THE IMPACTS OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY ON HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

INTRODUCTION

During its development history, the Southeast Asian area is determined by the entry of the great civilizations, such as China, India (Middle Ages period) and the West. The diversity of religions and ethnicities, together with the large difference in term of economics and society, has created the seeds for conflicts in Southeast Asia. One of the most typical conflicts in the region is related to religious issues. It gradually escalates to secessionist movements and culminates in terrorist activities, especially since the event 11/9 and the war against terrorism of the US in 2001. The religious conflicts (especially between Islam and other religions) have deepened and become more complicated. In addition to the specific characteristics of Southeast Asia, which is a region with the most population of Muslims in the world, it is also home to many guerrilla wars of Islamic forces. The issue of religious conflict within each member state has a strong impact on the security situation not only in the country but also adversely affects the security situation in the whole region, which is particularly discussed in this article is the human security issues.

THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN SECURITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In the late of 1990s, Southeast Asia nations give careful consideration to major software aftermath of the financial and monetary crisis. Looking at the surface, the crisis has created and spread the impression of losing security of countries in the region on a large scale: political - economic and social culture with the people becomes poorer due to lower real incomes, instability of migration, shortage food, ill, crime increases, deteriorating education and the public lost confidence in the existing political system. After the crisis, the result of decades of development has eroded. The risk of falling into poverty people increases, political instability lasts, and relations between the countries becomes further complicated by the refugee problem victims and illegal immigrants. However, if you only look at the "coverage" of the concept of human security, it seems that the concept of "comprehensive security" ASEAN was born from the peak of the Cold War. From the mid-1960s, Indonesian President Suharto has comprehensive security view encompassing all aspects of the political, economic, socio-cultural and military environment both internally and externally. Or in Malaysia in 1986, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed has said national security was inseparable from political stability, economic progress, and social harmony. The other ASEAN member countries also mentioned

the comprehensive security concept similarly. Due to the general threat of communism, ethnic conflict, economic recession..., comprehensive security concept of the ASEAN countries exceeded the military security to include the political dimension, the economic and social culture. However, due to the importance of the stability of the regime and economic development (which is seen as essential tools for bringing stability), security concept should still get state-centered actors within the role of supplying security. Only after the crisis in 1997 in Asia in general and Southeast Asia in particular, it poses new problems about reconsidering the nature of security thinking and contrasts this with the practice to see the inevitability of promoting human security under the new approach to the region.

In this context, the Thai approach to position a developing country brings elements of traditional Asian cultures once considered a reliable model for tolerance given the political dimension economic and human security. This is the period that the government of Thailand's approach, Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai (before 2002), stemmed from the recognition that the national resources, as well as other resources, are always allocated for the security of the government and not enough to ensure human security. In this context, the concept of human security is admitted because they cover large issues from human rights, poverty and disease, gender and social prejudice to environmental degradation, crime, and terrorists... In the view of Thailand, the Southeast Asian countries may have different priorities in a wide spectrum of issues, but they can and should have a common strategy and policy for key issues such as poverty reduction, employment, equality and economic opportunities for the people and social, human and natural resources for sustainable development. In the condition of Thailand, human security needs political stability together with economic development, that is able to achieve human security through the consolidation of democracy and the need to reconcile both human needs and human rights so that they complement each other.

However, ASEAN generally has no consensus view of human security. It is quite clear to see a concern of ASEAN countries that 'human security' is just another method of imposing Western values of freedom and their political institutions to the region. The most important issue is ASEAN's strict conception of national sovereignty to emphasize the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of each other. ASEAN seems to want to solve the problem in a different direction: if human security is the security for the individual, which like the fact that only the best can be done through national security. Ever, in Southeast Asia, state personal protection against threats both from within and from external aggression, so the citizens

basically have voluntarily given the right to self because the state pays his personal "governance" as this is the force effective protection for their human security.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY AND ITS INFLUENCES ON HUMAN SECURITY IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIA

Religion is the moral support of human. It helps people with mental mainstay. Besides, it also helps people who have the same beliefs find their "common identity" and mount them together with the religious belief. Such religions are meant to help the lives of people in all aspects been enhanced and developed in a positive way. We can say that religion is indispensable in the life of every human being in the world. Southeast Asia has a large of a concentration of all the great religions of the world. Religion and its followers had enormous contributions and influence in the life, culture, politics and society of the countries in this area. The seminar "Conflict prevention, conflict solving, and peacemaking in Southeast Asia: ASEAN security community & the UN" raised the challenging issues that ASEAN has to face on the way of building the three pillars of ASEAN Community are a deficiency of common cultural and lingual characteristics and the extreme Islamic groups emerge.[1] With a population of 228 million, of whom 88% recognize themselves as Muslims, Indonesia has the world's biggest Muslim population yet at the same time remain a secular state. 59% of Malaysia's population of 23 million is Muslim. Malaysia's achievement in keeping up a pluralistic political framework, an energetic economy which has developed at 8% for every annum in the course of recent decades and the selection of approaches which have encouraged social combination has made Malaysia an effective formative model for some Islamic and rising nations. The small Islamic government of Brunei and the critical Muslim minority population in Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore are impacted by trends and developments influencing Muslims in Malaysia and Indonesia.[2] The conflicts related to religious elements have become one of the great obstacles to building ASCC due to their serious causes of social problems such as poverty, diseases, homelessness, police food security, unemployment... In the areas of conflicts, children do not have the conditions of learning and developing while education is an important goal in the process of building ASCC. The continuing conflicts are more and more difficult to be

[1] Bach Tuyet, Nguyen Thi (2007), "The issue of religion and social security in ASEAN", *Religious Studies Review,* Vol. 1, No. 4, pp. 75-81

[2] Robert W. Hefner (2007), "The Sword Against the Crescent: Religion and violence in Muslim Southeast Asia", in Linell E. Cady & Sheldon W. Simon (2007), *Religion and Conflict in South and Southeast Asia,* The National Bureau of Asian Research, pp. 33-50

resolved, and thereby also hinder the efforts into narrowing the development gap among countries.

First of all, the conflict could disrupt economic growth.

Typically, the proposed water pipeline transit (Pakistan, Thailand, and Myanmar) are often faced with the revolt of ethnic religions and jeopardize the stability in the region and that the development pipeline is complicated. This issue threatened one of the major export sectors of Indonesia (oil and gas accounted for 40% of GDP). Secondly, it leads to hinder the development of Member States. The religious conflict in Myanmar made the reform and the opening up of the country affected. According to Mr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Secretary-General of ASEAN, this is not just a matter of ethnic conflict - between the two religious communities Buddhism and Islam, but also the problem of the structure of the Constitution of Myanmar, the problem of democracy and human rights, and issues of national reconciliation. This conflict does not only affect the stability and development of Myanmar but also affect the realization of the ASEAN Community in 2015.[3]

Equal rights and social equality problems

In essence, religious violence happens not merely due to a conflict between two groups of people but rather a manifestation of the failure of social policies of many countries. Minority Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar are deprived of basic civil rights because they are not recognized as the official residents of Myanmar, so they have no such living conditions as most residents in Myanmar who are Buddhists. When a country has a national religion or a religion has the greatest influence, the minority groups of different religions are being treated unfairly. And in countries where Islam is a national religion, religious forces are making inroads into the state power and seizing political power, or sometimes even create pressures to the government. This situation shows that religion has had an active role which is a great incentive to link multiple ethnic countries, but it also can become the causes of civil war or secessions.

Migration issues - refugees related to religious factors

The fact that illegal migrants from the countries having conflicts move to neighboring countries to make a living and asylum has been affecting political stability and social economics of the country, causing extremely serious social problems as a homeless situation,

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[3] Emmanuel Karagiannis (2011), "China's Pipeline Diplomacy: Assessing the Threat of   Low Intensity Conflicts", *Havard Asia Quarterly,* pp. 54-60

food insecurity, environmental sanitation, and poverty. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), the conflict in Myanmar has left thousands of people homeless and facing the risk of serious food shortages, creating an exodus to neighboring countries like Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia.[4] The bad thing is that it affects the country's reform process in Myanmar. The successful reform of Myanmar in 2011 was praised many people in this country but not to help the Rohingya. Agencies in charge of refugees by the United Nations (UNHCR) estimates that 120,000 Rohingya have used different ways to leave Myanmar for three years. Trilateral meeting at the ministerial level between Malaysia, Thailand, and Myanmar in May 2015 has spread to a joint statement that the country will not implement rebuffing policies. However, these countries also said that the issues need to be solved at the root, i.e. from Myanmar. Meanwhile, Malaysia and Indonesia announced it would temporarily provide accommodation and minimum necessities for around 7,000-8,000 immigrants.[5]

Another example is the conflict in southern Thailand which caused serious insecurity for this country. Thailand has faced many moderate separatist groups occurring frequently in the country. The conflict over 9 years has claimed the lives of over 5,000 people.[6] Like other religious conflicts, instability created an exodus. Many Thais had to run into the neighboring countries such as Laos, Cambodia, and Malaysia to avoid violence. In addition, the conflict was a significant impact on the relationship between Malaysia and Thailand. Thailand believes that Malaysia has implicitly supported the separatist movement because this movement wants to merge into Malaysia. Moreover, Thailand objected to Malaysia to allow people of Pattani Liberation Organization (PULO) to legally refuge in this country. Problems have been seriously increasing as Malaysia refused to meet the requirements of Thailand regarding the repatriation of refugees. The unrest in the border area between the two countries also raised concerns about territorial disputes.

CHALLENGES FOR ASEAN COMMUNITY

Ethnic and religions conflicts has always been the concern of many researchers as well as many scholars in the world. Especially, when Southeast Asia was concentrated more religions, ethnicities, languages than any other regions in the world. Back in the world history, many

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[4] World Food Programme (2015), *Myanmar: current issues and what the World Food Programme is doing.* Accessed on https://www.wfp.org/countries/myanmar on 28 Sep 2015

[5] Worldwatch Monitor, *Religious tension rise in West Papua.* Accessed on <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2008/07-July/newsarticle_5474.html/> on 14 May 2014

[6] Beginda Pakpahan, "The role of Indonesia in ASEAN, in East Asia Summit and in G20", *The Jakarta Post*, 4/10/2011. Accessed on <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2011/10/04/the-role-indonesia-asean-east-asia-summit-and-g20.html> on 14 May 2014

conflicts in the region borrowed the name of 'ethnicity' or 'religion' as the external causes for the underlying causes such as the unequal treatment and the failure of policy government, and left various consequences, even causing bloody wars in the name of protecting religious sanctuary. In spite of how we name it, most people who suffer the consequences are innocent. They always have to live with a status of anxiety, fear, and mutual suspicion that will always be a problem in the security policies of each country. To better address the problem of conflicts, there is no other way, but finding the cause of the conflict. That has always been an important and urgent task for all the governments.

The foregoing analysis suggests that *religious violence in Southeast Asia is less about religion per se than about the underlying social psychological and in particular mimetic, dynamics driving it.*[7] Although the fact that Islam in Southeast Asia had long been regarded as more tolerant and inclusive than its Middle Eastern counterparts, religious fundamentalism in this region is on the rise, especially since the rise of IS. Sim contends that "religious fundamentalism seems to be more to do with power than spiritual matters," and "power is a political rather than a spiritual issue."[8] Religions easily become a pretext for the outbreak of social conflicts. The matter "human security" itself is very complex, and ensuring human security is even more complex. It depends on how the perceived problems of each country, each community, or more generally all the organization's world-class policies and measures to ensure the security of different people. Each country might have the path to go their own way. However, the world in which the interdependence between countries is increasing requires the approaches and solutions at the international level. Global measures often have a profound impact and long term for the community that will require determination, responsibility, cooperation and coordination of all countries and the worldwide community.[9] We can generalize these security measures to protect people from the influence of religion as follows: (i) sustainable development, create equal opportunities for all parishioners and religious organizations, (ii) solving the relationship between ethnicity and religion with the government, and (iii) the religious ethnicity to strengthen dialogue with each other to resolve conflicts.

Different religious communities will be difficult to find a common voice to build a common

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[7] Charles Selengut, *Sacred Fury: Understanding Religious Violence* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 228. See also Juergenmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God,* 162-3

[8] Stuart Sim, *Fundamentalist World: The New Dark Age of Dogma* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2004), p.29

[9] Ta, Minh Tuan (2008), "Human Security" (An ninh con người), *The Journal of Communism..* Access <http://www.tapchicongsan.org.vn/Home/Nghiencuu-Traodoi/2008/1177/An-ninh-con-nguoi-va-nhung-moi-de-doa-toan-cau.aspx>

identity as the dream of ASEAN community. ASEAN now efforts to promote the basic objectives, such as (i) focus on developing people's life and narrowing social gaps; (ii) ensure social rights and equality, regardless of religion, race, language ...; (iii) actively raise awareness of people about the issue of building the ASEAN common identity. Above all, the aim to ensure the rights and gender equality is a target evaluated the best. On the way to complete the Community post 2015, ASEAN is incurring many challenges, and among them, the issue of religion is one of the most important factors. The conflict in the region related to Islam clearly had a negative impact on ASEAN society as a consequence of migration issues - refugees, ensuring equal rights, and particularly the issue of building a common identity for the ASEAN region. With an area of religious diversity and a large number of Muslims, the role of national governments in particular and ASEAN in general in making the appropriate policy to manage the development of the religious communities is extremely important. This will bring a sustainable development to the social security of each nation and the whole Southeast Asia, as well as contribute to the completion of the objectives of the ASEAN Community.

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