

INTRODUCTION: WHEN SECURITY MEET POLITICS OF CONFLICT, WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE, GET READY FOR A CHALLENGING YEAR[©]

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ABSTRACT

This editorial note serves as an introductory explanation as we approach the dawn of 2023. The hardship of a total lockdown changes how we look at space and time or spatiotemporal beyond ordinary linearity of progress and regress. Nevertheless, how do we use space and time to make sense of the most significant concerns of threats to our security? How do we refine constructive ideas about safety and inspire others to think beyond the rigidity of rational choice and nearly no freedom to choose? Time and space transform our perceived secured reality and insinuate threat discursively, whether yesterday or today, international, or local. In our nested security discourse, we challenge the archaic and unstable binary boundaries between international and internal delineation of security threats and peace concerns. Altogether, temporal constraints and limited space disperse our cognitive inability to operate within the tesseract of multiple data analytics, eternal realities, and organic, meaningful solutions to give hope to humanity and freedom to coexist mutually. Underpinned by multidimensions and nested security discourse, we present our readers with our final thoughts in selecting six research articles, three research notes, two commentaries, and one book review.

Keywords: editorial note, relations between security and politics of conflict, women, development, peace, challenging year, 2023, BAGHUS and Bangi School

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Pengenalan: Apabila Keselamatan Bersembung dengan Politik Konflik, Wanita, Pembangunan dan Keamanan, Bersedialah untuk Tahun yang Mencabar

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ABSTRAK

Nota editorial ini berfungsi sebagai penjelasan pengenalan ketika kita menghampiri tahun 2023. Kesukaran perlaksanaan penutupan penuh telah mengubah cara kita melihat ruang dan masa atau spatiotemporal melebihi garis lurus kemajuan dan kemunduran biasa. Namun begitu, bagaimanakah kita menggunakan ruang dan masa untuk memahami kebimbangan terhadap ancaman keselamatan? Bagaimanakah pula kita memperhalusi idea yang membina keselamatan dan memberi inspirasi kepada orang lain untuk berfikir di luar kelaziman pilihan rasional dan hampir tiada pilihan kebebasan untuk memilih? Masa dan ruang mengubah kefahaman kita tentang keterjaminan dan mengubah persepsi terhadap wacana ancaman, sama ada semalam atau hari ini, baik di peringkat antarabangsa atau tempatan. Menerusi wacana keselamatan yang dihasilkan ini, kami mencabar sempadan binari kuno dan tidak stabil antara persempadanan ancaman keselamatan antarabangsa dan dalaman, serta kebimbangan keamanan. Secara keseluruhannya, kekangan sementara dan ruang yang terhad melenyapkan ketidakupayaan kognitif kita untuk beroperasi dalam jeda pelbagai dimensi dan memberi harapan kepada manusia dan kebebasan untuk hidup bersama. Disokong oleh wacana keselamatan pelbagai dimensi, nota editor ini menjelaskan kepada pembaca mengenai asas pemilihan enam makalah penyelidikan asli, tiga nota penyelidikan, dua makalah komentar dan satu makalah ulasan buku.

Kata Kunci: nota editor, perkaitan keselamatan dengan politik konflik, wanita, pembangunan, kemanan, tahun mencabar, 2023, BAGHUS dan Sekolah Bangi

Introduction: Rethinking Time and Space in Security Studies

Lambach (2020, 284) and Homs (2020, 23), respectively, highlight the uneven treatment of space and time by the existing scholarship on International Relations (IR), International Security (IS), and Strategic Studies (SS), be it local or international doyen. As we draw the curtain and approach the dawn of 2023, we look back and realise how we barely made an endemic shift and transition to new norms. The loss of many lives and away for many months from our loved ones to the pandemic, and the hardship of total lockdown and being constrained by limited confinement of our room certainly change how we look at space and time or spatiotemporal beyond ordinary linearity of progress and regress (Neumann and Sending 2018, 31). Nevertheless, how do we use space and time to make sense of the most significant concerns of threats to our security and practice in SS?

Altogether, temporal constraints and limited space disperse our cognitive inability to operate within the tesseract of multiple data analytics, eternal realities, and organic, meaningful solutions to give hope to humanity and freedom to coexist mutually (Maertens *et al.* 2022, 11). However, these disruptive covid years of over-reliance on digital technology and webinar mode of conversation via privileged unlimited internet data revive our selfish thought. It shakes our unrealised blind spot of calamities and marginalised peripheral actors (Damreuther 2013). How do we refine constructive ideas about safety and inspire others to think beyond the rigidity of rational choice and nearly no freedom to choose? The great works of Bates (2006), Adam (1990), and Tonkis (1998) encourage the significance of the nonlinearity of time and flexible dimensions to envision the proposition of stability and change for the good of many. We can no longer afford to work alone, thinking of a single solution within a single parallel of time and stability of singular space (Bertie 2016, 97). Assumed artificial separation between time and space, theory and practice, materials, and ideas, as well as between ivory tower scholars and everyday people, hinder our ability to generate creative solutions. Time and space transform our perceived secured reality and insinuate threat discursively, whether yesterday or today, international, or local (Williams 2016).

Nested and Multidimensional Relations between Strategic Studies, and International Affairs

In this introduction to the second issue of 2022, we provide our editorial thoughts on selected papers despite being overwhelmed with time management, especially with the growing volume of manuscript submissions. We remain indebted to and proud of our multinational representatives of boards, reviewers, and readers of *SINERGI*. We urge our readers to consider nested and multidimensions of security so we can realise multiple opportunities beyond the usual restrictions of time and space Rhamey Jr. *et al.* (2020). One of the critical limitations of security is the artificial divide and nearly typical assumptions between theory and practice and between traditional and human security scopes. However, local people's actual context and unique experience on the ground are subject to contested explanations. Common wisdom illustrates SS as a subfield of

IR (Baylis *et al.* 2022, 3). Therefore, SS is confined within closed relations and relevant applications of the military and defence industry and with limited civilian roles (Fredman 2013).

Contextualising the issue within broader intellectual development and world events in Politics and Social Sciences is necessary (Shiraev and Zunok 2019, 5-6). Whether one would agree with the conventional understanding of SS as military dimensions of defence policy overviews of IR issues and mitigating war risks (Booth 2007), SS proponents often emphasise the decades between the 1950s and 1980s as the development of its research agenda and expansion of the field (Hugh *et al.* 2006). Three significant developments in the late 1980s and early 1990s are relevant to our immediate interest here.

First, the failure of the past Washington Consensus in the neoliberal agenda of the structural adjustment policy (SAPs) and Amartya Sen's Human Capability approach in inequality discourse have significantly impacted non-econometric dimensions of international development of the early post-Cold War shift (Rajapakse 2016). They have also signified several interrelated policy and research developments, namely the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 1994 report, the Human Development Index (HDI), and Mahbub Al-Huq's Human Security matrix (Baru 1998).

Second, immediate post-Cold War discussions of the new world order of the United States (US), the end of history, and the inevitable discourse of liberal peace through the immediate prescription of election mechanisms and free-market economic corrections to fix the Third wave democracies' problems and conflict zones (Buzan and Larsen 2009). Consequent to the second development is a shift from the Cold War's peacemaking initiatives to the long-term peacebuilding agenda (Jackson *et al.* 2018). They are a shift in peace research agenda from inter-state armed conflicts into intra-state and civil war problems of Africa, Asia, and Southeast Europe or what is controversially coined as Kaldor's New War (2013). Immediate Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda of peace* (1992).

Third, the rise of the Postmodernist research agenda, including Social Constructivism, Poststructuralism and their linguistic methods of discourse analysis, has signified a growing critical and qualitative turn in understanding immediate post-Cold War problems of the early 1990s (Rhamey Jr. *et al.* 2020). Unequal distribution of wealth and failure of the past SAPs in many emerging economies have given rise to critical international political-economy (IPE) critiques of globalisation's failures to reverse uneven development and unfair trade relations between the Global North and Global South. However, poverty alone does not explain Collier's greed and grievance as root causes for trends of child soldiers, genocide, unsymmetrical warfare, and irregular combatants in many renewed cycles of violent conflicts. Meanwhile, increasing environmentalist activism of the *UN 21st Century Agenda* in Rio De Janeiro has renewed past environmental economics of *Tragedy of the Commons* (1833) into waves of anti-war, anti-human rights violations, and sustainable development discourse (Ramli *et al.* 2012).

Nonetheless, these three international developments of the 1990s and early 2000s have resurfaced in various UN debates and governance discourse of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Responsibility to Protect (R2P), Climate Change, International Criminal Court (ICC), and counterterrorism relations with organised and transnational crimes in financing terrorism (Andersen-Rogers and Crawford 2022). Additionally, iterate vicious global financial meltdown and economic recession every ten years at the dawn of the birth age of the fourth industrial revolution (IR 4.0) have introduced a new layer of cybersecurity threats. The recent pandemic and prolonged lockdown have heightened the worldwide scale of online economies and new dimensions of food security and shortage of staple supplies at inflated prices. After the endemic shift, massive border controls and financial inclusion barriers unravel unprecedented and more complex intricacies between economy, migration, exploitation, trafficking, and smuggling annihilations of human hopes and Elon Musk and Donald Trump's philanthropic styles of charity industry. The rise of cryptocurrency and artificial intelligence (AI) politics, the pervasiveness of auto-machine learning, and the stealing of personal and social media data are beyond our altruistic dreams (Coeckelbergh 2022). These have drawn close peace and violence into more profound conclusions of CNN effect, social media influencers' viral solutions, big data and 5G security threats, widening realistic threats from digital violence, illegal income, and money laundering crimes. They are an all-clear hint of multidimensional sources of threats and increasing colluded or nested intertwined pressures between national and human security. While the world is now living through the gradual decline of the US, the People's Republic of China (PRC) Belt and Road (BRI) project, and the South China Sea (SCS) security dilemma and extended geopolitical shift of previous US-PRC trade war into vaccination records of Pfizer versus Sinovac have not provided us with a vision of Galtung's positive peace (Abdullah 2010).

Moreover, the shift to post-Cold War has reduced many countries' military engagements of policy and defence budget cuts (Mat et al. 2019). It has brought the expansion of nonmilitary and other disciplinary views of analytical distinctions between strategy, operation, and tactic in the military and civilian policy-making process. Meanwhile, IS revolves around the object of security and illustrates conditions of freedom from fear and threat sources. Like SS, IS proponents used development and expansions of concerned issues in IR deemed as new opportunities to study threats sources to the survival of the states. In short, without IR, both IS and SS fields cannot broaden their study and research scopes due to the risks of changing dynamics of mentioned security events and threats. It is understood that military and nonmilitary design planning and instrument of SS is well understood, and executed within sequences between strategy, tactical, and operations of military and civilian police. The common wisdom of security dynamics and new human security dimensions are well versed. However, growing interests and students to appreciate security suffer from two unchecked and explored nested yet multidimensions of security (Noor 2021).

Thus, our selections of articles from various parts of the world have brought multinational authors to highlight compelling arguments. *First*, expanding security to include the human dimension replaces the irrelevant national security threats. Present

mixed evidence of stability, change, and conflict unpacks the disturbing facts that human security threats have transformed and reinforced the vulnerabilities of the state defence ecosystem, and their strategic policies in dealing with both types of security threats.

Second, while the human security matrix provides expansion into the security research agenda, people often argue that these topics are more relevant than national security in today's context. On the other hand, they do not replace the core classic security dilemma but reinforce the state's inability to subdue threats from both national and human security threats. Consequent to this is to consider nested and multidimensional security threats (Siko and Victor 2020).

Introducing Selected Articles for *SINERGI*, Issue December 2022

Selected papers on this issue recast the danger of our silence over the question of peaceful change in IR. Paul (2022, 12) argues the difference between a “peaceful system change” and “peaceful systemic change” as the former system deals with external superpower shifts (Paul 2022, 13). However, Gilpin (1981) ignores domestic discontent and their connections with future renewed violence. Paul (2022, 4) draws from the works of Gilpin (1981, 18) on highlighting the problems of peaceful system change and peaceful systemic transformation as the latter deals with local sources of security threats. In our nested security discourse, we challenge the archaic and unstable binary boundaries between international and internal delineation of security threats and peace concerns. Our present-day security and political reality can no longer afford to deny the transnational diffusion of security threats and solutions. Underpinned by multidimensions and nested security discourse, we present our readers with the following articles.

The first full-research article in this volume, entitled *Abolishing Military and Cultivating Pacifism in Costa Rica: Reflective but Limited Peace?* is written by Mohd Firdaus, A. J. from the University of Aberdeen, United Kingdom. Drawing from years of research on Security in Latin America, Firdaus reinvigorates Costa Rica's exceptionalism and José María Hipólito Figueres Ferrer's historic decision to abolish the military after the 1948 civil war permanently. While Cold War's regional security predicament has made Costa Rican an exceptional candidate for peace in Central America, the following underlying reasons for pacifist views do not make Costa Rica a compelling argument for romanticising the regional model of peaceful transitions. Guided by the Historical institutional approach in researching peace history and social origins of the 1948 civil wars, Firdaus provides a precise critical juncture that sets the subsequent path of dependence that ends the war and the eventual decision to military abolishment. On the surface levels, Costa Rican political development in the 1950s is reasonably commendable compared to neighbouring Latin American prominent attributes of military dictatorship and unspeakable mayhem of violence unleashed by numerous records of extreme civil-military relations. His further examinations of path dependence to progressive achievement in literacy, health, and productivity only confirm a usual case and different political trajectory of Costa Rica, which cannot be replicated nor comparable to propose democratic peace in the region. After all, social

process and local peace formation in Costa Rica since the 1950s is nowhere exceptional, yet misleadingly constructed as a fallacy of cultivating a peace culture that could be transferred to other countries. Understanding this peculiarity is a reminder for any renewed debate of Costa Rica in the security of the Central American region.

The second article in this volume is entitled *From Violent Victim to Emancipatory Agency of Peace: Exploring Female Jirga as Local Gendered Peace Formation and Community Peacebuilding in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan*, written by Irfan Khan from Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. As a human rights activist, Irfan explores local community peacebuilding initiatives of women's first Jirga by a local activist, Tabassum Adnan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a salient patriarchal Pakhtun worldview and rampant cases of women abuse, he examines the underlying social origins for a passive victim to become an active agent of peace. He contextualises grassroots origins for Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) to take place. Irfan's research unravels the potential and pitfalls of how women can embark upon alternative dispute resolutions (ADR) despite patriarchal conceptualisations of conflict resolution that prevent their active participation. His well-researched findings show multidimensional links between local community peace and the global systemic and peaceful transformation of IR.

The third article of this volume, *Against All Odds? Blue Economy and Blue Ocean Maritime Strategy in Seychelles and Mauritius*, is written by Muhammad Ammar Hisyam, Emma Michelle Lee Yuk Ying As-Shung, Kennimrod Sariburaja from Asia Pacific University, Malaysia, and Daniel Ruiz Garibay from Real Madrid Spain. In the article, these authors explore the politics of development and climate change in the Seychelles and Mauritius. Adopting library research methods and online focus group conversations with different stakeholders in both countries, and completed over two years, during pre-and post-Covid lockdown periods, provides this paper with fascinating findings. Further identification and understanding of vulnerability, overcoming the challenge and the paradox of Blue Economic ideals in these two cases of SDIS refine the reader's scepticism of the myth of the SDG.

The fourth article of this volume is entitled *Overcoming the Failed Peace in South Sudan? Empowering Unarmed Civilians and Local Peacekeepers through the Work of Nonviolent Peaceforce* written by Muhammad Farid Abd Rahman from the International Committee of the Red Cross, Abimbola J. Owojori from Nigeria Police Academy, and Faridah Jaafar from Universiti Sains Malaysia. In their article, these authors examine methods of unarmed civilian peacekeeping as local peace formation which employs non-use weapons for civilian protection in Juba, South Sudan. Farid, Abimbola, and Faridah illuminate the limited viability of the UN civilian-appointed personnel while arguing for the compelling efficacy of unarmed civilian peacekeepers in which those affected by the conflict are empowered in their physical protection. They further recommend integrating the NP strategies into the current UN peace operation disarray so the present self-fulfilling prophecy of failed peace in South Sudan can be overturned.

The fifth article of this volume is written in Bahasa Malaysia, entitled, *Malaysia in Global Feminism Waves: Women Development and International Relations of Malaysia* [Malaysia dalam Arus Feminisme Global: Pembangunan Wanita dan Hubungan Antarabangsa Malaysia], written by Muhammad Rahimi Hassan and Rashila Ramli from the National University of Malaysia. In their article, Rahimi and Rashila explain how the dynamics of women's development in Malaysia have become part of contemporary global feminism. When the UN celebrated International Women's Day in 1975, Malaysia played an active international role in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and SDG. It established a local agency, the National Advisory Council on the Integration of Women in Development. (NACIWID). Nevertheless, both Rahimi and Rashila elucidate interactions between feminism and International Relations and use the framework of women in development (WID), women and development (WAD), as well as gender and development (GAD) for assessing women's emancipation in policy formulation. In so doing, they show Malaysia's earliest roles and international activism and Malaysia's lessons for global feminist discourse.

The sixth article of this volume is also written in Bahasa Malaysia, entitled *Understanding History and Geopolitics of the United States in Thailand's Golden Triangle: Relations Drug Trafficking and Addiction with Security of Malaysia* [Memahami Sejarah dan Geopolitik Amerika Syarikat di Segi Tiga Emas Thailand: Hubungkait Ketagihan dan Penyeludupan Dadah serta Keselamatan Malaysia], written by Amer Fawwaz Mohamad Yasid and Noraini Zulkifli from the National Defence University of Malaysia. Amer and Noraini examine the latest proposals of the new Malaysia's government to decriminalise drug addiction issues. Providing their defence and security perspective, the authors caution Malaysia's hasty decision to decriminalise drug addicts when the existing security measures to combat drug smuggling at the cross-border remain unresolved. In demonstrating the relations between illegal drug supplies in the Malaysian black market and the transnational drug syndicate, the authors focus on the historical existence of the Golden Triangle and the US's Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) presence in the area during the Cold War. The CIA's involvement in the drug triangle was within complex nested security threats. It brought the Malaysian history of drugs and the introduction of capital punishment with the past relations of Malaya's communist insurgency with the northern Vietnam government and the Vietnam War. Given the current shift of the Southeast Asian tension involving the US-China power rivalry in the South China Sea, any attempt to decriminalise dangerous addictive substances must consider the historical geopolitical complexity of transnational and traditional security threats. Currently, the conceptualisation of drugs as national security threats depends upon the existing capital punishment for drug abuse as a criminal offence. Such an offence relies heavily upon jurisprudence conceptualisation of addiction with possession of the abused substance. A proposal to decriminalise Malaysian addicts needs to understand the reliance of threats upon criminal offence concepts of the addictive substance. Thus, without criminological concepts of unlawful possession, legal loopholes cannot deter transnational security problems caused by drug traffickers and smugglers.

The seventh article is a research note entitled *"If there is a Declaration of War, We*

Welcome the War": Undi-18, TikTok Election and Normalisation of Violence, written by Siti Zuliha Razali from Universiti Sains Malaysia, and Muhamad Luqman Hakim Abdul Hani from Universiti Malaya, Malaysia. Siti Zuliha and Luqman Hakim analyse the radicalisation of young and first-time voters on social media. They highlight TikTok as a primary campaign battleground during the 15th General Election (GE-15). They argue two crucial areas of unexplored terrain for future research. The first is the immediate need to invest in an emancipatory discourse of civic and political education and unabated expansions of democratic space and rights. Secondly, alarming concerns of electoral terrorism and hate speech via social media unravel the under-research angles or assumed organic political divisions between analogue generations of corrupted warlords versus digital politics of technocratic youth savvy.

The following eighth article is a second research note entitled *"Pelosi's Intoxication of Taiwan and Democrat's Flopped Performance in the US Midterm Election*, written by Namrata Hasiya, a researcher based at the Centre for the China Analysis and Strategy, New Delhi, India. Namrata does not rule out the possibility of an increased significant connection between the development between the US election and events in international politics. She explores profound security lessons since the unfortunate Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022 and the prospect of increasing tensions in Beijing-Washington relations foreshadowing Taiwan's possible invasion of Mainland China.

The ninth article is an obituary entitled, *Remembering Hamidin Abdul Hamid: His Contribution to Africa-Malaysia Relations and the Development of African Studies in Malaysia*, written by Muhammed Haron from Johannesburg University, South Africa, Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid from Universiti Sains Malaysia and, Muhammad Danial Azman, Salina Zainol and Hifzhan Hafiy Mohd Shafik from Universiti Malaya, Malaysia. In their tribute dedicated to the late Associate Professor Dr Hamidin Abdul Hamid (1970-2022), who passed away in the late afternoon of September 19, 2022. According to Muhammed Haron, Ahmad Fauzi, Muhammad Danial, Salina Zainol and Hifzhan, Malaysians know the late Dr Hamidin through his tv and his legacy in advancing African Studies in Malaysia. The authors also provide updates on the current trends in Malaysia-Africa relations and African Studies at Universiti Malaya and Malaysia.

The next tenth article is the first commentary article written in Bahasa Malaysia, *Engendering Indonesia's involvement in the United Nations peacekeeping operation* [Pengenderan Keterlibatan Indonesia dalam Operasi Pengaman Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu], written by Machya Astuti Dewi from Universitas Pembangunan Nasional, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Machya provides a brief account of Indonesian female armies in the UN Peacekeeping Operation (UNPKO) and her views on the needs of the Indonesian government to explore gender perspective since it only further enhances the Indonesian reputation at the UNPKO. In return, well-trained Indonesian male and female officers encourage gender lens in the professional enhancement of the defence sector.

The last commentary article is entitled, 40 Years of Malaysia's Look East Policy and Relocation of Indonesia's Capital: *Serumpun* Solution in Sarawak-West Kalimantan Cros-Border Halal Hub, written by Ahmad Sharif Haron and Zarina Othman from Research Centre for History, Politics and International Affairs, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, and Andika Wahab Institute of International and Malaysian Studies, in which all authors are based in the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia. In this commentary article, Ahmad Sharif, Zarina Othman and Andika Wahab provides a brief commentary on the recent relocation of Indonesia's new capital to Kota Nusantara (East Kalimantan) which is a game changer. The author highlights how the relocation creates a spill-over of the prosperity neighbour policy upon the existing West Kalimantan-Malaysia Sarawak border. Thus, there will be more benefits for the first Japanese Big AEON in Kuching (Malaysia's Sarawak) and the potential Halal Wagyu beef market in Pontianak (Indonesia's West Kalimantan). They suggests that both countries seize this golden opportunity to revisit their respective Look East Policy (LEP) with Japan and integrate Japan's advantages in quality assurance to overcome different regulatory Halal practices. While both countries are essential players in the global halal hub and share trade borders, there is a need to harmonise Kalimantan-Sarawak's cross-border halal framework and bring LEP's benefits to the existing business ecosystem in Kuching and Pontianak.

The last article is a book review written in Bahasa Malaysia by Aini Fatimah Roslam from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia, entitled, *Book Reviews: Iranian Nuclear Issues and America's National Interest* by Riki Rahmat and Zarina Othman, Bangi, UKM Press, 2020, 216 pp, ISBN: 9789674128395 [Ulasan Buku: Isu Nuklear dan Kepentingan Amerika Syarikat Oleh Riki Rahmat dan Zarina Othman, Bangi, Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan (UKM) Press, 2020, 216 ms, ISBN: 9789674128395].

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