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WIDER SECURITY AGENDA – A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT OR A SOURCE OF CONCERN

AUTHORED BY - BANGARU LAXMI JASTI

The concept of security is always highly debated by the scholars in international relations as there are different perspectives by different scholars/schools at various periods in time. The realism can be considered as the foremost advocators on the theory of security. According to the realist, the concept of security revolves around the state and military operations. This was the scenario during the cold war as well. However, there was a shift in the theorizing of security during 1980's and the post-cold war period. The publication of Barry Buzan's book "People, States, Fear" in 1983 can be marked as a major development in theorizing the security as he argues that security is not only about the state but is related to the human collectivities (Williams, 2013).

Realism failed to anticipate the end of cold war, which put 'realist on intellectual defensive (Cox, 2007; Saleh, 2010). Other threats began to take precedence over military concerns. Buzan,1983, argued that there are other sectors than the military, which were prioritized such as political, economic, societal, and environmental security. This paved the path for the broadening and deepening of the security. There is a shift from a traditionalist narrow view of security to broader and deeper views, with the Copenhagen school of thought, Aberystwyth school and by the prominence given to the human security by international organizations.

This paper will be arguing that the widening of the security agenda is a positive development and not a source of concern. This is because, with the widening of security, major threats can be securitized and prioritized. This helps in the development of the state in all possible aspects of economy, society and politics. With human security given importance, people can enjoy better living standards without fear from want or fear of insecurity. The road map of my essay will take three routes directly converging to strengthen this argument. This paper delves with the emergence of wider security agenda (setting of boundaries), followed by the schools/institutions which promoted the wider security concept, then the critiques and the possible precautions for the wider security agenda.

I. SETTING THE BOUNDARIES: EMERGENCE OF WIDER SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

The conceptualization of security had not been an easy task for the scholars of international relations. Generally, two philosophies of security can be traced in international relations. The first philosophy is associated with the accumulation of power and sees security as a commodity i.e., to secure power, actors (states) must possess money, territory, army, weapons etc. The more they accumulate these, the more power they own and the safer they are. The second philosophy challenges the above philosophy and it sees security in emancipation, that is, a concern with justice and the provision of human rights (Williams, 2013). The former philosophy is the traditional view of realist where the referent object is state and the accumulation of power is by the military might. It is state-centric and the realists believe that security is attained by protection of citizens from internal and external threats (Saleh, 2010). The later view is considered as the wider and deeper philosophy. Unlike the former perspective, this believes that security is about the 'relationship between the actors' than as a commodity. This relationship can be understood in either negative terms (that is security as absence of threat – "freedom from") or positive terms (which involves the phenomena of enabling and making of things possible – "freedom to") (Williams, 2013).

The former view can be traced back to the pre-cold war era and the shift to the latter is observed during the end of cold war and post-cold war times. This shift is due to assorted reasons. The realist had made some assumptions like systems of anarchy, threats of war by relative power capacities, distrust and fearfulness among the states, which were proved to not exist after the world war-II (Dannreuther, 2007). There was a shift from realism to neo-realism, to liberalism then to constructivism. With the decline of the realist perspectives, the 'new thinking' in the national policy is promoted by the sociological and philosophical ideas. Then the popularity of the social constructivism, critical security studies and feminist theory made an enormous difference in security studies in international relations.

Another important push which should be taken into regard is by powerful international organizations. Organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and other governmental and non-governmental organizations started considering aspects such as human security, environmental security, economic security. In the 1994 UN Human Development Report, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) suggested that the dominant notion of security (national/international security) should be broadened (Tadjbakhsh and

Chenoy, 2009; Persaud, 2016).

II. PROMOTION OF WIDER SECURITY AGENDA

This section briefly outlines few schools and institutions which paved the path to the widening of conceptualisation of security. Each school had made its own contributions to the development of contemporary security studies. The prominent schools which had initiated and promoted the shift from the narrower view are the Copenhagen school and critical security studies school. The other prominent contributors are the UNDP-for human security, World Bank Report-economic security and human development, the world commission on the environment and development-environmental security. Other than the afore mentioned schools, there are theories which enhanced a wider view of security studies, theories such as liberalists, constructivists.

COPENHAGEN SCHOOL

Mc Donald argues that the Copenhagen school of thought is an exception to traditional constructivism as the traditional constructivism is much broader and ambiguous than the Copenhagen school. The Copenhagen school broadens the security agenda like constructivists but it limits itself analytically. It includes the threats like environment, poverty and human rights which are neglected during the cold war, in the security concern. It limits itself saying that the issues must be of political concern to the analyst/security actor (McDonald, 2013). It propagates the securitization by “speech-act”. Speech act is a securitization process where the actor declares the issue as ‘existential threat’ with reference to a referent object (McDonald, 2013). So, this makes for an open-ended concept where the security threat depends on the securitizing actor and how well he can make an existential threat as a security threat. In this process of securitizing the threat, the actor must convince the audience to make a threat as a security concern. If the head of a state/political elite, finds a threat as major concern, he can try to securitize it and make it as a security agenda like for example, securitizing the HIV/AIDS. There must be acceptance from the audience/the population. The criticisms on this approach are dealt in the latter part of essay.

CRITICAL SECURITY STUDIES

Critical security theory claims to offer a more philosophical or holistic interpretation of international security by examining fundamental values, practices, or ideas that supposedly influence both positivist research agenda and policy making agendas (Smith, 2010). Critical

theory identifies present existing problems and proposes possible feasible transformations, without losing the historical processes (Cox, 1981; Booth, 1991; Bilgin, 2013). It means that, this school of thought tries to identify the existing threat and emancipate humans from the existing threat as well as trying to prevent the constraints holding the development of the humans (Smith, 2010).

HUMAN SECURITY

Human security is much disputed and the most prominent area of insecurity studies. It is a controversial area because of its status in the inclusion in the traditional security arena. Traditional security scholars do not consider human security, as referred to by its propagators, as a security concern. Rather they believe it to be a political/domestic affair. The proponents of the human security approach argue that there is a plethora of destructive effects that are 'already' ravaging individuals and communities throughout the world (Sommaruga, 2004; Soeya, 2005; Persaud, 2016). They believe that it is so because of the assault on the human welfare and dignity and so is the reason for it to be considered as a security threat. The prominence to the human security is in limelight after the publication of the UNDP report in 1994. Persaud, 2016 refers to it as official inauguration in broadening of security to human security. But there are traces of the prominent position given to the human security in the national policies in the global south, to address the insecurities of "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" (Persaud, 2016). The national policies, through their development programs have contributed to the human security much before of its recognition in the international policies. But they had not considered it to be a separate threat but as a part of national security. The propagators of this human security believe that, it is securitized, then there will be better living for the people and they also for their survival. It is opined that if human security is given importance and is elevated to the level of security threat, there will be a better world which is free from any threat or free from want. At long last, the main objective of the state is to protect its population.

III. CRITICISMS AND THE PRECAUTIONS FOR THE CONCEPT OF WIDENING OF SECURITY

The foremost criticisers of the widening of security are the realists/traditionalists. They argue that, the broadening and deepening of security will lose its analytical nature (Liotta, 2002; Evan, 2007; Persaud, 2016). The same criticism holds for the Copenhagen school and critical

security studies. The argument would be broadening of security does not lose its focal point as the wideners also acknowledge the traditional view of military/state-centric security. They add to it expanding it in the other sectors like sociology. They widen the concept for the better good of the state and securitize the threats to make it a priority and find a solution to it. Public agreement over government conceptualisation of security is encouraged, to prevent anarchy and power struggles.

The traditional 'state-centric' viewers argue that the concept of human security is in fact built in the concept of state – territory, sovereignty, government, population/people encompasses the state – and there is no need to separate the concept or elevate it to a different level (Smith, 2010). On this view, it would like to argue that, even if the human security is already involved in the nature of state, then there should have not been any violations of human rights and there should be prosperity in every nation. Which is not the situation in the present era. There are incidents of genocide in Rwanda, poverty in African nations, human trafficking and so on. So, there is a need for the elevation/securitization of the human security for a prosperous state.

CONCLUSION

With the widening of the security agenda, more issues can be brought under the roof of security. With the widening, states are not willing to neglect the most important agenda of state protection from external threat. They are expanding the scope and giving priority for the other aspects which can help in the prosperity of the state and development of the standard of living of people, which is the ultimate goal of the state. It is argued that, the widening is a positive development until it does not lose its focal point.

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