. A week before the Summit, foreign ministers of the participating countries assembled in Miyazaki. The meeting was somewhat lackluster since U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright did not attend, which irked the Japanese. Instead, she sent Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.[81]

In a document issued after the Miyazaki meeting, human security was a key concept. Participants reiterated that 'an enduring commitment to peace and the fundamental principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and an open economy will remain indispensable. We reaffirm our commitment to human security through the creation of an environment where the dignity, well-being, safety and human rights of all people are ensured.'[82] To prepare for the Summit deliberations, Mori made a flying visit to all G8 countries. The analyst John Kirton foresaw a shift away from Obuchi's idea: 'Mori, the mediator among equals, also has the classic Japanese skill of listening particularly closely to the Americans, with the result that his pre-Summit tour yielded a shift in emphasis that placed information technology, in keeping with American thinking, clearly in first place as the dominant Summit theme.'[83]

The fact that two countries taking part in the Summit, Japan and Canada, were leading advocates of human security had a marginal effect on the agenda. Obuchi's original intention to make human security a key issue on the agenda was not helped by the fact that the passivity of Japan's

---

80 Shinichi Kitaoka, 'The Koizumi Administration: Its Evaluation and Prospects' (2001).

81 Barbara Wanner, 'G-8 Foreign Ministers Tackle Conflict Prevention,' *JEI Report* 28 (2000).

82 MOFA, 'Conclusions of the G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Miyazaki, July 13, 2000'.

83 John Kirton, Eleonore Kokotsis and Gina Stephens with Diana Jurevic, 'The G8 and Conflict Prevention: Commitment, Compliance and Systemic Contribution,' Paper presented for the conference on Promoting Conflict Prevention and Human Security, What Can the G8 Do? Rome, July 16, 2001, p. 3.

diplomacy was quite visible already at the preparatory meeting of the foreign ministers in Miyazaki, according to an influential Japanese daily.[84] When the G8 Okinawa Summit was over, it was evident that the human security concept had not loomed large in deliberations, nor did it figure in the joint communiqué. However, commitments in other communiqués after the meeting suggest that cooperation in areas central to the idea of human security, such as crime and drugs, development, and health, was in focus. Rather than a human security perspective, international issues were discussed from a different angle. In his subsequent report to the parliament, Prime Minister Mori stated that the Summit had dealt with issues 'from the perspective of peace of mind.'[85]

The Millennium Summit

Prime Minister Mori continued Japan's UN-centered strategy at the Millennium Summit in September 2000, guided by Obuchi's vision of human security as a key concern of Japan's foreign policy. The assessment made by MOFA beforehand was that the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000 would be 'the most appropriate forum for continuing to position human security as one of the linchpins of Japan's foreign policy.'[86] Human security was one of the two issues in focus in Mori's speech at the Summit; the other was strengthening the United Nations. Characterizing human security as a 'pillar,' *hashira*, of Japan's foreign policy, Mori heightened its centrality, as 'pillar' is used in Japan's foreign policy liturgy to stress the importance of an element or idea. 'With "human security" as a pillar of its foreign policy,' the Japanese premier said, 'Japan will spare no effort to make the twenty-first century a human-centered century.'[87] Continuing the approach of Murayama and Obuchi, the security referent in Mori's speech was 'every human being,' *ningen hitori hitori*, while the core values were

84 'Chikyū kibo no shiten ga hitsuyō da' [Global viewpoint is necessary], *Mainichi Shimbun*, July 14, 2000 (editorial).

85 Mori Yoshiro, 'Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori to the 149th Session of The Diet,' July 28, 2000.

86 Takemi, in Sasagawa Peace Foundation, 'Roundtable: How to Safeguard People's Freedom,' p. 5.

87 Yoshiro Mori, 'Statement by H. E. Mr. Yoshiro Mori, Prime Minister of Japan at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations,' September 7, 2000.

specified as 'survival,' *seizon*, and 'dignity,' *sonkei*. One of the core values Obuchi referred to, 'livelihood,' *seikatsu*, was lacking. The list of threats to these core values amounted to conflicts, human rights violations, poverty, infectious diseases, crime, and environmental destruction.

Mori outlined two practical steps to advance the new security idea. One was to increase Japan's contributions to the Trust Fund for Human Security to approximately ¥10 billion (ca. US$100 million). The other represented an innovation. Mori announced that an international commission on human security should be established within the United Nations. He argued that the UN had to be strengthened for the maintenance of peace and security of the international community and claimed that the latter 'may well be a prerequisite for ensuring human security.'[88] In parallel with Obuchi's original intention to make the trust fund focus on Asia, Mori envisaged a commission having the same focus.[89] However, when the Commission of Human Security (CHS) was established, it was specified that its activities would have a global focus.

According to MOFA's press release after Mori's Millennium speech, 'there is a growing awareness in the international community that collective efforts are needed to reduce significantly the level of human suffering and insecurity where it is most acute and prevalent. Such concerns, increasingly expressed by the term "human security", have become a central focus of policy imperatives of many nations in recent years.'[90]

Mori and Africa

Like Obuchi, Mori saw Africa as a key area for improving human security. His invitation of African leaders to the G8 Okinawa Summit caught the eye. Another indication of the increased focus on Africa was a round trip he made to three African countries (South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria). He outlined his ideas on human security in the African context in a keynote

88 Ibid.

89 Ogata, in Sasagawa Peace Foundation, 'Roundtable: How to Safeguard People's Freedom,' p. 9.

90 MOFA, 'Press Release: Plan for Establishment of the Commission on Human Security' (2001).

speech in South Africa: 'All the problems confronting Africa—poverty, conflicts, refugees, infectious diseases, water resources, environmental destruction, etc.—are problems that threaten human existence itself. Indeed, Japan's 21st-century peace diplomacy places human security at its core. In that sense, it would not be an exaggeration to say that our success or failure in establishing human security in Africa will test the merits of Japan's foreign policy.'[91]

Africa made an indelible impression on Mori, and he made it a key concern of his government's foreign policy. His policy speech in parliament on January 31, 2001, after his return, included a passage on the human security situation in Africa. The prime minister expressed his awareness of his responsibility in this regard, linking the urge for leadership on the part of his country to the quest for human security: '[...] we must establish "a human security" that will release all people from such threats and forge a twenty-first century that will shine brightly for the people of the world. Furthermore, I [feel] a renewed determination that Japan will exercise responsibility and leadership toward this end.'[92]

Mori's address was notable for his expression of a sincere will to shoulder responsibilities and to exert leadership, which was an obvious response to the public's preference for a strong prime minister capable of clear messages and leadership.[93] It was yet another case in which a Japanese prime minister revealed his country's global leadership ambitions, as could be expected given Japan's mainstream political heavyweights' allegiance to the Yoshida Doctrine.

---

91 Yoshiro Mori, 'Speech by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori "Africa and Japan in the New Century" at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, Republic of South Africa,' January 9, 2001.

92 Yoshiro Mori, 'Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori to the 151st Session of the Diet,' January 31, 2001.

93 Kitaoka Shinichi, 'Koizumi shinseiken no kadai' [The agenda of the new Koizumi government], *Yomiuri Shimbun*, May 22–23, 2001. Reprinted in Kitaoka Shinichi, *Nihon no jiritsu: Taibei kyōchō to Ajia gaikō* [Japan's autonomy: Cooperation with the United States and Asian diplomacy] (Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha, 2004).

Japan's Two Key Tools in Its Pursuit of Human Security

The Commission on Human Security

A practical step toward implementing the new security idea was presented in Prime Minister Mori Yoshirō's speech at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. He proposed establishing an international commission on human security under the aegis of the United Nations. When UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan visited Tokyo in January 2001 and met Ogata Sadako, they finalized an agreement to establish the CHS. According to Annan, the issues to be addressed by this commission were closely related to the UN's main concerns, and he promised close cooperation on behalf of the world organization. From the outset, Annan's interest and support would continue. He sent a message to the CHS inaugural meeting in June 2001, saying that 'the UN has a deep and direct interest in your work and … will closely follow it.'[94]

The press release after the meeting between Annan and Ogata clarified that the goals of the CHS were: (1) to promote public understanding, engagement and support of human security and its underlying imperatives; (2) to develop the concept of human security as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation; and (3) to propose a concrete action program to address critical and pervasive threats to human security.[95] The various interpretations of the human security concept posed a problem. Therefore, it seems reasonable that the commission's first concern would have been to work out a definition, which, however, was not the case.

---

94 Message from the UN Secretary-General, Mr. K. Annan, to the first meeting of the Commission on Human Security, Greentree Estate, June 8–10, 2001.

95 MOFA, 'Press Release: Plan for Establishment of the Commission on Human Security,' January 24, 2001.

Recollecting her days as the UNHCR, Ogata said later: 'I learned that, by focusing more directly on the people, we could find ways to protect them, identify their needs, and uncover the social, economic, and political factors that endangered their own security. Thus, the concept of human security began to impress me more and more as a useful entry point to deal with the prevailing security issues all over the world.' She added that 'it is safe to say that the concept of human security has now evolved to a powerful tool for protecting and empowering people.' [96]

Mori had intended that the prospective commission should focus on Asia, but with Ogata involved in setting up the trust fund, it was a matter of course that its activities would be global, rather than Asian. When she was asked to co-chair the commission, she helped broaden its scope. In a roundtable talk, Ogata later revealed that she thought that the proposed focus, public health, was outside her field of expertise: 'Of course, disease, poverty, and unemployment are among the threats to human security, but I had long been concerned with the plight of the ordinary people who were the casualties of conflict. So, I made it clear that I was willing to be involved if the commission were expanded to include such issues.'[97]

Before the CHS issued its report, the term human security could be described as a fad or a catchphrase used too often and too loosely.[98] Still, the CHS was not directed to develop a definition but an operational definition. According to a close collaborator of Ogata at the CHS, Johann Cels, human security was intended to be a policy-relevant concept, rather than a theory.[99] The CHS reiterated the necessity for a dynamic conceptualization of human security: 'What people consider to be

96 Statement by Ms. Sadako Ogata at the High–level Event on Human Security, ECOSOC, New York, May 8, 2013.

97 Ogata Sadako, in Sasagawa Peace Foundation, 'Roundtable: How to Safeguard People's Freedom,' p. 8.

98 Bert Edström, 'Japan's foreign policy and human security,' *Japan Forum* 15, no. 2 (2003), p. 211.

99 Johann Cels, 'Natural disasters and forced population displacements: A human security perspective,' Research Workshop: Human Security and Natural Disasters, Waseda University, Tokyo, February 20, 2012.

"vital"—what they consider to be "of the essence of life" and "crucially important"—varies across individuals and societies. That is why any concept of human security must be dynamic.'[100]

To guide its work, the commission adopted at the outset a working definition of human security—the objective of human security is to protect the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive threats in a way that is consistent with long-term human fulfilment.[101] As is easy to see, it is not a definition of human security but rather clarifies the objective. This definition makes human security a black box; we know what the objective of x is, but not what x is. The commission's working definition of the concept presented in its report differed slightly: 'to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment.'[102]

Dignity was a value central to Obuchi and would eventually secure a place in the human security discourse.[103] While the concept of dignity appears 25 times in the CHS's report, the specific phrase 'freedom to live in dignity,' which was soon in vogue, is not mentioned. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan added it in his report, *In Larger Freedom*.[104]

As noted by Fukushima Akiko, instead of choosing between freedom from fear and freedom from want, the CHS chose to embrace all relevant freedoms.[105] Behind this broad approach lingered an unwillingness to

---

100 Commission of Human Security, *Human Security Now* (New York: Commission of Human Security 2003), p. 4.

101 Commission on Human Security, 'Report on the Second Meeting of the Commission on Human Security,' December 16–17, 2001.

102 Commission of Human Security, *Human Security Now*, p. 4.

103 Edström, 'Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō and Human Security'.

104 Kofi A. Annan, *In Larger Freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all.* Report of the Secretary-General (New York: United Nations, 2005).

105 Akiko Fukushima, 'Human Security and Japanese Foreign Policy,' in *Human Security in East Asia.* International Conference on Human Security in East Asia, June 16–17, 2003, Seoul, Republic of Korea (Seoul: Korean National Commission for UNESCO and Ilmin International Relations Institute of Korea University, 2004), p. 127.

deviate from the approach so far taken by ardent proponents of human security on how the work should proceed, which had enabled them to gradually secure its adoption in the international security arena. Furthermore, limiting the scope of the human security agenda would have directly contradicted the directives, since the third task of the CHS was to promote public understanding, engagement, and support for human security.

The leading ODA researcher Ōkuma Hiroshi characterized the commission's working definition as an *ōburoshiki* concept, a highly comprehensive concept that contains everything—that is, it contains nothing.[106] The problem with the definition was that it was so evasive that it had to be explicated in the next breath: 'Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms—freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.'[107] This extension stresses that maintaining human security should reinforce human dignity and aim to develop the individuals' and communities' capabilities to act on their own behalf. An empowerment interpretation was added to the protection aspect of human security, emphasizing individuals' ability to protect themselves from threats and conflicts and to respond to problems.[108]

While choosing an *ōburoshiki* definition made the commission's work easier, it also became one reason the CHS's report did not have the impact the Japanese government certainly intended, as it alienated countries that had the potential to be key partners in the human security endeavor. Having surveyed the Japanese and Canadian experiences of furthering

106 Ōkuma Hiroshi, in Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 19.

107 Commission of Human Security, *Human Security Now*, p. 4.

108 Elena Atanassova-Cornelis, 'Defining and Implementing Human Security: The Case of Japan,' in *Human Security on Foreign Policy Agendas. Changes, Concepts and Cases,* edited by Tobias Debiel and Sascha Werthes (Duisburg-Essen: Institute for Development and Peace, 2006).

the cause of human security, Bosold and Wertes (2005) noted: '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.'[109] According to them, the report was marginalized as a result of the ongoing war on terror and the unwillingness of key international actors to work multilaterally. The year after the CHS's report was published, Astri Suhrke characterized human security as a 'stalled initiative' that might still attract attention in academic circles but had lost its attraction for policymakers.[110]

In an *Asahi Shimbun* interview shortly before the final meeting of the CHS in February 2003, Ogata was asked if she thought the report to be issued would serve as a guideline for Japan and the international community. She responded: 'If so, Japan must do something. After all, it was Japan that created the Commission and has backed it. […] It is up to Japan to promote this idea. I am hoping that perhaps Japan is finally onto something that will put it at the vanguard of the international community.'[111]

Ogata was not only a leading representative of Japan's foreign policy elite but also a member of the upper echelon of Japanese society. Her answer reflected the dream that has plagued and haunted Japan's political leadership ever since the early Meiji period—Japan as *ittōkoku*, 'a first-class country.' The disappointment sensed in her statement can also be a reflection of the fact that the report that she was about to present was 'suggestive rather than comprehensive,' serving as 'a catalyst for further thinking and practical applications.'[112] The CHS had 'had to restrain its

---

109 David Bosold and Sascha Wertes, 'Human Security in Practice: Canadian and Japanese Experiences,' *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft/International Politics and Society,* no. 1 (2005), p. 97.

110 Astri Suhrke, 'A Stalled Initiative,' *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004).

111 'Ogata Sadakosan ni kiku: "Kokka" koe anzen hoshō e' [Interview of Mrs Sadako Ogata: Towards security beyond 'the state'], *Asahi Shimbun*, February 20, 2003.

112 Sadako Ogata and Johan Cels, 'Human Security: Protecting and Empowering People,' *Global Governance* 9 (2003), p. 273.

exercise for reasons of time and expertise.' Later, she hoped 'that the thrust of our message will stimulate interest and gain support to be followed with further exploration.'[113]

The CHS states in its report that '[w]hile many governments recognize the importance of human security, special mention must go to the Japanese.'[114] Nevertheless, if one scrutinizes the report, Japan or the Japanese government are hardly mentioned at all. When gratitude is expressed in the report's foreword to 'the active engagement and commitment to human security of successive prime ministers of Japan: Keizo Obuchi, Yoshiro Mori and Junichiro Koizumi,'[115] this verges on being platitudinous. Apart from the obvious mention that the CHS was created at the initiative of the Japanese government, received financial support from it, and held meetings in Tokyo, Japan figures more or less only when the TFHS and a grant for bilateral grants for human security purposes are mentioned as examples of resources targeted at human security.[116]

One party that did not waver in its support of the CHS was the Japanese government. In its response to the CHS's report, MOFA stated that 'Japan intends to strengthen efforts with the aim of spreading the concept of human security throughout the world based on these recommendations.'[117] The Japanese government supported the commission after its establishment, both financially and operationally, and increased the advancement of the human security idea.[118]

---

113 Sadako Ogata, 'Empowering People for Human Security,' Payne Lecture, Stanford University, May 28, 2003, p. 8, http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/newsandevents/ payne.html (accessed August 24, 2005).

114 Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, p. 155.

115 Ibid., p. v.

116 Ibid., p. 142.

117 MOFA, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2003* (Tokyo: Urban Connections, 2003), p. 185.

118 Minami Hiroshi, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō to Nihon gaikō' [Human security and Japanese foreign policy], *Kokusai mondai*, no. 530 (2004), pp. 46–47.

In a comment included in her speech in the United Nations General Assembly in September 2003, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko stated that 'Japan will continue to work for the realization of the recommendations made in the Report by the Commission on Human Security together with the United Nations, other countries and NGOs, through diplomatic measures, first and foremost ODA.'[119] Once again, it was ODA that was in the foreground when measures to be applied were specified; once again, Japan's UN centrism was at play, with the UN mentioned as a partner in this endeavor before other countries and NGOs. But it might have been partly a matter of courtesy: after all, Kawaguchi's speech was delivered in the UN, the formal employer of the CHS.

With the presentation of the final report of the CHS, the end of the tunnel of the first stage of establishing human security on the international security agenda was reached. But the seasoned Ogata stressed that the work of the CHS was 'no more than a beginning.'[120] The groundwork was done; the rest was work that should commence. The hint of disappointment revealed by her answer to the journalist's question is an indication that she sensed that Japan might perhaps not live up to the leadership ambitions that she ascribed to Japan, and which had been an intrinsic element of Obuchi's and Mori's thinking.

The CHS concluded its activities on May 31, 2003. The Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS) was established within the UN to continue disseminating the commission's work. While the CHS exists only in historical annals, it kept an important place in Japan's human security rhetoric.[121] During a symposium on human security in Tokyo in July 2010, organized by MOFA, the UN, and Waseda University, I witnessed Ogata Sadako as the star speaker among the international eminences

---

119 'Statement by H.E. Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister For Foreign Affairs of Japan at the Fifty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations,' September 23, 2003.

120 Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, p. iv.

121 Nasukawa Toshiyuki, '"Ningen no anzen hoshō" no kiseki to tenkai: Nihon gaikō o chūshin to shite' [The history and development of 'human security' in Japanese foreign policy], PhD dissertation, Waseda University, 2007, p. 201.

participating. It was quite striking to me that when she was presented as the co-chair of the CHS, the commission still seemed alive and kicking, seven years after it ceased to exist.[122]

For the Japanese government, the establishment of the CHS was a way to gain recognition for its efforts to promote human security and to exert leadership on an issue that was high on the international political agenda. Given this ambition, the modest attention to Japanese efforts in the report must have been a disappointment to the Japanese government. But what could it do? There was no reason to give up altogether, however. In its official reaction to the report, MOFA kept a stiff upper lip and stated that 'Japan intends to strengthen efforts with the aim of spreading the concept of human security throughout the world based on these recommendations.'[123]

The UN Trust Fund for Human Security

An agency established to implement Japan's human security ambitions was the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS). The trust fund was established by the UN Secretariat and the Japanese government, with funding from the Japanese government. Similar to the CHS, it was an international undertaking, symbolized by the fact that both were placed under the UN's aegis. While the CHS was established as a planning and policymaking body, the UNTFHS was established as a body for implementing policies. Since the CHS was created in 2001 and the UNTFHS had been put in place already in March 1999, the order in which the two new bodies were established might be seen as unconventional in that the body created to implement policies was established before the body that was to come up with the proposals, but it can be interpreted as a reflection of the Obuchi-inspired pragmatic way that Japan followed in its promotion of the new security idea.[124]

---

122 Edström, *Japan and Human Security,* p. 32.

123 Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now,* p. 185.

124 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 257.

A member of Obuchi's brain trust, Takemi Keizō, described the UNTFHS in the initial stage as 'a very small fund.'[125] It was an apt description. Japan's initial donation was modest, ¥500 million (US$4.2 million). These financial means dwarfed in comparison with both Japan's ODA budget, which made Japan the world's No. 1, and its financial support for countries affected by the Asian financial crises, which amounted to US$30 billion.[126] It is likely the Japanese government saw the rather modest initial financial allocation to the trust fund as seed money.[127] While the trust fund was a Japanese initiative, it was planned from the start to be an international undertaking under the UN aegis. However, the Japanese government's idea that the trust fund's activities would also be financed by other countries becoming sponsors proved to be utopian. Maybe the trust fund's meager resources began to be seen as embarrassing for its creator, Japan. After all, Obuchi headed a government responsible for the world's largest ODA budget. It was therefore not surprising that Obuchi's successor, Mori Yoshirō, rectified the awkward financial situation with generous donations from Japan, thereby making the UNTFHS the largest UN trust fund.[128]

During a visit to Japan in 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan highlighted his host's effort in the pursuit of human security: 'Prime Minister Obuchi himself has shown an extraordinary commitment to the idea and has established a Human Security Fund. If there were such a thing as a "human security council", Japan would undoubtedly have a lifetime seat.'[129]

When Obuchi proposed a trust fund, he aimed to create a body enabling international organizations to provide support 'in a flexible and timely

125 Shozawa Hitoshi et al., 'Zadankai: Hyūman sekyuriti kara miru kokusai shien' [Roundtable discussion: International assistance from a human security viewpoint], *Mita hyōron* 2006, Nos. 8–9.

126 Sanae Suzuki, 'East Asian Cooperation through Conference Diplomacy: Institutional Aspects of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Framework,' APEC Study Center, Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO, *Working Paper* 03/04, no. 7 (2004), p. 14.

127 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 157.

128 MOFA, *The Trust Fund for Human Security* (Tokyo: MOFA, 2002), p. 7.

129 Kofi Annan, 'Japan's World Role in the Twenty-first Century,' United Nations, Press Release, SG/SM/7209, UNU/192, November 10, 1999.

manner.' As to the UNTFHS, its activities began even before the CHS had presented its report, and some projects were substantial in a local context. The UNTFHS helped fill the gap between humanitarian and development assistance in countries and regions where the people's insecurities are most critical and pervasive, such as least developed countries and countries in conflict. Programs typically focused on the least developed countries and helped fill the gap between humanitarian and development assistance.[130] Thus, Ogata's influence was considerable in this preparatory stage, when policies and practices had not yet been established. Obuchi's intention that the trust fund would pursue activities in Asia was not followed when the UNTFHS was established as a part of the UN machinery; its scope was much broader, albeit with an Asian slant. Summarizing activities until June 2003, US$84 million had been allocated to 21 projects in Asia, 11 in Africa, 2 in Latin America, 3 in the Caribbean, 6 in Oceania, 10 in Kosovo, and 8 in other regions.[131]

A significant shift in Japan's foreign policy affected its approach to managing the UNTFHS, as the pursuit of national interests was deemed legitimate. That Japan had national interests was a sensitive idea in Japanese politics and hardly ever raised during the Cold War period.[132] A shift occurred after the millennium shift. The 21st Century Commission established by Obuchi stressed the importance of ODA as a means of serving Japan's 'enlightened national interest,' *hirakareta kokueki*.[133] The explicit reference to national interest can be interpreted both as an expression of increasing assertiveness on the part of Japanese decision-makers and as a response to concerns among Japanese taxpayers about the use of tax money for ODA amid rising fiscal deficits and debt.

---

130 Oscar Gómez and Chika Saito, 'Implementing Human Security: Japanese perspective through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security,' in *Mainstreaming Human Security: Asian Perspectives,* edited by Chantana Banpasirichote, Philippe Doneys, Mike Hayes and Chandan Sengupta (Bangkok: Chula Global Network, 2012), p. 2.

131 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* p.158.

132 Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine,* passim.

133 Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century, *The Frontier Within: Individual Empowerment and Better Governance in the New Millennium* (Tokyo: Office for the Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century, Cabinet Secretariat, 2000), p. 148.

The Task Force on Foreign Relations, headed by the former MOFA bureaucrat Okamoto Yukio, was tasked with formulating guidelines for Japan's external relations. The Task Force joined the 21st Century Commission and formulated what became a lodestar for Japanese politics: 'For Japan's foreign policy in its development from now, Japan must formulate clear strategies as a state, which have been lacking so far. The basis of all strategy is "national interest." Without a debate on the national interests, it is impossible to set a course for the nation.' The Task Force argued that Japanese ODA should be directly linked to Japanese national interests, with ODA classified into: (1) ODA directly related to national interests; and (2) ODA which Japan should shoulder as a member of the international community. ODA was a means of helping the poor and also a political tool to stabilize Japan's international environment and to contribute to the political stability of East Asian countries, thereby enhancing Japan's safety.[134]

In a 2004 opinion piece, Director-General Furuta Hajime of MOFA's Economic Cooperation Bureau gave voice to what had become a central aspect of Japanese politics, let alone foreign policy. He linked the contribution to global human security with Japan's own national interest: 'Japan has been benefiting from global interdependence as its acquisition of resources, energy, and food depends on imports from outside. Also, several Japanese businesses have gone overseas to reap profit from international trade. The contribution to the stability and development of developing nations through ODA can secure for Japan not only the status of an honoured member of the international community, but also national safety and prosperity. It is, thus, an indispensable investment in order to advance the interest of the Japanese people.'[135] The volte-face in a few years of the once-controversial concept of national interest was striking and vindicated a new-won pride and self-consciousness among the Japanese.

---

134 Task Force on Foreign Relations for the Prime Minister, 'Basic Strategies for Japan's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: New Era, New Vision, New Diplomacy,' November 28, 2000.

135 Furuta Hajime, 'Gaikō senryaku toshite no keizai kyōryoku: Nihon no ODA wa nani wo mezashite iru no ka' [Economic cooperation as a diplomatic strategy, what is Japan's ODA aimed at], *Gaikō fōramu* 17, no. 10 (2004), p. 29.

The Drive for Human Security Petering Out

Enter Koizumi Junichirō

When Mori left as prime minister, the shift in the man at the top spot of politics could not have been greater. Mori was one of Japan's most unpopular prime ministers ever, while his successor, Koizumi Junichirō, came to power riding on popular support. His election triggered a 'Koizumi boom' with an unprecedented 86.3 percent support rate. His political style differed from his predecessors. He took decisions based on his own political ideas and judgment of the political situation.[136] Initially, Koizumi followed the human security track laid down by Obuchi and Mori. In a message to the first meeting of the CHS on June 9, 2001, Koizumi stressed that 'Japan regards "human security" as an important viewpoint and perspective of foreign policy […]. We are determined to continue these efforts.'[137]

Not long after, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 occurred, often denoted as 9/11. As a politician, Koizumi was a doer. His decision-making style made a distinct impact on how he handled the repercussions of 9/11. In the prevailing situation with an urgent need to demonstrate loyalty to the United States, he modified policies to align with post-9/11 priorities. He took quick political action and engaged in a flurry of activities to avoid repeating Japan's reputational trauma that the Gulf War had created a decade before. Against domestic opposition, he strengthened Japan's commitment to the U.S. campaign against terrorism and deployed Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (SDF) supply ships to the Indian Ocean for logistical support.

---

136 Ōtake Hideo, *Koizumi Junichirō—Popyurizumu no kenkyū: Sono senryaku to shuhō* [Koizumi Junichirō. A Study of Populism: Its Strategy and Methods] (Tokyo: Tōyō shimpōsha, 2006), p. 157.

137 'Ningen no anzen hoshō iinkai daiikkai kaigō ni muketa Koizumi Junichirō Nihonkoku naikaku sōridaijin no messēji' [Message from Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō on the occasion of the first meeting of the Commission on Human Security], June 9, 2001.

Japan's participation in UNPKOs and peacebuilding became important elements of Koizumi's foreign policy. He adopted the concept of peacebuilding under the names of 'consolidation of peace' and 'state-building.'[138] In situations where peace-building was a matter of life and death for ordinary people trapped in internal conflicts, Japan had the material clout to assist.[139] Koizumi's message to the international symposium convening before a meeting of the CHS in Tokyo, three months after 9/11, 'Human Security and Terrorism - Diversifying Threats under Globalization - From Afghanistan to the Future of the World,' meant a turning point in Japan's pursuit of human security. He said:

> Terrorism is an activity that should never be tolerated, regardless of motives, since it threatens the survival, livelihood and dignity of innocent citizens with heinous violence and killings. At the same time, it is necessary to take a closer look at the danger that conflicts, poverty and other factors create hotbeds for terrorism. To eradicate terrorism, it is necessary to tackle not only terrorism itself but also other diverse threats to individuals. This means that we have to build and sustain a society where individual human beings can realize their potential. This is what 'human security' thinking aims at, and which Japan attaches importance to.[140]

Japanese policymakers recognized that the problems encountered were increasingly transnational: environmental catastrophes that spill across national borders, refugee problems with wide geographical consequences, and pandemics that spread to all corners of the globe.[141] Nonetheless, with the overriding priority that fighting terrorism had after 9/11, the amalgamation of human security and the fight against terrorism

---

138 Tadashi Iwami, 'Understanding Japan's Peacebuilding in Concept and Practice,' *East Asia* 33, no. 2 (2016), p. 112.

139 Lam Peng Er, 'Peace-Building as a New Pillar in Japan's Foreign Policy,' in *Security and Development in Asia. New Threats and Challenges in the Post-Postwar Era,* edited by Bert Edström (Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2011), p. 54.

140 Koizumi Junichirō, '"Ningen no anzen hoshō kokusai shimpojiumu" ni okeru Koizumi sōridaijin aisatsu' [Address by Prime Minister Koizumi at 'The International Symposium on Human Security'], December 15, 2001.

141 David Leheny, 'Terrorism, Law Enforcement, and Foreign Policy: Evaluating Japan's Counterterrorism Assistance Initiatives,' Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, *Asia Program Special Report* 128 (2005), p. 20.

made a levelling-down of the former inevitable, given that the latter was at the top of Koizumi's agenda. The downgrading of human security was confirmed in his policy speeches. He did not bring up human security until January 2003, when he said: 'ODA will be extended strategically with a priority on human security areas, including stability and growth in Asia, post-conflict consolidation of peace, and the environment.'[142] How this was implemented was seen when JICA assumed a new daunting task, peacebuilding. When Koizumi was appointed, JICA had just issued a report, 'Research Study on Peacebuilding: Towards the Achievement of Human Security' (2001), which described peacebuilding as 'seamless processes of reducing the risk of conflicts erupting, preventing widespread implications if a conflict erupts, recovering from the damage caused by the conflict, and leading a troubled region to sustainable development for ensuring human security.'[143]

The Japanese constitution's famous peace clause, Article 9, had prevented Japan from participating in the Australian-led multinational peace-keeping task force, the International Force East Timor mission (INTERFET), dispatched to restore peace and security in East Timor (1999–2000). This changed with Koizumi. In hindsight, INTERFET is described as Japan's first test of its human security policy.[144] According to him, the significance of human security, consolidation of peace, and the preamble of the constitution justified the SDF dispatch for post-conflict peace operations, including East Timor.[145]

Whereas human security comprised 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want,' the preamble of the constitution, as pointed out above,

142 Koizumi Junichiro, 'General Policy Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the 156th Session of the Diet,' January 31, 2003.

143 JICA, *Jigyō senryaku chōsa kenkyū. Heiwakōchiku: Ningen no anzen hoshō ni mukete* [Research study on project strategy. Peacebuilding: Towards the achievement of human security] (2001), p. i.

144 Gen Kikkawa, 'East Timor and Japan: Change and development of Japan's security policy and the road to East Timor,' *Japanese Studies* 27, no. 3 (2007), p. 248.

145 Koizumi Junichirō, statement in the Lower House, January 19, 2004, quoted in Daisuke Akimoto, 'Negative Pacifism' and 'Positive Pacifism': Japan's Changing Security Identity and Implications for International Peace and Security,' PhD diss. University of Western Sydney, 2011, p. 179.

declares that 'all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.' In other words, on this point, the concept of human security and the preamble are identical. The non-military nature of the concept of human security suited Japan's foreign policy. Therefore, the justification for dispatching the SDF to UNPKO in East Timor was based on both the constitution's preamble and the concept of human security.[146] It can be seen as a case of Japan offering its niche expertise in its desire to take the lead in region building.[147]

The break with Japan's previous policy that the SDF's overseas dispatch meant is indicated by how soon-to-be JICA President, Ogata Sadako, viewed the role of the military: 'Since Japan does not engage in military actions, when it comes to making human contributions, the first area is development. However, since the 1990s, regional conflicts and civil wars have become frequent around the world, and the international community has come to demand that direct threats to human life be addressed. As a result, the Japanese government has come to believe it must play a role beyond its traditional development assistance. This is why the concepts of "human security" and "peacebuilding" were incorporated into Japan's aid policy. I believe this reflected the political will that emerged in response to changes in the international community.'[148]

In a speech in Singapore in January 2002, Koizumi proposed that Japan should broaden its role beyond a one-dimensional emphasis on economics. He wanted his country to engage in conflict prevention in East Timor, Aceh, and Mindanao and work towards the eradication of poverty in these areas.[149] Afghanistan was at the top of the international

146 Ibid., p. 177.

147 Kuniko Ashizawa, 'When Identity Matters: State Identity, Regional Institution-Building, and Japanese Foreign Policy,' *International Studies Review* 10 (2008), p. 586; Soeya, *Nihon no 'midoru pawā' gaikō*, pp. 112f.

148 Ogata Sadako, in Nobayashi Takeshi and Naya Masatsugu, *Kikigaki Ogata Sadako kaikoroku* [An oral history: Ogata Sadako memoirs] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2015), p. 267.

149 'Speech by Prime Minister of Japan, Junichiro Koizumi: Japan and ASEAN in East Asia: A Sincere and Open Partnership,' January 14, 2002.

agenda. In April 2002, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko announced that Japan adopted the peacebuilding concept as the basis for Japan's assistance to Afghanistan. Subsequently, Japan used its ODA to ensure human security for Afghans and to support the country's reconstruction, allocating approximately US$1.24 billion in financial assistance for this purpose from 2001 to 2007, when Japan's peacebuilding concept was consolidated.[150]

Koizumi followed suit when, in a speech in Sydney, he said his government would consider adding the consolidation of peace and nation-building as a pillar in Japanese foreign policy. He characterized peacebuilding as activities that were 'designed to consolidate peace and build basic foundations in countries suffering from such conflicts.'[151]

The UN Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISET) was a post-conflict peacebuilding operation that was based on new diplomatic concepts such as 'human security' and 'consolidation of peace.' The concept of human security was also consistent with the pacifism enshrined in the preamble of the constitution, and it facilitated Japan's participation in peace operations in East Timor. The operation comprised nation-building by an engineering unit of 1,607 SDF troops, across 120 projects: road, bridge, and infrastructure maintenance and repair; land levelling for elementary schools; and construction of waste disposal facilities. The UNMISET mission was led by a Japanese, Hasegawa Sukehiro, who was the UN secretary-general's special representative. Based on his experience in East Timor, Hasegawa stressed the significance of the concept of human security in post-conflict peacebuilding.[152] UNMISET continued until June 2004. The success story it became for Japan whetted the Japanese

150 Iwami, 'Understanding Japan's Peacebuilding in Concept and Practice,' p. 122.

151 'Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi: Japan and Australia toward a Creative Partnership at the Asia Society Dinner,' May 1, 2002.

152 Hasegawa Sukehiro, 'Heiwa kōchiku to kokuren' [Peace-building and the United Nations], in *Kokuren heiwa kōchiku shien no arata na kadai to kaizensaku* [Peace-building: The need for a more integrated and holistic support], edited by Nihon kokusai rengō gakkai (Tokyo: Kokusai shoin, 2007).

government's appetite for similar operations, and by September 2010, a total of 13 UNPKOs involving Japan had been initiated.[153]

Based on its institutional memories from the PKOs dispatched to Cambodia and East Timor, the SDF possessed the professionalism, expertise, and enthusiasm to participate in similar endeavors. In 2007, the Defence Agency became the Ministry of Defence, and international peace cooperation was designated as the SDF's primary mission. According to Lam, this move was highly significant for the SDF because its primary role was no longer just to defend the Japanese home islands and function as an auxiliary provider of logistical support to the U.S. military in 'areas surrounding Japan,' but also participate in international peace cooperation in its own right.[154]

The 2003 ODA Charter

In parallel with Japan's activities at the UN, important developments occurred in Japan. As I pointed out in my 2011 report, the report of Obuchi's 21st Century Commission indicates that human security would occupy an important place in Japan's foreign policy: 'In the period ahead, even greater energy should be devoted to global issues relating to human security, such as the environment, anti-personnel mines, drugs, earthquakes, refugees, population, food, medical care and AIDS, and these areas should become established as spheres of international activity by Japan.'[155] However, soon afterwards, a clear shift can be observed in how policy-planning and policymaking commissions addressed human security. Neither the Advisory Group on International Cooperation for Peace nor the Task Force on Foreign Relations for the Prime Minister brought up the human security concept in their reports.[156] The two reports mentioned above indicated that

153 Hiromi Nagata Fujishige, Yuji Uesugi, Tomoaki Honda, *Japan's Peacekeeping at a Crossroads. Taking a Robust Stance or Remaining Hesitant?* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), pp. 189–195.

154 Lam, 'Peace-Building as a New Pillar in Japan's Foreign Policy,' p. 78.

155 Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century, 2000, p. 160.

156 MOFA, Executive Summary of the Report of the Advisory Group on International Cooperation for Peace, December 18, 2002; Task Force on Foreign Relations for the Prime Minister, 'Basic Strategies for Japan's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: New Era, New Vision, New Diplomacy,' November 28, 2002.

the days when human security was seen as a key concept of foreign policy were probably over. This was a clear indication that human security as a 'pillar' of foreign policy was in for a revision, despite the fact that it had been a high-profile idea on the political agenda of the two prime ministers immediately preceding the incumbent Koizumi. This monumental change broke through with the 2003 ODA Charter.

In its pursuit of human security, Japan, like other countries, adopted a niche policy, concentrating resources in specific areas, rather than trying to cover foreign policy as a whole.[157] Continuing the tradition of Japan's chequebook diplomacy, and given Japan's newly won status as the world's No. 1 donor, it was natural for Japanese policymakers and MOFA officials to see ODA as the key instrument in the pursuit of human security.[158]

So far, so good. In her speech on the occasion of the meeting of the International Symposium on Human Security in Tokyo in February 2003, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko was noticeably pleased when she declared: 'Japan's ODA has been playing an effective and important role in promoting human security. The government has decided to greatly expand its conventional grant assistance for grassroots projects by offering "grassroots/human security grant aid", in keeping with the human security concept. Through its establishment of the Trust Fund for Human Security in the United Nations in March 1999, Japan has continued to offer concrete assistance, giving an orientation to the activities of international organizations that is based on the concept of human security.'[159]

---

157 Haruko Satoh and Carmina Yu Y Untalan, 'Japan's Human Security and Peacebuilding Diplomacy: Middle Power by Any Other Name,' in *The Niche Diplomacy of Asian Middle Powers,* edited by Brendan M. Howe (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).

158 Minami Hiroshi, Yuge Akiko, Yamauchi Masayuki, and Waki Yūzō, 'Nihon gaikō no kidōryoku to shite: Naze ningen no anzen hoshō na no ka' [The mobilizing power of Japan's diplomacy: Why do we need human security?], *Gaikō fōramu* 16, no. 12 (2003), pp. 28–31.

159 'Kawaguchi gaimudaijin aisatsu, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō shimpojiumu: Kokusai shakai ga samazama na kyōi ni chokumen suru jidai ni okeru sono yakuwari' [Address by Foreign Minister Kawaguchi at the International Symposium on Human Security: 'Human Security: Its role in an era of various threats to international community'], February 25, 2003.

Three significant steps were taken in 2003. After the CHS had delivered its report, the Japanese government announced that it would heed it. The policy that Obuchi had initiated combined the pursuit of human security with the pride of Japan's foreign policy of the 1970s and 1980s, chequebook diplomacy. The policy change can be seen as a move to counter Japan's image of excelling in 'faceless' [*kao ga mienai*] aid, just gushing out money in its ODA activities.[160]

The 2003 ODA Charter introduced a reform of Japan's 1992 ODA Charter. The ODA reform continued on a new track, with aid motivated by human security and grassroots assistance, which made Japan very visible in the field, as an experienced Japanese diplomat reported.[161] The charter established that the guiding principle underpinning Japan's development cooperation is human security. It is no exaggeration to say that the 2003 ODA Charter was immersed in the CHS's report's thinking. It was a matter of course. Ogata Sadako was appointed JICA President, which was seen as a guarantee that Japan would remain a noted actor in human security, also internationally. JICA was also reorganized as an independent administrative institution through a merger with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, itself the result of a 1999 merger of the Japan Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund.

Given the central position given to human security, it is notable that the concept surfaces only once in the 2003 ODA Charter but, then, in an impressively compact passage: 'In order to address direct threats to individuals such as conflicts, disasters, infectious diseases, it is important not only to consider the global, regional, and national perspectives, but also to consider the perspective of human security, which focuses on individuals. Accordingly, Japan will implement ODA to strengthen local communities' capacity through human resource development. To ensure that human dignity is maintained at all stages, from the conflict stage to the reconstruction and development stages, Japan will extend assistance

160 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 174.

161 Kawatō Akio, *Gaikōkan no shigoto* [The work of a diplomat] (Tokyo: Sōshisha, 2005), p. 192.

for the protection and empowerment of individuals.'[162]

It should be noted that alongside humanitarian goals, the charter made clear that the purpose was to ensure Japan's own security and prosperity. 'Japan's ODA policy had goals at two levels, both of them strategically oriented. The international goals were to promote human security and democracy and to discourage militarization; the national goals were to promote Japan's prosperity and security. Japan's foreign aid monies served national and international interests.'[163]

According to the 2003 ODA Charter, human security was a basic policy [*kihon hōshin*] of Japan's ODA policy. Given that human security was declared central, it is instructive to examine what was said about its role after the policy change. In order of appearance, the five basic policies of the revised ODA policy were: (1) Supporting self-help efforts of developing countries; (2) the perspective of 'human security'; (3) assurance of fairness; (4) utilization of Japan's experience and expertise; and (5) partnership and collaboration with the international community.[164] Thus, while human security was a basic policy of Japan's ODA policy, it was not the pre-eminent one, as it was listed as No. 2, after self-help. Moreover, the Obuchi-Mori line on human security was abandoned, and with it, ceased to be the top priority of Japan's foreign policy. That this was the case was admitted by Ogata, who described human security as an underpinning of Japan's foreign policy.[165]

---

162 MOFA, 'Seifu kaihatsu enjo taikō' [2003 ODA Charter], August 29, 2003.

163 Purnendra Jain, 'National Interest and Japan's Foreign Aid Policy,' *Kokusai mondai,* no. 637 (2014).

164 MOFA, 'Seifu kaihatsu enjo taikō' [2003 ODA Charter] (August 29, 2003).

165 Ogata Sadako, 'Ningen no anzenhoshō to nanmin shien' [Human security and refugee assistance]. In *Oraru hisutorī: Nihon to Kokuren no 50 nen,* edited by Akashi Yasushi et al (Tokyo: Mineruvā shobō, 2008), p. 52.

Koizumi and Japan's Drive for a Permanent Seat in the UN Security Council

A decade after Japan's foreign policy suffered a resounding setback during the Gulf War, it had regained confidence and launched a campaign to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Japan had long sought recognition and a position of influence in the UN, as it was the second-largest donor after the United States.[166] Behind the quest for membership lay Japan's desire for political status and an end to its symbolic designation as a former enemy in the United Nations Charter.[167] Writing as early as 1980, Ogata Sadako, who had served at the UN, saw no reason to hide that Japan's financial contribution was the key reason why Japan should be a permanent member of the UN Security Council.[168] However, endless parroting of this argument had not made it more convincing. It led to the criticism that Japan was trying to buy a seat on the Security Council and was unwilling to contribute through policies and ideas as well.[169]

That human security was seen as a powerful foreign policy instrument was revealed when Japan's human security ambitions were combined with its desire to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. When Japan's focus shifted from human security as a key element of foreign policy to making it the central idea of ODA policy, it was natural to make human security inherit the status of ODA as the central element of Japan's campaign for a permanent UN Security Council seat. This idea was launched by Mori at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit, when he declared

166 Toshiya Hoshino and Haruko Satoh, 'Japan and the Emerging Approach to Human Security: A "Tokyo Consensus?" in *New Approaches to Human Security in the Asia-Pacific: China, Japan and Australia,* edited by William T. Tow, David Walton, and Rikki Kersten (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2013), p. 69.

167 Yasuhiro Ueki, 'Japan's UN Diplomacy: Sources of Passivism and Activism,' in *Japan's Foreign Policy after the Cold War: Coping with Change,* edited by Gerald L. Curtis (Armonk, New York, London: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 365.

168 Ogata Sadako, *Kokuren kara no shiten: 'Kokusai shakai to Nihon' o kangaeru* [From the UN viewpoint: Thinking about 'the international system and Japan'] (Tokyo: Asahi ibuningu nyūsusha, 1980), p. 23.

169 Reinhard Drifte, 'Japan's Quest for a Permanent Seat on the Security Council,' *Asia–Pacific Review* 5, no. 2 (1998), p. 100.

that human security was a pillar of Japan's diplomacy and tied Japan's bid to its promotion of human security.[170] Lingering in the background was the legacy of domestic criticism of Japan's foreign policy for its alleged bias toward the United States. UN centrism was consciously introduced to deflect criticism of leaning too one-sidedly toward the United States, which compromised Japan's attempted independent foreign policy.[171] Such thinking was anathema to Koizumi. In the aftermath of 9/11, he sided with the United States. Going all in to prove that Japan was a solid U.S. ally, he did not use Ogata's argument that Japan's financial contribution made it qualified for being a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Thus, Koizumi picked up Mori's idea but broke with Japan's traditional economic argument. He pointed in policy speeches not to Japan's financial contribution to the UN but to its 'participation in reconstruction assistance activities and peacekeeping operations' (policy speech October 12, 2004) and 'record of international contribution to date' (policy speech January 21, 2005). The next step was to bring in human security: 'While striving for a permanent UN Security Council seat, Japan will continue to bring the importance of the [human security] idea to the attention of the international community.'[172]

At the same time, Koizumi made it next to impossible for Japan's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat to pass. He continued his annual visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine, which antagonized Asian countries, not least China, which could veto such a decision. It was an odd way to handle a sensitive issue. Membership needs to be approved

170 Yoshihide Soeya, 'A "Normal" Middle Power: Interpreting Changes in Japanese Security Policy in the 1990s and After,' in *Japan as an 'Normal Country'? A Nation in Search for Its Place in the World,* edited by Yoshihide Soeya, Masayuki Tadokoro, and David A. Welch (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 91.

171 Saitō Shizuo, *Kokusai rengo ron josetsu* [An introduction to the United Nations] (Tokyo: Shin'yūdō, 1977), p. 58. Saitō was Japan's ambassador to the UN 1973–76 and reiterated this standpoint in an interview in the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 27, 1992.

172 Koizumi Junichirō, 162nd Lower House session, January 25, 2005, quoted in Kaoru Kurusu, 'Japan as a Norm Entrepreneur for Human Security,' in *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Foreign Policy,* edited by Mary M. McCarthy (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018), p. 326.

by the permanent members of the Security Council, and, at rock bottom, they had no appetite to limit the powers given to them when the UN was founded, and Japan was included in the 'enemy state clauses' in the UN Charter. In the end, Japan's campaign failed.

As ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary and deputy permanent representative of Japan to the United Nations, Kitaoka Shinichi was involved in Japan's campaign for a permanent UN Security Council seat. He puts the blame for Japan's campaign's failure on Koizumi, who had no interest in the United Nations. He was totally inflexible and did nothing to make the campaign a success (author's interview with Kitaoka Shinichi, October 21, 2025). The reason for Kitaoka's annoyance can be understood from James Przystup's comment: 'Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's Oct. 17 visit to the Yasukuni Shrine effectively put Japan-China relations into a political deep freeze. Meetings on sensitive East China Sea issues were cancelled and prospects for a Japan-China leadership summit before the end of the year went from slim to none.'[173]

What may have been a test balloon by the former UN ambassador Kitaoka to revive the question of a permanent Security Council seat for Japan was a policy paper presenting a vision for Japan's UN policy under the DPJ-led government, which had taken over after the LDP's miserable performance in the 2009 general elections. Kitaoka and a group of Japan's leading intellectuals launched 10 proposals for the new government. They wrote, inter alia, 'Japan should dramatically strengthen its UN diplomacy and continue its efforts to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, while boldly taking the lead in "human security" […] Japan should lead the UN in spreading the idea of "human security," which emphasizes human dignity and support for self-reliance, and should make particular efforts in such fields as the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the rule of law, and respect for human rights.'[174] This was a bold view and reflected that the

173 James J Przystup, 'Yasukuni Stops Everything,' *Comparative Connections* 7, no. 4 (2006), p. 109.

174 Tokyo Foundation, Policy Research Division, 'Japan's Security: 10 Proposals for the Hatoyama Administration,' November 20, 2009.

proposals were launched in November, two months after DPJ's Hatoyama assumed the post of prime minister, when the hopes were high for what the former opposition parties could do after their landslide victory in the 2009 general elections. No response to the proposal was noted, possibly due to Prime Minister Hatoyama's clumsy handling of sensitive political issues, which forced him to leave office after only eight months.[175]

When Japan's campaign for a permanent UN Security Council seat failed, it had repercussions on how Japan's policymakers and officials viewed human security. In 2010, I interviewed one of Japan's leading international law specialists, Yokota Yōzō, about Japan's ambition to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council. He argued that, in a situation in which Japan faced constitutional restrictions on traditional security matters, the pursuit of human security opened the prospect of Japan playing a larger role in international security. Behind Japan's campaign for human security lay its ambition to gain a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. The use of human security as an argument for Japan to play a larger role in international security and at the United Nations reached its heyday during the discussion on UN reform, which peaked in 2004–05. Key players in this latter context were African countries, which together formed a voting bloc of over 50 countries. They were dependent on ODA, and Japan sought ways to increase ODA to African countries. For Japan, it was of no concern if the money went straight into the pockets of leaders. As long as they were satisfied with the increased ODA, it served the Japanese purpose. The African countries informed Japan that they did not oppose Japan's seat on the Security Council but insisted on Africa having a seat as well, with veto rights, a stance Japan supported. When the campaign failed, MOFA's interest in human security decreased.[176]

In my 2010 interview with the ODA expert Ōkuma Hiroshi, he argued Japan's failure in its campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council affected its drive for human security on the international scene. According

175 Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine*, pp. 301ff.

176 Yokota, in Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 51.

to him, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had replaced human security as the key concept of Japan's ODA policy. In fact, Ōkuma went so far as to claim that human security had become a subconcept under the MDGs, which had replaced human security as the attractive concept. The situation was one where Japan aimed at contributing to development and post-conflict building, but no longer under the banner of human security, but the MDGs.[177] The central role of the MDGs could be seen in that the 2010 human security symposium in Tokyo, to which UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon sent a message on video and Ogata Sadako was the star speaker, was titled 'Symposium on Human Security—its history and future: toward achievement of MDGs'.

Human Security No Longer a Central Task for the Post-Koizumi Prime Ministers

As noted above, Koizumi did not see human security as a foreign policy pillar, as did Obuchi and Mori. He focused on 'human security areas, including stability and growth in Asia, post-conflict consolidation of peace, and the environment' as he said in his policy speech in the parliament in January 2003.[178] The policy shift implemented by the 2003 ODA Charter ended the introductory phase of Japan's human security policy and commenced the implementation phase with human security as a matter of ODA.[179] The change had lasting effects, as can be discerned in the prime ministers' policy speeches, which are the most important expression of the government's policy, delivered when parliament begins a new session. The audiences for these speeches are both national and international and present the government's priorities and plans.

In policy speeches delivered by the prime ministers coming after Koizumi, it is evident that Japan's drive for human security has lost steam. Human security was not mentioned by his successor, Abe Shinzō,

177 Ōkuma, in Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, pp. 52f.

178 'General Policy Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the 156th Session of the Diet,' January 31, 2003.

179 Takamasa Akiyama and Takehiko Nakao, 'Japanese ODA: Adapting to the Issues and Challenges of the New Aid Environment,' *FASID Discussion Paper on Development Assistance*, no. 8 (2005), p. 13.

in his policy speeches during his first stint as prime minister, 2006–07. The task of pursuing human security was no longer the prime minister's responsibility; it had been passed to MOFA and JICA. As Daniel Clausen has noted: 'Though the early personal attention of Prime Ministers Obuchi and Mori was essential for beginning the drive to mainstream human security discourse, it seems now that MOFA and JICA have become the *de facto* owners of Japan's initiatives to promote the concept. In this backdrop, it should be noted that while the concept has been given increasingly little political attention, as a bureaucratically-led scholarly movement, the concept continues to grow and become part of an elite foreign policy-making culture.'[180] At the same time, a hint that MOFA had effectively abdicated from its previous ambitions to be a key actor in human security is that only two MOFA officials worked full-time on human security in 2010, and the special human security ambassador was no longer appointed. Whatever Japan was doing in the field was primarily handled by JICA.[181]

Given this development, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) presents an interesting case. When it presented its election platform for the 2009 election, the party outlined a vision for ODA and environmental issues, including climate change, emphasizing transnational cooperation on preserving the environment, halting desertification, ensuring assistance for refugees, eradicating poverty, and protecting against infection. The DPJ also identified human security as 'the most important objective of Japan's international cooperation.'[182] Despite the prominence of human security in the party's election platform, it was hardly referred to in the three DPJ prime ministers' policy speeches. However, Prime Minister Kan Naoto mentioned it in the context of the National Defence Program Guidelines, which 'set forth objectives for security as the defence of Japan as well as contributing towards ensuring world peace and stability and human security.'[183]

---

180 Clausen, 'Japan and Human Security'.

181 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 52.

182 Leif-Eric Easley, Tetsuo Kotani & Aki Mori, 'Electing a New Japanese Security Policy? Examining Foreign Policy Visions within the Democratic Party of Japan,' *Asia Policy*, no. 9 (2010), p. 17.

183 'Policy Speech by Prime Minister Naoto Kan at the 177th Session of the Diet,' January 24, 2011.

When the LDP was back in power in 2012, human security was not in focus for Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, who mentioned it in a few policy speeches. He was proud that 'we have also stood at the fore in advancing efforts to bring about human security, including the active participation of women' (January 24, 2014). In later policy speeches, he said 'we will work with the United States to take on all manner of human security-related issues, including poverty, infectious diseases, and climate change' (January 22, 2016), and claimed that 'Japan will exercise strong leadership in the international community for finding solutions to the full array of issues related to human security, including poverty reduction, health and hygiene, and women's empowerment' (January 22, 2018).

At the same time, the way Japanese representatives raised human security at the United Nations General Assembly was relatively consistent over the years. Coming after Murayama and Hashimoto, Foreign Minister Kōmura Masahiko introduced it in 1999 as a fresh viewpoint on both conflict and poverty, referring to freedom from fear and freedom from want. His successor Kōno Yōhei also did so the following year, referring to it as a concept. Notably, he linked Japan's human security capabilities and experiences to its hope to become a permanent member of the Security Council. After a two-year hiatus, Koizumi's foreign minister, Kawaguchi Yoriko, argued in 2003 that human security was a conceptual framework referring to freedom from fear and freedom from want. In line with transferring human security from foreign policy to ODA policy, Koizumi depicted in 2004 the concept of human security as a matter of development linked to freedom from want, which Foreign Minister Machimura Nobutaka reiterated the following year, as well as Ōshima Kenzō, Japan's permanent representative at the UN, in 2006. Back as foreign minister in 2007, Kōmura again referred to human security as a matter of freedom from fear and freedom from want.

One who was early to discern that human security in Japan's national politics was petering out was Ogata Sadako. Two years after the 2003 ODA Charter was issued, she spoke with a visiting British delegation. She admitted that the Japanese government's pursuit of human security

had not only had its ups and downs but was also a bit of old wine in new bottles. The delegation reported: 'The Japanese are funding international initiatives, e.g., in the UN. Mrs Ogata has explained this as helping to rescue development from the predation of security, but operationally it is presented as something that actually looks very much like the earlier concepts, with a strong emphasis on participation and on a combination of what we would call livelihood promotion and livelihood protection. There remains some uncertainty about what the concept actually means operationally and the extent to which it will actually mean something very different from existing approaches.'[184]

The lineup of prime ministers, who served for only a brief time from 2008, chose to speak at the UNGA. In 2008, Asō Tarō linked human security as a concept 'which Japan had carefully nurtured' and linked to to development and freedom from want; Hatoyama Yukio of the former opposition party, the DPJ, linked human security to African development and the MDGs in 2009, while his party colleague Kan Naoto in 2010 linked human security with development assistance, the MDGs and peacebuilding with a focus on freedom from want. His successor, Noda Yoshihiko, spoke twice at the UNGA. In 2011, his speech was delivered after the Tōhoku triple disaster, and he mentioned human security as something the Japanese had never felt more strongly the significance of promoting. The following year, he was pleased to note what he saw as Japan's leadership role when the UNGA adopted Resolution A/RES/66/290 by consensus in 2012.

While the long-reigning Abe Shinzō mentioned human security in only a few of his many policy speeches, he began to address it more ambitiously in the UN context, raising it in his UNGA speeches in 2013, 2014, and 2015. In 2013, he mentioned Japan's determination to disseminate and implement the concept. The following year, he confidently claimed that Japan had promoted it 'through many years' and that 'there will not be any changes in efforts to fully ensure human security.' As he linked it to

184 Julius Court, Simon Maxwell, David Booth and Karin Christiansen, 'The G8, UK Aid Policies for African Development and Implications for Japan,' ODI Japan Visit Report (June 2005), p. 8.

fighting poverty, human security was seen as freedom from want. He later expanded the scope of human security, defining it as both freedom from fear and freedom from want. While Abe mentioned human security in a 2018 policy speech, it did not figure in his UNGA speeches after 2015.[185]

The downgrading of human security was more extensive than its demotion as described above. The post-Koizumi prime ministers' rhetoric evidences a considerable downgrading of the human security concept that had been hyped in the years around the millennium shift. Its levelling-down is confirmed by a MOFA document. The document is one in the file 'Human Security' dated March 5, 2019, which is a subfile of the file 'Global Issues and ODA' under 'Foreign Policy' on MOFA's homepage. The document presents a concise summary entitled 'Chronology of Activities Related to Human Security by the Japanese Government.'[186] It lists events from 'Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow' in December 1998 and adds ¥4 billion (US$32.79 million) to the UNTFHS in February 2003. According to this document, which was still available on MOFA's homepage in February 2026, the Japanese government took no noteworthy action or pursued any further human security activities after February 2003. It confirms the conclusion in my 2011 report that Obuchi's and Mori's vision, which made human security a pillar of Japan's foreign policy, evaporated with the transformation of this idea to a matter of ODA policy; it was not only the foundation of this vision that went down the drain, but it meant the end of the vision itself.[187]

185 Citations from Sarah Tanke, 'Japan's narrative on human security: international norms, diplomatic identity and recognition,' *Japan Forum* 34, no. 4 (2022), pp. 431–434.

186 MOFA, 'Chronology of Activities Related to Human Security by the Japanese Government' (2019).

187 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 56.

Japan's Post-Koizumi Human Security Activities

Continuing on the UN Track

Yamamoto Tadashi was one of Japan's leading internationalists and the executive director of the Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century. He was the founder and president of the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE) and, as one of Japan's key proponents of human security, he envisaged what had to follow after CHS wound up its work: 'Japan, having promoted the concept in various ways in recent years, now has a special responsibility to put the concept into action in response to the recommendations of the Commission. This, however, raises a major challenge: Japan must move beyond financial contributions and attempt to implement the concept in ways that will necessitate a restructuring of its policies and even a reorientation of the way it deals with the international community.'[188] Was Yamamoto to see the development he hoped for? The first part of his prescription was realized when the long-drawn-out 'lost decade(s)' led to budgetary restrictions. While Japan continued funding the UNTFHS, the amounts allocated to it steadily decreased from the peak year, 2001.[189] Moreover, it is hard to trace the policy restructuring and reorientation that seems to have been Yamamoto's idea.

Obuchi and his team chose the UN as the primary arena for Japan's human security ambitions and a central arena for implementing human security projects. The UN's importance in Japan's human security drive is noticeable in the entry on the CHS in a widely used online dictionary, *Maruchimedia-intānetto jiten* [Dictionary of Multimedia & Internet], in

188 Tadashi Yamamoto, 'Human Security – From Concept to Action: A Challenge for Japan,' in *International Conference on Human Security in East Asia, June 16–17, 2003, Seoul, Republic of Korea. Proceedings* (Seoul: Korean National Commission for UNESCO and Ilmin International Relations Institute of Korea University, 2004), pp. 3f.

189 Kenki Adachi, 'The Resurgence of Human Security in Japan's Foreign Policy,' in *Handbook of Japan's Foreign and Domestic Policies during the Decade of Abe,* edited by Tosh Minohara (Abingdon, Oxon: Amsterdam University Press, 2024), p. 254.

which it is claimed that the secretary-general not only had inspired its establishment, but it was created at his initiative.[190]

The CHS and the UNTFHS were the primary tools for advancing human security. Both were established within the UN system and aimed to strengthen Japanese influence on the international arena. It could be seen as a tangible expression of the revival of Japan's famous UN-centered foreign policy, which Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke declared in 1957, but which was 'relegated to occasionally used rhetoric' soon after its launch.[191] UN Secretaries-General Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-moon supported Japan's efforts to promote human security.

Behind the focus on conceptual differences between Japan and other leading proponents of human security, to which Japanese officials often referred, lurked apprehension about the reactions of countries important to Japan's campaign for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. The idea of human security made some developing countries anxious that it might invite interference in their internal affairs. Recognizing these concerns, the Japanese government focused on the developmental and economic aspects of human security. One example of this was that Japanese representatives intentionally mentioned 'poverty' in their UN speeches whenever they listed threats to human security.[192] The response from members of the non-aligned movement and developing countries was favorable.

By building on and supporting UNDP efforts to establish human security as a key aspect of international security, Japan's human security policy could be seen as an attempt to influence the rules guiding the international community and as a conscious effort to demonstrate that the country had what was said to be necessary for playing a leadership role

---

190 'Ningen no anzen hoshō iikai' [Commission on Human Security], in *Maruchimedia-intānetto jiten* [Dictionary of Multimedia & Internet].

191 Ueki, 'Japan's UN Diplomacy,' p. 349.

192 Satō Yukio, 'Nihon no kokuren gaikō to ningen no anzen hoshō: Kokuren mireniamu samitto e no kiseki' [Japan's UN diplomacy and human security: Track record up to the UN Millennium Summit], *Kokusai mondai,* no. 533 (2004), p. 7.

internationally, namely ideas of its own as to how international relations should be conducted. However, Japan faced an uphill battle in its efforts to mainstream. The first meeting of the Advisory Board for Human Security lamented in 2003: 'While the concept has begun to permeate UN organisations and member states, human security has not yet become a formal "UN word".'[193]

In the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, all UN member states officially recognized the concept of human security, but its definition remained undetermined and was left to the UN General Assembly to discuss.[194] The release of the UN secretary-general's report in April 2010 led to the first formal discussion of human security at the UN General Assembly, and a resolution on human security was adopted. However, it was more about procedural matters, since there was still no agreement among the membership on the notion of human security. Explanations of the position some UN member states presented at the Summit reveal that views on human security differed. Some placed more importance on development, while others were concerned about the use of force and interference in domestic affairs in the name of safeguarding human security. Nonetheless, in the eyes of the Japanese government, the adoption of the resolution marked a milestone in terms of disseminating and developing the notion of human security.[195]

Meanwhile, Japan had not seen any breakthrough for its human security drive. The IR specialist Ōshiba Ryō queried in an overview of Japan's multilateral diplomacy in 2013: 'Has Japan been able to propose any new principles for the international community in the course of its energetic UN diplomacy since the 1990s? On this point, it should be noted that

193 Emma Rothschild, 'Kotoba no jidai—ningen no anzen hoshō no rekishi' [The era of words — the history of human security]. In *21 seiki no ningen no anzen hoshō* [Human security in the 21st century], edited by Tōkai daigaku heiwa senryaku kokusai kenkyūsho (Tokyo: Tōkai daigaku shuppankai, 2006), p. 34.

194 Kazuo Tase, 'Human Security: The Way Forward,' in *Japan as a Peace Enabler: Views from the Next Generation,* edited by Yuki Tatsumi (Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center, 2016), p. 28.

195 Akiko Fukushima, 'The Japanese Approach to Human Security,' Paper for the GR:EEN Case Study Integrity Forum, December 5, 2013.

Japan used the United Nations to promote the concept of human security within the international community. It goes without saying that "human security" was first proposed by the UNDP in its 1994 Human Development Report.'[196]

Questioned UNTFHS in Question

Obuchi had envisaged the UN trust fund as a key tool for Japan's pursuit of human security, but Mori's innovation, the CHS, took this spot. After delivering its report, the CHS was closed down shortly thereafter. Its demise made the UNTFHS replace the CHS as a cause of pride for Japan. In 2004, two noted human security writers opined on the implications of the CHS's closure. Fukushima Akiko described the UNTFHS as 'the main avenue by which the Japanese government translates human security-related ideas into practice,'[197] while Akiyama Nobumasa, continued the hype, claiming the fund was the materialization of Japan's human security efforts.[198]

To counter the claim that the trust fund was an all-Japanese affair, the UNTFHS statutes were revised in 2005. The purpose was to mainstream projects that encompassed a wider range of interconnected regions and areas. Multiple international organizations and NGOs participated with the intention of integrating humanitarian and development assistance by strengthening people's capacity to implement assistance seamlessly during the transitional period between conflict and peace.[199] It was not overly successful, since the UNTFHS did not grow, neither in terms of the number of sponsors nor in the scale of its activities. Yet in its annual report

196 Ōshiba Ryō, 'Takokkan gaikō to takokkanshugi—Kokuren, G8, G20, Buretton Udzu kikan' [Multilateral diplomacy and multilateralism: UN, G8, G20, Bretton Woods institutions], in *Nihon gaikō: kadaihen, daigoken* [Japan's foreign policy: Themes, vol. 5], edited by Ōshiba Ryō (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2013), p. 302.

197 Fukushima, 'Human Security and Japanese Foreign Policy,' p. 148.

198 Nobumasa Akiyama, 'Human Security at the Crossroad: Human Security in the Japanese Foreign Policy Context,' in *Conflict and Human Security: A Search for New Approaches of Peace-building*, edited by Hideaki Shinoda and Ho-Won Jeong, IPSHU English Research Report Series no. 19 (Hiroshima: Hiroshima University, Institute for Peace Science, 2004), p. 262.

199 Fukushima, 'The Japanese Approach to Human Security'.

for 2008, MOFA found that the UNTFHS 'may be considered Japan's main (and purest) contribution to human security.'[200]

In my first report on human security, I identified three main problems with the trust fund's activities up to 2003: (1) funds allocated to the UNTFHS were underutilized; (2) despite the fact that the UNTFHS was a trust fund within the United Nations, the way that resources were allocated to projects was awkward in that it was not the United Nations or some UN body that decided on grants and allocation but Japan and the UN; and (3) no other governments had joined Japan as financial sponsors of the UNTFHS, which was the unequivocal ambition of the Japanese government.[201]

An audit of the UNTFHS by the Internal Audit Division of the UN's Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) was issued in 2010. It enables an assessment of how the problems I had identified had been handled. As to the first problem, underutilization of resources, improvement could be noted. While projects approved by the UNTFHS until February 2003 accounted for a little over 50 per cent of the funds available,[202] the trust fund had spent US$223 million, or 60 per cent of its total income, during the period 1999–2008. Finding the allocation of available funds still too low, the auditors recommended that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) should initiate an evaluation of the UNTFHS. The aim was to determine whether there continued to be a need for a separate trust fund to finance human security activities.[203] The latter verged on being a curiosity but nevertheless hampered the possibility that UNTFHS would become what the Japanese government intended: a vehicle for Japan to have an impact on international human security efforts. It must be seen as a blow to Japanese

200 MOFA, *Seifu kaihatsu enjo (ODA) hakusho: Nihon no keizai kyōryoku* [The ODA White Paper: Japan's economic cooperation] (Tokyo: MOFA, 2009), p. 161.

201 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, pp. 160ff.

202 Fukushima, 'Human Security and Japanese Foreign Policy,' p. 148.

203 United Nations, Office of Internal Oversight Services, Internal Audit Division, 'Management of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security,' Audit Report, Assignment No. AN2009/590/04, p. 4.

ambitions to primarily pursue human security in a UN context.[204]

Regarding the second problem, the audit report recommended streamlining the project approval processes. While the UNTFHS remained a joint UN-Japan project, Tokyo retained the ability to reject projects at its discretion. Apart from the Japanese government, the process involved OCHA/HSU, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Controller's Office, and the Project Review Committee. This slowed the project approval process. When the Guidelines were revised in 2008, the Japanese government no longer reviewed project proposals, but the improvement was marginal, as the government and its agencies were still involved in granting clearance. This was awkward since two other countries, Thailand and Slovenia, had joined Japan as donors; later, Greece was added as a sponsor.[205]

As to the third problem, perceptions among UN members that the UNTFHS remained largely a Japanese project had not changed. From the start, Japan clarified that it intended to influence the use of available funds, and the Japanese government retained the final say over how the UNTFHS's financial resources were used. Behind this arrangement lingered what Ogata Sadako argued was the case, viz. that 'when international institutions are created to serve as fora for multilateral diplomatic negotiations, and further, when these institutions implement programs for multilateral cooperation, questions inevitably arise over how to share the costs for the operational and program expenses of those institutions. From the perspective of the participating countries, this is a question of fiscal contributions to international organizations, and they have a keen interest in whether they can secure a position within those institutions commensurate with their contributions. This is the issue of *burden-sharing* and *power-sharing*.'[206] Paying secured the position within the organization.

---

204 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, pp. 25f.

205 Ibid., p. 28.

206 Sadako Ogata, 'Shifting Power Relations in Multilateral Development Banks,' *The Journal of International Studies* [Institute of International Relations, Sophia University], no. 22 (1989), cited in Oshiba, 'Multilateral diplomacy and multilateralism,' p. 294.

Given the outcome, it must be said that Japan applied Ogata's thinking too rigidly. The decision-making process was devised so that Japan had a de facto veto over how allocations were made. The Japanese government did not seem willing to entrust the UN with deciding how to allocate the funds Japan provided. 'A noteworthy fact,' I wrote in my 2008 report, 'is that the TFHS was, and is, seen not so much as a UN body but a Japanese institution to a large extent.' Other governments saw it the same way, which was why few were willing to join the UNTFHS.

From the Japanese side, it was pointed out that three countries had joined as sponsors. However, their financial contributions were marginal, so Japan's share of the resources allocated to the UNTFHS remained dominant. With Japan unwilling to abandon its right to decide how to use the fund's financial resources, which it viewed as Japanese taxpayers' money, the trust fund's support from other UN member states was limited. Moreover, it gradually emerged that the strategy picked by Japan to secure acceptance for the concept of human security, adopting a general pro-development, vaguely defined definition and approach, resulted in 'a perception that the concept has been poorly operationalized at the UN level, with the result that the UNTFHS has not been a success.'[207]

Attempts at reform efforts were seen. In 2010, I witnessed how Japan's eagerness to keep an eye on how the UNTFHS used the funds was as fresh as ever. Asked about it, MOFA's Ishihara Takashi revealed that changes were in the offing. They were implemented the following year. Opting for an Alexandrian cut in order to address the problem that few other governments had joined Japan as sponsors of the UNTFHS, the trust fund was made multilateral. With Japan no longer deciding how funds should be allocated, it would be easier for Japan to persuade other UN members to become donors. Moreover, since the fund became a multi-donor enterprise, Japan no longer sat on the board screening projects for eligibility. However, another problem was added. With new sponsors, Japan was no longer the sole donor, which should have been

207 Bacon, 'The politics of human security in Japan,' p. 30.

reflected in the decision-making process, but it was not. What was done was in line with traditional Japanese policy. Despite that the problem of missing sponsors had been identified soon after the UNTFHS had been established, the MOFA representative at a meeting in September 2003 of the Advisory Board on Human Security, stated that 'while welcoming the possibility of broadening the funding base of the Trust Fund, [Japan] does not intend to promote such an endeavour at this particular juncture actively.'[208] With such a lack of enthusiasm for recruiting more sponsors, combined with an equally distinctive unwillingness to give up its power position within the trust fund, it is no wonder that activities did not take off in a way worthy of the economic superpower Japan. In my first report on human security, I found it fit to ask: 'Is it simply that Japan, when it comes to the crunch, is not that interested in abstaining from one of the few areas where it plays first fiddle?'[209] Japan's subsequent actions demonstrated that this was the case.

Thus, it could be asked, as the UN auditors did in 2010, whether the reason behind Japan's interest in creating a trust fund for human security, that is, to promote human security, had been realized. The audit report noted the need to determine the impact of the UNTFHS on promoting human security. The report indicated that the UN's Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS) assigned a central role managing the UNTFHS to the Human Security Unit (HSU), established within the United Nations in 2004.[210] The ABHS 'advised the HSU to undertake an evaluation of the UNTFHS two years from that date (at the earliest),' the reason for the slow action being that 'the first projects which used the new guidelines in their formulation only started in 2006/07 and have either just been completed or are expected to be completed within the next couple of years.' The dry comment from the OIOS was that 'there is no need to wait for another two years to carry out this evaluation as UNTFHS has completed its tenth

208 Koichi Haraguchi, Statement. Minutes of the Meeting, Advisory Board on Human Security, September 16–17, 2003.

209 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security, p.* 163.

210 Tanaka, 'Toward a Theory of Human Security,' p. 2.

year with over US$223 million in expenditures.'[211] A reader of the report might be inclined to suspect that the slow action contemplated by the ABHS might be that such an evaluation would show that there was no need for a special body for human security, such as UNTFHS, and that its activities could be taken over by other competent organs in the UN system. However, the question was whether Japan would continue to allocate resources that had so far gone to the UNTFHS amid continuing cuts to Japanese ODA and an 'ODA bashing' seen in Japan in the wake of ODA fatigue.[212]

As noted above, Japan had ambitions to mainstream human security. Tase Kazuo argued in 2016 that Japan had failed. He went as far as claiming that 'most stakeholders, including NGOs and businesses, are not even familiar with the term or concept.'[213] According to him, this setback to Japan's ambitions could be traced to the UNTFHS's declining status. Its structural and operational shortcomings were often attributed to its perception as a fund created through closed-door negotiations between the UN secretary-general and Japan. That it was known as the 'Japan Fund' gave other member states the misimpression that it was not an inclusive endeavor. 'Japan's dominance of the [human security] concept and moreover its management of UNTFHS led to its isolation in the larger UN system. UNTFHS has been suffering from declining financial resources as Japanese contributions to the UN system decline,' resulting in the comment that 'UNTFHS has diminished in both scale and influence.'[214] A setback for Japan was that the term human security was not accepted in the negotiations to redraft the SDGs toward 2030, despite Japan's intensive diplomatic efforts.[215]

Like my 2008 and 2011 reports, Tase paid attention to Japan's disinterest in collaboration: 'Japan's efforts to raise awareness of the human security

211 United Nations, Office of Internal Oversight Services, Internal Audit Division, Audit report, p. 5.

212 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 54.

213 Tase, 'Human Security: The Way Forward,' p. 31.

214 Ibid.

215 Ibid., p. 28.

concept have been limited to persuading friendly nations to endorse Japan's efforts. Tokyo has been unsuccessful in identifying a partner country that could work with Japan to mainstream the concept.'[216] When the Human Security Network was established, Japan did not go along when Canada and Norway suggested Japan should join. Likewise, when Sweden expressed interest in collaborating on preparations for the 2000 Millennium Summit, Japan did not respond, effectively refusing to accept the proposal.

It should be food for thought for the Japanese human security protagonists that the project funding of the UNTFHS, which MOFA in 2009 described as Japan's main (and purest) contribution to human security, was minuscule compared to Japan's ODA. Japan chose to allocate its economic resources earmarked for human security to the UN system, but at the time, these resources were not commensurate with what should be expected of an economic superpower. Japan eventually gave up its *de facto* veto over the UNTFHS's grantmaking, but it was too late to save the trust fund from continuing on a track with relatively modest activity.

In addition, the difficulty in distinguishing UNTFHS projects from regular ODA-funded projects did not square with the idea that the UNTFHS would make Japan the leading voice and actor on human security. Japan's allocations of financial resources to the UNTFHS were comparatively small, and the impact of Japanese projects faded when Japan's impressive ODA was factored in. In hindsight, this ambition would have been almost unavoidable if Obuchi's original idea had materialized, viz., using Japan's sizeable ODA budget as a tool in the Japanese campaign for human security.

Another matter that must have been a concern for the Japanese government was the 2016 announcement that China had established a trust fund within the UN system, the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund, pledging to contribute US$200 million over a ten-year period.

216 Ibid., p. 33.

Similar to the UNTFHS, the Chinese-funded trust fund appears to be largely Chinese, with its steering committee manned by Chinese staff and one UN official.[217] Like the UNTFHS, the trust fund established by China is not well-endowed and, consequently, its activities are limited, which keeps both trust funds out of the limelight. This can be seen reflecting the decline of the United Nations' role, with superpower activities paralyzing the Security Council's ability to act when action is needed.

When Japan's campaign for human security was initiated, it was as a means to become a noted international security actor and to strengthen its international role. The establishment of the new trust funded by China and run in conjunction with the UN must be seen as a move signalling that Japan's choice to prioritize working with the UN through the UNTFHS did not become the effective tool to strengthen Japan's voice and role in international politics, which had been its ambition at the beginning of this endeavor.

Two Over-riding Priorities with Ogata at the Rudder: Refugees and Peacebuilding

Ogata Sadako became JICA President after serving for over 10 years as the UNHCR and became the first President of JICA from outside the government. She had pushed for giving human security a prominent place in the 2003 ODA Charter. Known for her belief in seeing a situation firsthand rather than sitting behind a desk, she went to each site to assess it with her own eyes. Thus, when she attempted to reorganize JICA, one of the principles it was based on was *gembashugi,* an organizational problem-solving approach, which can roughly be translated as 'the hands-on approach' or 'the on-site focus', indicating a promotion of field-oriented activities. The other principles were guaranteeing human safety, effectiveness, efficiency, and speed. JICA documents translated *gembashugi* into English as the 'field-oriented approach,' referring to the delegation of personnel and authority from its Tokyo headquarters to local offices.[218] Previously,

217 United Nations, 'United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund' (2016).

218 Naoki Matsubara, '*Genba-Shugi:* Understanding Through a Hands-On Approach,' in *The Semantics*

the JICA headquarters in Japan led project planning, implementation, and evaluation, but shifted to an on-site focus with *gembashugi*, enabling rapid response to local needs. The authority of JICA's 56 overseas offices worldwide expanded, shifting from the previous approach of 'delegating to overseas offices what they can do' to a field-based approach where the JICA headquarters would support what overseas offices could not do.' As many as 261 staff members, about 20 percent of the total staff, were transferred overseas in 2004 and 2005 alone.[219]

As for human security, one reason why the Japanese government appointed Ogata was that she was seen as eminently well-suited to implement Japanese human security ambitions, which, despite Prime Minister Koizumi's lack of interest, remained a Japanese trademark. As JICA President, Ogata became a spokesperson for Japan's ambition to promote and pursue human security. She said: 'We used to draw a clear line between humanitarian assistance and development aid, but now we have to integrate them. However, there was no framework for such integration. That is when the policy concept of human security emerged.'[220]

The 2004 JICA Reform Plan issued by MOFA directing JICA laid down four guidelines for JICA's development programs: '1) Ensure that projects targeting the "government" level are linked to those targeting the "local communities and people" level; 2) Promote collaboration among projects that have traditionally been conducted separately in specialized fields such as education, health, and agriculture, and address the issues faced by people comprehensively; 3) Expand the success of "points" into "areas", we will collaborate broadly with other donors, developing country governments, local communities, and other stakeholders to contribute to

of Development in Asia. Exploring 'Untranslatable' Ideas Through Japan, edited by Jin Sato and Soyeun Kim (Singapore: Springer, 2024), p. 51.

219 Sachiko G. Kamidohzono, Oscar A. Gómez and Yoichi Mine, 'Embracing Human Security: New Directions of Japan's ODA for the 21st Century,' *JICA-RI Working Paper,* no. 94 (Tokyo: JICA Research Institute, 2015), p. 6.

220 Ogata, in Nobayashi Takeshi and Naya Masatsugu. *Kikigaki Ogata Sadako kaikoroku* [An oral history: Ogata Sadako memoirs]. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2015), pp. 228f.

larger development goals; and 4) Activities at the community level, as well as collaboration with Japanese and local NGOs and local governments, are also important.'[221]

In hindsight, Yanagihara commented: 'While these guidelines did reflect Ogata's concerns and ideas, they did not include any elements specific to human security. Furthermore, when listed in this way, the original connections between them were lost, and they became a checklist of separate items. When used in this way, each item became applicable to a wide range of projects and no longer characterized projects based on the perspective of human security.'[222]

Given JICA President Ogata's image as Japan's foremost supporter of and efficient implementer of human security, Yanagihara's observation is thought-provoking. However, it can be corroborated by a review of JICA's activities, drawing on JICA's Operational Performance Reports, *Gyōmu jissekito hōkokusho,* which are detailed and systematic annual summaries of JICA's activities; that is, JICA activities on the ground, not planned but implemented.[223] In these reports, the number of pages where human security is mentioned when Ogata was JICA president were: 0 (2004), 0 (2005), 3 (2006), 0 (2007), 16 (2008), 9 (2009), 0 (2010), 11 (2011), and 15 (2012) (JICA, 2004–2012). Given the fact that human security was a priority for JICA under Ogata, the concept's initial lacklustre appearance is indeed striking. Even though the frequency of a phrase using a concept does not necessarily indicate its importance, the present JICA President Tanaka Akihiko has pointed out that it does matter.[224]

---

221 Yanagihara Tōru, '"Ningen no anzen hoshō" ni miru Nihon no enjo no tokushoku—Gaimushō/JICA bunshō no rebyū yori'. Nihon no kaihatsu kyōryoku no rekishi: Bakkuguraundo pēpā [Characteristics of Japanese aid as seen in 'human security': From a review of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA documents, 'History of Japan's Development Cooperation' Background Paper], no. 6 (2019), p. 31.

222 Ibid.

223 JICA, *Gyōmu jisseki hōkokusho* [Operational Performance Report] (2004–2025).

224 Akihiko Tanaka, 'Global Perspective: Japan sets human security at core of development aid in complex world,' *The Mainichi,* August 2, 2023.

The above statistics mask the fact that two issue areas soon emerged as prominent under Ogata's leadership. One was the refugee issue, which she made a central concern for JICA. As the head of JICA, she continued the same line she pursued while serving as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (1991–2000), extending UNHCR's reach to internally displaced persons (Kitaoka, 2020). Her priority on refugees was reflected in her aim to establish a conceptual framework for integrating humanitarian and development assistance in activities aimed at protecting refugees and to explore policy concepts that could provide a basis for their mutual integration. Her work was founded on her long experience as the UNHCR: 'Human security is not an abstract concept but a highly practical one that emerged from concrete demands.'[225] Meanwhile, Prime Minister Koizumi identified peacebuilding as a vital task for Japan, and Ogata clarified her stance: 'As the president of JICA, what I am thinking about now is getting involved in peacebuilding work in the latter stages or at the conclusion of an emergency. My idea is for JICA to get involved at an earlier stage and connect the process of peacebuilding to development.'[226]

A niche policy took shape, focusing on areas where Japan had, or was perceived to have, a comparative advantage. Japan's contributions to peacebuilding were predicated upon its economic muscles. Underpinning Japan's concept of peacebuilding was a balance between domestic constraints shaped by pacifist norms and emerging activism responding to international expectations.[227] In the region, Japan was expected to participate in peacebuilding and, while it responded positively, it upheld its pacifist norms and distanced itself from a combat role on the frontline of conflict.[228]

---

225 Ogata Sadako, in Nobayashi and Naya, *Kikigaki Ogata Sadako kaikoroku*, p. 240.

226 Ogata Sadako, *Tenki no kaigai enjo* [Foreign aid at a turning point]. (Tokyo: Nihon hōsō shuppankai, 2005), p. 10.

227 Iwami, 'Understanding Japan's Peacebuilding in Concept and Practice,' p. 113.

228 Ibid., p. 127.

It is worth noting that one manifestation of the link to the UN was Japan complementing its UN peacebuilding operations with financial support from UNTFHS. An early case was the support for the program '100 School Project: Improving the Quality of Primary Education in East Timor' conducted by the UN agency UNICEF.[229] Japan became a 'UN peace-builder' participating in the UN Mission of Support to East Timor (UNMISET) and similar operations. More eye-catching was that a Japanese, Hasegawa Sukehiro, led the UNMISET. At the time, he was the UN secretary-general's special representative.

A move advancing Japan's collaboration with the UN was seen when Japan supported the establishment of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) in 2005 by contributing US$20 million. Its role was to advice and strategize towards the consolidation of peace for the UN.[230] Subsequently, the Japanese diplomat Takasu Yukio served as its chair.

A significant move was when the SDF was entrusted with peacebuilding tasks a decade after they had been mobilized by the Japanese government in the aftermath of the Gulf War. According to Lam, 'the SDF had the professionalism, expertise, and enthusiasm to participate in such endeavors based on its valuable institutional memories in Cambodia and East Timor. Once international peace cooperation has been redefined as a primary mission for the SDF, it will make the necessary organizational, personnel and training, and hardware changes. This move is extremely significant for the SDF because its primary role is no longer just to defend the home islands and function as an auxiliary provider of logistical support to the U.S. military in "areas surrounding Japan," but also participates in international peace cooperation in its own right.'[231] Henceforth, the SDF was an integral part of Japanese peacebuilding missions. The 2010 National Defence Program Guideline referred to human security as one

229 MOFA, *Assistance through the Trust Fund for Human Security for Enhancing Basic Education in Timor-Leste*, December 14, 2004.

230 Lam, 'Peace-Building as a New Pillar in Japan's Foreign Policy,' pp. 72f.

231 Ibid., p. 78.

of the fundamental principles of Japan's national security. The National Security Strategy of December 2013 also referred to human security as one of the national security principles that Japan upholds when tackling global issues. Kurusu Kaoru cautioned that despite the fact that human security is mainly used as a guiding principle in dealing with global issues, its direct connection to the SDF missions has not yet clearly been defined in the wording of such policy papers.[232]

The importance Ogata ascribed to peacebuilding made it natural to mention it in JICA's Performance Operational Report, the annual summary of JICA's activities. Following the 2003 ceasefire agreement in Mindanao, JICA supported the peace process there in 2004. Japan's peaceful assistance to both sides of the conflict continued and resulted in the signing of a historic comprehensive peace agreement in 2014.[233] After a hiatus until 2008, it was regularly included as an important part of JICA's activities.

Ogata's work focusing on refugees and peacebuilding created goodwill for Japan. Writing in 2009, Clausen claims the Japanese commitment to human security could be seen as an assertive bureaucratic strategy by both MOFA and JICA, promoting Japan's contributions to international and regional security without aggravating lingering fears of a revival of Japanese militarism or directly rejecting a future move toward military normalization.[234] He quotes Ikeda Jōsuke, who argues that Japanese human security discourse should similarly be conceptualized as a bureaucratically-led initiative. The production of human security discourse could be seen as an 'assembly line' process in which foreign ideas are first imported, and relevant parts are then collected, put together, and assembled in ways that fit particularly Japanese needs.[235]

---

232 Kurusu, 'Does the Concept of Human Security Generate Additional Value?' p. 9.

233 Morohashi Kumiko, 'Japan's International Cooperation for ASEAN: Past and Present,' Public Relations Office, Government of Japan (2023).

234 Clausen, 'Japan and Human Security'.

235 Josuke Ikeda, 'Creating Human Security Discourse and the Role of Academic-Policy Complex: International Relations as "Japanese Social Science"?' *Interdisciplinary Information Sciences* [Graduate School of Information Sciences, Tohoku University], 15, no. 2 (2009).

In hindsight, Ogata commented on the prospects for success: 'Seamless support is crucial to the success or failure of peacebuilding, but there is no framework for it. We have no choice but to return to the basics of ensuring human security and try various approaches.'[236] With Ogata at the helm, Japan was relying exclusively on diplomacy, the dispatching of SDF personnel within the UNPKO framework on a case-by-case basis (where they are kept out of harm's way), and offering developmental aid as an incentive for peace. Tokyo's consolidation of a peace approach was different from the more forceful NATO and European models.[237] When Ogata left JICA, she was understandably proud of what she had done to develop the concept of human security and to implement it.

Post-Ogata Developments

Ogata left as JICA President on March 31, 2012. Replacing Ogata was not easy for the DPJ government, as she was a national hero. Her fame rested not only on her illustrious career as a diplomat and researcher but also on her influence in introducing human security into the UN system and masterminding the establishment of what became the framework for human security adopted by Japan. Thus, taking up the post was not easy for her successor, Tanaka Akihiko, who had been a member of Obuchi's advisory group when human security became a central concern. He came to the post from being president of a research institute and with an impressive CV as a scholar and official. That Tanaka was an 'Ogata child' (interview with Takemi, October 14, 2025) was a guarantee that her legacy would continue to be upheld and that activities pursued under her leadership would continue. It was graphically illustrated by the fact that Tanaka's first trip overseas as JICA president was to Cotabata in the center of the Mindanao conflict area. He also participated in the ceremony when the Mindanao peace agreement was signed in 2014.[238]

---

236 Ogata Sadako, in Nobayashi and Naya, *Kikigaki Ogata Sadako kaikoroku*, p. 236.

237 Lam, 'Peace-Building as a New Pillar in Japan's Foreign Policy,' p. 63.

238 Naoyuki Ochiai, *Peace and Development in Mindanao, Republic of the Philippines. The Long Road to Peace through Trust* (Tokyo: JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development, 2020), pp. 94f.

The same year Ogata was succeeded as JICA President by Tanaka, Abe Shinzō was appointed prime minister after the LDP's landslide victory in the 2012 Lower House elections. Despite his lack of economic expertise, Abe's economic policy, known as Abenomics, helped his party turn a miserable showing in the 2009 elections into an impressive share of the seats up for grabs. He took the opportunity when addressing the 68th session of the UNGA on September 26, 2013 to promote Abenomics. Abenomics was first and foremost a plan to restore the Japanese economy, which remained stuck in stagnation, while his foreign and security policies aimed at making Japan 'be back' after decades of declining international influence and mounting problems internationally. The need was acute. China had overtaken Japan in 2011 in the international pecking order as symbolized by the gross domestic product (GDP) ranking. The pressure from China, even perceived as a threat, was growing in light of its increasing defense spending and assertive activities in the South China Sea.

Abe's counter-measure to respond to China's rapidly expanding might and assertive actions was to 'strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance and actively promote bilateral and multilateral security cooperation with other countries.'[239] This was manifested in his promotion of Japan's proactive contribution to peace, promising that it could be 'even more actively engaged in UN collective security measures, including peacekeeping operations,' whilst still acknowledging Japan's adherence to the concept of human security.[240]

Adachi Kenki has argued that the Japanese government 'attempted to face off against China by using soft power to compensate for what Japan lacked in hard power,' using what he terms Japan's 'soft-power diplomacy' focusing on pop culture and public diplomacy, alongside attempting to promote the fact that that the country without using military force was making efforts to realize human security, engaging in freedom,

239 Prime Minister's Office of Japan, 'The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and beyond,' December 17, 2013.

240 'Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at the Sixty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations,' September 26, 2013.

democracy, and the rule of law. Concurrently, Japan took measures, such as changing the exercise of the right of collective self-defence, which increased concerns overseas. Adachi describes how 'Abe tried to allay the concerns of other countries about Japan's increasing military role and the return of militarism,' contrasting China with 'Japan as a country that values the rule of law and contributes to world peace and security in areas such as human security.'[241] JICA continued the important task to expand cooperation oriented to human security that was initiated by Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō.

Tanaka Akihiko left as JICA President in 2015 and was succeeded by erudite scholar and prolific political commentator Kitaoka Shinichi. A political scientist and a long-time political advisor to prime ministers, Kitaoka had also served as an ambassador to the United Nations. The same year, the 2003 ODA Charter was revised. Prime Minister Abe Shinzō was a prolific nationalist brimming with the ambition to restore Japan's status as a great power.[242] The new charter prescribed the directions for JICA that he wanted implemented. Reflecting his political drive to strengthen Japan's image as an important international actor, the 'ODA' in the title of the Charter was replaced by 'development cooperation,' referring to 'international cooperation activities conducted by the government and its affiliated agencies for the main purpose of development in developing regions.[243]

The directions of the 2015 Development Cooperation Charter were defined as: 1) Contributing to peace and prosperity through cooperation for non-military purposes; 2) Promoting human security; and 3) Cooperation aimed at a self-reliant development as well as dialogue and collaboration based on Japanese experiences. In its introduction, it was specified that an objective of Japan's ODA was 'to ensure Japan's national interests,' which

241 Adachi, 'The Resurgence of Human Security in Japan's Foreign Policy,' pp. 256ff.

242 Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine*, Chapter 21.

243 MOFA, 'Development Cooperation Charter, for peace, prosperity and a better future for everyone,' February 10, 2015.

was an extension of the 2003 ODA Charter's 'Japan's own security and prosperity.' A substantial departure from Japan's traditional and venerable non-military principles was that the charter welcomed the armed forces or members of the armed forces in recipient countries to be involved in development cooperation for non-military purposes. This was founded on the Abe government's commitment to play a more proactive role in the wake of Japan's decision not to withdraw its troops from South Sudan in 2013.

The 2015 Development Cooperation Charter provided the direction for the activities to be undertaken by JICA. The aim was to protect and empower vulnerable people. 'Japan will make efforts so that this basic policy will be understood and accepted widely among its partner countries, thereby mainstreaming the concept even further in the international community.' At the same time, the implications were such that Japan's leadership ambitions stood out, which reflected that a priority for Abe at the rudder was for Japan to exert leadership.

One priority of the new Charter was 'promoting human security.' The question that arose was, to what extent? JICA official Makino Kōji noted in 2022 that at the time human security was introduced, it was so broad and abstract that there was initial confusion among the JICA staff about how it would be reflected in JICA projects. They made efforts to elucidate the concept and promote its implementation in the field. 'As a result, progress was made in putting the concept into practice, and by 2010, approximately 60% of new projects were recognized as being in line with the idea of human security.'[244] This assessment reflected the staff's self-reflection. Did it reflect reality, or was it wishful thinking on the part of the officials, who had to deliver?

244 Koji Makino, 'Human Security and Development Cooperation Today,' in *Human Security Today. Revisiting Human Security,* no. 1 (Tokyo: JICA Ogata Sadako Institute for Peace and Development, 2022), p. 8.

To complement Makino's report, a review of JICA's activities similar to the above one can be made, drawing on JICA's Operational Performance Reports. The breadth of activities was substantial, and the annual summaries of JICA's activities from 2012 to 2025 range from 156 to 307 pages. Did the tendencies continue after Ogata that the concept of human security did not surface particularly often in Japan's ODA projects, and human security was not often referred to in Japan's ODA projects? According to her successor, Tanaka Akihiko, 'We are emphasizing human security more and more. Both the 2015 and the 2023 ODA Charters refer to human security as the guiding principle. We try to incorporate the idea of human security into many traditional ODA activities. Nowadays, we urge our staff to consider human security elements in every kind of project.' Asked whether that meant every JICA staff member is working for human security, Tanaka confirmed that this was the case (author's interview with Tanaka Akihiko, October 20, 2025). Tanaka's successor, and predecessor, Kitaoka Shinichi, concurs: 'Under Tanaka and myself, we insisted that human security should be more emphasized in our approach to ODA' (interview with Kitaoka, October 21, 2025).

What do JICA's Operational Performance Reports indicate for the post-Ogata period? The number of pages where human security is referred to is: 13 (2013), 13 (2014), 13 (2015), 12 (2016), 2 (2017), 8 (2018), 23 (2019), 31 (2020), 35 (2021), 21 (2022), 12 (2023), 15 (2024), and 15 (2025). It should be noted that where the frequency is higher, the concept is often mentioned multiple times on the same page once it is introduced. Figures indicate that the way human security has been incorporated and expressed in Japan's *actual* performance in the field is considerably higher than previously, with FY 2017 an outlier with few references.

Yet the fact that human security was a guiding principle for ODA policy is hardly reflected in these figures. This can be seen to be explained by what Kitaoka said: 'That we insist on the importance of human security has to do with JICA's composition. JICA was formed through a merger of the JBIC and JICA. The JICA staff were more interested in human security, while the JBIC staff were more interested in infrastructure development.

That can be understood as competition over the budget. Still, we are doing it together. Human security is important. It is an umbrella for the many things JICA is doing' (interview with Kitaoka, October 21, 2025). That human security functions as the umbrella for JICA's manifold and variegated activities makes it reasonable to assume that it is also actually what guides JICA's activities to such a degree that its importance as the guiding principle does not need to be pointed out time and again. Makino claims that this is the case. He describes the situation nowadays as one where 'the significance of the concept has taken root and become part of the intrinsic working practice of JICA staff. Contributions to human security are routinely discussed at JICA board meetings and during each department's project review process. Staff strive to put the concept into practice in the formation of regional and country strategies, project design, and implementation.'[245]

Kitaoka's characterization of human security as an umbrella reflects the view expressed in UNDP's 1994 report, as already cited. It has important implications, revealing how the influential political analyst Hoshiro Hiroyuki goes astray in his analysis of Japan's ODA policy. In his recent study of 30 years of Japan's foreign aid policy, he describes how Japan emerged in the 1990s as the world's top donor of foreign aid, measured in dollars, and how interest in Japan's ODA program from various quarters increased accordingly, thanks in part to yen appreciation. The ODA budget peaked in 1997 and has been in decline since then. The so-called bubble economy collapsed in the early 1990s, plunging Japan into a long-term recession. Japan's ODA policy was codified in the 1992, 2003, and 2015 ODA Charters, and Hoshiro lists the priority aid topics. He finds they are 15, 20, and 24, respectively. In his lists of priority aid topics, human security figures in the 2003 and 2015 ODA Charters; thus, according to him, it cannot be said to be a top priority as it is only one among several priority aid topics.[246]

---

245 Ibid.

246 Hiroyuki Hoshiro, 'Japan's Foreign Aid Policy: Has It Changed? Thirty Years of ODA Charters,' *Social Science Japan Journal* 25, no. 2 (2022), p. 311.

What Hoshiro misses is that it is not particularly apt to declare human security a top priority among aid topics when, as Kitaoka points out, it actually is the precondition for Japan's ODA policy. The substance is the same when JICA President Tanaka Akihiko says that the 2015 and 2023 ODA Charters prescribe human security as the guiding principle for Japan's ODA policy. Stated simply, as human security is the precondition of Japan's ODA policy, it cannot be a priority aid topic, as it constitutes the framework within which ODA projects are devised, prioritized, and implemented.

Apart from the fact that the human security idea functions as an umbrella for JICA's multitude of activities, another aspect is pertinent. Aid philosophies in Japan 'have shifted in emphasis over the past 30 years from economic security and interdependence to human security and the environment [but] the way that cooperation projects are formulated has remained rather constant.'[247] This aspect surfaced in my interview with Takemi Keizō, when he commented: 'MOFA says human security has consistently been the key concept of Japan's ODA policy, but the ODA concept itself did not take the role as a political concept to allocate the human resources and also the financial resources. I have consistently argued that this concept should be realized as the true concept of policymaking, but this did not actually occur, except in the case of health. Although the ODA Charters accepted human security as a key concept of Japan's ODA policy making, the actual decision making and location of resources did not change fundamentally.' He also added: 'It is strange. A political phenomenon happened. On the surface, human security is mentioned as important, but, in the real world, others diversified the values adhered to by each bureaucrat, so it did not reflect the concept of human security' (interview with Takemi, October 14, 2025). The sparse references to human security in the annual summaries of JICA's activities reveal that Takemi's view reflects what was occurring, and why he added

247 Jin Sato, '*Yōsei-Shugi*: The Mystery of the Japanese Request-Based Aid,' in *The Semantics of Development in Asia. Exploring 'Untranslatable' Ideas Through Japan,* edited by Jin Sato and Soyeun Kim (Singapore: Springer, 2024), p. 114.

during the interview: 'Please separate what the bureaucrats are saying and what they are doing.'

Takemi's comments capture one important aspect of Japanese foreign policy decision-making machinery. MOFA officials tend to be specialized. These who handle Japan-U.S. relations tend to focus on the Japan-U.S. security treaty. Moreover, they often focus on the threats from North Korea and China. MOFA officials may not be well-versed in the achievements of Japan's ODA in many developing countries, or realize how Japan's development cooperation incorporates the human security concept.

Initially, the vagueness of the human security concept was seen as advantageous in Japan. An acute analyst captured in 2012 how the concept's vagueness opened for various interpretations: 'Concretely, the concept has the following functions: to set the policy agenda; to provide guidelines, philosophy, and vision for Japan's foreign policy; to expand the country's roles and leadership in the wider field; and to incorporate various actors into the policy of contribution.'[248]

Efforts within the UN system led to a stricter definition, which improved matters, particularly the separation of human security and R2P, which originated with Kitaoka when he was Japan's UN ambassador. However, in his recollections from his assignment as ambassador, he, for good reasons, only noted that the fact that his separation of human security and R2P was included in the World Summit Outcome was 'a sort of success' [*ittei no seika*]. [249] As pointed out above, the Japanese government was much more appreciative and called on other interested countries to seriously consider ways to follow up on this paragraph.[250] This was not to happen as Kitaoka could observe at close range: 'With Kofi Annan's reform, human security became alive in UN documents, but, still, we

248 Teewin Suputtikun, 'An excuse for common goods: the multipurposeness of the "human security" concept in Japan's foreign policy,' *Asian Review* 25 (2012), p. 142.

249 Kitaoka Shinichi, *Kokuren no seiji rikigaku: Nihon wa doko ni iru no ka* [The political dynamics of the UN: Where does Japan stand?] (Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha, 2007), p. 59.

250 Takasu, 'Statement'.

could not expand our influence on human security. We did not have many supporters in pursuing this concept. In that sense, human security was becoming less visible in our UN activities.' He went on: 'However, we feel it is very difficult to have more supporters of human security at the global level. So, let's do that by ourselves; that's our approach. We prefer to do our own job through JICA. The money is limited, so the question is, how much money are we going to give to international organizations and to JICA' (interview with Kitaoka, October 21, 2025).

Kitaoka's seasoned view of what Japan encountered and the lack of interest demonstrated by other countries made him take action as JICA President: 'Actually, I was told in my early years as JICA President that Japan did not say much about human security. So I said, "Let's update it." It became 'Human security 2.0,' a renewed concept of human security in today's global context. Human security is often seen as a vague concept, but the idea at its core is clear; all humans have the right to live with dignity, and it is the responsibility of the international community to support it.' As JICA President, he wrote: 'Mrs. Ogata's legacy is still alive and well. Also, when it comes to human security, JICA renewed human security efforts, as shown in a leaflet titled "Revisiting Human Security in Today's Global Context" (October 2019), and declared that it is at the heart of JICA activities' (Kitaoka, 2020).

Kitaoka's stance led JICA to reassess and strengthen its human security practices in response to the current threats in the changing international landscape. The gist of 'Human security 2.0' is that 'human security is the idea of "protecting people's lives, livelihoods, and dignity by creating a resilient society against various threats," with threats being "(1) shocks such as conflict, violence, infectious and other diseases, climate change and natural disasters, etc., economic crises, accidents, and crimes, all of which can be considered aspects of "fear," and (2) threats categorized as "want," or chronic poverty in the broader sense of the term, such as income poverty, hunger, and lack of health, education, and social security services. Human security also emphasizes people's "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" as well as "freedom to fulfil their dignity." Dignity is to "be able

to live a full human life throughout one's life because one was born as a human being," or to "have confidence in oneself, pride in one's identity, and respect for beings other than oneself." […] While "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" are essential for the realization of dignity, it should be noted that their fulfilment does not necessarily guarantee dignity. Ensuring dignity is essential for the realization of human security.'[251]

Kitaoka commented further on what he called the Japanese approach, viz., 'let's do that by ourselves': 'We insist on activities on the ground, that is the tradition from Ogata. Certainly, we have to update it. But we feel it's challenging to have more supporters of human security at the global level. So, let's do that by ourselves; that's our approach. We have our own idea of how to manage. While human security receives little attention in the international community, it remains at the core of JICA's activities. We prefer to do our own job through JICA. Our approach to health, for example, starts with washing your hands, making clean water and having good nutrition. Those are important. That is not the way the WHO works; they tend to give medicine immediately' (interview with Kitaoka, October 21, 2025).

What Kitaoka alluded to was that one of the pillars of JICA activities introduced with Ogata Sadako at the rudder, *gembashugi*. His statement was in the best of traditions. It related to Japan's approach to foreign aid warranting a quotation at some length. In 2012, I wrote a comment on Japan's ODA policy after reading in the *Japan Times* that Japan's ODA budget had decreased for 13 consecutive years from its high point in 1997, based on an authoritative source, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. I wrote *inter alia*:

> There is something fishy about the message disseminated by the DAC in Geneva that Japan as an aid donor has shrunk from being "No. 1" to not much better than middle-sized European countries. The problem concerns how ODA is defined. According to the DAC, to qualify as ODA, loans provided must convey "a grant element of at least 25 percent." The DAC

251 Makino, 'Human Security and Development Cooperation Today,' p. 8.

> definition means that a large part of what is in reality Japanese aid does not count as ODA, for the simple reason that what Japan has provided is often loans lacking the 25 per cent grant element.
>
> The reason for this lies in Japan's aid philosophy, which differs from that of most other Western countries—for good reasons, at least in Japanese eyes. Japan's views on aid are based on its own historical experiences. Japan was once a very poor country; it has been ravaged by war and natural catastrophes. The diligence and devotion of generations preceding the present one built the country to its present prosperity. Its aid philosophy is based on this history. After the Second World War, the World Bank provided credit for Japan's post-war reconstruction. At that time, Japan needed to finance large-scale infrastructure projects, which it did through loans. This taught the Japanese the usefulness of loans that promote "self-help efforts" and respect the ownership of the aid recipient. Japan applies this lesson from history to its ODA. Japan has provided long-term loans in the past with favorable conditions and very low interest rates. Japan prefers to provide loans rather than grants because they promote the discipline of aid recipients; it was good for Japan, so it's seen as suitable for other countries too. […]
>
> Further to this, since Japan's loans have promoted the economic development of recipient countries, they now repay what they owe Japan and have begun doing so. […] Since Japan receives repayments on loans provided to other countries in the past, it has to increase its allocations to ODA to keep it up. […] Even such a sizeable increase of Japanese ODA as 8.3 per cent, as seen in 2008, almost disappears within the DAC statistics. […] Rather than the sizeable cuts that the DAC and Japanese officials have reported every year, figures show ups and downs, but are constantly at a high level. The amazing thing is that Japan's government and its officials parrot the DAC reports, which say that cuts have taken their toll, making Japan's ODA less impressive than it was in the 1990s. The fact is that Japan's ODA is still going strong.[252]

Against this background, with its human security pursuit not giving Japan the kudos it had hoped for in the international community, but being rooted in JICA's activities, it may not be so surprising that Kitaoka

252 Bert Edström, 'Japan's ODA Still Going Strong,' Institute for Security and Development Policy,' Policy Brief, no. 95 (2012).

preferred that JICA does 'our own job'. At the same time, JICA's approach toward cooperation was rooted in the engagements with partner countries as equals that share mutual respect. Therefore, in my interview with Kitaoka, he continued: 'I was rather fond of Japan acting alone, because we encountered difficulties in the international community. In many countries, there is a tendency to engage in support for the people from a spiritual perspective, something from above. Our approach is different. We are engaging in ODA in the spirit of cooperation. We have to work on the same ground as those we assist, and then the activities can be carried out through cooperation between these two partners. That's why I say that everyone has the right to live in dignity' (interview with Kitaoka, October 21, 2025). What Kitaoka told me reflects a view that had spread in the international ODA community: that the relationships ODA donors had with recipients were those of partners and that a relationship did not involve a single entity, as the recipients comprised various stakeholders.[253]

253 Shimomura Yasutami, *Kaihatsu enjo seisaku* [Development aid policy] (Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha, 2011), pp. 7, 28f.

Wanting Collaboration

As Japan's UN ambassador, Kitaoka Shinichi became aware of other countries' lack of interest in Japan's pursuit of human security. This indicated that what Obuchi saw as a precondition for the success of Japan's human security campaign did not materialize: coordinated international action. The trajectory of Japan's ambition went from high hope to resignation. Maybe Kitaoka, as JICA President, made a virtue out of necessity when he told me during my interview with him that he was rather fond of Japan acting alone because of the difficulties it encountered in the international community. He focused not on collaboration with UN members as Obuchi did, but on cooperation with those he saw as Japan's partners in the pursuit of human security.

Given the importance Obuchi assigned to cooperation in his spirited leadership on human security, it is worth outlining attempts at cooperation involving Japan and the extent to which they have materialized. As was the case with many of his predecessors, when he became prime minister, he was not particularly versed in foreign policy. His forte was that he was thoroughly versed in the intricacies of Japan's faction-ridden political system and knew how to maneuver the prevailing system.[254] For a start, his pursuit of human security was very much a personal endeavor. His starting point was his decision that Japan should join the campaign against landmines, initiated by an international NGO. At the ceremony marking the signing of the Ottawa anti-landmine treaty, Obuchi praised NGOs for encouraging and supplementing intergovernmental negotiations.[255]

In its report in January 1998, the Council on ODA Reforms for the 21st Century emphasized the need to formulate country assistance

254 Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine, p.* 228.

255 'Japan: Statement by Keizo Obuchi, Foreign Minister, December 3.' In *Ottawa Landmines Convention: Treaty Signing Conference and Mine Action Forum.* Signing Conference for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production, Transfer and Stockpiling of Anti-personnel Mines and their Destruction, and Mine Action Forum, Ottawa, December 2–4, 1997.

programs, emphasize poverty alleviation and social development with a focus on people-oriented development, increase assistance for human resources development, give broader intellectual support, and form global partnerships and cooperation with other countries, multilateral institutions and private sectors, among others.[256] Such collaboration was vital for Obuchi when he outlined a strategy for promoting human security in his Tokyo and Hanoi speeches in December 1998. In Tokyo, he said, '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.' He continued: 'Since many of the problems affecting human security cross national borders, no country can solve such problems alone; the coordinated action of the international community is necessary. Moreover, since these problems directly affect the lives of human beings, and since it is this area where the activities of citizens through NGOs and others are most effective, it is important for governments and international organizations to strengthen the linkages and cooperation with citizens' activities to cope with such problems.'[257]

The Domestic Level

The standing and prestige of Japanese NGOs skyrocketed following their rescue efforts during the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, when volunteers and NGOs came to the rescue.[258] MOFA initiated regular meetings with NGOs in 1994, and with the NGOs' newfound prestige, the government's financial assistance to them was discussed in meetings after 1996.[259] Obuchi saw collaboration with NGOs as important because problems affecting human security were best addressed by citizens' activities through NGOs.[260] In his speech at the JIIA's 40th anniversary, he said: 'The role of NGOs and other components of civil

256 MOFA, 'Council on ODA Reforms for the 21st Century Final Report' (1998).

257 Obuchi Keizō, 'Opening Remarks by Prime Minister Obuchi at An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow,' p. 19.

258 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* p. 170.

259 Keiko Hirata, 'New Challenges to Japan's Aid: An Analysis of Aid Policy-Making,' *Pacific Affairs* 71, no. 3 (1998), p. 319.

260 Obuchi, 'Opening Remarks,' p. 19.

society has become important. […] Governmental efforts alone will not guarantee human security in Asia and the world in the coming twenty-first century.'[261]

The prime example of government-NGO cooperation was the Japan Platform. It was a network organization with MOFA, the Japan Business Federation, Keidanren, and an NGO Unit, where 'all NGOs meeting objective participation criteria may participate.' The NGO Unit was established in 2000 as a body working to advance human security and received government economic support through the ODA budget, complemented by private donations. To use available funds, the NGO Unit had to obtain MOFA's approval. The Japan Platform was an attempt by the Mori government to further good relations with NGOs. Yet not all NGOs were welcome on board, which should not be seen as strange given the sheer number of NGOs; 391 were listed as members of the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), an umbrella organization of citizen-led NGOs involved in ODA.[262]

NGOs that were members of JANIC did not want to accept government grants, as doing so would compromise their independence. The important role of NGOs in the pursuit of human security that Obuchi had anticipated did not materialize, and the scale of their activities under the banner of human security was limited.

In my 2008 report, which covered the period up to 2003, I noted that although NGOs received verbal support, their participation in Japan's overseas aid activities was limited. NGOs were not seen by government officials as partners on an equal footing but rather as instruments of governmental policies—at best.[263] It was evident that MOFA officials did not fancy these organizations. Skepticism was reciprocated, however. An analysis released

261 Keizo Obuchi, 'In Quest of Human Security,' in *In Quest of Human Security: JIIA 40th Anniversary Symposium* (Tokyo: The Japan Institute of International Affairs, 2001), pp. 10f.

262 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 172.

263 Ibid., pp. 186f.

in 2005 claimed that not a few NGO staff saw MOFA as pursuing aid objectives incompatible with NGOs' humanitarian principles.[264] In the eyes of many NGOs, embedding NGOs in the NGO Unit and subordinating it to both MOFA and Keidanren turned NGOs into subcontractors.[265] According to Miyashita Megumi, Human Resource Development Program Officer at JANIC, the Japan Platform played an important role in humanitarian relief. NGOs involved in activities had to obey those who supplied the money, the government and Keidanren, and grants tended to be given only to big NGOs, excluding small and middle-sized NGOs.[266]

The situation was to change. In my 2010 interview with Hayashi Akihito, a JANIC activist employed as a JICA coordinator for NGO–JANIC Partnership Promotion, he described the breaking point as 2008 when two large-scale international meetings took place in Japan, the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Yokohama in May and the G8 Summit in Tōyako in July. According to Hayashi, the government had previously not cooperated with civil society groups or NGOs in policy formulation, but now, JANIC held almost weekly meetings with MOFA officials, with NGO representatives trying to be creative and proposing concrete, feasible projects rather than just criticizing the government. This stance paid off, as the government became more willing to support NGO activities. Hayashi stressed the different roles that NGOs and the government play. The NGOs had the skills that the government lacked, while the government had money. He indicated that the cooperation between the government and NGOs that had evolved had increased the government's understanding of NGOs and had enabled them to influence policymaking.[267]

---

264 Sakura Ozaki, 'The Formation of NGO Inclusion Policy in Japan's Official Development Assistance. The Roles of NGOs, the Foreign Ministry and Business,' MA Thesis, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia, 2005, p. 57.

265 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, p. 180.

266 Miyashita Megumi, in ibid., p. 173.

267 Hayashi, in Edström, *Japan and Human Security,* p. 18.

The Japan Platform was a key partner in the government's cooperation with NGOs. The Platform had expanded, both in terms of NGO members and financial resources. The NGO Unit of the Japan Platform numbered 17 in November 2001, but had increased to 33 in 2008, and its financial resources have increased considerably. Nevertheless, even if the number of NGOs participating in this government-sponsored body was larger than before, they were still relatively few, making it hard to say that Hayashi's 'Japan's NGO World' participated.

The irony was that while relations between NGOs and the Japanese government had improved, Japanese NGOs' interest in working under the banner of human security was largely absent. One of Japan's leading NGO activists, Osa Yukie, argued in my 2010 interview with her that human security had never been a mainstream concern for Japan's NGO community. NGOs were indifferent to working under the banner of human security. They had worked for what had in reality been human security all along, only without using that label; in fact, they saw it as the very *raison d'être* of NGOs, but saw no need for the new and fancy concept. She added that if the government had created a fund for human security in Japan, many NGOs would have been interested in human security, but since there was no such fund, interest was lacking.[268]

The political scientist Ōkuma Hiroshi, a leading specialist on Japan's ODA policy, agreed that this was the case. In the eyes of NGOs, he said, the human security concept boiled down to a beautiful word for which they saw no need. The concept of human security was an *ōburoshiki* concept, which made it unattractive to NGOs. This aversion was probably behind a phenomenon Osa mentioned. The comprehensive nature of the concept of human security did not align with how NGOs worked. There was specialization among activists: only the particular issue an NGO was dealing with (landmines, poverty alleviation, etc.) was picked up; if the NGO came across something else, they didn't bother. She was highly critical of this stance.[269]

---

268 Osa, in Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 19.

269 Ōkuma, in ibid.

The skepticism of NGOs towards human security as a concept and a slogan had one important effect. In Japan, no epistemic community had formed around human security, unlike the situation internationally. When I asked knowledgeable insiders and researchers in 2010 whether such a community was to be found in Japan, it was a surprise to me that no one could identify such a grouping, despite activities by renowned and vocal human security protagonists like Fukushima Akiko, Takasu Yukio, Takemi Keizō, Tase Kazuo, Osa Yukie, etc. Japanese representatives may have contributed to the international epistemic community, but there was none in the country itself. By contrast, Lam Peng Er discerned an emerging epistemological community in peacebuilding, comprising practitioners, politicians, and academics interested in advancing peace. Prominent among them were Akashi Yasushi and Ogata Sadako, as well as politicians and NGO activists, including LDP politician Yamanaka Akiko and Isezaki Kenji (former district administrator in East Timor and head of DDR in Afghanistan).[270]

The Bilateral Level

An integral part of the campaign for human security that Obuchi initiated was the effort to foster collaboration with other countries, in the same way that reliance on like-minded countries was a primary instrument for a country like Canada.[271] Since international collaboration was *sine qua non* for the success of the new policy, according to Obuchi, it was a foregone conclusion that he was considering how to act.[272] The result on the bilateral front was not impressive. In my 2011 report, I quoted Toyoshima Naoko's survey of the pre-2009 situation, noting that Japanese bilateral cooperation on human security with other countries had hardly been seen.[273]

---

270 Lam, 'Peace-Building as a New Pillar in Japan's Foreign Policy,' pp. 79f.

271 Prosper Bernard, Jr., 'Canada and Human Security: From the Axworthy Doctrine to Middle Power Internationalism,' *The American Review of Canadian Studies,* no. 36 (2006), p. 234.

272 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* p. 101.

273 Toyoshima Naoko, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō seisaku ni miru Nihon no shisei' [Japan's stance as seen in its human security policy], *Sōka daigaku daigakuin kiyō,* no. 31 (2009), p. 82.

This does not mean that feelers were not put out. On the contrary. One country approached was South Korea. President Kim Dae-jung made a state visit to Japan in 1998. It became a success story when Prime Minister Obuchi offered a 'heart-felt apology' for 'the unfortunate past,' which Kim found sincere and sufficient to put the bad history to rest. The following year, Obuchi visited Seoul in the conspicuously improved atmosphere between Seoul and Tokyo and an ambitious Joint Declaration was signed.

In a speech at Korea University in Seoul, Obuchi said that Korea and Japan had to address human security issues and invest resources and knowledge to find solutions. He proposed that South Korea and Japan should jointly assume a leadership role in human security, with human security at the core of Korea-Japan cooperation.[274] This was not to be, although Kim saw Obuchi's 'human security' as commensurate with his own pet idea 'global democracy,' in that it considered individual rights, prosperity and global environmental health.[275]

Kim's take on Obuchi's pet concept had long-lasting effects. Kim et al. (2015) concluded that 'the South Korean government ministries and aid implementation agencies have understood and embraced the concept of human security in their official documents and policies regarding ODA [but] have not explicitly used the term "human security" in their official documents and policies.'[276]

The second noteworthy instance in which Obuchi put out a feeler for collaboration on human security was during a visit to the United States. He had a bit of an uphill because Washington had in fresh memory that he had been instrumental in revising the Japanese policy on the

274 Obuchi Keizō, 'Koryo daigaku ni okeru Obuchi sōridaijin enzetsu. Shinseki no Nikkan kankei: Arata na rekishi no sōzō' [Prime Minister Obuchi's speech at Korea University, Japan-Korea relations in the new millennium: The creation of a new history] (March 20, 1999).

275 Yoon Suk Jung, 'Structural Change in Korea-Japan Relations during the 1990s and the Korea-Japan Joint Declaration: An Examination of the Transnational Attempts at Coopera-tion and Institutionalization in the Post-Cold War Era,' *Seoul Journal of Japanese Studies* 7, no.1 (2012), p. 134.

276 Kim Eun Mee, Seon Young Bae, and Ji Hyun Shin, 'Human Security in Practice: The Case of South Korea,' *JICA-RI Working Paper,* no. 93 (2015), p. 31.

controversial landmine issue despite U.S. opposition.[277] But it was worth a try as President Bill Clinton's Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Under-Secretary of State Timothy Wirth were on record using human security terminology.[278] In a last-minute effort to pave the way for human security to be added to the agenda of this meeting, Obuchi described human security-related issues as 'a pressing task over which further cooperation between Japan and the United States is necessary and possible.'[279] However, any ambition he may have had was thwarted by his encounter with President Clinton. The meeting became business as usual. Proceedings centered on U.S. pressures on Tokyo to get Japan's economy in order. Human security was not included on the agenda.[280]

The third feeler put out to initiate cooperation on human security was Sweden's, not Japan's. The same month as Obuchi met President Bill Clinton, State Secretary Lars Danielsson of the Swedish Cabinet Office visited Tokyo to prepare for the 2nd Japan-Nordic Summit in Reykjavik in June. His meeting with Canada's Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy the previous year had led Danielsson to conclude that human security would be a suitable topic for the upcoming Millennium Summit. That Sweden would propose Swedish-Japanese collaboration was to be expected, as the Commission on Global Governance had whole-heartedly supported human security in its report, *Our Global Neighbourhood* (1995).[281] The commission, with Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson and former Commonwealth Secretary-General Sridath Ramphal as co-chairs, and Ogata Sadako as one of its 28 members, had been established in 1992 with the support of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

---

277 Yukio Okamoto, 'Japan and the United States: The Essential Alliance,' *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (2002), pp. 61f.

278 Rodger A. Payne, 'Human Security and American Foreign Policy,' Paper prepared for conference on Human Security in the New Millennium, European Union Center, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO (March 4–5, 2004), p. 7.

279 Obuchi Keizo, 'Japan: America's Partner in Asia', speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, April 29, 1999.

280 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* pp. 101ff.

281 The Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Danielsson met Vice Minister Yanai Shunji of MOFA at the same time as the meeting in Norway of representatives from 11 governments, which led to the formation of the Human Security Network. Danielsson proposed that a joint initiative should be taken at the upcoming Millennium Summit. Instead of welcoming Sweden's invitation to collaboration on human security, Yanai was noncommittal and merely stated that 'Japan, and Obuchi personally, puts a lot of emphasis on the discussion of human security.' Yanai's disinterest was striking to Danielsson. That Japan was not interested in collaborating was contrary to what he had expected, given his meeting with Axworthy.[282]

Why Sweden's proposal was not welcomed by Japan is unclear. Given that Canada had emerged as the No. 1 advocate for human security, Sweden's interest in pursuing it might have been unwelcome to Japan, as it could undermine its ambition to exert leadership. However, in this context, the author's personal experience may be relevant, as it points in another direction. In 1992, two Japanese officials were invited by the Swedish government to discuss development aid collaboration. Listening to the presentations at the Prime Minister's Office, the will to collaborate from both parties was noticeable. I knew one of the Japanese from Keio University. In the break, I exchanged views with him. This was noted by Rasmus Rasmusson of the Swedish foreign ministry, who asked me to try to find out more about the guests' views on the prospects for cooperation. I invited my Keio friend to dinner. At the dinner, he saw me as a Keio insider. What he told me was a straightforward case of the Japanese *tatemae* and *honne* thinking. What I had listened to at the Prime Minister's Office was *tatemae*, Japan's interest in collaborating, while my Keio friend revealed the *honne,* Japan's true intention: Japan had no interest in collaborating with Sweden on ODA. Tokyo was tired of countries presenting all kinds of projects that just showed they wanted to take advantage of Japanese ODA for their own purposes. So, I wrote to Rasmusson about what my friend had told me, which indicated that no collaboration with Japan on development aid would materialize, which also became the case.

282 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* pp. 105f.

One effect of Yanai's declining collaboration with Sweden was the collateral damage to Japan's ambition to exert leadership on human security. Danielsson related in my 2006 interview with him that he subsequently met his Norwegian colleague in Oslo. He asked for Swedish understanding on a particular matter. He said that while Sweden was very active in the United Nations and a member of the EU, Norway was put offside by not being a member of the EU and struggled to have a voice internationally. Norway had a strong interest in playing a key role in human security, and Danielsson's Norwegian colleague asked Sweden to abstain from human security-related activities. After pondering the suggestion, Danielsson accepted, which opened the way for Norway to pursue human security internationally, becoming an important stakeholder and playing an international leadership role, while Sweden largely abstained from tangible human-security related activities.[283]

Thus, Japan declined collaboration with Norway (a member of the Human Security Network) and Sweden (Yanai's meeting with Danielsson). Yet, Obuchi claimed in comments after the 2nd Japan-Nordic Summit in 1999 that Japan and the Nordic countries had agreed at the meeting on making the 21st century a human-centered century and were resolved to cooperate internationally in the future.[284] His comment did not reflect reality. What had occurred, instead, was the collapse of Japanese collaboration with two Nordic countries interested in promoting human security.

A fourth attempt at collaboration came a couple of months later. It involved Canada, which was a member of the Human Security Network, with the prolific human security activist, Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy, as the driving force. The conceptual differences between Japan and Canada were shrinking as Japan, with its non-military, non-coercive actions, increasingly took an interest in post-conflict

283 Ibid., p. 106.

284 Keizo Obuchi, 'A Message from the Prime Minister of Japan,' in Gro Harlem Brundtland, *Preparing for the Worst: Can We Give Hope to Victims in Complex Emergencies?* Fridtjof Nansen Memorial Lecture 1999 (Tokyo: United Nations University, 1999).

peacebuilding.[285] On a visit to Japan in September 1999, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Obuchi agreed on a joint action plan and on how to work together to implement it. However, collaboration did not take off. My interviews in 2004 with two key policymakers behind Japan's human security policy, Yamamoto Tadashi and Takemi Keizō, showed that even though countries like Japan and Canada were like-minded in their views of human security, collaboration did not materialize, even if official rhetoric had been strongly in favor of cooperation.[286] The Japan–Canada divide, which the human security literature abounded with, led to descriptions of the 'Japanese' and the 'Canadian' views so different that they became an obstacle to collaboration.

Another case of Japanese disinterest in collaborating with Canada was the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), established at Canada's initiative to clarify the conditions under which humanitarian intervention would be permissible. Canada considered Japanese representation and approached Ogata Sadako, who declined to join.[287] Her rejection contrasts with what had been seen in other internationally composed commissions, where members often 'represented' countries with starkly diverging interests. While the ICISS testified to Canada's interest in exploring human security as freedom from fear, examining difficult questions about when and where it was right to intervene in a nation-state's domestic security, Ogata's rejection demonstrated an unwillingness to participate in such discussions. Furthermore, when the ICISS published its report, the Japanese government did not welcome it.[288]

---

285 Hirai Terumi, 'Nihon no gaikō seisaku to ningen no anzen hoshō: Banguradeshu no jirei kara' [Japan's foreign policy and human security: The case of Bangladesh], in *Gurōbaruka to ningen no anzenhoshō. Kōdō suru shimin shakai* [Globalization and human security. Civil society in action], edited by Katsumata Makoto (Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha, 2001), p. 379.

286 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* pp. 110f.

287 Akiko Fukushima, 'Human Security: Comparing Japanese and Canadian Governmental Thinking and Practice,' CCHS Human Security Visiting Fellow Paper (Vancouver: Canadian Consortium on Human Security, 2004), p. 3.

288 Akiko Fukushima, 'Review of Japan–Canada Cooperation for Peace and Security,' in *The 4th Canada–Japan Symposium on Peace and Security Cooperation, June 10–12, 2005* (Tokyo: Research

Ueda Hideaki, the head of the Global Issue Department of MOFA, opined in 2000 that Canada's approach to human security, which focused narrowly on humanitarian intervention to protect human rights, could be counterproductive in the long run because it would invite opposition from countries that emphasized the weight of sovereignty. He stressed that the Japanese approach was to build partnerships with developing countries to help alleviate development-related issues such as poverty, refugees, and environmental problems. This reflects the expedient approach, which, as recognized by Ueda, allows different interpretations by developed and developing states and a myriad of possibilities for selective engagements.[289] My interviews in 2004 with Yamamoto and Takemi showed that while Japan and Canada were like-minded in their views of the importance of human security, specific core ideas or policies, like their views on humanitarian intervention, were too divergent, with the result that collaboration did not materialize, even if official rhetoric had been strongly in favor of cooperation.

The Multilateral Level

The above cases of attempts to initiate bilateral collaboration can be seen as de facto setbacks to attempts to collaborate on human security. In 2010, Ueda Hideaki, who was now the Director of MOFA's International Cooperation Bureau, said 'we have concluded that we can advance Japan's multilateral diplomacy by using human security as a banner.'[290] The primary partner remained the United Nations. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was a staunch supporter of Japan's efforts to pursue human security, and the UNTFHS was established jointly by the UN and Japan.

Institute for Peace and Security, 2005), p. 17.

289 Ueda Hideaki, 'Ima naze "ningen no anzen hoshō" na no ka' [Why human security now?], *Gaikō fōramu* 13, no. 2 (2000), pp. 71f.

290 Ueda Hideaki, '"Ningen no anzen hoshō" no hatten' [The development of 'human security'], *Sandai hōgaku* 44, no. 2 (2010), p. 7.

Other countries were also active in multilateral collaboration on human security. Canadian and Norwegian Foreign Ministers Lloyd Axworthy and Knut Wollebæk took the initiative to establish the Human Security Network (HSN), which was established in 1999 and became the most important body for international collaboration in the pursuit of human security. The HSN was an association of states that met and collaborated to identify potential areas for collective action to advance human security. The Network was loosely organized, with participating countries sharing the belief in the need to coordinate human security activities. They were committed to promoting respect for human rights and international humanitarian law; strengthening the rule of law and good governance; and fostering a culture of peace through peaceful resolution of conflicts, controlling the instruments of violence and ending impunity in cases of violations of human rights and international law.[291]

As already mentioned, Japan was asked to join the HSN but declined, which affected Japan's pursuit of multilateral collaboration, as Network members reciprocated. When Ogata introduced the CHS's report to the Human Security Network, she found it expedient to point out that 'the donor base of the Trust Fund should be broadened to include other countries [than Japan].'[292] Later, Japan began to participate in the HSN as an observer to some extent.[293]

UN member states committed to human security participated in the 2005 World Summit to discuss and define the concept of human security.[294] The commitment to 'discuss and define the notion of human security' pinpointed the problem that no stringent definition of human security had emerged since the UNDP report in 1994. Japan's then ambassador and deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Kitaoka

291 Norwegian Embassy, Ottawa, 'Human Security Network' [n.d.].

292 Sadako Ogata, 'Human Security Now,' Remarks at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network, Graz, Austria, May 8, 2003.

293 Nasukawa, '"Ningen no anzen hoshō" no kiseki to tenkai,' p. 201.

294 United Nations, General Assembly, '2005 World Summit Outcome,' A/RES/60/1.

Shinichi, found that many countries were confused about the difference between human security and R2P, with their relationship complicated, so he decided to separate them. Both were included in Secretary-General Annan's 2005 reform (interview with Kitaoka, October 21, 2025). A Swedish diplomat confirmed that the concepts were inserted at the insistence of Japan, 'since it was necessary to have something to show the Japanese public.'[295] Some countries felt misgivings over its inclusion.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome adopted by the UN General Assembly, §143, reads: 'We stress the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair. We recognize that all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. To this end, we commit ourselves to discussing and defining the notion of human security in the General Assembly.'[296] Japan's official view on the inclusion of this paragraph in the resolution was expressed by Ambassador Takasu Yukio. He said the Japanese government 'highly appreciates the inclusion of paragraph 143 in the Outcome Document, and calls on other interested countries to seriously consider ways to follow up this paragraph.'[297]

As noted by Bacon, the broader Japanese perspective is clearly reflected in UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's two reports on human security (2010, 2012), which both make an explicit distinction between human security and R2P and specifically rule out the use of force.[298] The breadth and lack of precision of the Japanese perspective were among the reasons for its success in becoming the approved perspective. In my interview with Kitaoka, he said: 'Intervention beyond borders is difficult. The advanced democracies do not have enough potential to intervene. We

---

295 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security*, pp. 263f; see also Fukushima, 'The Japanese Approach to Human Security,' p. 4.

296 United Nations, General Assembly, '2005 World Summit Outcome'.

297 Yukio Takasu, 'Towards Forming Friends of Human Security'. On the Occasion of the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network, Bangkok, June 1, 2006.

298 Bacon, 'The politics of human security in Japan,' p. 28.

could intervene, but we could not take care of people who are suffering afterwards. It's very clear: is there anyone supporting R2P now? In the competition between the two concepts, we are victorious. They lost their ground' (interview with Kitaoka, October 21, 2025).

In the aftermath of the 2005 World Summit, the Friends of Human Security was launched the following year, with Japan and Mexico spearheading the initiative. It was an open-ended, informal forum for UN member states and relevant international organizations to discuss human security, co-chaired by Japan and Mexico. Takasu Yukio has described its establishment: 'Mexico ... offered to organize a workshop to deepen understanding of human security among many countries as a follow-up to the Outcome Document. […] In the workshop, the proposal was made to form a framework to broaden and strengthen partnerships towards forming an international forum named Friends of Human Security. This forum is open to both HSN and non-HSN countries with strong interests in human security, and it aims at seeking partnership (not necessarily asking to become a formal member) with other countries that have not associated with any particular initiatives in the past.'[299]

The forum could be seen as an attempt to combine the Japanese–UN and Canadian–Norwegian network initiatives by forming an informal group.[300] Both the informal membership and the looseness of definition continued the Japanese approach to human security collaboration. Taking participation as a measure, the new network could seem a success, since the number of participating countries increased from 23 at the first meeting, to 33 at the second and 44 at the third.[301]

However, behind lurked problems that Japan had tried to tackle by taking the initiative. While the new network was 'open to both HSN and non-HSN

299 Takasu, 'Towards Forming Friends of Human Security'.

300 Marlies Glasius, 'Human Security from Paradigm Shift to Operationalization: Job Description for a Human Security Worker,' *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 1 (2008), p. 34.

301 Toyoshima, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō seisaku ni miru Nihon no shisei,' p. 80.

countries with strong interests in human security,' a reasonable question seems to be: With the HSN alive and kicking, why another network? Takasu's not very convincing argument was that there were 'many countries that are interested in some aspects of human security but do not necessarily wish to become members of the HSN.' The prime example of such a country was, of course, Japan, which refused to become a member of the HSN when such an offer was made at the time of its formation, with the rejection said to stem from disagreement over the concept of human security.

Japan sought to address its own lack of interest in collaboration by papering over differences and inviting members of the HSN to join the Friends. The approach bore Japan's unmistakable mark, revealed when Takasu presented what he said were his initial thoughts on the new network: 'We should not rush to seek formal discussions in the UN on the definition of human security, such as holding formal consultations for negotiating over a legal definition.' His view was that it 'would be sufficient to agree on a general operational definition as a base of collaborative efforts' like the one proposed by the CHS.[302] Given the fact that the 2005 World Summit Outcome pointed out the necessity of discussing and defining human security, Takasu's view is surprising, to say the least.

Šárka Waisová has argued, 'Although it was never officially stated, Friends of Human Security was meant to replace Human Security Network, which had ceased to be active.'[303] Others were more outspoken. It was argued that behind Japan's launch of the Friends of Human Security lay a strategy of norm contestation. According to Prantl and Nakano, Japan pursued such a strategy in parallel with endorsing the global norm of human security: 'The adoption of R2P in 2005 triggered a feedback loop that led to a new push for projecting Japan's human security posture at the regional and global levels. Such a strategy of norm contestation has been epitomized in the Friends of Human Security Forum, an initiative

302 Takasu, 'Towards Forming Friends of Human Security'.

303 Šárka Waisová, 'Human Security: An Analysis of the Dissemination of an Idea in World Politics,' *Politics in Central Europe* 14, no. 3 (2010), p. 88.

that Tokyo proposed in June 2006 shortly after the formal adoption of R2P.'[304] Similarly, Fukushima and Tow found that 'Japan's strategy of norm contestation is most visible in its initiative to launch the Friends of Human Security Forum, which was proposed shortly after the formal adoption of R2P at the ministerial meeting of the Human Security Network in Bangkok in June 2006.'[305] The subsequent development has been captured by Waisová: '[Over the last few years], the Human Security Network has ceased to exist, and its website and several projects it supported have also disappeared. […] Friends of Human Security, the platform supported by Japan, never found the widespread support enjoyed by the Human Security Network.'[306]

304 Jochen Prantl and Ryoko Nakano, 'Global Norm Diffusion in East Asia: How China and Japan Implement the Responsibility to Protect,' *International Relations* 25, no. 2 (2011), p. 218.

305 Akiko Fukushima and William T. Tow, 'Human Security and Global Governance,' in *Security Politics in the Asia-Pacific: A Regional-Global Nexus?* edited by William T. Tow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 182.

306 Waisová, 'Human Security,' p. 91.

Japan's Leadership Ambitions

In a perceptive analysis of the effects of globalization on Japan's foreign policy, Inoguchi Takashi claimed in 1999 that 'the noticeable trait of activities of the Japanese government to going it alone must be seen against the background of the ending of the Cold War, which opened up for enterprising countries to advance towards international status and prestige. Japan has, with few misgivings, elected to sign on to the new order for now and see how things unfold. At the same time, it is pursuing its own policy for "human security".'[307] While the role of prestige should not be underestimated in the case of Japan, even weightier was the attractive perspective for Japanese foreign policy decision-makers that the pursuit of human security would enable Japan to pursue policies devised in Tokyo, not Washington. At what in hindsight appears the peak of Japan's human security policy, I wrote: 'Human security is a field where Japan can excel and demonstrate the leadership that it so desperately desires to show.'[308] Adopting the human security concept allowed Japan to combine its traditional regional aid operations with an initiative with global reach.[309] It became an antidote to the constraints imposed by Japan's constitution and lingering animosity in the region over Japan's historic role.

The assertiveness Obuchi demonstrated during the Asian financial crisis can be seen as a response to Asian political leaders' call for Japanese leadership. A leading voice was Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohammed, known for his criticism of Japan for being too modest in presenting its leadership ambitions. Japan was the only Asian country able to help its fellow Asian countries.[310] In a conversation with one of Japan's well-known business gurus, Mahathir went so far as to claim that Japan's natural place

307 Takashi Inoguchi, 'Globalization and Japan's Foreign Policy,' *The Japan Review of International Affairs* 13 (1999), p. 162.

308 Edström, 'Japan's foreign policy and human security,' pp. 220f.

309 Howe, 'Human Security, Peacebuilding, and the Responsibility to Protect in East Asia,' p. 187.

310 Takashi Terada, 'Constructing an "East Asian" concept and growing regional identity: from EAEC to ASEAN+3,' *The Pacific Review* 16, no. 3 (2003), p. 257.

was to be a world leader.[311] Others aired similar views. During a meeting with Japanese and South Korean lawmakers at the end of November 1998, including Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō and South Korean Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil, the South Koreans brought up the Japanese idea of establishing an Asian Monetary Fund, and it was reported that Prime Minister Kim backed the idea that 'Japan should be the leader of Asia.'[312]

As already mentioned, during his 1999 visit to Seoul, Obuchi stressed the importance of exerting leadership to promote human security in Asia and proposed that South Korea and Japan jointly assume this leadership. Behind lay the realization that 'Japan could become a leader in the sense of creating universally accepted values, if it adopted and preached the virtues of human security alongside its recognized role as the world's largest aid donor, which role it had kept up throughout the 1990s despite its economic problems.'[313]

A way for Japan to exert leadership was to entrust the task to a group of eminences. When Obuchi's successor Mori took the initiative to establish the CHS in 2001, it was intended as a body to develop proposals and policies to promote the international community's pursuit of human security, not to carry out Japanese projects.[314] The Japan-centric approach and Japan's urge to exert leadership in the work of the UNTFHS came to the fore in Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko's speech on the occasion of the fifth and final meeting of the CHS in February 2003, when she declared: 'Through its establishment of the Trust Fund for Human Security in the United Nations in March 1999, Japan has continued to offer concrete assistance, giving an orientation to the activities of international organizations that is based on the concept of human security.'[315]

---

311 Ōmae Kenichi, *Ajiajin to Nihonjin: Mahatīru Marēshia shushō to no taiwa* [Asians and Japanese: Conversations with Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir] (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1994).

312 Saori Katada, 'Japan and Asian Monetary Regionalization: cultivating a new regional leadership after the Asian financial crisis,' *Geopolitics* 7, no. 1 (2002), p. 49.

313 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* p. 223.

314 Ibid. p. 225.

315 'Kawaguchi gaimudaijin aisatsu, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō shimpojiumu'.

The lack of distinction between MOFA and CHS activities that can be discerned helps explain why the CHS's impact was not comparable to that of previous international commissions. It was symptomatic of the Japanese boldness that the CHS reported to the Japanese prime minister two months before handing over its report to its employer, the UN. Inadvertently, it testified to Japan's eagerness to play first fiddle on human security.[316]

When the CHS presented its report later that year, the political situation in Japan had changed. The LDP was out of power, and Hosokawa Morihiro headed a coalition government of former opposition parties. He declared Japan would play a leadership role in tackling the many complex issues facing the international community and would take the lead at the United Nations and other international efforts. Hosokawa pioneered what would become a thread in the policy pursued by post-1993 Japanese governments—the insight that other nations' expectations, shaped by their recognition of Japan's status as a world power, made Japan obligated to provide international public goods. This thinking resonated with post-Cold War trends in Japan. Exercising 'intellectual leadership' in international society, Japan could create 'new trends in the world, such as the Club of Rome's "limits to growth" idea and the Brundtland Commission's "sustainable development" idea; human security could fulfil that role for Japan.'[317]

One rationale behind Japan's enthusiasm for creating the CHS was that 'it would clarify the concept of human security as an applicable principle for the foreign policies of its own and other countries. In doing so, the Japanese leaders at that time believed that Japan would be able to play an entrepreneurial role in promoting and diffusing norms of human security through the CHS.'[318] While Japan, for constitutional and other reasons, could not carve out a leadership role based on capacity or power, human

316 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* pp. 203f.

317 Kurusu and Kersten, 'Japan as an Active Agent for Global Norms,' p. 120.

318 Tadashi Iwami, 'Japan's Human Security and Peacebuilding in the Twenty-First Century,' in *Japan's Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century. Continuity and Change,* edited by Lam Peng Er and Purnendra Jain (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2020), p. 201.

security fitted Japan's ambitions to exert entrepreneurial and intellectual leadership.[319]

The ODA specialist Ōkuma Hiroshi claimed Obuchi's initiative entailed a step towards transforming Japan's role in the global donor community from 'Top Donor' to 'Leading Donor', providing guidance in the formulation of a basic philosophy and strategy in development cooperation.[320] Human security was used as a flagship of Japan's commitment to contribute to international public goods.[321]

Japan has been described as guided these years by a wish to act as, and be seen as, a norm entrepreneur.[322] Human security as a universal principle was seen as a potential area for Japan to promote international norms and rules governing the global order.[323] Ōkuma even discerned a will on the part of Japan to become a 'missionary' for human security.[324] Japan's human security policy could also be seen as a conscious effort to demonstrate that the country had what was said to be necessary for playing a leadership role internationally, viz., ideas of its own as to how international relations should be conducted. This follows an idea aired by Asō Tarō as foreign minister in Abe's first cabinet (2006–7). According to Asō, Japan should be a thought leader, which was relevant in the context of Japan's peacebuilding activities: 'Asia, including Japan, has amassed a wealth of experience in peacebuilding in such locations as Cambodia, East Timor, Aceh and Mindanao among others [...] it will be necessary to

319 Tase Kazuo and Takemi Keizō, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō to Nihon no yakuwari' [Human security and Japan's role], in *21 seiki no ningen no anzen hoshō* [Human security in the 21st century], edited by Tōkai daigaku heiwa senryaku kokusai kenkyūsho (Tokyo: Tōkai daigaku shuppankai, 2005), pp. 147ff.

320 Hiroshi Okuma, 'New Directions in Japan's Official Development Assistance,' in *Japan and Enlarged Europe: Partners in Global Governance,* edited by Takako Ueta and Éric Remacle (Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2005), p. 156.

321 Suputtikun, 'An excuse for common goods,' p. 140.

322 Edström, *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security,* p. 22.

323 Kurusu, 'Japan as a Norm Entrepreneur for Human Security'.

324 Ōkuma Hiroshi, '2003 nen ODA taikō to ningen no anzen hoshō. Retorikku no kiho kōzu' [2003 ODA Charter and human security. The fundamental composition of rhetoric], *Seijō daigaku inobēshon gakkai shakai inobēshon kenkyū* 2, no. 1 (2006), pp. 25ff.

create a setup through which Asia is able to develop human resources which can successfully work towards peace building, make use of Asia's experiences to date and drawing on knowledge and know-how broadly from around the globe.'[325]

A lot of goodwill was evident, but no takeoff occurred. One of the starting points for the international campaign for human security that Obuchi initiated was to use Japan's sizeable ODA as a tool in Japan's pursuit of human security. This did not work as he envisaged. Japan's urge to be a leader influenced its campaign for human security, as other countries, such as the founders of the HSN, Canada and Norway, shared the same ambition. The reason for Norway's advocacy of human security was its search for 'humanitarian large power status', according to Astri Suhrke.[326] It clashed with Japan's own interest in being seen as No. 1 in the pursuit of human security in the international context, resulting in a competition that was not conducive to collaboration.[327] Nonetheless, as noted by Paul Bacon, the broader 'Japanese' perspective was reflected in UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's reports on Human Security in 2010 and 2012, which made an explicit distinction between human security and R2P and specifically ruled out the use of force. The 'Japanese' perspective had, therefore, emerged as the 'officially approved' version of human security. However, the breadth of the Japanese concept sometimes proved a vice.[328] That Japan's perspective had impacted Secretary-General Ban could be noted in his message to the symposium on human security organized by MOFA in 2010. He praised Japan for its leadership in promoting human security. This was quite striking for me as a reader of his report submitted to the General Assembly shortly before the symposium, in which Japan was mentioned only once, and then, at the very end of the report, as second among four countries: Greece, Japan, Slovenia, and Thailand. Moreover,

---

325 Taro Aso, 'A Networked Asia: Conceptualizing a Future,' Speech by Mr Taro Aso, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the Occasion of the 12th Nikkei International Conference on the Future of Asia, May 26, 2006.

326 Astri Suhrke, 'Human Security and the Interests of States,' *Security Dialogue* 30, no. 3 (1999), p. 287.

327 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 2.

328 Bacon, 'The politics of human security in Japan,' p. 2.

nothing done by Japan in this field was mentioned, much less in which way Japan had shown leadership.

Japan's desire to be in the driver's seat raised concerns among its human security proponents. Behind their focus on conceptual differences with Canada as an obstacle to collaboration lay Japanese apprehension about the reactions of countries important to Japan's campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council. India and several developed countries were skeptical of the idea of human security. They wanted to emphasize the importance of the sovereignty of nations. Knowing this apprehension of developing countries, the Japanese government focused on the developmental and economic aspects of human security. Henceforth, Japan's commitment to the concept of human security was expressed mainly through its development aid programs.[329]

The other Japanese tool for promoting human security internationally, the UNTFHS, was a Japanese institution despite changes to its statutes. Japan's unwillingness to abandon its right to decide how the fund's financial resources were used diminished the support from other UN members. Adopting a general pro-development stance and a vaguely defined definition and approach to human security did not work, so the UNTFHS did not become a success. This was reflected in the first comprehensive assessment of the UN's pursuit of human security issued in 2010 by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. While he was outspoken in his praise for Japan's all-out effort to mainstream human security in the UN context, it had not worked, so the secretary-general begged UN members to take action: 'At the Secretariat, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security has played an important role in addressing human security challenges. In addition to the valuable support provided by the Governments of Greece, Japan, Slovenia and Thailand, I strongly urge other Member States to contribute to the valuable work of the Trust Fund.'[330] That's all. Nothing

329 Sung Won Kim, 'Human Security with an Asian Face?' *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 17, no. 1, Article 5 (2010), p. 9.

330 United Nations, General Assembly, 'Human security: Report of the Secretary-General,' Sixty-

done by Japan in this field is mentioned, much less in which way Japan had shown leadership. To Japan's ardent human security proponents, the secretary-general's report must have been disappointing.[331]

Seven years later, the prolific human security writer Fukushima Akiko went public once again with her views. She found that 'Japan has to promote institutions that can function as platforms for cooperation. This demands informed idea leadership. In other words, if Japan wants to stay relevant, it has to seek a more enlightened approach to multilateralism. […] Japan needs to find a key common denominator with the United States and like-minded countries that is still palatable to countries that disagree. Such a phrase might be "liberal democracy" or "human security".'[332] Her comment rested on the insight that the collaboration that Obuchi saw as *sine qua non* had long been missing, not least because of Japan's intransigence in entering into collaboration with others. The result was that few alliances formed among participants pursuing human security with Japan. In that respect, the UNTFHS became a failure because Japan's urge to become 'No. 1' at least in one area, human security, outweighed other considerations that guided the actions taken and policies devised by Japan.

fourth session, Agenda items 48 and 114, A/64/701, March 8, 2010, p. 17.

331 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 1.

332 Akiko Fukushima, 'Multilateralism Recalibrated: Japan's Engagement in Institution Building in the Past 70 Years and Beyond,' in *Postwar Japan: Growth, Security, and Uncertainty since 1945*, edited by Michael J. Green and Zack Cooper (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), p. 34.

The UHC Knowledge Hub

When Obuchi chose the UN as the main track for Japan's pursuit of human security, it eventually dawned on the Japanese government that its ardent wish to exert leadership and build collaboration with others was far from easy. The Koizumi government's decision to change human security from being a pillar of Japan's foreign policy to one of the five basic policies of its ODA policy derailed Obuchi's and Mori's vision of human security as the backbone of Japan's foreign policy. As a basic policy among five, and not a pillar of foreign policy, the concept dear to Ogata was clearly demoted. However, in parallel with this development and its effects, a new track for pursuing human security gradually evolved, leading to the establishment in December 2025 of the UHC Knowledge Hub as the second UN institution in Japan, alongside the UN University; UHC stands for Universal Health Coverage.

In my interview with Takemi Keizō in October 2025, he outlined how Japan's pursuit of human security had developed. He stressed that health is a core part of human security. Amartya Sen's human security conceptual framework explains why Japan has consistently focused on health. Health is not the only alternative for getting a meaningful lift. By losing one's health, other options are lost. Therefore, health belongs to the core of human security. The concept of human security is still vague. It is not clear as a concept that can be directly utilized for policy-making and prioritization. However, what is essential is that this framework, spiritually, gives us the incentive to commit to health.

Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō defined health as a core part of human security, and the Japanese government focused on this global issue, for example, at the Millennium Summit. Health issues became the main agenda through the MDGs in 2000. Five of the eight MDG goals are health-related. The Japanese government has consistently concentrated

on health as a global issue. At the G8 Kyūshū-Okinawa Summit in 2000, G8 countries agreed to implement an ambitious plan to address HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Prime Minister Mori announced that Japan would donate US$3 billion for the fight against infectious diseases. Therefore, it was the golden age of global health financing. This Japanese commitment to fighting infectious diseases led to the establishment of the foundation for the fight against AIDS/HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, which is now known as The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Japanese government has consistently contributed to this fund for many years.

An important step was taken at the G8 Hokkaidō-Tōyako Summit in 2008. A year before the Summit, Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo asked Takemi to be the head of the task force preparing policy recommendations for the Summit. Fukuda's choice of Takemi for such a vital task is interesting. He had lost his election to Japan's parliament in the summer of 2007 and been invited to Harvard University as a guest researcher. Later, he wrote, it was 'strengthening my ability to serve as a global health policymaker for Japan and the world.'[333].

Preparing for the Summit, Takemi focused on broad-based cooperation, but with a focus that differed from Japan's approach so far with its focus on UN members. In a situation where the lack of support for the UNTFHS showed that Japan's ambition to mainstream human security had failed, he organized a working group that supported working out the agenda for the international conference and provided intellectual input.

Mobilizing his extensive network, Takemi recruited domestic and international partners to the working group. On the government side, members included the Director-General of the International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Vice-Minister for Technical Affairs of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Director-General

333 Keizo Takemi, 'Preface to the Special Issue by Keizo Takemi, Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare, Japan' (editorial). *Health Systems & Reform* 10, no. 2 (2024)

of the International Bureau of the Ministry of Finance, directors in charge of JICA and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), and the President of the National Center for Global Health and Medicine. The private side was represented by the President of the JCIE, the President of the Nippon Foundation, representatives of health-related NGOs, and academic experts from universities. Moreover, expert groups in the field of global health policy have been organized overseas, particularly an informal working group centered around professors from the Harvard School of Public Health.[334]

Members were chosen in a way that demonstrates that Takemi was as aware of the need for multilevel cooperation as Obuchi and wanted to promote integrated public-public and public-private collaboration. In my interview with Takemi, he stressed that the concept of human security had been useful in convincing bureaucrats to come together and participate in the task force. To overcome bureaucratic silos, the secretariat was housed at the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE).

Based on the working group's deliberations, Takemi told Prime Minister Fukuda that health should be given priority. Takemi was a bit surprised by the prime minister's reaction when he said that health is essential because it is closely related to human security. As host of the G8 Hokkaidō-Tōyako Summit, Japan stressed the importance of strengthening health systems and defined the health systems approach as a key framework for global health decision-making (interview with Takemi, October 14, 2025). A result of the 2008 G8 Hokkaidō-Tōyako Summit was the Toyako Framework for Action on Global Health, which emphasized the strengthening of the health system.

International partners were added as a follow-up to the G8 Summit. MOFA co-hosted an international conference together with the World Bank, the WHO, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. In conjunction

334 Takemi Keizō, '21 seikigata no pawāporitikusu to waga kuni no herusu-dipuromasī' [21st century power politics and Japan's health diplomacy], *Gaikō* 5 (2011), p. 42.

with the G8 follow-up, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare submitted a resolution on health systems strengthening to the WHO General Assembly, the first such resolution in over 50 years since Japan joined the WHO. Prior to submitting the resolution to the WHO Executive Board in January, Japan solicited co-sponsors. This quickly gained the support of Asian countries, including China, South Korea, and Thailand, and even encouraged African and Latin American countries to join the co-sponsors. As a result, the number of co-sponsors had grown to 43 at the WHO General Assembly in May, and the resolution was adopted.[335] The multilevel nature of the cooperation that emerged is captured in Table 1.[336]

Table 1. The Role of the Takemi Study Group in 'Challenges in Global Health and Japan's Contribution'

Coordination between domestic ministries & agencies	Constructed an 'all-Japan' system by coordinating between domestic ministries and agencies and a forum for participation by various stakeholders including intellectuals and the private sector.
International network	Built up an international network including Japanese and overseas foundations, research institutes, corporations and civic society, and tried to make use of professional knowledge from a global perspective.
International transmission power	Carried out information transmission to the international community by publishing an article in the internationally respected authoritative journal, *The Lancet,* and by participating in international conferences.

Source: Ohno (2011), p. 107.

335 Ibid., p. 44.

336 Izumi Ohno, 'The Strategic Environment Surrounding the Developing Countries and Japan's Development Cooperation: To Be a Global Civilian Power,' in *The World and Japan's Foreign Policy in the Future: Prospects in 20 Years* (Tokyo: The Japan Institute of International Affairs, 2011), p. 107.

Parallel to his work as a political heavyweight in Japanese politics, Takemi continued to promote human security. He viewed health as a core part of human security and served as chair of the Executive Committee on Global Health and Human Security, which has supported the Japanese government's health policy decision-making. It is a platform for private and public collaboration with its roots in the task force on agenda-setting at the G8 Summit in 2008. After its launch in 2007, quarterly meetings provided a venue for unofficial exchanges of views and information-sharing among government ministries, academia, private companies, and civil society organizations in Japan. The Executive Committee contributed to the Japanese government's health policy decision-making. Over the years, 53 meetings have convened to prepare policy recommendations.

In 2013, Prime Minister Abe committed to contributing to the development of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).[337] At the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in 2016, the Japanese government reiterated the importance of global health. Outcome documents were issued on quality infrastructure investment, global health, capacity building of women and girls, cybersecurity, anti-corruption, and anti-terrorism, and the countries participating committed to the G7 Ise-Shima Vision for Global Health with concrete action plans for the reinforcement of the global health architecture, attainment of universal health care, antimicrobial resistance, and research and development for innovative medicine initiative.

To prepare for the 2023 Hiroshima G7 Summit in the context of the rapidly evolving global health architecture, the Hiroshima G7 Global Health Task Force under the Executive Committee on Global Health and Human Security was established in July 2022. It was launched to make recommendations to the Japanese government on the global health agenda and offer concrete measures that the Summit and related ministers' meetings could take up. As a follow-up initiative, the 'Global Health Multistakeholder Dialogue: from Hiroshima to Puglia' was organized in

337 Shinzo Abe, 'Japan's strategy for global health diplomacy: why it matters,' *Lancet* 382, no. 9896 (2013).

partnership with eight organizations. Its final report was presented to the G7 members in December 2023.[338]

The establishment of the UHC Knowledge Hub is significant for international cooperation on global health. The Japanese government, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Finance launched the UHC Knowledge Hub in cooperation with the World Bank Group and the World Health Organization (WHO). To support this knowledge hub, the WHO opened a branch in Tokyo, and the WHO and the World Bank established a joint office there. Takemi is proud that, after the UN University, the UHC Knowledge Hub is the second UN-related institution in Japan.

The new knowledge hub sheds light on the two aspects of Japan's human security endeavor discussed above. The first is that its establishment has been made possible by the dedication to cooperation, both nationally and internationally. The insight that promoting universal health care makes international cooperation mandatory has been a driving force. The second is the insight that, for Japan to make an imprint globally, solid national backing is equally compulsory. The Executive Committee's membership includes politicians, government officials, scholars, and representatives of businesses and organizations. The members have all the trappings of constituting an epistemic community, but Takemi sees it as much more institutionalized than an epistemic community would be (interview with Takemi, October 14, 2025). That the hub is located in Tokyo is recognition of Japan's long history of promoting global health and a tribute to Takemi and his devotion to improving global health and human security.

338 Secretariat of the Executive Committee on Global Health and Human Security [2024]. Unpublished memo.

Concluding Remarks

The Life Story of Japan's 'Human Security'

The period when human security was in the limelight as a significant element of Japan's foreign policy was brief. Its breakthrough came quickly, as reflected in the fact that it was included in Iokibe Makoto's classic history of Japan's foreign policy, issued a few months after Obuchi's two important speeches in Tokyo and Hanoi in December 1998.[339] As quick as its ascendancy had been, equally drastic was the way human security was discarded as a matter of foreign policy. The shift came shortly thereafter, with the 2003 ODA Charter, which implied that human security was no longer part of Japan's foreign policy. In a 2004 comprehensive anthology on human security, the author of the chapter on Japan described human security as an element of Japan's *enjo gaikō* or aid diplomacy, not foreign policy.[340] Five years later, another human security analyst shouldered the same task and did so, basing himself mainly on sources from the initial years of the millennium,[341] seemingly not finding it worthwhile to use sources issued after 2004. As noted above, when a new edition of Iokibe's history of foreign policy was issued in 2006, human security was not referenced.

The period when human security was a much-hyped foreign policy concept was brief. Its trajectory ranged from Obuchi's view that it constituted the core of Japan's long-term foreign policy to Mori's assertion that it was the pillar of Japanese peace diplomacy of the 21st century, and ended when

339 Iokibe Makoto, ed. *Sengo Nihon gaikōshi* [A history of postwar Japanese foreign policy] (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1999).

340 Kurosawa Satoru and Kawamura Mari, 'Nihon no enjo gaikō to ningen no anzen hoshō: Heiwa kōchiku no shiten kara' [Japan's aid diplomacy and human security: From the viewpoint of peace building], in *Ningen no anzen hoshō: Sekai kiki hōsen* [Human security: Meeting the global challenges], edited by Satō Makoto and Andō Tsugio (Tokyo: Tōshindō, 2004).

341 Satō Makoto, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō to Nihon no gaikō seisaku' [Human security and Japan's foreign policy], in *Ningen no anzen hoshō: Kokka chūshinshugi o koete* [Human security: Beyond state centrism], edited by Mushakōji Kinhide (Tokyo: Minerva shobō, 2009).

Kozumi made it an element of Japan's ODA policy. Initially, he continued Obuchi's and Mori's policy, but 9/11 changed the way the world talked the talk and walked the walk. Koizumi used Japan's emergence as a devoted promoter of human security as an argument in Japan's campaign for a permanent UN Security Council seat, but it was to no avail. The campaign failed. From being seen by Obuchi and Mori as the basis of Japan's long-term foreign policy, the status of human security was diluted: from one of five basic policies of Japan's ODA policy, then one of three, and later one of four (see Table 2).

Table 2. The Life Story of Japan's 'Human Security'

Phase 1: 1999–2000	A pillar-to-be of Japan's long-term foreign policy
Phase 2: 2001–2003	A priority of Japan's foreign policy
Phase 3: 2003–2015	One of the five basic policies of Japan's ODA policy
Phase 4: 2015–2023	One of the three basic policies of Japan's development cooperation
Phase 5: 2023–	One of the four basic policies of Japan's development cooperation

Source: Adapted from Edström, Japan and Human Security, p. 46.

In my 2011 report, I cited two analysts who summarized Japan's achievements. Yamasaki (2009) listed the main achievements of Japan's pursuit of human security as: (1) Japan provided about three hundred million dollars to establish the UNTFHS; (2) the Japanese government supported and hosted the CHS; (3) the ODA and JICA projects were planned in accordance with the idea of human security; and (4) the Japanese government established and supported the Friends of Human Security.[342] A similar inventory was presented by Toyoshima (2009) listing the results as: (1) the UNTFHS; (2) the CHS; (3) [human security] symposiums; and (4) the Friends of Human Security.[343] It is notable that both Yamasaki and

342 Michi Yamasaki, 'A Study of Middle Power Diplomacy as a Strategy of Leadership and Influence,' MA thesis. University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada (2009), pp. 113–116.

343 Toyoshima, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō seisaku ni miru Nihon no shisei,' p. 80.

Toyoshima did not present actual achievements but listed the allocation of money and/or the establishment of institutions.[344] What can be noted is that the deeds elevated by Yamasaki and Toyoshima now essentially belong to history. However, concurrently with these deeds, JICA continued as the only development cooperation agency in the world that makes human security its primary mission, engaging in human security advancing projects in partner countries. However, with Japan's heydays of being the 'No. 1' ODA great power over, JICA can no longer avoid economizing but prioritizes effective aid over size, as JICA President Tanaka Akihiko points out (interview with Tanaka, October 14, 2025). Continuing to work according to Japanese ideas of how to work, the Japanese found that, in a moment when Japan was itself in need, in the aftermath of the 2011 Tōhoku triple catastrophe, the scale of the support Japan received was staggering. Prime Minister Noda Yoshihiko noted, when he commented on the support Japan had received, that over 160 countries and more than 40 international organizations offered assistance.[345]

In her analysis of Japan's narrative on human security, Sarah Tanke remarks that 'most of the academic literature on Japan and human security has been written at the beginning of the twenty-first century … little has been published after 2013.'[346] Human security has indeed figured in parliamentary debates every year, which Tanke points out. Still, it is hard to say that it has been a central topic. Her two further proofs for the vitality of human security in the Japanese context relate to Japan's activities in the United Nations, but, as is only too evident from my discussion above, it is hard to say that Japan's ambitions have been overly successful. The CHS belongs to history, and the UNTFHS's activities are far from what Obuchi and Mori envisaged. Apart from marginal contributions from a few other countries, it has received funding only from Japan. Furthermore, what counts as successes in Japanese eyes, the

344 Edström, *Japan and Human Security,* p. 56.

345 Noda Yoshihiko, Speech at 'Reception to Express Respect to Ms. Ogata Sadako on her Contributions to Japan and the International Community,' April 17, 2012.

346 Tanke, 'Japan's narrative on human security,' p. 421.

2005 and 2012 UNGA resolutions, did not mean that human security had won a prominent place, not even in the UN context. This state of affairs is reflected in the present report, which is my third and final overview of the development of human security in the Japanese context, beginning as a hyped concept in Japan's foreign policy and continuing as the central idea of Japan's ODA policy a. k. a. development cooperation policy.

The overview presented above reflects not only Japan's current perceived international impact but also that human security remains an important concept for Japan. In a recent Canadian survey of international approaches to human security, the UN, EU/OSCE, NATO, the UK, and Canada are discussed, but Japan is not.[347] It is hardly a coincidence or a belated act of revenge of the international actor that was once Japan's primary adversary in human security.

As cited above, Clausen remarked in 2009 that Prime Ministers Obuchi's and Mori's early personal attention to human security had been replaced by MOFA and JICA taking over and becoming 'the *de facto* owners' of Japan's human security initiatives. In the Japanese government, the unit handling human security is MOFA's International Cooperation Bureau. According to MOFA's homepage, the Bureau takes charge of:

> policy formulation and implementation of Official Development Assistance; foreign policy on global issues and development cooperation with international organizations; issues related to human security and global health; foreign policy on UN and other specialized agencies concerning social and economic affairs; issues related to global environment and climate change; survey of the international economic cooperation situation and compilation of statistics and collection of data concerning international economic cooperation; issues related to the Japan International Cooperation Agency; matters concerning humanitarian assistance and enforcement of the law concerning dispatch of Japan disaster relief teams, assistance to NGOs as well as other matters relating to economic cooperation. [348]

---

347 Daniel Bajt et al., 'International Approaches to Human Security,' *Canadian Military Journal* 25, no. 2 (2025).

348 MOFA, 'About Us: Organization,' April 14, 2026.

The International Cooperation Bureau's responsibilities are so multifarious and wide-ranging that human security does not emerge as a priority. How about the Global Issues Cooperation Division, which is responsible for human security within the Bureau? On April 14, 2026, the MOFA homepage reports that the 'Global Issues & ODA' covers ODA, human security, the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, disaster risk reduction, health, environment, climate change, Arctic and Antarctic, science and technology, maritime affairs, and specialized agencies.[349] Continuing to MOFA's homepage for 'Human Security', which has not been updated since March 5, 2019, eight areas are listed: 'Assistances through the Trust Fund for Human Security,' dated October 7, 2014, presents projects from November 2011 up to October 7, 2014; 'Other Assistances for Human Security,' dated September 11, 2012, covers four items from 2012; 'Commission on Human Security' lists four items, 2001–2003; 'Friends of Human Security,' dated February 9, 2016, lists reports from seven meetings of the Friends, 2006–2009; 'Chronology of activities related to Human Security by the Japanese Government' lists items from December 1998 to February 2003; 'Symposia, Seminars and Meetings' lists one event in 2013 and one in 2019; and 'Speeches by Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Japanese representatives' lists items from December 1998 to May 2008, and 'Archives' which covers the period from 1999 to 2010.

In essence, the information on 'Human Security' on MOFA's homepage is largely dated, which may result from a lack of recent events and data to report or from the homepage not being updated. Either way indicates that human security is no longer a priority for MOFA. It is evident that MOFA has abdicated its role as the *de facto* owner of initiatives promoting the human security concept, as Clausen observed in 2009. Today, human security does not emerge as a priority for MOFA, whereas it is for JICA. Long past is the period when the Japanese government appointed a special ambassador for human security.

349 MOFA, Foreign policy, Global Issues & ODA, April 14, 2026.

When Tanaka Akihiko took over after Ogata Sadako as JICA President, he seems to have seen it as his duty as a leading political science scholar to contribute to elucidating the theoretical foundations of the central concept guiding JICA's activities, human security. In his 2015 paper 'Towards a Theory of Human Security,' Tanaka points out that there are limitations to what single states, even high-income countries, can do to adequately respond to many of the effects of geological, geographic, climatic, biological, ecological, economic and social phenomena. A telling example, he says, 'is that of Japan, one of the world's highest-income countries, [that] became one of the largest aid recipients after the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake in 2011.'[350] As he observes:

> Threats to human security, if broadly defined, appear so numerous that a simple theory of deterrence and mutual deterrence, which dominated security studies during the Cold War, would not be sufficient. Not only are threats diverse and numerous: possible measures to cope with them seemingly encompass almost all social measures. If threats to human security include sudden financial market fluctuation, earthquakes, epidemics, civil wars, and so on, measures of human security may include all of the policy tools that the entire government bureaucracy disposes of.[351]

No wonder that Tanaka, at the outset of his study, welcomes studies of human security that go beyond the human-security studies so far presented with their broad definitions.[352] However, equally telling is that he concludes his report by admitting that the observations he presents in his report to elucidate the causes of the threats to human security, and their interaction with each other, and suggesting useful instruments, are but preliminary, tentative, and hypothetical.[353]

As a conclusion to the present report about Japan's pursuit of human

350 Tanaka, 'Toward a Theory of Human Security,' p. 19.

351 Ibid., pp. 4f.

352 Ibid., p. 6.

353 Ibid., p. 20.

security, three aspects of its evolution will be highlighted: the definitional quagmire that has been a fellow passenger to the human security debate over the years, Japan's myopic human security view, and the static image of Japan's 'human security.'

Definitional Quagmire

A peculiarity that has characterized the pursuit of human security is the lack of a stringent definition of the concept. The CHS was criticized for failing to provide a definition that was easy to grasp and could be universally shared.[354] However, it was a criticism that missed its target. The definitional tasks, such as they were, did not come first for the CHS. Its priority was to promote public understanding of, engagement with, and support for human security; the CHS was intended to function as a kind of sales or PR agency for the concept.[355] If some were to be criticized for the lack of a clear-cut definition in the CHS's report, it is those who appointed the CHS and formulated its directives.[356] The working definition used by the CHS ended up being broad because its co-chair, Ogata Sadako, wanted the conceptual scope of human security to be comprehensive, which made it an *ōburoshiki* concept. Her approach has been captured by Daniel Traschler. 'It is not a question of terminological purism, but on the usability of the concept, what the concept is to be used for, and which partners one is looking for among international organizations and other countries.'[357]

The vagueness of the human security concept was advantageous to Japan, when it sought sponsors for the UNTFHS. The vagueness enabled actors to tailor the definition of human security to their needs and interests in each case. This had a flipside. With many on board, many with differing ideas about human security, there were competing interpretations of what it constituted and how it should be instrumentalized. Camps formed,

354 Atanassova-Cornelis, 'Defining and Implementing Human Security,' p. 47.

355 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 28.

356 Ibid., p. 29; Bacon, 'The politics of human security in Japan,' p. 29.

357 Daniel Traschler, 'Menschliche Sicherheit: Klärungsbedürftiges Konzept, Vielversprechende Praxis,' *Bulletin 2003 zur schweizerischen Sicherheitspolitik*, p. 96.

which became an obstacle to collaboration.

Japan's lack of interest in contributing to making the concept of human security precise led to its contributions to human security being primarily financial, both regionally and globally. Its engagement took primarily the form of funds and ODA.[358] The downside of this approach was that Japan's pursuit of human security did not add the dimension the country so sorely lacked, ideas for improving the way international relations worked. Kitaoka's Human Security 2.0 initiative can be seen as a move to rectify this. While human security was not a concept 'Made in Japan,' Japan adopted it, and, as Kitaoka has pointed out, JICA is the only development cooperation agency in the world that advocates human security as its main mission.[359]

Japan's Myopic Human Security View

Views representative of the group around Obuchi, which was masterminding Japanese activities aimed at pursuing human security, were those which they saw would improve Japan's place in the world. One of the central figures behind Japan's Obuchi-initiated campaign for human security was Takemi Keizō. He argued: 'Although Japan is often criticized for not taking a leadership role effectively as a responsible state, Japan has been giving close attention to this new concept of human security before any other country.'[360] Similarly, Yamamoto Tadashi was another central figure in Japan's human security campaign, who in 2003 gave his angle on Japan's pursuit of human security: 'Japan by no means has any exclusive claim to "ownership" of the concept of human security. […] Yet, no other government has gone so far as the government of Japan to incorporate human security as a major framework of its foreign policy.' [361] As noted above, Inoguchi Takashi discerned in 1999 a 'noticeable trait of activities

358 Shin-wha Lee and Chun Young Park, 'Korea's Middle Power Diplomacy for Human Security: A Global and Regional Approach,' *Journal of International and Area Studies* 24, no. 1 (2017), p. 33.

359 Kitaoka Shinichi, 'Foreword,' in *Human Security Today. Revisiting Human Security,* no. 1 (Tokyo: JICA Ogata Sadako Institute for Peace and Development, 2022), p. 1.

360 Keizo Takemi, 'Security and stability in Asia,' Speech at the Second Meeting of the Asian Statesmen's Forum, January 23, 2001.

361 Yamamoto, 'Human Security – From Concept to Action,' p. 3.

of the Japanese government to going it alone.'

After the Cold War was over, and Japan's foreign policy debacle in the Gulf War occurred, Japan needed ideas to guide its actions aimed at contributing to peace and conflict resolution, particularly as Japan's ODA began to decrease, according to international statistics and public debate in Japan. In a 2002 interview, Tanaka Akihiko pointed to the key role of ideas. According to him, 'Once we can come up with ideas, even if Japan's ODA budget shrinks, the ideas are expected to produce a multiplier effect that would more than make up for the loss.'[362] Human security came in handy. It was a concept and idea which Japanese officials and policymakers eagerly embraced. Pushing for this novel concept was seen to help Japan present itself as a norm entrepreneur, filling the bottle that was so empty—Japanese ideas of how the world could and should be run. Although the origin of the human security idea and the security thinking it represented did not originate in Japan, Japanese officials liked to depict it as 'Made in Japan.'[363] In 2003, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi Yoriko emphasized that Japan's ODA policies from 1954 shared basic ideas with the concept of human security even before it appeared and received attention as a 'new' concept.[364]

The downgrading of human security from the pillar of Japan's foreign policy, as envisaged by Obuchi and Mori, to a matter of ODA policy, was not noted by all. Precisely when the march downwards for Japan's human security as the pillar of Japan's foreign policy began, the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA) concluded that human security had turned into 'one of the most important political agendas as

362 'Interview: Tanaka Akihiko: ODA the price for minimum security levels,' *Asahi Shimbun,* September 20, 2002.

363 Shinoda Hideaki, 'Anzen hoshō gainen no tagika to "ningen no anzen hoshō"' [The proliferation of the meaning of the national security concept and "human security"], in *IPSHU kenkyūhōkoku 31: Ningen no anzen hoshō no saikentō* [IPSHU research report 31: A reassessment of human security], edited by Hiroshima daigaku heiwa kenkyū sentā (Hiroshima: Hiroshima daigaku heiwa kagaku kenkyū sentā, 2004), p. 72.

364 Kawaguchi Yoriko, 'Henka suru anzen hoshō kankyō to Nihon gaikō' [The changing national security environment and Japan's foreign policy], *Ronza,* no. 94 (2003), p. 189.

a concept which addresses comprehensively various kinds of threats to human survival, life and dignity and stresses the need to respond to such threats.'[365] Despite the downgrading of human security, Japan continued to be portrayed as an important international policymaker on human security. The leading human security researcher Fukushima Akiko wrote as late as 2013: 'The Japanese government has been a prime promoter of human security since Prime Minister Keizō Obuchi delivered his seminal speech on the concept on December 16, 1998.'[366]

Ironically, Ogata Sadako was one who initiated the demotion of human security. When she became JICA President, human security was her signature policy, and she pushed for a prominent place for human security in the revised ODA Charter of 2003. According to Purnendra Jain, it should be noted that 'while the charter includes humanitarian goals, it also makes clear their purpose: to ensure Japan's own security and prosperity.'[367] In other words, Ogata masterminded a policy that prioritized Japan's national interest over human security.

Maybe it was the insight that this was the case that made Ogata brutally honest when I interviewed her in 2010. I was taken aback when she did not object to my view that human security had not been a matter of foreign policy from around 2003–04, when it became an element of Japan's ODA policy. In a thought-provoking extension, this authority on Japan's pursuit of human security added that human security had never been of central importance to MOFA.[368]

When the leading human security researcher Kurusu Kaoru in 2016 summarized her research into human security stakeholders' perception, her conclusion was simple: 'Although the notion of human security has been accepted in the resolutions of the UN General Assembly, it has not yet be-

365 NIRA, 'Human Security: Examining the Role of Civil Society,' *NIRA Policy Research* 14, no. 5 (2003).

366 Fukushima, 'The Japanese Approach to Human Security'.

367 Jain, 'National Interest and Japan's Foreign Aid Policy'.

368 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 49.

come a mainstream concept accepted in all societies and countries in East Asia. Nor has Japanese society fully understood the concept yet.' [369] Kurusu continued in a way that must have been depressing for Japan's human-security protagonists, considering Japan's long-term human-security endeavor: 'Interviewees from various sectors, who have been active in human security-related policies and projects, found at least some utility in the human security concept. The findings through this analysis may sound relatively unexciting, for instance, compared with the way the emerging norm of "responsibility to protect" challenges state sovereignty and might have an impact on exceptional cases of humanitarian crisis if implemented.'

The Static Snapshot of Japan's Pursuit of Human Security

The image of Japan's human security has not only been myopic but also static. A paradoxical aspect of Japan's pursuit of human security is that, in Japanese rhetoric, human security has continued to be portrayed as a key element of foreign policy, also when it had become a part of ODA policy, that is, by definition, no longer a part of Japan's foreign policy.[370] Howe described how 'policymakers have identified a niche area where Japan can step up to its weight in the international arena, if not above it, the pursuance of which will promote national interest at the same time as improving the image of Japan as a benevolent international actor.'[371] It was a valid description but negated by Koizumi's change of Japan's ODA policy. In my study of 75 years of Japan's foreign policy doctrine, the human security concept is shown to have receded after a brief spurt around the millennium shift.[372] Yet, pundits and proponents continued to use a lingo that had been appropriate for a short period but was no longer. The leading voice for human security both in Japan and the UN, Takasu Yukio, wrote in 2014, a decade after human security's noticeable downgrading, that the utilization of human security by Tokyo had

369 Kurusu, 'Does the Concept of Human Security Generate Additional Value,' p. 41.

370 Edström, *Japan and Human Security*, p. 48.

371 Howe, 'Human Security, Peacebuilding, and the Responsibility to Protect in East Asia,' p. 188.

372 Edström, *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine,* passim.

prevailed across several governments.[373] Six years later, Iwami Tadashi found Obuchi and Mori's initial internalization of the concept of human security into Japan's foreign policy continued during successive administrations from both the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) under Koizumi Junichirō (2001–2006), Fukuda Yasuo (2007–2008), and Asō Tarō (2008–2009) and the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) under Hatoyama Yukio (2009–2010), Kan Naoto (2010–2011), Noda Yoshihiko (2011–2012) and Abe Shinzō (2006–2007; 2012–[2020]).[374]

It was as if what belonged to the past since the early 2000s still remained a valid description. To quote a few cases in the plethora of such claims: the South Korean diplomat Kim Sun-won wrote in 2010 of human security as still a central concept of Japanese foreign policy: 'Japan finds the human security approach helpful in raising its political and economic profile in Asia and beyond without raising too many concerns about Japanese national interests and intentions.'[375] Surveying post-Obuchi governments, Suzuki (2012) notes a continued commitment to promoting the mainstreaming of the concept of human security.[376] In 2013, a decade after the CHS ceased to exist and Japan's financial contributions to the UNTFHS were no longer impressive, Howe and Campbell wrote: 'The Commission on Human Security was established after a meeting in Tokyo between UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Ogata Sadako in January 2001 in response to Japan's call at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. The commission aimed to develop the concept of human security and propose a concrete program of action for the international community. Japan has continued to push the human security agenda, regularly hosts international symposia on the subject, and contributes significant sums of ODA, especially for East Asian countries, in order to

373 Yukio Takasu, 'Japan and networked human security,' in *Routledge Handbook of Human Security*, edited by Mary Martin and Taylor Owen (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).

374 Iwami, 'Japan's Human Security and Peacebuilding in the Twenty-First Century,' pp. 200f.

375 Kim, 'Human Security with an Asian Face?' p. 94.

376 Tomoko Suzuki, 'Japan as a Champion of Human Security,' *Global Health Governance* 6, no. 1 (2012), pp. 1–3.

promote human security and protect individual well-being'.[377] In 2017, the Taiwanese IR scholar Tsai Yu-tai wrote: 'Since 1998, Japan has adopted a broad concept of human security as the foreign policy for gaining global influence without revising the 1947 peace constitution'. Moreover, he claims that Japan is the UN's second largest donor.[378] The latter refers to a 2005 statement by Japan's then UN Ambassador Ozawa Toshirō, which has been long incorrect. In a standard work issued in 2020, Iwami reiterates as valid that which had capsized almost two decades ago: 'Japan seeks to continuously internalize human security as the core concept of its foreign policy in the twenty-first century.'[379]

What Next?

For Japan, it's time for visioneering. At the outset of its human security campaign, Japan chose collaboration with the United Nations as the path to becoming the pre-eminent international human security actor. This collaboration focused on the UN secretary-general, inadvertently indicating that Japan underestimated the value of collaborating with UN members, even though multilevel collaboration was one of the starting points for Obuchi. The fact that very few UN members joined the UNTFHS can be seen as a response. The root cause of Japan's failure to secure broad support for its human security campaign was its drive to become No. 1, which led Japan to abstain from, or even reject, collaboration with potentially significant partners. As it turned out, the Japanese will to become No. 1 nullified its chance to be recognized as the pre-eminent international human security actor; the role was secured by Canada. This situation did not change when Ogata became JICA President. However eminent she was, with an impressive career as a scholar, a diplomat, and a former UNHCR, she could not link Japan's policy to a path that would make Japan attain what it longed for—to be No. 1. It did not help much that UN Secretaries-General Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-moon were seen on

377 Brendan M. Howe and Joel R. Campbell, 'Continuity and change: Evolution, not revolution, in Japan's foreign and security policy under the DPJ,' *Asian Perspective* 37, no. 1 (2013), p. 109.

378 Tsai Yu-tai, 'From Human Security to the Responsibility to Protect: What Role Can Japan Play in an Altering Foreign Policy?' Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association (2017), p. 4.

379 Iwami, 'Japan's Human Security and Peacebuilding in the Twenty-First Century,' p. 201.

the barricades together with Japan. For Annan, it made sense to praise Japan and hail its leadership on human security, as it was a divination plant that needed care to grow.

As Japan's UN ambassador, Kitaoka Shinichi witnessed other UN member states showing little interest in Japan's pursuit of human security. Worse for Japan's ambition to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council was the lack of interest Prime Minister Koizumi demonstrated for human security and Japan's campaign, which, according to Kitaoka, torpedoed Japan's permanent seat campaign.

In a situation where the UN Security Council was often paralyzed by disagreement and conflict among its members, the United Nations did not become the successful vehicle for gaining international influence that Japan had hoped for. Japan's work for human security was primarily carried out through JICA, which became the only aid agency to base its work on human security. As JICA President, Kitaoka was rather fond of Japan acting alone because of the difficulties it encountered in the international community.

Instead of focusing on collaborating with other UN members, a complementary undertaking emerged with Takemi Keizō as the central actor. He was the one who alerted Foreign Minister Obuchi Keizō to the importance of human security and has over the years been a key actor not only in the Japanese context but also internationally. Similar to Obuchi, Takemi realizes the vital role cooperation plays. In a situation with almost total lack of support among UN member states for the UNTFHS, he focused instead on collaboration, both in a Japanese and an international context, with those willing to support global health, which, according to him, is the core area of human security. Preparing Japan's input to the 2008 G8 Hokkaidō Tōyako Summit, the working group he organized initiated a new development. What commenced was a work spanning many years, crowned by the establishment of the UHC Knowledge Hub, inaugurated in December 2025.

With the UHC Knowledge Hub, the dawn of a new Japanese human security strategy is discernable. Japan is advancing its human security pursuit through JICA and the new UN agency. Here, a tandem strategy can be seen emerging. A tandem strategy involves coordinating two or more elements—such as technologies, processes, or people—to work sequentially or simultaneously to achieve higher efficiency, better performance, or shared goals. Such strategies are used across several areas of human activity, such as chemistry, language learning, education, medicine, and biology. Japan's human security tandem strategy, which is in the offing, offers an opportunity to improve the human security situation by combining and coordinating the work of JICA and the UHC Knowledge Hub, protecting and empowering vulnerable people who are victims of threats to their human security.

Bibliography

Abe, Shinzō. 2013a. 'Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, at the Sixty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations' (September 26), http://japan.kantei.go.jp/ 96_abe/statement/201309/26generaldebate_e.html.

Abe, Shinzo. 2013b. 'Japan's strategy for global health diplomacy: why it matters'. *Lancet*, 382, no. 9896 (September 14): 915–916, https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000014304.pdf.

Acharya, Amitav. 2004. 'The Nexus Between Human Security and Traditional Security in Asia'. In *Proceedings. International Conference on Human Security in East Asia, June 16–17, 2003, Seoul, Republic of Korea*, 103–120. Seoul: UNESCO, Korean National Commission for UNESCO and Ilmin International Relations Institute of Korea University, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000136506.

Acharya, Amitav, and Arabinda Acharya. 2000. 'Human Security in Asia Pacific: Puzzle, Panacea or Peril?' *CANCAPS Bulletin,* no. 27: 1–5, https://www.yorku.ca/drache/talks/pdf/acharya_delhi.pdf.

Adachi, Kenki. 2024. 'The Resurgence of Human Security in Japan's Foreign Policy'. In *Handbook of Japan's Foreign and Domestic Policies during the Decade of Abe*, edited by Tosh Minohara, 245–260. Abingdon, Oxon: Amsterdam University Press.

Akimoto, Daisuke. 2011. 'Negative Pacifism' and 'Positive Pacifism': Japan's Changing Security Identity and Implications for International Peace and Security'. PhD diss. University of Western Sydney, https://researchers-admin.westernsydney.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/94890340/uws_28406.pdf.

Akiyama, Nobumasa. 2004. 'Human Security at the Crossroad: Human Security in the Japanese Foreign Policy Context'. In *Conflict and Human Security: A Search for New Approaches of Peace-building*, edited by Hideaki Shinoda and Ho-Won Jeong, IPSHU English Research Report Series no. 19, 252–270. Hiroshima: Hiroshima University, Institute for Peace Science.

Akiyama, Takamasa, and Takehiko Nakao. 2005. 'Japanese ODA: Adapting to the Issues and Challenges of the New Aid Environment'. *FASID Discussion Paper on Development Assistance*, no. 8, https://www.fasid.or.jp/english/files/discussion_paper/DP_8_E.pdf.

Annan, Kofi A. 1997. Speech at a luncheon hosted by the United Nations Association of Japan in Tokyo, May 13, 1997. United Nations, *Press Release* SG/SM/6236, https://dokumen.pub/the-collected-papers-of-kofi-annan-un-secretary-general-1997-2006-9781588269386.html.

Annan, Kofi. 1999. 'Japan's World Role in the Twenty-first Century'. United Nations, *Press Release*, SG/SM/7209, UNU/192 (November 10), http://www.un.org/news/Press/ docs/1999/19991110.sgsm7209.doc.html (accessed February 3, 2006).

Annan, Kofi. 2001. Message from the UN Secretary-General, Mr. K. Annan, to the first meeting of the Commission on Human Security, Greentree Estate, June 8–10, 2001, http://www. humansecurity-chs.org/activities/meetings/first/annan.html (accessed August 1, 2003).

Annan, Kofi A. 2005. *In Larger Freedom: Towards development, security and human rights for all.* Report of the Secretary-General. New York: United Nations.

Asahi Shimbun. 2002. 'Interview: Tanaka Akihiko: ODA the price for minimum security levels'. September 20.

Ashizawa, Kuniko. 2008. 'When Identity Matters: State Identity, Regional Institution-Building, and Japanese Foreign Policy'. *International Studies Review* 10: 571–598, https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1468-2486.2008.00805.X.

Asō, Tarō. 2006. 'A Networked Asia: Conceptualizing a Future'. Speech by Mr Taro Aso, Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the Occasion of the 12th Nikkei International Conference on the Future of Asia, May 26, 2006, http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0605-2.html.

Atanassova-Cornelis, Elena. 2006. 'Defining and Implementing Human Security: The Case of Japan'. In *Human Security on Foreign Policy Agendas. Changes, Concepts and Cases,* edited by Tobias Debiel and Sascha Werthes, 39–51. Duisburg-Essen: Institute for Development and Peace.

Bacon, Paul. 2014. 'The politics of human security in Japan'. In *Human Security and Japan's Triple Disaster: Responding to the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima nuclear crisis,* edited by Paul Bacon and Christopher Howe, 22–38. London and New York: Routledge.

Bajt, Daniel et al. 2025. 'International Approaches to Human Security'. *Canadian Military Journal* 25, no. 2: 62–67, https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection _2025/mdn-dnd/D12-8-25-2-eng.pdf.

Baldwin, David A. 1995. 'Security Studies and the End of the Cold War'. *World Politics* 48, no. 1: 117–141, http://jstor.org/stable/25053954.

Bernard, Jr., Prosper. 2006. 'Canada and Human Security: From the Axworthy Doctrine to Middle Power Internationalism'. *The American Review of Canadian Studies,* no. 36: 233–261, https://doi.org/10.1080/02722010609481699.

Blaker, Michael. 1993. 'Evaluating Japanese Diplomatic Performance'. In *Japan's Foreign Policy after the Cold War: Coping with Change,* edited by Gerald L. Curtis, 1–42. Armonk, New York, London: M.E. Sharpe.

Bosold, David, and Sascha Wertes. 2005. 'Human Security in Practice: Canadian and Japanese Experiences'. *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft/International Politics and Society,* no. 1: 84–101, https://www.fes.de/ipg/IPG1_2005/BOSOLDWERTHES.PDF.

Cels, Johann. 2012. 'Natural disasters and forced population displacements: A human security perspective'. Research Workshop: Human Security and Natural Disasters, Waseda University, Tokyo, February 20, 2000.

Clausen, Daniel. 2009. 'Japan and Human Security: A Powerful Discourse or a Useful Coping Mechanism?' *electronic journal of contemporary japanese studies.* Discussion Paper 3, https://japanesestudies.org.uk/discussionpapers/2009/Clausen.html.

Commission on Global Governance. 1995. *Our Global Neighbourhood.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Commission on Human Security. 2001. 'Report on the Second Meeting of the Commission on Human Security' (December 16–17), http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/ activities/meetings/second/index.html (accessed February 22, 2007).

Commission of Human Security. 2003. *Human Security Now.* New York: Commission of Human Security.

Court, Julius, Simon Maxwell, David Booth and Karin Christiansen. 2005. 'The G8, UK Aid Policies for African Development anions for Japan', ODI Japan Visit Report (June), http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Projects/RAP0011/docs/Tokyo_visit_report_ext.pdf (accessed March 5, 2006).

Deudney, Daniel. 1990. 'The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security.' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 19, no. 3: 461–476, https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298900190031001.

Drifte, Reinhard. 1998. 'Japan's Quest for a Permanent Seat on the Security Council'. *Asia–Pacific Review* 5, no. 2: 87–109, https://doi.org.10.1080.134390098087119981.

Easley, Leif-Eric, Tetsuo Kotani & Aki Mori. 2010. 'Electing a New Japanese

Security Policy? Examining Foreign Policy Visions within the Democratic Party of Japan'. *Asia Policy* 9, no. 1: 1-17 (advance release).

Edström, Bert. 2003. 'Japan's foreign policy and human security'. *Japan Forum* 15, no. 2: 209–225, https://doi.org/10.1080/0955800320001083 97.

Edström, Bert. 2004. 'Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō and Human Security'. Paper prepared for presentation at the First NAJS Conference on the Study of Contemporary Japanese Society, Göteborg, Sweden, April 22–24, 2004.

Edström, Bert. 2008. *Japan and the Challenge of Human Security: The Founding of a New Policy, 1995–2003*. Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy.

Edström, Bert. 2011. *Japan and Human Security: The Derailing of a Foreign Policy Vision.* Institute for Security and Development Policy, *Asia Paper* (March).

Edström, Bert. 2012. 'Japan's ODA Still Going Strong'. Institute for Security and Development Policy, *Policy Brief*, no. 95, https://www.isdp.eu//wp-content/uploads/publications/2012_edstrom_japan-oda.pdf.

Edström, Bert. 2025. *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine, 2nd ed.: The Long Postwar.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Franke, Volker. 2002. 'The Emperor Needs New Clothes: Securitizing Threats in the 21st Century'. *Peace and Conflict Studies* 9, no. 2, Article 1, https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=pcs.

Fujishige, Hiromi Nagata, Yuji Uesugi, Tomoaki Honda. 2022. *Japan's Peacekeeping at a Crossroads. Taking a Robust Stance or Remaining Hesitant?* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fukuda-Pharr, Sakiko, and Carol Messineo. 2012. 'Human Security: A critical review of the literature'. *CPRD Working Paper,* no. 11, https://www.e-ir.info/2014/07/05/a-critical-evaluation-of-the-concept-of-human-security/.

Fukushima, Akiko. 2004a. 'Human Security and Japanese Foreign Policy'. In *Human Security in East Asia.* International Conference on Human Security in East Asia, June 16–17, 2003. Seoul, Republic of Korea, 121–167. Seoul: Korean Commission for UNESCO and Ilmin International Relations Institute of Korea University, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000136506.

Fukushima, Akiko. 2004b. 'Human Security: Comparing Japanese and Canadian Governmental Thinking and Practice'. CCHS Human Security Visiting Fellow Paper. Vancouver: Canadian Consortium on Human Security.

Fukushima, Akiko. 2005. 'Review of Japan–Canada Cooperation for Peace and Security'. In *The 4th Canada–Japan Symposium on Peace and Security*

Cooperation, June 10–12, 2005. Tokyo: Research Institute for Peace and Security.

Fukushima Akiko. 2010. *Ningen no anzen hoshō. Gurōbaruka suru tayō na kyōi to seisaku frēmuwāku* [Human security: Multifaceted threats and policy framework under globalization]. Tokyo: Chikura shobō.

Fukushima, Akiko. 2013. 'The Japanese Approach to Human Security'. Paper for the GR:EEN Case Study Integrity Forum, December 5, 2013. Mimeo.

Fukushima, Akiko. 2017. 'Multilateralism Recalibrated: Japan's Engagement in Institution Building in the Past 70 Years and Beyond'. In *Postwar Japan: Growth, Security, and Uncertainty since 1945*, edited by Michael J. Green and Zack Cooper, 131–176. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Fukushima, Akiko, and William T. Tow. 2009. 'Human Security and Global Governance'. In *Security Politics in the Asia-Pacific: A Regional-Global Nexus?* edited by William T. Tow, 167–187. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Funabashi, Yoichi. 1992. 'Japan and America: Global Partners'. *Foreign Policy,* no. 86: 24–39, https://doi.org/10.2307/1149186.

Furuta Hajime. 2004. 'Gaikō senryaku toshite no keizai kyōryoku: Nihon no ODA wa nani wo mezashite iru no ka' [Economic cooperation as a diplomatic strategy: What is Japan's ODA aimed at?]. *Gaikō fōramu* 17, no. 19: 24–31.

Glasius, Marlies. 2008. 'Human Security from Paradigm Shift to Operationalization: Job Description for a Human Security Worker'. *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 1: 31–54, https://doi.10.1177/0967010607086822.

Gómez, Oscar Andres, and Chika Saito. 2012. 'Implementing Human Security: Japanese perspective through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security'. In *Mainstreaming Human Security: Asian Perspectives,* edited by Chantana Banpasirichote, Philippe Doneys, Mike Hayes and Chandan Sengupta, 150–158. Bangkok: Chula Global Network.

Haq, Mahbub ul. 1995. *Reflections on Human Development.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Haraguchi, Koichi. 2003. Statement. Minutes of the Meeting, Advisory Board on Human Security, September 16–17, 2003, http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/abhs/Board meetings/1-minutes.html (accessed January 22, 2007).

Hasegawa Sukehiro. 2007. 'Heiwa kōchiku to kokuren' [Peace-building and the United Nations]. In *Kokuren heiwa kōchiku shien no arata na kadai to kaizensaku* [Peace-building: The need for a more integrated and holistic support],

edited by Nihon kokusai rengō gakkai, 27–71. Tokyo: Kokusai shoin.

Hashimoto, Ryūtarō. 1997. 'Statement by Prime Minister of Japan Ryutaro Hashimoto at the Special Session of the General Assembly for the Overall Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of Agenda 21' (June 23), United Nations, New York, http:// https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/archive_3/agenda21.html (accessed March 12, 2002).

Hirai Terumi. 2001. 'Nihon no gaikō seisaku to ningen no anzen hoshō: Banguradeshu no jirei kara' [Japan's foreign policy and human security: The case of Bangladesh]. In *Gurōbaruka to ningen no anzenhoshō. Kōdō suru shimin shakai* [Globalization and human security. Civil society in action], edited by Katsumata Makoto, 343–386. Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha.

Hirata, Keiko. 1998. 'New Challenges to Japan's Aid: An Analysis of Aid Policy-Making'. *Pacific Affairs* 71, no. 3: 311–334, https://doi.org/10.2307/2761413.

Hoshino, Toshiya, and Haruko Satoh. 2013. 'Japan and the Emerging Approach to Human Security: A "Tokyo Consensus?" In *New Approaches to Human Security in the Asia-Pacific: China, Japan and Australia,* edited by William T. Tow, David Walton, and Rikki Kersten, 63–77. Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate.

Hoshiro, Hiroyuki. 2022. 'Japan's Foreign Aid Policy: Has It Changed? Thirty Years of ODA Charters'. *Social Science Japan Journal* 25, no. 2: 297–330, https://doi.org/ 10.1093/ssjj/jyac010.

Hosokawa, Morihiro. 1993. 'Policy Speech by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa to the 128th Session of the National Diet' (September 21), https://japan.kantei.go.jp/128.html.

Howe, Brendan. 2019. 'Human Security, Peacebuilding, and the Responsibility to Protect in East Asia', *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* 7, no. 2: 183–218, https://doi: 10.18588/201911.00a093.

Howe, Brendan M., and Joel R. Campbell. 2013. 'Continuity and change: Evolution, not revolution, in Japan's foreign and security policy under the DPJ'. *Asian Perspective* 37, no. 1: 99–123, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42704820.

Hughes, Christopher W. 2005. 'Japanese Military Modernization: In Search of a "Normal" Security Role'. In *Strategic Asia 2005–06: Military Modernization in an Era of Uncertainty,* edited by Ashley J. Tellis and Michael Wills, 104–135. Seattle: National Bureau of Asian Research.

Ikeda, Josuke. 2009. 'Creating Human Security Discourse and the Role of Academic-Policy Complex: International Relations as "Japanese Social

Science"?' *Interdisciplinary Information Sciences* [Graduate School of Information Sciences, Tohoku University], 15, no. 2: 197–209, https://doi.org/10.4036/IIS.2009.197.

Ikei Masaru. 1998. 'Rekishi ni miru Nihon gaikō' [Japan's foreign policy in the light of history]. In *Reisengo no kokusai seiji: Jissen, seisaku, riron* [International politics after the Cold War: Practices, policies, theories], edited by Soeya Yoshihide and Akagi Kanji. Tokyo: Keiō gijuku daigaku shuppankai.

Inoguchi, Takashi. 1999. 'Globalization and Japan's Foreign Policy'. *The Japan Review of International Affairs* 13, no. 3: 157–171.

Iokibe, Makoto, ed. 1999, new ed. 2006. *Sengo Nihon gaikōshi* [A history of postwar Japanese foreign policy]. Tokyo: Yūhikaku.

Iokibe, Makoto, ed. *The Diplomatic History of Postwar Japan.* London and New York: Routledge, 2011.

Iwami, Tadashi. 2016. 'Understanding Japan's Peacebuilding in Concept and Practice'. *East Asia* 33, no. 2: 111–132, https://.10.1007/s12140-016-9255-9.

Iwami, Tadashi. 2020. 'Japan's Human Security and Peacebuilding in the Twenty-First Century'. In *Japan's Foreign Policy in the Twenty-First Century. Continuity and Change,* edited by Lam Peng Er and Purnendra Jain, 199–218. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Jain, Purnendra. 2014. 'National Interest and Japan's Foreign Aid Policy'. *Kokusai mondai,* no. 637: 1–15, https://www2.jiia.or.jp/en/indx_kokusaimondai.html.

Japan Center for International Exchange. 2000. 'Dialogue with Prime Minister Obuchi'. In *Community Building in Asia Pacific: Dialogue in Okinawa,* 9–23. Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange.

JICA. 2001. *Jigyō senryaku chōsa kenkyū. Heiwa kōchiku: Ningen no anzen hoshō ni mukete* [Research study on project strategy. Peacebuilding: Towards achieving human security], https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/jica-ri/IFIC_and_JBICI-Studies/jica-ri/publication/archives/jica/kenkyu/01_33/33_12.pdf.

JICA. 2004–2025. *Gyōmu jisseki hōkokusho* [Operational performance reports], https://www.jica.go.jp/about/disc/jisseki/index.html.

Kaldor, Mary. 2000. 'Introduction'. In *Global Insecurity: Restructuring the Global Military Sector, Volume III,* edited by Mary Kaldor, 2–23. London and New York: Pinter.

Kamidohzono, Sachiko G., Oscar A. Gómez and Yoichi Mine. 2015. 'Embracing Human Security: New Directions of Japan's ODA for the 21st Century'. *JICA-RI Working Paper,* no. 94. Tokyo: JICA Research Institute, https://www.

jica.go.jp/Resource/jica-ri/publication/workingpaper/jrft3q00000026bz-att/JICA-RI_WP_No_94.pdf.

Kan, Naoto. 2011. 'Policy Speech by Prime Minister Naoto Kan at the 177th Session of the Diet', January 24, https://japan.kantei.go.jp/kan/statement/201101/24siseihousin_e.html.

Katada, Saori. 2002. 'Japan and Asian Monetary Regionalization: cultivating a new regional leadership after the Asian financial crisis'. *Geopolitics* 7, no. 1: 85–112, https://doi.org/10.1080/714000897.

Kawaguchi Yoriko. 2003a. 'Kawaguchi gaimudaijin aisatsu, 'Ningen no anzen hoshō shimpojiumu: Kokusai shakai ga samazama na kyōi ni chokumen suru jidai ni okeru sono yakuwari' [Address by Foreign Minister Kawaguchi at the International Symposium on Human Security: 'Human Security: Its role in an era of various threats to international community'], Tokyo, February 25, 2003, http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/enzetsu/15/ekw_0225.html (accessed June 19, 2003).

Kawaguchi Yoriko. 2003b. 'Henka suru anzen hoshō kankyō to Nihon gaikō' [The changing national security environment and Japan's foreign policy], *Ronza* no. 94.

Kawaguchi, Yoriko. 2003c. 'Statement by H.E. Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister For Foreign Affairs of Japan at the Fifty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations', September 23, 2003, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us fmv0309/unstate.html (accessed October 31, 2005).

Kawatō Akio. 2005. *Gaikōkan no shigoto* [The work of a diplomat]. Tokyo: Sōshisha.

Kikkawa, Gen. 2007. 'East Timor and Japan: Change and development of Japan's security policy and the road to East Timor'. *Japanese Studies* 27, no. 3: 247–261, https://doi.org/10.1080.1037139070168021.

Kim, Sung Won. 2010. 'Human Security with an Asian Face?' *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 17, no. 1, Article 5: 83–10, https://www.repository.law.oizumi.edu/ijgls/vol17/iss1/5/.

Kim, Eun Mee, Seon Young Bae, and Ji Hyun Shin. 2015. 'Human Security in Practice: The Case of South Korea'. *JICA-RI Working Paper,* no. 93, https://www.jica.go.jp/resource/ jica-ri/publication/workingpaper/jrft3q00000026ac-att/JICA-RI_WP_No_93. Pdf.

Kirton, John, Eleonore Kokotsis, Gina Stephens with Diana Jurevic. 2001. 'The G8 and Conflict Prevention: Commitment, Compliance and Systemic Contribution'. Paper presented for the conference on Promoting Conflict

Prevention and Human Security: What Can the G8 Do? Rome, July 16, 2001, http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/conferences/2001/ rome/conflictPrevention.pdf (accessed December 26, 2005).

Kitaoka, Shinichi. 2001. 'The Koizumi Administration: Its Evaluation and Prospects'. *Glocom Platform,* http://www.glocom.org/opinions/essays/200105kitaoka_ koizumi/index.html (accessed May 17, 2006).

Kitaoka Shinichi. 2004. *Nihon no jiritsu: Taibei kyōchō to Ajia gaikō* [Japan's autonomy: Cooperation with the United States and Asian diplomacy]. Tokyo: Chūō kōronsha.

Kitaoka Shinichi. 2007. *Kokuren no seiji rikigaku: Nihon wa doko ni iru no ka* [The political dynamics of the UN: Where does Japan stand?]. Tokyo: Chūō kōron shinsha.

Kitaoka, Shinichi. 2020. 'In Memoriam: Ogata Sadako – a giant of humanity and international cooperation whom the world loved and respected'. *Japan Policy Forum*, no. 59 (July 31), https://www.japanpolicyforum.jp/diplomacy/pt202007311532181055 5.html

Kitaoka, Shinichi. 2022. 'Foreword'. In *Human Security Today. Revisiting Human Security,* no. 1. Tokyo: JICA Ogata Sadako Institute for Peace and Development: 1.

Koizumi Junichirō. 2001a. '"Ningen no anzen hoshō kokusai shimpojiumu" ni okeru Koizumi sōridaijin aisatsu' [Address by Prime Minister Koizumi at 'The International Symposium on Human Security'], December 15, 2001, http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/hs/terro_koizumi.html (accessed March 12, 2002).

Koizumi Junichirō. 2001b. 'Ningen no anzen hoshō iinkai daiikkai kaigō ni muketa Koizumi Junichirō Nihonkoku naikaku sōridaijin no messēji' [Message from Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō on the occasion of the first meeting of the Commission on Human Security], June 9, 2001, https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/enzetsu/13/ekoi_0609.html (accessed October 30, 2005).

Koizumi Junichirō. 2001c. '"Ningen no anzen hoshō kokusai shimpojiumu" ni okeru Koizumi sōridaijin aisatsu' [Address by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō at 'The International Symposium on Human Security'], Tokyo, December 15, 2001, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/sympo0112_pm.html

Koizumi, Junichiro. 2002a. 'Speech by Prime Minister of Japan, Junichiro Koizumi: Japan and ASEAN in East Asia: A Sincere and Open Partnership'

(January 14), https://worldjpn.net/documents/texts/asean/20020114.S1E.html.

Koizumi, Junichiro. 2002b. 'Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi: Japan and Australia toward a Creative Partnership at the Asia Society Dinner on May 1, 2002', http://www. mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0204/speech.html.

Koizumi, Junichiro. 2003. 'General Policy Speech by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the 156th Session of the Diet', January 31, 2003, http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/speech 030131.html (accessed June 18, 2003).

Krauthammer, Charles. 2002/2003. 'The Unipolar Moment Revisited'. *The National Interest,* no. 70: 5–18, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42897438.

Kurosawa Satoru and Kawamura Mari. 2004. 'Nihon no enjo gaikō to ningen no anzen hoshō: Heiwa kōchiku no shiten kara' [Japan's aid diplomacy and human security: From the viewpoint of peace building]. In *Ningen no anzen hoshō: Sekai kiki hōsen* [Human security: Meeting the global challenges], edited by Satō Makoto and Andō Tsugio, 157–181. Tokyo: Tōshindō.

Kurusu, Kaoru. 2016. 'Does the Concept of Human Security Generate Additional Value? An Analysis of Japanese Stakeholder Perceptions'. *JICA-RI Working Paper,* no. 122, https://www.jica.go.jp/english/jica_ri/publication/workingpaper/wp_122.html.

Kurusu, Kaoru. 2018. 'Japan as a Norm Entrepreneur for Human Security'. In *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Foreign Policy,* edited by Mary M. McCarthy, 321–336. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Kurusu, Kaoru, and Rikki Kersten. 2011. 'Japan as an Active Agent for Global Norms: The Political Dynamism Behind the Acceptance and Promotion of "Human Security"'. *Asia-Pacific Review* 18, no. 2: 115–137, https://doi.org/10.1080/13439006.2011.630854.

Lam, Peng Er. 2011. 'Peace-Building as a New Pillar in Japan's Foreign Policy'. In *Security and Development in Asia. New Threats and Challenges in the Post-Postwar Era,* edited by Bert Edström, 50–81. Stockholm: Institute for Security and Development Policy.

Lee, Shin-wha, and Chun Young Park. 2017. 'Korea's Middle Power Diplomacy for Human Security: A Global and Regional Approach'. *Journal of International and Area Studies* 24, no. 1: 21–44, https://s-space.snu.ac.kr/handle/10371/145092.

Leheny, David. 2005 'Terrorism, Law Enforcement, and Foreign Policy: Evaluating Japan's Counterterrorism Assistance Initiatives'. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, *Asia Program Special Report* 128:

17–21, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites /default/files/media/documents/publication/.

Liotta, P. H., and Taylor Owen. 2006. 'Why Human Security?' *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* 7, no. 1: 37–54, https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/shjdir/v7n1/v7n1_04.pdf.

Macrae, Joanna. 2002. 'Analysis and synthesis'. In *The New Humanitarianisms: a review of trends in global humanitarian action,* edited by Joanna Macrae, 5–18. Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group, HPG Report 1: 5–17, https://media.odi.org/documents/293.pdf.

Mainichi Shimbun, 2000. 'Chikyū kibo no shiten ga hitsuyō da' [Global viewpoint is necessary], July 14 (editorial).

Makino, Koji. 2022. 'Human Security and Development Cooperation Today', in *Human Security Today. Revisiting Human Security,* no. 1. Tokyo: JICA Ogata Sadako Institute for Peace and Development: 1–22.

Maruchimedia-intānetto jiten [Dictionary of Multimedia & Internet]. N.d. 'Ningen no anzen hoshō iinkai' [Commission on Human Security], http://www.jiten.com/dicmi/pre.htm (accessed December 26, 2005).

Matsubara, Naoki. 2024. '*Genba-Shugi:* Understanding Through a Hands-On Approach'. In *The Semantics of Development in Asia. Exploring 'Untranslatable' Ideas Through Japan,* edited by Jin Sato and Soyeun Kim, 45–58. Singapore: Springer.

Minami Hiroshi. 2004. 'Ningen no anzen hoshō to Nihon gaikō' [Human security and Japanese foreign policy]. *Kokusai mondai,* no. 530: 44–54.

Minami Hiroshi, Yuge Akiko, Yamauchi Masayuki, and Waki Yūzō. 2003. 'Nihon gaikō no kidōryoku to shite: Naze ningen no anzen hoshō na no ka' [The mobilizing power of Japan's diplomacy: Why do we need human security?]. *Gaikō fōramu* 16, no. 12: 28–31.

MOFA. 1998. 'Council on ODA Reforms for the 21st Century Final Report', https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/reform/report21.html.

MOFA. 1999. 'Japan's Medium-Term Policy on Official Development Assistance (ODA)', http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/mid-term/1999/introduction.html (accessed September 8, 2005).

MOFA. 2000. 'Conclusions of the G8 Foreign Ministers' Meeting', Miyazaki, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/summit/2000/documents/conclusion.html (accessed October 1, 2003).

MOFA. 2001a. 'Press Release: Plan for Establishment of the Commission on Human Security', January 24, 2001, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/speech0101.html (accessed February 25, 2002).

MOFA. 2001b. *Gaikō seisho* [Diplomatic bluebook]. Tokyo: Ōkurashō insatsukyoku.

MOFA. 2002a. *The Trust Fund for Human Security.* Tokyo: MOFA.

MOFA. 2002b. Executive Summary of the Report of the Advisory Group on International Cooperation for Peace (December 18), https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pko/ report0212.pdf.

MOFA. 2003a. *Diplomatic Bluebook* 2003. Tokyo: Urban Connections.

MOFA. 2003b. 'Seifu kaihatsu enjo taikō' [2003 ODA Charter] (August 29), http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/seisaku/taikou.html.

MOFA. 2004. *Assistance through the Trust Fund for Human Security for Enhancing Basic Education in Timor-Leste*, December 14, 2004, http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2004/12/1214.html (accessed November 10, 2008).

MOFA. 2005. Record of Japan's International Peace Cooperation Activities based on the International Peace Cooperation Law, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/pko/pamph2005-2.pdf.

MOFA. 2009. *Seifu kaihatsu enjo (ODA) hakusho: Nihon no keizai kyōryoku* [The ODA White Paper: Japan's economic cooperation]. Tokyo: MOFA.

MOFA. 2015. 'Development Cooperation Charter, for peace, prosperity and a better future for everyone', February 10, 2015, https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000067701.pdf.

MOFA. 2019. 'Chronology of Activities Related to Human Security by the Japanese Government', https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/chronology.html.

MOFA. 2023. 'Development Cooperation Charter. Japan's Contributions to the Sustainable Development of a Free and Open World', https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100514705.pdf.

MOFA. 2026. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'About Us: Organization', January 26, https://www.mofa.go.jp/about/hq/org.html.

Mori, Yoshirō. 2000a. 'Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori To The 149th Session Of The Diet', July 28, 2000, http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/pm/mori/speech 0007.html (accessed June 20, 2003).

Mori, Yoshirō. 2000b. 'Statement by H.E. Mr. Yoshiro Mori, Prime Minister of

Japan at the Millennium Summit of the United Nations', September 7, 2000, http://www.un.org/ millennium/webcast/statements/japan.htm (accessed March 12, 2002).

Mori, Yoshirō. 2001a. 'Speech by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori "Africa and Japan in the New Century", at Gallagher Estate, Midrand, Republic of South Africa', January 9, 2001, http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/africa/pmv0101/ pmspeech.html (accessed September 4, 2005).

Mori, Yoshirō. 2001b. 'Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori to the 151st Session of the Diet', January 31, 2001, http://www.mofa.go.jp/ announce/announce/2001/1/0131-2.html (accessed June 17, 2003).

Morohashi, Kumiko. 2023. 'Japan's International Cooperation for ASEAN: Past and Present'. Public Relations Office, Government of Japan, https://www. gov-online.go.jp/eng publicity/book/hlj/html/202311/202311_00_en.html.

Murayama, Tomiichi. 1995.'Statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the Fiftieth

Anniversary of the U. N., New York, October 22, 1995', https://www.mofa.go.jp/ announce/announce/archive_3/sp.html (accessed March 12, 2002).

Nasukawa Toshiyuki. 2007. '"Ningen no anzen hoshō" no kiseki to tenkai: Nihon gaikō o chūshin toshite' [History and development of 'human security' in Japanese foreign policy]. PhD dissertation, Waseda University, http://dspace.wul.waseda.ac.jp/dspace/ bitstream/2065/28624/3/Honbun-4692. pdf (accessed January 2, 2008).

Newman, Edward. 2004. 'A Normatively Attractive but Analytically Weak Concept'. *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3: 358–359, https://doi.org/10.1177/ 096701060403500316.

NIRA. 2003. 'Human Security: Examining the Role of Civil Society'. *NIRA Policy Research* 14, no. 5, http://www.nira.go.jp/newse/research/a147.html (accessed October 1, 2003).

Nobayashi Takeshi and Naya Masatsugu. 2015. *Kikigaki Ogata Sadako kaikoroku* [An oral history: Ogata Sadako memoirs]. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Noda, Yoshihiko. 2012. Speech at 'Reception to Express Respect to Ms. Ogata Sadako on her Contributions to Japan and the International Community' (April 17), https://japan.kantei.go.jp/noda/actions/201204/17reception_e.html (accessed April 18, 2012).

Norwegian Embassy, Ottawa. [n.d.]. 'Human Security Network', http://www.

emb-norway.ca/policy/humansecurity/humansecurity.htm (accessed December 15, 2005).

Obuchi, Keizō. 1997. 'Japan: Statement by Keizo Obuchi, Foreign Minister, December 3'. In *Ottawa Landmines Convention: Treaty Signing Conference and Mine Action Forum.* Signing Conference for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production, Transfer and Stockpiling of Anti-personnel Mines and their Destruction, and Mine Action Forum, Ottawa, 2–4 December 1997, *Disarmament Diplomacy,* no. 21, http://www.acronym.org.uk/textonly/dd/dd21/21.htm.

Obuchi, Keizō. 1998a 'Opening Remarks by Prime Minister Obuchi at the conference An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow', December 2, 1998. In *The Asian Crisis and Human Security: An Intellectual Dialogue on Building Asia's Tomorrow* [edited by Pamela J. Noda], 17–19. Tokyo: Japan Center for International Exchange, 1999.

Obuchi, Keizō. 1998b. 'Toward the Creation of a Bright Future for Asia'. Policy speech at the Lecture Program hosted by the Institute for International Relations, Hanoi, Vietnam, 16 December 1998, https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asiapaci/asean/pmv9812/ policyspeech.html

Obuchi Keizō. 1999a. 'Koryo daigaku ni okeru Obuchi sōridaijin enzetsu, Shinseki no Nikkan kankei: Arata na rekishi no sōzō' [Prime Minister Obuchi's speech at Korea University, "Japan-Korea relations in the new millennium: The creation of a new history"] (March 20), http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/enzetsu/11/eos_0320.html.

Obuchi, Keizō. 1999b. 'A Message from the Prime Minister of Japan'. In Gro Harlem Brundtland, *Preparing for the Worst: Can We Give Hope to Victims in Complex Emergencies?* Fridtjof Nansen Memorial Lecture 1999. Tokyo: United Nations University, http://www.unu.edu/unupress/brundtland.html (accessed December 25, 2005).

Obuchi, Keizō. 1999c. 'Japan: America's Partner in Asia'. Speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council (April 29), http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/ pmv9905/laspeech.html (accessed June 17, 2003).

Obuchi, Keizō. 2001. 'In Quest of Human Security'. In *In Quest of Human Security: JIIA 40th Anniversary Symposium*Tokyo: The Japan Institute of International Affairs.

Ochiai, Naoyuki. 2020. *Peace and Development in Mindanao, Republic of the Philippines. The Long Road to Peace through Trust.* Tokyo: JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development.

Ogata Sadako. 1980. *Kokuren kara no shiten: 'Kokusai shakai to Nihon' o kangaeru* [From the UN viewpoint: Thinking about 'the international society and Japan']. Tokyo: Asahi ibuningu nyūsusha.

Ogata, Sadako. 1989. 'Shifting Power Relations in Multilateral Development Banks'. *The Journal of International Studies* [Institute of International Relations, Sophia University], no. 22: 1–25.

Ogata, Sadako. 2002. 'From State Security to Human Security'. The Ogden Lecture. Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, May 26, 2002, http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/activities/outreach/ogata_ogden.html (accessed December 12, 2006).

Ogata, Sadako. 2003. 'Human Security Now'. Remarks at the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network, Graz, Austria, May 8, 2003, http://www.human security-chs.org/newsandevents/graz.html (accessed December 5, 2005).

Ogata, Sadako. 2004. 'The Human Security Commission's Strategy'. *Peace Review* 16, no. 1: 25–28, https://doi.ord/10.1080/1040265042000210111.

Ogata Sadako. 2005. *Tenki no kaigai enjo* [Foreign aid at a turning point]. Tokyo: Nihon hōsō shuppankai.

Ogata Sadako. 2008. 'Ningen no anzenhoshō to nanmin shien' [Human security and refugee assistance]. In *Oraru hisutorī: Nihon to Kokuren no 50 nen* [Oral history: Japan and the United Nations 50 years], edited by Akashi Yasushi, Takasu Yukio, Nomura Akio, Oshiba Ryo, Akiyama Nobumasa, 39–68. Tokyo: Mineruva shobō.

Ogata Sadako. 2013. 'Statement by Ms. Sadako Ogata at the High–level Event on Human Security, ECOSOC, New York, May 8, 2013'. Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, https://www.un.emb-japan.go.jp/statements/ogata050813.html.

Ohno, Izumi. 2011. 'The Strategic Environment Surrounding the Developing Countries and Japan's Development Cooperation: To Be a Global Civilian Power'. In *The World and Japan's Foreign Policy in the Future: Prospects in 20 Years,* 85–110. Tokyo: The Japan Institute of International Affairs.

Okamoto, Yukio. 2002. 'Japan and the United States: The Essential Alliance'. *The Washington Quarterly* 25, no. 2: 59–72, https://olemiss.edu.courses/pol337/okamoto02.pdf.

Ōkuma, Hiroshi. 2005. 'New Directions in Japan's Official Development Assistance'. In *Japan and Enlarged Europe: Partners in Global Governance,*

edited by Takako Ueta and Eric Remacle, 155–173. Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang.

Ōkuma Hiroshi. 2006. '2003 nen ODA taikō to ningen no anzen hoshō. Retorikku no kihon kōzu' [2003 ODA Charter and human security. The fundamental composition of rhetoric]. *Seijō daigaku inobēshon gakkai shakai inobēshon kenkyū* 2, no. 1: 1–49, https://www.seijo.ac.jp/pdf/fasiv/2-1/ookuma.pdf.

Ōmae Kenichi. 1994. *Ajiajin to Nihonjin: Mahatīru Marēshia shushō to no taiwa* [Asians and Japanese: Conversations with Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir]. Tokyo: Shōgakukan.

Ōshiba Ryō. 2013. 'Takokkan gaikō to takokkanshugi—Kokuren, G8, G20, Buretton Udzu kikan' [Multilateral diplomacy and multilateralism: UN, G8, G20, Bretton Woods institutions], in *Nihon gaikō: kadaihen, daigoken* [Japan's foreign policy: Themes, vol. 5, edited by Ōshiba Ryō, 298–319. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.

Ōtake Hideo. 2006. *Koizumi Junichirō—Popyurizumu no kenkyū: Sono senryaku to shuhō* [Koizumi Junichirō. A Study of Populism: Its Strategy and Methods]. Tokyo: Tōyō shimpōsha.

Ozaki, Sakura. 2005. 'The Formation of NGO Inclusion Policy in Japan's Official Development Assistance: The Roles of NGOs, the Foreign Ministry and Business'. MA Thesis. Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of British Columbia.

Ozawa, Ichiro. 1994. *Blueprint for a New Japan: The Rethinking of a Nation.* Tokyo, New York, London: Kodansha International.

Paris, Roland. 2001. 'Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?' *International Security* 26, no. 2: 87–102, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3092123.

Payne, Rodger A. 2004. 'Human Security and American Foreign Policy'. Paper prepared for conference on Human Security in the New Millennium, European Union Center, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO (March 4–5), https://www.academia.edu/554001/Human_Security_and_American_Foreign_Policy.

Pempel, T. J. 1997. 'Transpacific Torii: Japan and the Emerging Asian Regionalism'. In *Network Power: Japan and Asia,* edited by Peter J. Katzenstein and Takashi Shiraishi, 47–82. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Plate, Tom. 1999. 'The Japanese Prime Minister Defies His Critics, Hiding Bold Ideas Behind a Bland Style', *Los Angeles Times*, September 15.

Prantl, Jochen, and Ryoko Nakano. 2011. 'Global Norm Diffusion in East Asia: How China and Japan Implement the Responsibility to Protect'. *International Relations* 25, no. 2: 204–223, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117811404450.

Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century. 2000. *The Frontier Within: Individual Empowerment and Better Governance in the New Millennium.* Tokyo: Office for the Prime Minister's Commission on Japan's Goals in the 21st Century, Cabinet Secretariat.

Prime Minister's Office of Japan. 2013. 'The National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and beyond', https://japan.kantei.go.jp/96_abe/documents/2013/__icsFiles/ afieldfile/ 2014/02/03/NDPG.pdf

Przystup, James J. 2006. 'Yasukuni Stops Everything'. *Comparative Connections* 7, no. 4: 109–122, https://cc.pacforum.org/2006/01/yasukuni-stops-everything/.

Rothschild, Emma. 1995. 'What is Security?' *Daedalus* 124, no. 3: 53–98, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20027310.

Rothschild, Emma. 2006. 'Kotoba no jidai—ningen no anzen hoshō no rekishi' [The era of words—the history of human security]. In *21 seiki no ningen no anzen hoshō* [Human security in the 21st century], edited by Tōkai daigaku heiwa senryaku kokusai kenkyūsho, 3–53. Tokyo: Tōkai daigaku shuppankai.

Saitō Shizuo. 1977. *Kokusai rengo ron josetsu* [An introduction to the United Nations]. Tokyo: Shin'yūdō.

Sasagawa Peace Foundation. 2004. 'Roundtable: How to Safeguard People's Freedom'. *The Sasagawa Peace Foundation Annual Report FY 2004*, http://www.spf.org/e/publication/annual/pdf/ar04_1.pdf (accessed February 17, 2006).

Satō Makoto. 2009. 'Ningen no anzen hoshō to Nihon no gaikō seisaku' [Human security and Japan's foreign policy]. In *Ningen no anzen hoshō: Kokka chūshinshugi o koete* [Human security: Beyond state centrism], edited by Mushakōji Kinhide, 93–108. Tokyo: Minerva shobō.

Satō Yukio. 2004. 'Nihon no kokuren gaikō to ningen no anzen hoshō: Kokuren mireniamu samitto e no kiseki' [Japan's UN diplomacy and human security: The road to the UN Millennium Summit]. *Kokusai mondai*, no. 533: 2–13.

Sato, Jin. 2024. '*Yōsei-Shugi*: The Mystery of the Japanese Request-Based Aid'. In *The Semantics of Development in Asia. Exploring 'Untranslatable' Ideas Through Japan*, edited by Jin Sato and Soyeun Kim, 113–128. Singapore: Springer.

Satoh, Haruko, and Carmina Yu Y Untalan. 2021. 'Japan's Human Security and Peacebuilding Diplomacy: Middle Power by Any Other Name'. In *The*

Niche Diplomacy of Asian Middle Powers, edited by Brendan M. Howe, 17–34. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, DOI: 10.5040/9781978733091.ch-2.

Secretariat of the Executive Committee on Global Health and Human Security. [2024]. Unpublished memo.

Seisaku kenkyūkai sōgō anzen hoshō grūpu. 1980. 'Sōgō anzen hoshō grūpu hōkokusho' [Report by the comprehensive security group]. In *Ōhira sōri no seisaku kenkyūkai hōkokusho* [Reports of Prime Minister Ōhira's policy research groups]. Tokyo: Jiyūminshutō kōhō shuppankyoku.

Sen, Amartya. 2000. 'Why Human Security?' Presentation at the International Symposium on Human Security in Tokyo, July 28, 2000, https://www.ucipfg.com/Repositorio/ MCSH/MCSH-05/BLOQUE-ACADEMICO/Unidad-01/complementarias/3.pdf.

Shimomura, Yasutami. 2011. *Kaihatsu enjo seisaku* [Development aid policy]. Tokyo: Nihon keizai hyōronsha.

Shinoda Hideaki. 2004. 'Anzen hoshō gainen no tagika to "ningen no anzen hoshō"' [The proliferation of the meaning of the national security concept and 'human security']. In *IPSHU kenkyū hōkoku 31: Ningen no anzen hoshō no saikentō* [IPSHU research report 31: A reassessment of human security], edited by Hiroshima daigaku heiwa kagaku kenkyū sentā, 51–84. Hiroshima: Hiroshima daigaku heiwa kagaku kenkyū sentā.

Shinyo Takahiro. 1995. *Shinkokurenron: Kokusai heiwa no tame no kokuren to Nihon no yakuwari* [On the new United Nations: The roles of the United Nations and Japan for international peace]. Tokyo: Ōsaka daigaku shuppankai.

Shozawa Hitoshi et al. 2006. 'Zadankai: Hyūman sekyuritī kara miru kokusai shien' [Roundtable discussion: International assistance from a human security viewpoint], *Mita hyōron,* nos. 8–9.

Soeya, Yoshihide. 2004. 'Redefining Japan's Security Profile: International Security, Human Security, and an East Asian Community'. Paper presented at IIPS International Conference 'A New Horizon for Japan's Security Policy—Basic Concepts and Framework', November 30 and December 1, 2004, https://npi.or.jp/event/data/04asiasec_soeya.pdf.

Soeya Yoshihide. 2005. *Nihon no 'midoru pawā' gaikō: Sengo Nihon no sentaku to kōsō* [Japan's 'middle power' diplomacy: Postwar Japan's choices and conceptions]. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō.

Soeya, Yoshihide. 2011. 'A "Normal" Middle Power: Interpreting Changes in Japanese Security Policy in the 1990s and After'. In *Japan as an 'Normal Country'? A Nation in Search for Its Place in the World,* edited by Yoshihide

Soeya, Masayuki Tadokoro, and David A. Welch, 72–97. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Söderberg, Marie. 2016. 'Japan's Revised Development Cooperation Charter: National Interests and Security at the Core'. *Il Politico* 81, no. 2: 134–148.

Suhrke, Astri. 1999. 'Human Security and the Interests of States'. *Security Dialogue* 30, no. 3: 265–276, https://www.cmi.no/publications/1077-human-security-and-the-interests-of-state.

Suhrke, Astri. 2004. 'A Stalled Initiative'. *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3: 365, https://doi.org/10.1177/096701060403500322.

Suputtikun, Teewin. 2012. 'An excuse for common goods: the multipurposeness of the "human security" concept in Japan's foreign policy'. *Asian Review* 25: 137–160, https://digital.car.chula.ac.th/arv/vol25/iss1/8.

Suzuki, Sanae. 2004. 'East Asian Cooperation through Conference Diplomacy: Institutional Aspects of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Framework'. APEC Study Center, Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO, *Working Paper* 03/04, no. 7, https://www.ide.go.jp/library/English/Publish/Reports/Apec/pdf/2003_07.pdf.

Suzuki, Tomoko. 2012. 'Japan as a Champion of Human Security'. *Global Health Governance* 6, no. 1: 1–3, https://jcie.org/analysis/inmedia/japan-as-a-champion-of-human-security/

Tadokoro, Masayuki. 2021. 'Japanese Diplomacy and the First Gulf War'. In *The First Gulf War in Historical Perspectives.* 2021 International Forum on War History: Proceedings, 81–90. Tokyo: National Institute for Defense Studies, https://www.nids.mod.go.jp/event/proceedings/forum/pdf/2021/EN_01_index.pdf.

Takasu, Yukio. 2000. 'Statement by Director-General Yukio Takasu at the International Conference on Human Security in a Globalized World'. Ulan-Bator, May 8, 2000, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/speech0005.html (accessed March 12, 2002).

Takasu, Yukio. 2006. 'Towards Forming Friends of Human Security': On the Occasion of the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the Human Security Network, Bangkok, June 1, 2006, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/state0606.html (accessed January 18, 2007).

Takasu, Yukio. 2014. 'Japan and networked human security'. In *Routledge handbook of human security,* edited by Mary Martin and Taylor Owen, 239–250. London and New York: Routledge.

Takemi, Keizō. 1999. 'Capacity Building for Human Dignity: The Essence of the International Order in the 21st Century'. Address by State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Keizō Takemi at a Lecture Meeting Hosted by the Asia Society, New York, September 1, 1999, http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/human_secu/speech9909.html (accessed March 12, 2002).

Takemi, Keizō. 2001. 'Security and stability in Asia'. Speech at the Second Meeting of the Asian Statesmen's Forum, January 23, 2001, http://www.takemi.net/english/contents/1222.html (accessed February 5, 2003).

Takemi Keizō. 2011. '21 seikigata no pawāporitikusu to waga kuni no herusu-dipuromasī' [21st century power politics and Japan's health diplomacy]. *Gaikō* 5: 36–47.

Takemi Keizō. 2016. 'Kaihatsu to anzen hoshō wo tsunagu: Nihon no gurōbaru herusu senryaku' [Japan's global health strategy: Connecting development and security]. *Gaikō,* Vol. 36: 70–77.

Takemi, Keizō, 2024. 'Preface to the Special Issue by Keizo Takemi, Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare, Japan' (editorial). *Health Systems & Reform* 10, no. 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/23288604.2024.2390851

Tanaka Akihiko. 1997. *Anzen hoshō: Sengo 50 nen no mosaku* [Security: Fifty years of searching in the post-war period]. Tokyo: Yomiuri shimbunsha.

Tanaka, Akihiko. 2015. 'Toward a Theory of Human Security'. JICA Research Institute, *JICA-RI Working Paper,* no. 91, https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/jica-ri/publication/workingpaper/jrft3q000000267e-att/JICA-RI_WP_No.91.pdf.

Tanaka, Akihiko. 2023. 'Global Perspective: Japan sets human security at core of development aid in complex world'. *The Mainichi,* August 2 (Eng. translation of article printed in *Mainichi Shimbun*, July 13, 2023).

Tanke, Sarah. 2022. 'Japan's narrative on human security: international norms, diplomatic identity and recognition'. *Japan Forum* 34, no. 4: 419–442, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09555803.2021.1876140.

Tase, Kazuo. 2016. 'Human Security: The Way Forward'. In *Japan as a Peace Enabler: Views from the Next Generation,* edited by Yuki Tatsumi, 27–38. Washington, D.C.: Stimson Center.

Tase Kazuo and Takemi Keizō. 2005. 'Ningen no anzen hoshō to Nihon no yakuwari' [Human security and Japan's role]. In *21 seiki no ningen no anzen hoshō* [Human security in the 21st century], edited by Tōkai daigaku heiwa senryaku kokusai kenkyūsho, 123–150. Tokyo: Tōkai daigaku shuppankai.

Task Force on Foreign Relations for the Prime Minister. 2002. 'Basic Strategies

for Japan's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: New Era, New Vision, New Diplomacy', http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/policy/2002/1128tf_e.html.

Teh, Benny Cheng Guan. 2012. 'Introduction; Human Security Development and the Future of East Asia'. In *Human Security. Securing East Asia's Future,* edited by Benny Teh Cheng Guan, 1–14. Dordrecht: Springer.

Terada, Takashi. 2003. 'Constructing an "East Asian" concept and growing regional identity: from EAEC to ASEAN+3'. *The Pacific Review* 16, no. 3: 251–277, https://doi.org/10.1080/0951274032000069615.

Thakur, Ramesh. 2005. 'From National Security to Human Security'. *The Japan Times,* October 13.

Tokyo Foundation, Policy Research Division. 2009. 'Japan's Security: 10 Proposals for the Hatoyama Administration' (November 20), https://www.tokyofoundation.org/research/ detail.php?id=125.

Toyoshima Naoko. 2009. 'Ningen no anzen hoshō seisaku ni miru Nihon no shisei' [Japan's stance as seen in its human security policy]. *Sōka daigaku daigakuin kiyō,* no. 31.

Traschler, Daniel. 2003. 'Menschliche Sicherheit: Klärungsbedürftiges Konzept, Vielversprechende Praxis'. *Bulletin 2003 zur schweizerischen Sicherheitspolitik*, 69–104, https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/handle/20.500.11850/281314.

Tsai, Yu-tai. 2017. 'From Human Security to the Responsibility to Protect: What Role Can Japan Play in an Altering Foreign Policy?' Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association, https://www.koryu.or.jp/Portals/0/nittaichiteki/fellow/2016/2016tsaiyutai.pdf.

Uchida, Kenzo. 2000. 'The right leader for Japan?' *The Japan Times*, May 19.

Ueda Hideaki. 2000. 'Ima naze "ningen no anzen hoshō" na no ka' [Why human security now?]. *Gaikō fōramu* 13, no. 2: 64–73.

Ueda Hideaki. 2010. '"Ningen no anzen hoshō" no hatten' [The development of 'human security']. *Sandai hōgaku* 44, no. 2: 1–22.

Ueki, Yasuhiro. 1993. 'Japan's UN Diplomacy: Sources of Passivism and Activism'. In *Japan's Foreign Policy after the Cold War: Coping with Change,* edited by Gerald L. Curtis, 347–70. Armonk, New York, London: M.E. Sharpe.

United Nations. 2016. 'United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund', https://www.un.org/en/unpdf.

United Nations, Advisory Board on Human Security. 2003. Minutes of the Advisory Board on Human Security (ABHS) First Meeting,

http://ochaonline.un.org/ABHSandOutreach/ BoardMeetings/ FirstMeetingoftheABHS/MinutesFirstMeeting/tabid/2158/Default.aspx.

United Nations, General Assembly. 2005. '2005 World Summit Outcome', A/RES/60/1, September 20, 2005, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/ 2022/08/gaworld-summit-outcome-documentares601english0.pdf (accessed July 14, 2025).

United Nations, General Assembly. 2010. 'Human security: Report of the Secretary-General'. Sixty-fourth session, Agenda items 48 and 114, A/64/701, March 8, 2010, https://docs.un.org/en/A/64/701.

United Nations, General Assembly. 2012. Sixtieth session, Agenda items 14 and 117, Resolution A/RES/66/290 adopted by the General Assembly on September 10, 2012, https://docs.un.org/en/%20A/RES/66/290

United Nations, Office of Internal Oversight Services, Internal Audit Division. 2010. 'Management of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security'. Audit Report. Assignment No. AN2009/590/04 (January 29), https://2009-2017-usun.state.gov/sites/default/files/organization_ pdf.14491.pdf.

United Nations Development Program. 1994. *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Waisová, Šárka. 2018. 'Human Security: An Analysis of the Dissemination of an Idea in World Politics'. *Politics in Central Europe* 14, no. 3: 75–99, DOI:10.2478/pce-2018-0019.

Wanner, Barbara. 2000. 'G-8 Foreign Ministers Tackle Conflict Prevention'. *JEI Report* 28, http://www.jei.org/Archive/JEIR00/0028w4.html (accessed September 15, 2005).

Wolfers, Arnold. 1962. *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Yamamoto, Tadashi. 2004. 'Human Security—From Concept to Action: A Challenge for Japan'. In *International Conference on Human Security in East Asia, June 16–17, 2003, Seoul, Republic of Korea: Proceedings,* 3–18. Seoul: Korean National Commission for UNESCO and Ilmin International Relations Institute of Korea University, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000136506.

Yamasaki, Michi. 2009. 'A Study of Middle Power Diplomacy as a Strategy of Leadership and Influence'. MA thesis. University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, https://dspacemainprd01.lib.uwaterloo.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/a7e54176-9ac6-4f5a-a1d9-d286ccdb2ed6/content.

Yanagihara Tōru. 2019. '"Ningen no anzen hoshō" ni miru Nihon no enjo no tokushoku. Gaimushō/JICA bunshō no rebyū yori'. Nihon no kaihatsu kyōryoku no rekishi: Bakku guraundo pēpā [Characteristics of Japanese aid as seen in 'human security': From a review of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA documents, 'History of Japan's Development Cooperation' Background Paper], no. 6, https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/jica-ri/ja/publication/other/sgjqgc000000553u-att/backgroundpaper_No.6.pdf.

Yokota Yōzō, Ueda Hideaki, and Watanabe Akio. 1999. 'Zadankai. Kokka no anzen hoshō kara ningen no anzen hoshō e' [From state security to human security. A roundtable discussion]. *Gaikō fōramu* 12, no. 1: 20–29.

Yoon, Suk Jung. 2021. 'Structural Change in Korea-Japan Relations during the 1990s and the Korea-Japan Joint Declaration: An Examination of the Transnational Attempts at Cooperation and Institutionalization in the Post-Cold War Era'. *Seoul Journal of Japanese Studies* 7, no. 1: 119–138, https://hdl.handle.net/10371/175010.

Interviews

Kitaoka Shinichi, JICA President, 2015–2022, and Special Advisor to the JICA President, 2022–, October 21, 2025

Takemi Keizō, Senior Fellow, JCIE, October 14, 2025

Tanaka Akihiko, JICA President, 2012–2015 and 2022–, October 20, 2025

About the Author

Bert Edström is a non-resident Senior Research Fellow at ISDP. He holds a PhD in Japanese Studies from Stockholm University (1988), an MSSc (1974), and a BA (1971) from the same university. His dissertation dealt with national role conceptions ascribed to Japan nationally and internationally. Edström is the author of books on Japan's foreign policy and has written numerous articles and research reports on security policy issues and modern Japanese history. He is the author of *Sweden–Japan: 150 Years of Friendship and Cooperation* (Sweden-Japan Foundation, 2018), *Master Spy on a Mission: The Untold Story of Onodera Makoto and Swedish Intelligence 1941–1945* (2021), *Four Essays on East Asian Studies at Stockholm University* (Föreningen för orientaliska studier, 2024, in Swedish), and *Japan's Evolving Foreign Policy Doctrine, 2nd ed.: The Long Postwar* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025).

Institute for Security and Development Policy
Västra Finnbodavägen 2, 131 30 Stockholm-Nacka, Sweden
Tel. +46-841056953; Fax. +46-86403370
Email: info@isdp.eu