

Human Security: Concept and Measurement

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Introduction

How safe and free are we as individuals? That is the central question behind the idea of human security. It is not a new question, but it is one that is attracting the interest of both policy makers and thinkers. Freed from the constraints of the Cold War, governments, international organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), and ordinary citizens are in a position to explore that question as never before and to act to enlarge the envelope of safety and freedom.¹ While security studies and international relations scholars remain skeptical about the idea of human security, arguing that it is too woolly and broad a concept to be useful either analytically or practically, decision-makers increasingly recognize the importance of human security as a policy framework.

What is human security? Can human security be described succinctly enough to guide research and policy? This essay suggests that the idea of human security can be clearly delineated in relation to the dominant, neo-realist conception of security and that its elements can be presented compactly enough for further refinement. The human security conception presented here aspires to be a general schema, more or less applicable to any society in the world, and important parts of it are even quantifiable. If so, it is argued that it is possible to carry out an annual audit of human security, much as human development is audited on a yearly basis by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in its *Human Development Report*.

¹ The best known statements on the concept of human security are United Nations Development Program, "Redefining Security: The Human Dimension," *Current History* (May 1995), 94, pp. 229-236 and Lloyd Axworthy, "Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership," *International Journal* (Spring 1997), LII, 183-196. For an assessment of the Canadian view, see Astri Suhrke, "Human Security and the Interest of States," *Security Dialogue*, vol. 30, no. 3 (September 1999), pp. 265-276.

With the end of the Cold War, the concept of security has increasingly come under scrutiny from scholars and practitioners alike. In the classical formulation, security is about how states use force to manage threats to their territorial integrity, their autonomy, and their domestic political order, primarily from other states. This *classical* national security formulation has been criticized on various grounds.

For some, the classical formulation is too unilateralist in its emphasis on force in a world where there are weapons of mass destruction and where interdependence is knitting nations together willy-nilly. A unilateralist notion of security must give way, in this view, to *cooperative security*.² For others, the classical formulation errs in restricting the scope of security to *military* threats from other states. In this view, rival states may deploy other kinds of threats against each other's territorial integrity and domestic political order. These may include environmental, economic, and cultural threats. In addition, threats to territorial integrity and political order must be reckoned not just from other states but also from various non-state actors and even natural catastrophes. This much more expanded notion of security, which broadens the instruments and sources of threat, may be called *comprehensive security*.³ A third and more fundamental critique of security goes even further, to suggest that security cannot be restricted to the well being of the state. From this perspective, implicit in the classical formulation of security is the protection and welfare of the state, whereas what is central – or should be central – is the protection and welfare of the individual citizen or human being. A conception of security that is centered above all on the sanctity of the individual may be called *human security*.

² On cooperative security, see Janne Nolan, ed., *Global Engagement: Cooperation and Security in the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994).

This paper is about the notion of human security. The first section of the paper traces the origins of human security thinking and outlines a framework within which the two most important sets of writings on the subject – by the UNDP and Canadian government – can be assessed. The next two sections go on to describe the UNDP and Canadian approaches to human security in some detail according to the framework developed in the previous section. In the fourth section, the paper attempts a detailed comparison of the UNDP and Canadian approaches. The fifth section brings together the major elements of the UNDP and Canadian schemas in an overall human security conception, in particular focussing on the nature of human security threats and the instruments/means of dealing with those threats. The final two sections then deal with the notion of a human security audit as also the uses and limits of a Human Security Index (HSI) which, it is argued, is a vital part of the audit.

I. The Concept of Human Security

What is human security? The genealogy of the *idea* can be related to if not traced back to the growing dissatisfaction with prevailing notions of development and security in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Economics undoubtedly led the way with its critiques of the dominant models of economic development beginning in the 1960s. In the middle 1970s, in International Relations, the home of security studies, the multinational World Order Models Project (WOMP) launched an ambitious effort to envision and construct a more

³ On comprehensive security, see Muthiah Alagappa, “Asian Practice of Security: Key Features and Explanations,” in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 624-629.

stable and just world order, and as a part of this endeavor drew attention to the problem of individual well-being and safety.⁴

Perhaps the most important forerunners of the idea of human security, though, were the reports of a series of multinational independent commissions composed of prominent leaders, intellectuals, and academics. Beginning in the 1970s, the Club of Rome group produced a series of volumes on the “world problematique” which were premised on the idea that there is “a complex of problems troubling men of all nations: poverty...degradation of the environment; loss of faith in institutions; uncontrolled urban spread; insecurity of employment; alienation of youth; rejection of traditional values; and inflation and other monetary and economic disruptions.”⁵ The Report noted that “Every person in the world faces a series of pressures and problems that require his attention and action. These problems affect him at many different levels. He may spend much of his time trying to find tomorrow’s food...He may be concerned about personal power or the power of the nation in which he lives. He may worry about a world war...or a war next week with a rival clan in his neighborhood.”⁶ These and other concerns had to be understood in the context of large global trends and forces which impinged on the individual, particularly “accelerating industrialization, rapid population growth, widespread malnutrition, depletion of non-renewable resources, and a deteriorating environment.”⁷ The inter-linkages between these macro, planetary variables suggested that there were limits to economic growth globally and therefore that a cataclysmic future might confront human society. However, “a state of global equilibrium could be

⁴ See amongst others Saul B. Mendowitz, ed., *On the Creation of a Just World Order* (New York: The Free Press, 1975) and Rajni Kothari, *Footsteps into the Future* (New York: Free Press, 1974).

⁵ Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and William W. Behrens III, *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Universe Books, 1972), p. 10.

designed that so that the basic material needs of each person...are satisfied, and each person has an equal opportunity to realize his individual human potential.”⁸ In short, the group proposed that there was a complex global system influencing the individual’s life chances and that there were alternative ways of conceptualizing global development and, ultimately, global security so as to sustain and improve those life chances.

In the 1980s, two other independent commissions contributed to the changing thinking on development and security. The first was the Independent Commission on International Development Issues chaired by Willy Brandt which, in 1980, issued the so-called “North-South report”. In his introduction to the report, Brandt wrote: “Our Report is based on what appears to be the simplest common interest: that mankind wants to survive, and one might even add has the moral obligation to survive. This not only raises traditional questions of peace and war, but also how to overcome world hunger, mass misery and alarming disparities between the living conditions of rich and poor.”⁹ In arguing for the necessity of a North-South engagement for development, it noted that the heart of the matter was the “will to overcome dangerous tensions and to produce significant and useful results for nations and regions – but, first and foremost, for human beings – in all parts of the world.”¹⁰

The second commission of the 1980s, the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (chaired by Olof Palme), authored the famous “common security” report which also drew attention to alternative ways of thinking about peace and security. While it focused on military issues and the staples of national

⁶ Meadows et al., *Limits to Growth*, pp. 17-18.

⁷ Meadows et al., *Limits to Growth*, p. 21.

⁸ Meadows et al., *Limits to Growth*, pp. 23-24.

security, it acknowledged that in the Third World security was in addition threatened by “poverty and deprivation, by economic inequality.” The Report also noted that “Common security requires that people live in dignity and peace, that they have enough to eat and are able to find work and live in a world without poverty and destitution.”¹¹

With the end of the Cold War, calls for new thinking in security matters grew rapidly. In 1991, the Stockholm Initiative on Global Security and Governance issued a call for “Common Responsibility in the 1990’s” which referred to “challenges to security other than political rivalry and armaments” and to a “wider concept of security, which deals also with threats that stem from failures in development, environmental degradation, excessive population growth and movement, and lack of progress towards democracy.”¹² Four years later, the Commission on Global Governance’s report, *Our Global Neighborhood*, echoed the Stockholm Initiative’s words on security: “The concept of global security must be broadened from the traditional focus on the security of states to include the security of people and the security of the planet.”¹³

If these commission reports were the precursors to human security thinking, it was only in the early 1990s that an explicitly human security perspective was articulated with some rigor. The first contribution was that of Mahbub ul Haq and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).¹⁴ Haq, a respected development economist and

⁹ The Independent Commission on International Development Issues, *North-South: A Programme for Survival* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1980), p. 13.

¹⁰ The Independent Commission on International Development Issues, *North-South*, p. 9.

¹¹ The Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, *Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. xv and p. 172, respectively.

¹² The Stockholm Initiative on Global Security and Governance, “Common Responsibility in the 1990’s”, a paper published by the Prime Minister’s Office, Government of Sweden, Stockholm, 1991, pp. 17-18.

¹³ The Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighborhood* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 338.

¹⁴ In terms of the “folklore” of human security, Lincoln Chen, formerly of the Ford Foundation and presently at the Rockefeller Foundation, is reported to have coined the term. Personal communication,

a long-time consultant to the UNDP, was a central figure in the launching of the human development index (HDI). The human development effort explicitly put at the center of its formulation the notion that development thinking and policies must take as their focus the welfare of individuals rather than simply the macro-economy. The second important intervention on human security was that of the Canadian government and various Canadian academics who led a middle powers' initiative.

To understand these two “schools” or “approaches” and to clarify the difference between human security and traditional national security conceptions, it is necessary to resort to some common terms of reference. The political scientist, David Baldwin, has argued that in order to evaluate the debate over the conception of security, it is vital to define the term more closely. This requires, at the very least, two things: agreement on the root meaning of security; and greater specification of the term, with reference to a series of questions: security for whom, security for which values, how much security, security from what threats, and security by what means?¹⁵

First of all, the analyst needs a basic understanding of what constitutes the security problem. Here Baldwin takes as a starting point Arnold Wolfers' famous discussion of security as “the absence of threat to acquired values” and modifies this to read “a low probability of damage to acquired values.”¹⁶ Security policies are those actions one takes to reduce or limit the probability of damage to one's acquired values. This leaves open a number of vital questions that Baldwin argues must be answered if the term security is to be analytically and prescriptively useful. At least two questions are

Kennette Benedict, Program on Global Security and Sustainability, Macarthur Foundation, Chicago, 2 June 2000.

¹⁵ David Baldwin, “The Concept of Security,” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 23 (1997), pp. 12-18.

¹⁶ Baldwin, “The Concept of Security,” p. 13.

fundamental: *security for whom* and *security of which values*? These, he notes, “suffice to define the concept of security,” but “they provide little guidance for its pursuit”.¹⁷

Thus, in addition, the analyst should ask: how much security, from what threats, by what means, at what cost, and in what time period? Not all these latter questions are vital.

Much depends on the research agenda. Minimally, the analyst needs to answer the first two core questions: *security for whom* and *security of which values*. To go beyond that depends on the problem at hand. For our purposes, two additional questions are necessary: *security from what threats* and *security by what means*? By asking these four questions of traditional security and the human security approaches of the UNDP and Canadian schools, we will begin our search for conceptual clarity. What follows is a detailed textual analysis and comparison of the two approaches within the framework of the four questions. It is not primarily a critical treatment, but rather an exegetical and comparative one, seeking to lay bare the ideas of the two schools as far as possible in their own words. This exegetical and comparative treatment will serve as the basis for a synthesis in the section that follows.

II. Mahbub ul Haq and the UNDP Approach to Human Security

To understand the UNDP approach to human security, let us try to answer the four key questions we have extracted from the Baldwin schema: *Security for whom?* *Security for which values?* *Security from what threats?* *Security by what means?*

¹⁷ Baldwin, “The Concept of Security,” p. 14.

Mahbub ul Haq and Human Security

The idea of human security is generally thought to go back to the United Nations Development Program report of 1994. Closely associated with the idea from the beginning was the consulting economist, the late Mahbub ul Haq, who had earlier played a key role in the construction of the Human Development Index (HDI) and who was subsequently the moving force behind the more recent Humane Governance Index (HGI).¹⁸ Haq's approach is outlined in his paper, "New Imperatives of Human Security" (1994).

Haq answers the question of "security for whom" quite simply. Human security is not about states and nations, but about individuals and people. Thus, he argues that the world is "entering a new era of human security" in which "the entire concept of security will change – and change dramatically". In this new conception, security will be equated with the "security of individuals, not just security of their nations" or, to put it differently, "security of people, not just security of territory." Elsewhere, more normatively, he writes, "We need to fashion a new concept of human security that is reflected in the lives of our people, not in the weapons of our country."

In fashioning this new concept, what values will we seek to protect? Haq is not explicit on this issue, but clearly individual safety and well being in the broad sense are the prime values. Whereas the traditional conception of security emphasizes territorial integrity and national independence as the primary values that need to be protected, human security pertains above all to the safety and well-being of "all the people

¹⁸ Human Development Centre, *Human Development Report for South Asia, 1999: The Crisis of Governance* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

everywhere – in their homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities, in their environment”.¹⁹

What are the major threats to these values? Here Haq initially essays a brief, illustrative laundry list of threats: drugs, disease, terrorism, and poverty. Later in the essay, in his discussion of what is to be done to advance the cause of human security, it is clear, at least by implication, that a far more fundamental threat exists, namely, an unequal world order in which some states and elites dominate to the detriment of the vast mass of humanity. This world order is embodied in the prevailing conceptions and practices of development, the reliance on arms for security, the divide between North and South globally, and the increasing marginalization of global institutions (e.g. the UN and the Bretton Woods arrangements).

What then is to be done? How can human security be achieved? This is the major part of Haq’s contribution, and it is a radical program. Fundamentally, human security will be achieved through “development, not...through arms.”²⁰ In particular, five rather radical steps are necessary to give life to the new conception of security: a human development conception with emphasis on equity, sustainability, and grassroots participation; a peace dividend to underwrite the broader agenda of human security; a new partnership between North and South based on “justice, not charity” which emphasizes “equitable access to global market opportunities” and economic restructuring; a new framework of global governance built on reform of international

¹⁹ Mahbub ul Haq, “New Imperatives of Human Security,” RGICS Paper No. 17, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS), Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, New Delhi, 1994, p. 1.

²⁰ Haq, “New Imperatives,” p. 1.

institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and United Nations; and finally, a growing role for global civil society.²¹

Haq outlines a long list of truly far-reaching proposals for global human security.

These include:

- *Developmentally*: sustainability; equity of opportunities (better distribution of productive assets, including land and credit; open access to market opportunities; job creation; social safety nets); and global justice via a “a major restructuring” of the world’s income, consumption, and lifestyle patterns
- *Militarily*: reducing arms expenditures; closing all military bases; converting military aid to economic aid; stopping arms transfers; eliminating arms export subsidies; retraining workers in defense industries
- *North-South restructuring*: equitable access to global markets for the poor countries built on the removal of trade barriers (especially in textiles and agriculture); financial compensation from the rich countries in return for immigration controls and for overuse of global environmental resources; and a global payment mechanisms for various services rendered (e.g. environmental services, control of narcotics and disease), for “damages” in cases of economic injury, and for bad economic conduct (e.g. encouraging the brain drain, restricting migration of low-skill labor, export restrictions)
- *Institutionally*: the resuscitation and restructuring of the IMF, World Bank, and UN to focus more on human development; economic adjustments which target the rich more than the poor; new governance patterns everywhere which empower the poor; new institutions such as a world central bank, a global taxation system, a world trade organization, an international investment trust, a world treasury, and above all, a representative and veto-less Economic Security Council in the UN which would be the “highest decision making forum” to deal with “all issues confronting humanity” including food and environmental security, poverty and job creation, migration and drug trafficking
- *The evolution of a global civil society*: all of the above would require grassroots participation and a change from authoritarian to democratic government.²²

The UNDP and Human Security

Published in the same year as the Haq monograph was the UNDP’s *Human Development Report* of 1994 which includes a section on human security. Called “Redefining Security: The Human Dimension” (hereafter “the Report”), it purports to offer a

²¹ Haq, “New Imperatives,” pp. 2-19.

²² Haq, “New Imperatives,” pp. 3-17.

thoroughgoing alternative to traditional security and a necessary supplement to human development. How does it answer the four central questions of security?

The Report answers the question of “security for whom” by reference to traditional notions of security. Traditional notions of security were concerned with “security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy, or as global security from the threat of nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people.”²³ What this conception overlooked was “the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives.”²⁴ Human security, on the other hand, is “people-centered.” Thus, the Report insists, as did Haq, that the referent object of human security is individual or people. In support of this contention, the Report cites the founding document of the UN and its original delineation of security as “freedom from fear” as also “freedom from want” and “the equal weight to territories and to people” that that distinction implied. Unfortunately, during the Cold War, security thinking had tilted overly towards the protection of territory; after the Cold War, the Report proposes, it is time to redress the balance and include the protection of people.²⁵

The Report’s treatment of security values is in two parts. It, first of all, makes a number of rather general statements about values which emphasize the safety, well being, and dignity of individual human beings in their daily lives. Thus, reminiscent of Haq, the Report notes that the traditional conception of security, in focussing on territorial integrity, the advancement of the national interest, and nuclear deterrence, ignored clear and more present dangers faced at every turn by ordinary men and women: “For

²³ UNDP, “Redefining Security,” p. 229.

²⁴ UNDP, “Redefining Security,” p. 229.

many...security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards.”²⁶ Less abstractly, “human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, a job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern with weapons – it is a concern with human life and dignity...It is concerned with how people live and breathe in a society, how freely they exercise their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities – and whether they live in conflict or in peace.”²⁷ Human security also encompasses a sense of personal choice and surety about the future and of personal efficacy and opportunity. Thus, in drawing attention to the difference between human security and its cognate, human development, the Report argues that the latter is a “broader concept” and refers to “a process of widening the range of people’s choices,” while the former implies that “people can exercise these choices safely and freely – and that they can be relatively confident that the opportunities they have today are not totally lost tomorrow”.²⁸ Along with a sense of choice and surety about the future, people should be efficacious and empowered enough to be “able to take care of themselves: all people should have the opportunity to meet their most essential needs and to earn their own living.”²⁹

Beyond these generalities, the Report lists seven “components” or, in terms of our schema, seven specific values of human security: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and

²⁵ UNDP, “Redefining Security,” p. 229.

²⁶ UNDP, “Redefining Security,” p. 229.

²⁷ UNDP, “Redefining Security,” p. 229.

²⁸ UNDP, “Redefining Security,” p. 230.

political security. Economic security refers to an individual's enjoyment of a basic income, either through gainful employment or from a social safety net. Food security refers to an individual's access to food via his or her assets, employment, or income. Health security refers to an individual's freedom from various diseases and debilitating illnesses and his or her access to health care. Environmental security refers to the integrity of land, air, and water, which make human habitation possible. Personal security refers to an individual's freedom from crime and violence, especially women and children who are more vulnerable. Community security refers to cultural dignity and to inter-community peace within which an individual lives and grows. Finally, political security refers to protection against human rights violations.³⁰

What are the threats to these human security values? The Report appears to distinguish between two sets of threats. First of all, some threats are more localized. These are threats that are particular to different societies or regions of the world and seemingly vary by level of economic development and geographical location. Secondly, some threats are global in nature because "threats within countries rapidly spill beyond national frontiers".³¹

According to the Report, the more localized threats can be understood in relation to the seven values of human security. These are summarized below:

- Threats to economic security: lack of productive and remunerative employment, precarious employment, absence of publicly financed safety nets
- Threats to food security: lack of food entitlements including insufficient access to assets, work, and assured incomes
- Threats to health security: infectious and parasitic diseases, diseases of the circulatory system and cancers, lack of safe water, air pollution, lack of access to health care facilities

²⁹ UNDP, "Redefining Security," p. 230.

³⁰ UNDP, "Redefining Security," pp. 230-234.

³¹ UNDP, "Redefining Security," p. 234.

- Threats to environmental security: declining water availability, water pollution, declining arable land, deforestation, desertification, air pollution, natural disasters
- Threats to personal security: violent crime, drug trafficking, violence and abuse of children and women
- Threats to community security: breakdown of the family, collapse of traditional languages and cultures, ethnic discrimination and strife, genocide and ethnic cleansing
- Threats to political security: government repression, systematic human rights violations, militarization

In addition to the more localized threats listed above, the Report cites a number of more global or transnational threats whose spread or effects go well beyond any given national boundaries. These are grouped into six areas:

- Population growth which increases the pressure on non-renewable resources and is linked intimately to global poverty, environmental degradation, and international migration
- Growing disparities in global income leading to overconsumption and overproduction in the industrialized countries and poverty and environmental degradation in the developing world
- Increasing international migration as a function of population growth, poverty, and the policies of the industrial countries have contributed to the flow of international migrants as also an increase in refugees and internally displaced persons
- Various forms of environmental decay (that among other things cause acid rain, skin cancer, and global warming) as well as reduced biodiversity, and the destruction of wetlands, coral reefs, and temperate forests as well as tropical rainforests
- Drug trafficking, which has grown into a global, multinational industry
- International terrorism which has spread from Latin America in the 1960s to a global phenomenon

Given this enormous array of values to be protected and threats to be combated, what exactly needs to be done? How should the world community respond? Traditional security threats could be dealt with by nuclear and conventional weapons, alliances and balances of power, as well as great power and UN intervention. The new security agenda demands a much wider range of instrumentalities and cooperation between a greater range of actors – and certainly there is little place for the use of force. Among others, the Report recommends endorsement of the concept of human security itself, changes in

national and international policy focused on basic needs, productive and remunerative employment and human rights, preventive diplomacy and “preventive” development, and the reform of global institutions.³²

III. The Canadian and Middle Powers’ Approach to Human Security

The Canadian led middle powers’ approach to human security overlaps with the UNDP approach but over the years has differentiated itself from it. Disentangling the basics of Ottawa’s approach on the basis of our four orienting questions reveals that the two schools are quite distinct in some respects. Canada has made two major statements of its position (1997, 1999) and along with Norway organized a middle powers’ conference in Lysoen in Norway (1999) which largely affirmed its viewpoint.³³

For Canada, as much as the UNDP, human security implies security for the individual. A people-centered view of security, Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy argues in his 1997 paper, “includes security against economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights.”³⁴ Two years later, in 1999, he notes that “the safety of the individual – that is, human security – has become a new measure of global security.”³⁵ The later paper concedes that “Security between states remains a necessary condition for the security of people” but argues that since the Cold War it is increasingly clear that “national security is insufficient to guarantee people’s security”.³⁶

³²UNDP, “Redefining Security,” p. 236.

³³ In 1996, the Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy in an address to the 51st UN General Assembly first broached the idea of human security on behalf of his government. See Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” p. 184.

³⁴ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” p. 184.

³⁵ “Human Security: Safety for People in a Changing World,” a paper prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Canada (hereafter DFAIT), at website <http://www.dfait.maeci.gc.ca/foreignp/HumanSecurity/secur-e.htm>, p. 1.

³⁶ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 1.

Beyond “security for whom” is the issue of “security of what values.” As noted above, human security values include “an acceptable quality of life,” and “a guarantee of fundamental human rights”. Minimally, it implies “basic needs..., sustained economic development, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and social equity”.³⁷ The Lysoen declaration argues that the fundamental values of human security are freedom from fear, freedom from want, and equal opportunities. The core value of a human security conception though is freedom from “pervasive threats to people’s rights, their safety or their lives,” that is, what the declaration calls freedom from fear.³⁸

What are the threats to these key values? The Canadian paper is less exhaustive and less systematic than the UNDP report, but nevertheless presents a rather impressive list of threats. The 1997 paper cites among others the income gap between rich and poor countries, internal conflict and state failure, transnational crime, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, religious and ethnic discord, environmental degradation, population growth, ethnic conflict and migration, state repression, the widespread use of anti-personnel landmines, child abuse, economic underdevelopment, and a unstable, protectionist international trading system.³⁹ The 1999 paper refers to the dangers posed by civil conflicts, large-scale atrocities, and genocide. Globalization is another factor, which has brought in its wake “violent crime, drug trade, terrorism, disease and environmental deterioration” and internal war fought by “irregular forces” of ethnic and

³⁷ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” p. 184.

³⁸ “A Perspective on Human Security: Chairman’s Summary,” Lysoen, Norway, 20 May 1999, at website <http://www.dfait.maeci.gc.ca/foreignp/HumanSecurity/secur-e.htm>, p. 2.

³⁹ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” pp. 183-184, 187, 189, 190.

religious groups equipped with small arms.⁴⁰ The decline of state control and, relatedly, the growth of warlordism, banditry, organized crime, drug trafficking, and private security forces, all these have increased violence against individuals.⁴¹ In addition, a “broadening range of transnational threats” renders individuals more vulnerable: economic globalization and better communications and transportation increase pollution, disease vectors, and economic instabilities worldwide.⁴²

By what means is this complex security agenda to be advanced? In 1997, Canada suggested that peacebuilding, peacekeeping, disarmament (especially the abolition of anti-personnel landmines), safeguarding the rights of children, and economic development through “rules-based trade” were key areas of the human security endeavor for Ottawa.⁴³ To move this agenda forward, Canada would have to rely increasingly on “soft” power – “the art of disseminating information in such a way that desirable outcomes are achieved through persuasion rather than coercion.”⁴⁴ Canada and various other middle powers were ideally suited to network, build coalitions, and bring others round to understand the importance of human security. Governments, NGOs, academics, businesses and ordinary citizens were all potential partners in this endeavor.⁴⁵

The 1999 Canadian paper amplifies the 1997 approach by listing six broader principles that might guide actions. Combined, these boil down to three major principles. First, the international community must consider coercion including the use of sanctions and force if necessary. Second, national security policies themselves must be altered, to give due consideration to the promotion of human security goals. Integral to the new

⁴⁰ DFAIT, “Human Security,” pp. 1-2.

⁴¹ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 2.

⁴² DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 2.

⁴³ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” pp. 185-191.

security policy agenda must be the promotion of norms/institutions and the use of development strategies – norms/institutions (e.g. human rights, humanitarian and refugee law) would set standards of conduct; and development strategies would, presumably, bring about conditions within which it would be easier for states and non-state actors to observe those norms.⁴⁶ Norms in what areas exactly? The Lysoen declaration, which Canada helped draft, lists ten areas in which norms were required: anti-personnel landmines, small arms, children in armed conflict, international criminal court proceedings, exploitation of children, safety of humanitarian personnel, conflict prevention, transnational organized crime, and resources for development.⁴⁷ Also important though are improvements in governance capacities, both within states and internationally. The former implies democratization and the latter a more effective UN structure.⁴⁸ A third principle of effective action on behalf of human security is to construct a coalition of states, international organizations, and NGOs that would promote development and help enforce agreed-upon norms.⁴⁹

IV. The UNDP and Canadian Approaches: A Comparison

What do the UNDP and Canadian approaches to human security tell us? Are they broadly similar in their approach to *security for whom, security of what values, security from what threats, and security by what means*? Or are they different? In any case, what have we learnt from these writings?

⁴⁴ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” p. 192.

⁴⁵ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” pp. 192-196.

⁴⁶ DFAIT, “Human Security,” pp. 3-4.

⁴⁷ “A Perspective on Human Security: Chairman’s Summary,” pp. 2-4.

⁴⁸ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 4.

⁴⁹ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 4.

Security Referent

In the traditional conception of security, the referent object is the state. In the UNDP and Canadian approaches, by contrast, it is the individual. Both sets of writings acknowledge that the almost exclusive focus on state security is justifiable in certain kinds of circumstances. After World War II, given the geopolitical rivalries of the two blocs, the emerging differences between the newly-independent colonial countries in Asia and Africa, and the existence of nuclear weapons, inter-state violence was a massive, even central problem.⁵⁰ However, the dominance of the traditional national security perspective was never entirely justified. The security of the individual depends on the security of the state; but individual security is never purely and simply coterminous with state security.

For both the UNDP and Canadian proponents of human security, new conceptual and policy spaces have been revealed or made legitimate as a result of the dramatic changes since 1991. With the end of the Cold War, new historical possibilities emerged. Catastrophic wars of aggression and conquest between the major powers and the possibility of nuclear war receded.⁵¹ Given that the major powers are no longer fearsome enemies, the security of the individual can be practically addressed. The situation, after 1991, is therefore the reverse of the Cold War. Individual or human security is now the central concern of security; and traditional national security concerns are secondary. It is important to note that, especially for the Canadian government, traditional national

⁵⁰ UNDP, "Redefining Security," p. 229.

⁵¹ UNDP, "Redefining Security," p. 229.

security concerns are by no means irrelevant. They remain important, but they no longer suffice for “stability and peace.”⁵²

Security Values

In the traditional national security conception, state sovereignty is the most important value: it is the state’s sovereignty that is to be secured or to be defended. What does sovereignty mean? It means that a people and its government have exclusive control over some space or territory. It also means that they are free to choose their enemies and friends from among other peoples and governments as also to conduct their relations with other societies without reference to any other authority or body. Finally, it implies that within their territory they are free to regulate their own affairs as they see fit. In sum, in a national security conception, the key values are exclusive territorial control, diplomatic autonomy, and political independence. Another, more compact way of putting this is that sovereignty implies territorial integrity and political freedom (diplomatic autonomy plus internal independence).⁵³

What values are at the heart of a human security conception? In both the UNDP and Canadian view, two overarching values appear central: the safety and well being of the individual in physical terms; and individual freedom. This is nicely captured in the UNDP’s statement that “Human security is not a concern with weapons – it is a concern with human life [physical safety and well-being] and dignity [freedom].” Virtually all of the values implicit or explicit in the UNDP report fall into one or other of these two categories. Thus, as noted earlier, the UNDP lists personal, economic, food, health and

⁵² Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” pp. 183-184.

environmental security, all of which relate to the overarching values of individual safety and well being. The Report also suggests that the capacity of individuals to make choices, a sense of surety about the future, feelings of personal efficacy and empowerment, and community and political security are important human security values, which for the most part relate to the freedom/dignity of the individual in social and political life.

Similarly, in the Canadian approach, human security implies “an acceptable quality of life” – which connotes physical safety and well being, minimally – and “a guarantee of fundamental human rights” – which connotes a basic charter of political freedoms. The list of values in the Canadian papers can also be arranged in terms of these two overarching values. Basic needs, sustainable economic development, and social equity, on the one hand, are central to the notion of physical safety and well being. Human rights, fundamental freedoms, rule of law, and good governance, on the other, are all dimensions of political freedom.⁵⁴

There is a parallel therefore between national security values and human security values. Broadly, if sovereignty of the state is at the heart of the traditional national security conception, so sovereignty of the individual is at the heart of human security. If national security is, at base, about territorial integrity or protection of the body politic, so human security is, at base, about physical integrity or protection of the individual human body from harm. If national security is also about the political freedom of a state to choose its diplomatic partners/adversaries and to regulate its internal affairs, so also

⁵³ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), chapter one, for a discussion of various conceptions of sovereignty.

⁵⁴ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” p. 184 for a listing of these values. I have rearranged Axworthy’s listing somewhat.

human security is about the political freedom of an individual to associate with others (civic freedom) as well as the freedom to live private life without undue interference from fellow citizens and state authorities (basic freedom).

Security Threats

What are the threats to physical safety and well being as well as basic and civic freedom?

As we have already seen, the list of human security threats cited in the UNDP and Canadian writings is detailed, even exhaustive. The language of the two sets of writings is not always comparable, and therefore systematic comparison is made difficult. To permit a more systematic comparison, it is necessary to distinguish between types of threats. To do this, it will be useful to use Johan Galtung's discussion of violence and his distinction between structural or indirect violence and direct or personal violence.

We may conceptualize the notion of threats in terms of violence. According to Galtung, violence is not merely the "intentional use of force... against one or more 'others' ...to inflict injury or death." It is not necessarily "goal oriented" and intended to "achieve some particular or general purpose(s)."⁵⁵ Rather violence is the difference between the potential and the actual in human life. Thus, Galtung writes "violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations."⁵⁶ Galtung distinguishes between direct violence and structural or indirect violence, both of which cause there to be a difference between the potential and the actual:

⁵⁵ Kathleen Maas Weigert, "Structural Violence," in *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict*, Volume 3 (New York: Academic Press, 1999), p. 432.

⁵⁶ Cited in Weigert, "Structural Violence," p. 432.

We shall refer to the type of violence where there is an actor that commits the violence as *personal* or *direct*, and to violence where there is no such actor as *structural* or *indirect*. In both cases individuals may be killed or mutilated, hit or hurt in both senses of these words, and manipulated by means of stick or carrot strategies. But whereas in the first case the consequences can be traced back to concrete persons as actors, in the second case this is no longer meaningful. There may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances. (Italics in the original.)⁵⁷

Or, as Kathleen Maas Weigert notes, structural or indirect violence refers to “preventable harm or damage to persons (and by extension to things) where there is no actor committing the violence or where it is not meaningful to search for the actor(s).”⁵⁸ Harm or damage can be traced back most usefully in this view to social relations or structures. Structures, according to Galtung, in this context refer, in turn, to “the settings within which individuals may do enormous amounts of harm to other human beings without ever intending to do so...Structural violence was then seen as unintended harm done to human beings...as a process, working slowly in the way misery in general, and hunger in particular, erode and finally kill human beings.”⁵⁹

Most of the threats listed by both the UNDP and Canadian government papers relate to personal safety and well being. Both identify indirect and direct threats. Amongst the direct threats, they both list everyday violent crime, child abuse, and abuse of women. Much higher up the ladder towards more organized direct violence, they both list government repression, terrorism, and genocide. Canada lists, in addition, various other kinds of direct violence – call it societal violence – that endanger personal safety including the existence of private security forces, banditry, warlordism, internal war, and

⁵⁷ Cited in Weigert, “Structural Violence,” p. 432-33.

⁵⁸ Weigert, “Structural Violence,” p. 431.

ethnic violence. The Canadian writings in particular include organized violence that is more familiar in security thinking – transnational violence and international/global violence. Thus, Canada refers to the violence caused by transnational crime, worldwide narcotics trafficking, and the proliferation of small arms, all of which endanger personal safety and well being. Finally, there is international/global violence which also harms the individual – inter-state war, weapons of mass destruction, and, in the Canadian conception in particular, anti-personnel landmines.

Both the UNDP and the Canadian papers also identify a number of indirect threats to personal safety and well being. Here too there is a good bit of overlap. The lack of food, water, and primary health care entitlements endanger the basic needs of the human body. Both approaches conceive of disease as a key indirect threat to personal safety and well being. In the UNDP schema, there is a recognition that the types of disease at issue differ by economic development levels – infectious diseases in the developing world and cancers and cardio-pulmonary ailments in the developed world. At a more expanded, societal level, the extent of poverty (UNDP) and economic underdevelopment (Canada) in developing societies are indirect threats. In the developing countries as well as the industrially more advanced countries, lack of remunerative and sustained employment is important (UNDP): in the developing countries, employment difficulties may be a matter of life and death; in the industrialized countries, it may lead to psychological anxieties and debilities which threaten individual health and happiness. Population growth by putting pressure on scarce resources also is a crucial long-term threat, particularly in the developing countries. Neither the UNDP and Canada note the other side of the coin: namely, that slow population growth or even population decline are threats to other

⁵⁹ Cited in Weigert, “Structural Violence,” p. 433.

societies (parts of Africa, Western and Eastern Europe, and Russia), but we may add these in for the sake of universality. Finally, natural disasters can kill, injure, and deprive millions. These disasters are often not natural at all but at the same time are not the product of any single agent.

Beyond these societal-level indirect threats, there exist indirect threats at the international/global level. These include global population growth, population movements (migration), global environmental degradation (e.g. ozone depletion, carbon emissions, global warming, rain forest depletion, acid rain, biodiversity), and highly unequal patterns of consumption worldwide. The issue of unequal consumption appears in its North-South guise, as a problem between rich nations and poor nations for the most part, but it should be noted here that it is at once a national as well as global problem. There is a global elite that consumes far more than the average global citizen and thereby denies it to others, now or in the future, and puts additional pressures on scarce resources everywhere. Finally, the UNDP and Canadian writings point to the emergence of a globalized economy as an opportunity but also as the source of indirect threats to personal safety and well being. Both sets of writings agree that a more open global economy is a good thing for poor and rich countries alike – because more trade is good for everyone – but they also argue that protectionism by some nations (rich and poor) and an unwillingness to play by the rules of the game pose dangers to the stability of this globalizing economic system which could have painful effects on individual safety and well-being. Various economic shocks and crises in one part of the world may, in the Canadian view, hurt others and therefore constitute another set of indirect threats.

While both the UNDP and Canadian writings are exhaustive in their treatment of threats to personal safety and well being, their treatment of threats to the other core value of human security, individual freedom, is rather modest. This probably reflects the fact that many of the direct and indirect threats to personal safety and well being are also threats to basic and civic freedom. Thus, unorganized threats such as physical abuse of children and women as well as the more organized societal level threats such as inter-ethnic conflict, genocide, warlordism, internal war, and government repression endanger both personal safety/well-being and individual freedom. Similarly, many of the indirect threats to personal safety/well-being imply indirect threats also to basic and civic freedom. In particular, economic deprivation and underdevelopment – gross deprivation of basic needs, extreme poverty, unemployment, and inequality – may translate into an inability to participate in social and political affairs with any degree of efficacy. The exercise or enjoyment of freedom to that extent may be a rather superficial condition.

In any case, the list of direct and indirect threats to freedom beyond these is few. Human rights violations and the suspension of human rights by governments are one set of threats. Some attacks on human rights may not amount to direct physical harm but are constraints on the exercise of basic and civic freedom. Government policies of even a seemingly benign paternalistic sort could be classified as threats to freedom. Clearly, suspension of the constitution and the rule of law constitute direct threats to freedom. Discriminatory rules and policies relating to ethno-religious groups are also direct threats. The UNDP, in addition, recognizes that while communities are sources of identity and security, they can also abridge one's freedom. The breakdown of tradition and customs and cultural mores is a threat to one's identity. At the same time, the enforcement of

traditional customs and practices against the wishes of members of the community is as serious a threat as the government's abridgment of one's rights. Finally, the UNDP argues that the militarization of social and political life is itself potentially a threat to freedom. The fear of civil or state violence can leave individuals in thrall as much as the actual application of violence. The symbolic and demonstrative effect of police and paramilitary forces as a deterrent or as a coercive inducement is enough to make people behave in ways that they may not otherwise wish.

In sum, what have we learnt about the UNDP and Canadian diagnosis of human security threats? First, both approaches suggest that direct and indirect violence threaten personal safety/well-being and basic and civic freedom. The two approaches identify many of the same threats. Second, the UNDP approach, on balance, places greater emphasis on indirect threats, whereas the Canadian approach puts greater stress on direct threats. This is evident, for instance, in Canada's greater concern with the continuing – though reduced – importance of traditional national security threats as well organized internal violence (e.g., banditry, warlordism, ethnic violence, internal war, genocide). In criticizing the UNDP approach, Canada explicitly notes that “in emphasizing the threats associated with underdevelopment, the Report largely ignores the continuing human insecurity resulting from violent conflict.”⁶⁰ Third, both approaches place threats to personal safety/well-being at the center of their analyses.

Security Instruments/Means

In the traditional national security conception, security is sought to be achieved by the unilateral use of force either to compel or to deter other states. States may also seek

alliances against common enemies but cooperation with others beyond this is precarious at best. Norms and institutions are creatures of states and are ultimately of little comfort in dealing with military threats. In an anarchic international system, with no higher authority to regulate their relations, states must be attentive to the balance of power, for that is the ultimate means of regulating inter-state relations.

The UNDP and Canadian view of “security by what means” is almost completely the obverse of the national security view. First of all, in the UNDP and Canadian view, force is a secondary instrument. In the UNDP schema, there is virtually no room for the use of force, primarily, as we shall see, because the main instrumentality in achieving human security goals is development. In the Canadian schema, force remains an instrument, but one that is only a last resort and not very effective in dealing with the multifarious threats to personal safety and freedom. The Canadian view is that various kinds of sanctions should be preferred over force which must be the ultimate instrument. Force in any case is to be used not purely for national but rather for more “cosmopolitan” goals, namely, to manage human security threats. In addition, force, if it is required, should be used in partnership with others, preferably under the auspices of international institutions (e.g. the UN or regional organizations), not unilaterally.

Secondly, in both the UNDP and Canadian view, long-term cooperation is both possible and necessary. This is because the world is increasingly interdependent and states are more porous than ever. What happens even in distant lands will affect those not directly at risk. States must come together to deal with human security threats. They must also reach out to international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and any other agencies in civil society. Canada sees a particular role for countries like itself

⁶⁰ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 2.

which dispose of soft power, the power of persuasion. This power should be brought to bear to disseminate information and ideas in order to persuade others of the need for cooperation and on the means of collaboration.

Thirdly, states, international organizations, and NGOs can combine to foster norms of conduct in various areas of human security. The spread of norms must be accompanied by the invigoration of global institutions. These institutions will help to enforce norms. The UN and global economic and financial institutions must be at the heart of a new institutionalism. These institutions can be effective if states stand behind them. States will back institutions to the extent that they are effective participants in decision-making processes. Institutions that are more democratic and representative will be more legitimate and therefore, in the end, more effective.

There is seemingly no great difference between the UNDP and Canadian approaches up to this point. However, a closer reading suggests that the gap is not as small as might appear. Fundamentally, in the UNDP view, global society itself must be restructured to bring about a condition in which both direct and indirect threats will disappear. That restructuring should basically be a developmental one. Thus, the UNDP urges that a new human development paradigm must be evolved with an accent on equity, sustainability, and participation.⁶¹ It urges that the post Cold War peace dividend be used to improve the lot of human beings instead of being channeled into arms acquisition programs. A new North-South partnership in which the South can benefit from global market opportunities is crucial. The South in turn must push ahead with its

⁶¹ It should be noted that when Haq and the UNDP refer to equity they explicitly note that they refer to equity of opportunities. See Haq, "New Imperatives of Human Security," p. 4: "But it is equity in opportunities, not necessarily in results. What people do with their opportunities is their own concern, but

own economic restructuring in order to avail of emerging global market opportunities. Global governance should be democratized, with the developing world better represented in international institutions. An *Economic Security Council* in the UN should be brought into being to oversee this massive developmental agenda.

In place of this formidable plan, Canada offers an ostensibly more pragmatic program. It cautions that human security is not directly translatable into policy imperatives. It is more “a shift in perspective or orientation...an alternative way of seeing the world”.⁶² To the extent that policy shifts or commitments are required, the Canadian approach is that practice might better lead precept. Thus it notes, “As is so often the case in public policy, practice had led theory.”⁶³

As we have seen, the UNDP and Canadian approach on the referent, values, and threats of security do not differ in any great measure. Canada’s real concern is over the *policy implications* of the almost revolutionary agenda offered by the UNDP: “The very breadth of the UNDP approach...made it unwieldy *as a policy instrument*.”⁶⁴ (Emphasis added.) While Canada insists that “vigorous action in defense of human security objectives will be necessary,” the program of action that it puts forward is modest in comparison to that of the UNDP. On the issue of human rights, for instance, the paper proposes that these rights are vital to human security; but, in terms of actions, it merely recommends that “security policies must be integrated more closely with strategies for promoting human rights, democracy, and development.”⁶⁵ It goes on to cautiously suggest that international law and development strategies offer a key “framework” or

they should not be denied an equal opportunity to develop their human capabilities....Such equity, however, requires many structural reforms....”

⁶² DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 2.

⁶³ Axworthy, “Foreword,” in DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 1.

“means” of advancing human security goals.⁶⁶ In the conclusion of the 1999 paper, it endorses a “fill-in-the-gaps” view of an appropriate action program. Thus, it notes that human security focused on “the safety of people highlights the need for more *targeted* attention to key issues that *are not yet adequately addressed*” (emphasis added). The paper refers to filling in the “gaps” in the security agenda by dealing with such concerns as small arms proliferation and the protection of children.⁶⁷ Finally, when it argues that standard setting and the capacity to enforce those standards is vital to the new security agenda, it does not imply interventionism of a very direct sort. Rather, its emphasis is on “improving democratic governance” and “strengthening the capacity of international organizations.” Even the latter is problematic, it concedes, because while the “range of tasks assigned to UN mandated operations is increasing, at the same time...the UN’s capacity to organize and fund such operations is dwindling.”⁶⁸

We see here perhaps a “North-South” divide reminiscent of the 1970s. Haq and the “left of center” UNDP approach is more concerned about *economic maldevelopment or underdevelopment* as leading to deprivation and violence, with the implication that greater development, equity, and intervention would remedy the problem. In the Canadian formulation though, the breakdown of states, societies, and governance – mostly in the developing world – or *political underdevelopment* is the cause of deprivation and violence. The remedy, in the Canadian approach, is not so much the UNDP’s interventionary developmentalism, but “protection”. This difference in emphasis shows most clearly in the declaration adopted at the Canadian- and Norwegian-

⁶⁴ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 2.

⁶⁵ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 3.

⁶⁶ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 3.

⁶⁷ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 4.

led meeting of middle powers in Lysoen in Norway in May 1999. Of the ten items listed as crucial for the human security agenda – anti-personnel landmines, small arms, children in armed conflict, international humanitarian and human rights law, international criminal proceedings, exploitation of children, safety of humanitarian personnel, conflict prevention, transnational organized crime, and, lastly, resources for development – only relates to economic development directly.⁶⁹

It is important to note that the Canadian paper of 1999 does not *rule out* the more developmentalist agenda of the UNDP approach – any more than the UNDP rules out peacekeeping and banning landmines. Rather, it *relegates* it. The 1997 paper by Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy begins with the thought that after the Cold War “the international community...would turn its attention to global problems, such as poverty, the environment, and population growth.”⁷⁰ As noted earlier, the 1997 formulation portrays human security in terms of “economic privation, an acceptable quality of life, and a guarantee of fundamental human rights,” of “basic human needs,...basic human needs,...sustained economic development,...sustainable development and social equity....”⁷¹ However, even in 1997, the Canadian paper, in describing Ottawa’s own human security policies, focuses on peacebuilding, peacekeeping, disarmament (especially landmines), and protecting the rights of children. Economic development is important too, but development is equated here for the most part with the promotion of “rules-based trade”. In the 1999 paper, development is not entirely absent from the Canadian approach, but it is a more minor theme. The 1999 paper accepts that “The

⁶⁸ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 4.

⁶⁹ “A Perspective on Human Security: Chairman’s Summary,” pp. 2-4.

⁷⁰ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” p. 183.

⁷¹ Axworthy, “Canada and Human Security,” p. 184.

widespread social unrest and violence that often accompanies economic crises demonstrates that there are clear economic underpinnings to human security.”⁷² Poverty and insecurity, it notes, are interlinked “in a vicious cycle” and “[b]reaking the cycle requires measures to promote human development, through access to reliable employment, education, and social services.” Human development and human security are “mutually reinforcing” and “development assistance” can complement “political, legal, and military initiatives in enhancing human security.”⁷³ In short, there is nothing on par here with the massive developmentalist agenda proposed by Haq and the UNDP.

At one level, then, the UNDP and Canada are in agreement on “security by what means”. They are in agreement in their discomfort with the traditional instruments of security – force, deterrence, balance of power. However, at a deeper level, they are in fairly strong disagreement. The UNDP’s far greater emphasis on economic development contrasts with Canada’s much greater accent on political development.

Should we prefer the UNDP or the Canadian approach to human security? Our comparison suggests that the similarities on many aspects of human security between the two schools probably outweigh the differences. If so, the task ahead is not so much choosing one approach over the other as it is to show how they can be rather comfortably reconciled or synthesized to produce an overall human security framework.

The following table summarizes the two schools of thought in relation to our four orienting questions – security referent, values, threats, and instruments or means:

⁷² DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 3.

⁷³ DFAIT, “Human Security,” p. 3.

Table I: Comparison of the UNDP and Canadian Schools of Human Security

	UNDP School	Canadian School
Security for whom	Primarily the individual	Primarily the individual, but state security also is important
Security of what values	Personal safety/well-being and individual freedom	Personal safety/well-being and individual freedom
Security from what threats	Direct and indirect violence; greater emphasis on indirect violence, especially economic, environmental factors	Direct and indirect violence; greater emphasis on direct violence at two levels – national/societal and international/global
Security by what means	Promoting human development: basic needs plus equity, sustainability, and greater democratization and participation at all levels of global society	Promoting political development: global norms and institutions (governance) plus collective use of force as well as sanctions if and when necessary

Let us contrast this with the neo-realist conception of security as a way of developing a human security conception that will take us forward.

V. Human Security: A Way Forward

In the prevailing neo-realist conception, the *referent* of security is the state. Neo-realists argue that, in a Hobbesian world, the state is the primary provider of security: if the state is secure, then those who live within it are secure. Two *values* associated with the state are central: territorial integrity; and national independence. The principal *threats* to territorial integrity and national independence are violence and coercion by other states. Finally, security is achieved by *means* of the retaliatory use – or threat of use – of violence and by a balance of power, where power is equated with military capabilities, for the most part. This is a world in which cooperation between states is limited to alliance formation and is, at best, tenuous. Norms and institutions are creatures of states

and therefore of little value, especially in the sphere of security/military affairs.⁷⁴ The human security conception contests each of these elements of neo-realism.

Security Referent

In the human security conception, the primary *referent* of security is the individual.

Human security does not ignore state security, but it treats it as no more than co-equal to individual security. The key argument is that ultimately state security is *for* individual security. In the end, the state is the provider of security for the citizenry; it is a *means to* security, and its security cannot be the *end of* security. Only the security of the individual can be the rightful and meaningful objective of security. A second argument for the coeval nature of individual and state security is that there are threats to individual security that go beyond the capacity of the state to manage. These threats may be transnational or internal. Thus, the state may be safe from other states, but may be gradually “hollowed out” from within as individual security declines. Transnational or subnational forces or actors may so threaten individuals that the state gradually weakens from within. A time may come when the state is no longer able to resist its external enemies because it has lost internal strength. Thirdly, a state may lose legitimacy for various reasons and turn against its own citizens: state security and individual security may come to be inversely related. A dysfunctional state that threatens the personal safety and freedom of its citizens will eventually lose the right to rule. Its security can no longer be the primary concern in this situation; rather its restructuring or even its destruction is necessitated – so

⁷⁴ For the primary neo-realist conception of international relations, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1979). A fairly traditional but forthright view of security studies is Stephen M. Walt, “The Renaissance of Security Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35 (June 1991), pp. 211-239.

that another state is brought into being, one that better protects the individuals within its boundaries.

To say that the individual and state are coeval is to imply that state security also is vital, for the reason given earlier, namely, that the state is an instrument, a key instrument, in the protection of individuals. Historically, states have come to be regarded as the most effective way of ensuring the safety and freedom of individuals. Some states are better at this task than others, but few states are altogether useless. In the human security view, therefore, the security of the state is not a negligible issue.

Security Values

Two *values* are paramount in the human security conception: the bodily safety of the individual; and his or her personal freedom. Bodily safety implies two things: protection of the body from pain and destruction; and some at least minimal level of physical well being. Personal freedom can also be thought about in terms of two components: the *basic freedom* of the individual in relation to one's most intimate and meaningful life choices (e.g. marriage, personal law, sexual orientation, employment); and freedom of the individual to associate with others.⁷⁵ The latter may be called *civic freedom* and refers to the liberty to organize for cultural, social, economic, and political purposes.

Human security entails both values. Human security is not simply about the bodily safety and well being of the individual. Nor can it be simply about personal freedom. Clearly, bodily safety is at the core of human security. Well-being, a somewhat more expansive notion, is closely related. A body that is not in great pain or

⁷⁵ This is rather close to the notion of "life chances" elaborated by Ralf Dahrendorf. See Dahrendorf, *Life Chances: Approaches to Social and Political Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

has not been destroyed but is wasting away because it is unable to fulfill its basic needs or cannot access basic entitlements is not far away from great pain and premature destruction. Bodily safety and well being are related to personal freedom. Pain and destruction of bodies, or extreme deprivation of basic needs and entitlements, imply lack of freedom. Few would *choose* pain, self-destruction, or extreme deprivation. If they face these threats, it is because some one or some social condition is *forcing* the body.

Why not then simply equate human security with bodily safety? The reason is a normative one. Imagine that government agents or a set of well-established social practices in a society are able to guarantee safety from pain, destruction, and deprivation. They do so in part by curtailing personal freedoms: by imposing minute limits to ensure that individuals do not hurt each other; and by destroying the social conditions that permit deprivations to exist. A totalitarian form of government may promise and to some extent construct such a protected society. A highly-regulated social order – a caste system, even slavery, perhaps – could also, by means of various strictures, rights, and obligations, ensure that each person knew his or her station and was protected from pain, destruction, or deprivation as long as they respected the codes and prohibitions of the system. Surely however these forms of human security are unacceptable normatively. Bodies secure from pain, destruction, and deprivation at the expense of basic personal freedoms cannot be equated with human security. Human security therefore describes some balance between the need for safety and the necessity of freedom. Absolutism in respect of either safety or freedom would be repugnant and self-defeating.

Security Threats

On the issue of *threats*, human security differs significantly from the neo-realist conception. For the realist, the basic threat to security is direct organized violence from other states. In the human security conception, threats must be reckoned as both direct and indirect, from identifiable sources, such as other states or non-state actors of various kinds, as also from structural sources, that is, from relations of power at various levels – from the family upwards to the global economy. In the latter case, threats are not easily traceable to the intentions of any one or more actors and may be the unintended consequences of others' actions or even inactions.

The Canadian and UNDP human security schemas have identified scores of direct and indirect threats. These can be reduced to the following:

Table II: Direct and Indirect Threats to Human Security

Direct Violence	Indirect Violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent Death/Disablement: victims of violent crime, killing of women and children, sexual assault, terrorism, inter-group riots/pogroms/genocide, killing and torture of dissidents, killing of government officials/agents, war casualties • Dehumanization: slavery and trafficking in women and children; use of child soldiers; physical abuse of women and children (in households); kidnapping, abduction, unlawful detention of political opponents + rigged trials • Drugs: drug addiction • Discrimination and Domination: discriminatory laws/practices against minorities and women; banning/rigging elections; subversion of political institutions and the media • International Disputes: Inter-state tensions/crises (bilateral/regional) + great power tensions/crises • Most Destructive Weapons: the spread of weapons of mass destruction + advanced conventional, small arms, landmines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deprivation: Levels of basic needs and entitlements (food, safe drinking water, primary health care, primary education) • Disease: Incidence of life-threatening illness (infectious, cardio-vascular, cancer) • Natural and Man-made Disasters • Underdevelopment: low levels of GNP/capita, low GNP growth, inflation, unemployment, inequality, population growth/decline, poverty, at the national level; and regional/global economic instability and stagnation + demographic change • Population Displacement (national, regional, global): refugees and migration • Environmental Degradation (local, national, regional, global)

The table is largely self-explanatory. However, four points may be made about threats and human security values.

First of all, the twelve types of threats obviously vary by country. The pattern of threats affecting bodily safety/well-being and basic/civic freedom in advanced industrial countries surely differs from that of most developing countries. Democracies presumably differ from non-democracies. Some countries face a multitude of threats; others confront relatively simple threat structures. In Africa, Asia, and Latin America, human security is “overdetermined” and complex; in most of Europe and North America, human security is less challenging (though not necessarily *unchallenging*).

Second, a number of threats are global in nature and affect all human beings, though, once again, not in the same measure. Great power tensions and crises, a world war, and stockpiles of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons would derogate from everyone’s safety. Global war, conventional or nuclear, will cause environmental damage on such a scale as to endanger virtually all life on the planet.⁷⁶ Instabilities in the global economy will hurt everyone, if differentially.

Third, the table is suggestive of some differentiation amongst the various threats in terms of their importance. Clearly, ranking violent death/disablement and deprivation at the top of the two columns is a gesture towards the primacy of these threats to safety/well-being and basic/civic freedom. It is not hard to see that the first three or four sets of threats in both columns comprise the core threats to human security: violent death/disablement, dehumanization, and drugs, amongst the direct threats; and deprivation, disease, and disasters, amongst the indirect threats. These are perhaps the

⁷⁶ On the nuclear winter hypothesis, see Carl Sagan and Richard Turco, *A Path Where No Man Thought: Nuclear Winter and the End of the Arms Race* (New York: Random, 1990).

most visible and immediate forms of direct and indirect violence. By contrast, discrimination and domination, international disputes, the spread of WMDs and other highly destructive weaponry, underdevelopment, population displacement, and environmental degradation are more remote and long term in their consequences for bodily safety/well-being and basic/civic freedom.

Fourth, the threats listed in the bottom half of both columns are more ambiguous in terms of their effects on bodily safety/well-being and basic/civic freedom. Few would have difficulty in admitting that violent death, various forms of dehumanization, and drug addiction are unequivocally bad for safety and freedom. Similarly, surely there are few doubts that deprivation, disease, and disasters are fairly directly related to the chances of personal safety and freedom. On the other hand, there may be real differences of opinion over the threats listed in the bottom half of the table and the extent to which they can be linked to safety and freedom.

Discriminatory laws and practices as well as naked forms of political domination, such as the banning and rigging of elections and the subversion of political institutions and the media, would plainly hurt bodily safety should someone choose to challenge those laws and practices. Clearly, such laws and practices curtail civic freedoms, even if they do not necessarily affect basic freedoms. However, some discriminatory laws and practices may be defensible. For instance, a disadvantaged community may benefit from “reverse discrimination” or “affirmative action”. In Sri Lanka, after independence, the majority Sinhala community not only came to dominate the democratic political system but it also gave itself certain advantages in the education system in order to correct for what it regarded as a historic wrong perpetrated by the British colonial government.

Historically, due to British policy, Sinhala representation in higher education was nowhere near proportionate to its share of the population, and after independence the Sinhala-dominated government instituted a policy of reverse discrimination to benefit Sinhala students. A similar policy was begun, much earlier, by Indonesia and Malaysia in respect of the majority Malay communities.

There is little doubt, with hindsight, that the Sri Lankan policy was disastrous in terms of its effects in fuelling Tamil discontent. The question is: how should the policy be judged from the point of view of human security? Was it a deliberate attack on the Tamil minority or was it a rather crude policy which turned out badly? My point is not that it is impossible to make a judgement. The policy may have been insensitively implemented rather than malign in intent, and a discerning observer should be able to judge whether or not the policy represents poor political management or the start of a repressive campaign against a minority. The point rather is that, in assessing cases such as these from the point of view of human security, contextual factors will matter a great deal and mechanical judgements could be seriously misleading.

How do international disputes short of war – tensions, crises – affect bodily safety/well-being and basic/civic freedom? Clearly, not all international tensions and crises directly affect individual safety and freedom. However, the expectation of and preparation for war – what Jean-Jacques Rousseau called the “state of war” – can have social effects with consequences for individual safety. Broadly, those effects can be encapsulated in the term *militarism* which may be defined as the propagation and privileging of symbols, values, and practices associated with organized violence. A militaristic state may become, to use Harold Lasswell’s term, a garrison state where the

specialists in violence and their social preferences come to dominate.⁷⁷ A garrison state would surely be a dangerous place from the point of view of individual safety and freedom.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, it could be argued, is not necessarily a threat to safety and freedom; indeed, it is the opposite. So, while everyone is agreed that nuclear proliferation beyond a point is dangerous and useless, there are those who would argue that nuclear weapons serve an essential deterrent function and will continue to do so for a long time to come. The stock of nuclear weapons should be reduced, perhaps even eventually abolished, but for now and the foreseeable future, in certain kinds of strategic environments, they are regarded by a dozen or so countries as good rather than bad for security.⁷⁸

Underdevelopment as a threat to personal safety and freedom will also be contested by some. Whether and how low per capital incomes, low economic growth rates, inflation, unemployment, economic inequality, demographic change, and poverty affect the prospects of safety and freedom is a matter of debate. Obviously, economic stagnation (low per capita incomes, low growth rates) below some threshold level and poverty levels that go beyond some level imply deprivation of basic needs and entitlements for large numbers of people which imply, in turn, diminishment of safety if not freedom as well. Beyond a minimum threshold though, the link to safety and freedom is more difficult to specify. What about other development factors such as unemployment and inequality? Or the general state of the regional and global economy?

⁷⁷ Harold Lasswell, "The Garrison State Hypothesis Today," in Samuel P. Huntington, ed., *Changing Patterns of Military Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1962), pp. 51-70.

⁷⁸ See the chapters by Kenneth Waltz in Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* (New York: Norton, 1995).

How do these affect safety and freedom? Economic backwardness and dislocation, whether at the national or transnational level, influence the social and political climate in which individuals live and work and therefore help determine the prospects of safety and freedom. Beyond this, it is hard to say. Prime facie there is a case for the inclusion of such “threats,” but clearly investigations into human security will have to delineate these links more convincingly.

So also there is genuine debate over whether population displacements – refugees and migration – should be classified as human security threats. Displaced people, according to Astri Suhrke, could as well be seen as “victims or assets.” Suhrke clarifies that “this does not necessarily mean that the security paradigm is inappropriate for migration and environment issues; only that its application in relation to the empirical material must be assessed with great care.”⁷⁹ In other words, it all depends. Put differently: context and interpretation matter.

Environmental degradation and its relationship to bodily safety/well-being and freedom are also ambiguous or controversial. In the first place, environmental decay must reach some threshold before it significantly affects human health and survival. That threshold will vary by any number of factors, including location, climate, general health of the population, among others. This is yet another way of saying that context matters in determining the salience of a putative threat for human security. Secondly, the causes of many bodily ailments are “overdetermined,” that is, any number of factors individually may be responsible for illness and infirmity. To link environmental decay to human

⁷⁹ Ann M. Florini and P.J. Simmons, “The New Security Thinking: A Review of the North American Literature,” Project on World Security, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Washington, D.C. and New York, 1998, p. 32 cites Astri Suhrke in making this point. See Suhrke, “Environmental Change, Migration, and Conflict: A Lethal Feedback Dynamic?” in Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall,

disease is therefore not always an easy task. Environmental degradation is often caused by human agency and to that extent it can be linked to the issue of freedom as well. Building dams and nuclear reactors may damage the ecology in costly and possibly irreparable ways. However, it may also damage and disrupt local human habitations and cultures, which must make way for the dam or reactor. The forcible eviction and relocation of people to sites that may or may not be as congenial to them is, it can be argued, a violation of a basic freedom. Having said that, clearly, there is the counter-argument, namely, that there is no absolute freedom, there are always trade-offs and, unfortunate as it is, some people sometimes must have their choices abridged for the greater good.

In sum, while the core threats identified in the top half of the table seem legitimate human security threats, those in the lower half are more problematic in their links to personal safety and freedom. Human security theorists will have to do better in specifying those links and in showing empirically that there is correlation. Contextual factors will play an important role in judging whether or not or in what circumstances these factors become “threats” to human security.

Security Instruments/Means

The human security conception of appropriate instruments or means is also quite different from that of the neo-realists. It differs in four key respects. First, in the human security approach, force is a secondary instrument. Force is not very effective in dealing with the multifarious threats to personal safety and freedom. Human development and humane

governance are therefore preferred instruments of security.⁸⁰ If coercion is necessary, then various kinds of sanctions are a first recourse. Force, in any case, is to be used not for purely national purposes but rather for the more “cosmopolitan” goal of managing human security threats. When it is used, it should be used collectively, preferably under the auspices of international institutions.

Second, in the human security view, long-term cooperation is possible, indeed vital. Growing interdependence and the increasing porousness of states make collaboration and coordination with others well-nigh inescapable. States must come together to deal with human security threats. They must also reach out to international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other agencies in civil society.

Third, in the traditional conception of security, hard or military power is central. In the human security conception, soft power or the power of persuasion is central. This soft power should be used to disseminate information and ideas on the imperatives of international cooperation and on the nature of collaboration for human security.

Fourth, states, regional and international organizations, and NGOs should combine to foster norms of conduct in various areas of human security. Norms must be backed by national and international institutions including the UN, global economic and financial institutions, regional organizations, state institutions, and NGOs. National and international institutions can be effective only if states and other actors make them work. They will do so to the extent that they are effective participants in those institutions. This requires that international and national institutions are made more democratic and

⁸⁰ For these notions, see the UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) and HDC, *Human Development in South Asia, 1999*.

representative. Democratization and representativeness must be achieved without paralyzing decision-making and implementation processes.

The contrast between traditional national security and human security can be summarized in the following table:

Table III: National Security and Human Security

	National Security	Human Security
Security for whom	Primarily, the state	Primarily, the individual
Security of what values	Territorial integrity and national independence	Personal safety and individual freedom
Security from what threats	Direct threats from other states	Direct threats from states and non-state actors + indirect threats
Security by what means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force as the primary instrument of security, to be used unilaterally for a state's own safety • Balance of power is important; power is equated with military capabilities • Cooperation between states is tenuous beyond alliance relations • Norms and institutions are of limited value, particularly in the security/military sphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force as a secondary instrument, to be used primarily for cosmopolitan ends and collectively; sanctions, human development, and humane governance as key instruments of individual-centered security • Balance of power is of limited utility; soft power is increasingly important • Cooperation between states, international organizations and NGOs can be effective and sustained • Norms and institutions matter; democratization and representativeness in institutions enhance their effectiveness

This table allows us to propose a succinct definition of human security:

Human security relates to the protection of the individual's personal safety and freedom from direct and indirect threats of violence. The promotion of human development and good governance, and, when necessary, the collective use of sanctions and force are central to managing human security. States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other groups in civil society in combination are vital to the prospects of human security.

Counter-Arguments and Arguments

Few would dispute the fact that the values and threats identified in this paper are important. Individual safety and freedom are paramount values, at least in any liberal political philosophy. The direct and indirect threats listed here would surely appear in most lists of dangers to human well being. Critics and skeptics of the human security idea would ask, however, whether it is helpful to include these values and threats *within the conception of security*. They would argue that there are in essence two problems associated with human security: first, that it is theoretically not an elegant formulation; and secondly, that the policy implications of such a holistic, heterogeneous view of security are confounding.

The theoretical objection to human security is most stringently raised by neo-realist security analysts who argue that lumping together such a disparate set of threats causes the terms security to lose all theoretical utility.⁸¹ In a neo-realist view, the equation of threats with direct and indirect violence simply muddies the issue. Security is about war, that is, organized violence between states or between states and those who can field military formations against states. The *forms* of such violence, neo-realists would insist, have little in common with other forms of violence, such as domestic political repression or violence against women and children. In addition, the *sources* or *causes* of war differ from the sources or causes of these other forms of violence. By lumping together violence in its all its manifestations, the theoretical task is thereby made more difficult.

⁸¹ See Florini and Simmons, "The New Security Thinking: A Review of the North American Literature," pp. 29-33 for a succinct and insightful overview of realist objections to human security.

The policy objection to human security is that by positing so many different forms of violence there is little hope of framing a coherent response. In the neo-realist view, the appropriate response to a physical attack by a clearly identified adversarial agent is the deployment of a counter-attack. This makes for a relatively simple and practical world. On the other hand, if the forms of violence vary greatly, if violence is more than just a physical blow and if it is indirect (i.e. if it is difficult or infructuous to identify the *agent* of violence), policy must commensurately be much more complex and may not involve the use of force at all. A policy that does not involve the use of force, security specialists would argue, falls outside the scope of security altogether.

These are not trivial objections. Neo-realism and more traditional realism and the study of war must be accorded their place. However, at least two comments should be made in reply. First, working within the theoretical and policy framework of realism is by no means a simple endeavor. Stephen Van Evera, citing a hefty amount of research, in the realist tradition amongst others, notes in his fine recent study of the causes of war: “Sadly, though, scholars have made scant progress on the problem. A vast literature on the causes of war has appeared, but this literature says little about how war can be prevented. Most of the many causes that it identifies cannot be manipulated.... Many hypotheses that identify manipulable causes have not been tested, leaving skeptics free to reject them.... In short, our stock of hypotheses on the causes of war is large but unuseful.”⁸² Van Evera, no enemy of realism, further admits that “Realism has been criticized for offering few hypotheses on the causes of war, or for proposing hypotheses of uncertain validity and strength...Realism has been rightly criticized for failing to

⁸² Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), pp. 1-2.

provide prescriptively useful explanations for the war problem.”⁸³ Van Evera sets out to “repair” realism, and the book has important insights into the problem of war; but economical in terms of explanations it is not. The book concludes with five major hypotheses and 23 corollaries spread over nearly four pages of text!⁸⁴

Secondly, it cannot be the case that confronted by a complex and dangerous world that confounds our theoretical and policy “comfort zones”, we climb back into those zones. The expansion of the term security to include a larger set of threats and violence is without doubt discomfiting. Where exactly to draw the line is unclear. What human security proponents have suggested and what has been endorsed in this paper is that security is larger than conventional conceptions would allow. How much larger is the subject of further research. The schema put forward here should help us determine the limits. A *human security audit* should reveal which components are truly important in terms of the threat to safety and freedom.

Realism’s appropriation of the term security rests on the assumption that interstate war is the greatest threat to personal safety and freedom. This may or may not be the case, at any given time. It is not however a given. Thus, as Emma Rothschild has shown, over the past three hundred years or so, there has been a seasonality to security thinking and principles.⁸⁵ Security paradigms have come and gone with major wars and their aftermath. A security sensibility focused on the individual existed from the mid 17th century to the French Revolution. It was succeeded by a view more concerned with the problem of organized violence between states.⁸⁶ The debate over security after the Cold

⁸³ Van Evera, *Causes of War*, p. 8.

⁸⁴ Van Evera, *Causes of War*, pp. 259-262.

⁸⁵ Emma Rothschild, “What is Security?” *Daedalus*, vol. 124, no. 3 (Summer 1995), pp. 53-54.

⁸⁶ Rothschild, “What is Security?” pp. 60-61.

War and the proclivity to expand the definition is not surprising from the point of view of the seasonality of security *weltanschauungs*. With the dramatic change in international politics in 1989, something had to give in the dominant conception of security. Human security is one way of characterizing the new, insurgent conception of security.⁸⁷

At base, human security is a manifestation of a Kantian internationalism and cosmopolitanism that is unsatisfied – not *dissatisfied* but *unsatisfied* – with a traditional interpretation of international politics. Neo-Kantianism is not dismissive of the older international power politics, but it is not content with it. One aspect of this neo-Kantianism is the desire to explore ways of preventing physical violence which go beyond deterrence, that is, beyond the deployment of physical counter-violence. As Rothschild explains, preventive action in general is very difficult because “[o]ne of the distinctive characteristics of prevention is that it takes place under conditions of imperfect information.”⁸⁸ Without good information, anticipatory actions are always likely to be too late: “One does not know that one cares about something, or reflect on what one has it in one’s power to do, until one knows about some particular injustice or crisis...”⁸⁹

Human security is a response to the urge to know better what one should care about, what it is in one’s power to do, and what crises are looming. Its concerns are both consequentialist and deontological. Human security’s concern with personal safety and freedom is consequentialist in that it regards inter-state war as frequently the end product of direct and indirect violence against the individual. It acknowledges that inter-state violence may arise from international anarchy, but it regards threats to individual life and

⁸⁷ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework of Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998) refers to the changing understanding of security as “securitization.”

⁸⁸ Rothschild, “What is Security?” p. 72.

⁸⁹ Rothschild, “What is Security?” pp. 72-73.

liberty as equally a cause of international violence. Human security's concern with personal safety and freedom is deontological because it affirms that individual life and liberty are values which require protection not so much because of the consequences that may flow from their non-protection but rather because these are morally worthy values that must be upheld for their own sake.

Human security envisages actions that attempt to at least meliorate if not prevent the threats to safety and freedom. To prepare the ground for such actions, it must enable us to "know better what one should care about, what it is in one's power to do, and what crises are looming." That is, human security requires an estimate or *audit* of the threats to safety and freedom that would better inform us. Such an audit would serve two functions: it would help "draw the line" around human security by showing which of the various threats to safety and freedom are the most important (and this may vary from society to society); and it would provide an assessment of the nature and volume of threats that one is up against as also the capabilities one possesses to meliorate or eliminate those threats.

VI. Constructing a Human Security Audit

Is it possible to construct a human security audit on an annual basis so as to develop a record of the safety and freedom of individuals all over the world as also the capabilities that exist to combat those threats? Drawing on our discussion of human security so far, we can see that there are two components at the core of such an enterprise:

- *direct and indirect threats* to individual bodily safety and freedom
- *the capacity to deal with threats*, namely, the fostering of norms, institutions, and democratization/representativeness in decision-making structures

An audit of human security would consist of (i) an accounting of the growth or decline in threats and (ii) an estimate of the capabilities to meet those threats.⁹⁰ A parallel to human anatomy may illustrate the point better. One can judge the health of the human body by the nature and intensity of infections sapping its vitality (threats) and by the health of the immune system that gives it resistive strength (capability to meet threats). In some cases, the audit of human security will be better served by assessing the rise and fall of threats. In other cases, it is better to assess the degree to which norms, institutions, and democratization and representativeness have been advanced at the global, regional, national, or sub-national level.

The threats/capabilities schema can be used to make cross-national as well as intra-national comparisons. Thus, the schema could be used to compare human security from country to country, but it could also be used to generate comparisons within countries – and at various levels. There are considerable variations within countries at the provincial or municipal level. The incidence of violent crime, violence against women and children, internal war, government repression, access to basic needs and entitlements, ecological decay, and so on, will vary significantly from one province to another, perhaps even from municipality to municipality.

How would a human security audit be operationalized? In two ways: quantitatively and qualitatively. First of all, it is feasible to construct a *quantitative* measure of human security on an annual basis. That is, parallel to the Human Development Index and the recently proposed Humane Governance Index, one can

⁹⁰ See Daniel N. Nelson, “Threats and Capacities: Great Powers and Global Insecurity,” in Michael T. Klare and Yogesh Chandrani, eds., *World Security: Challenges for a New Century*, Third Edition (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), pp. 38-40 for a similar formulation regarding more traditional notions of security.

develop a Human Security Index. A great deal of data now exists for the kind of cross-national and intra-national comparisons that are required by an HSI.

Second, those factors that are not susceptible to measurement can be assessed *qualitatively*. These factors are generally at the international/global level and usually more on the “capabilities” rather than “threats” side of the security audit. Thus, a qualitative estimate, on an annual basis, of global disarmament efforts would be far more useful than a listing of the numbers of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons in existence. Similarly, while some figures are available on the spread of small arms, it would be far more illuminating to estimate international efforts to control small arms proliferation. Another example relates to global ecology. Figures exist on carbon emissions and on the degree of global warming. These numbers are, however, controversial at best. An annual report on the status of global agreements to control emissions and to coordinate policies would be a more satisfactory way of assessing human security in ecological terms. At the national/societal level, qualitative surveys of government laws that may discriminate against or offend the sensibilities of ethno-religious groups will be essential. So also a human security audit cannot simply count the numbers of women and children involved in trafficking. It must in addition assess inter-governmental and governmental policies to end this awful practice.

VII. The Uses and Limits of a Human Security Index

The idea of a Human Security Index (HSI) needs some discussion. An HSI would have at least five uses:

- Developing a social early warning system
- Focussing attention on problem areas

- Redefining national and international policy priorities
- Setting national and international standards
- Generating new social scientific knowledge

First, and most importantly, an HSI could be used to produce trend lines of human security for all societies. An HSI, measured over time, could be used to produce a picture of the rise and fall, the highs and lows, the direction and amplitude of change in human security. A cross-temporal mapping of human security could be used as an important part of a national or global early warning system.

Second, given that the HSI will consist of a number of components, it will be possible to disaggregate the overall HSI score and identify those elements of human security that are most responsible for a rising or falling score. In terms of policy responses, a componential reading of the score would help locate with much greater accuracy areas that warrant attention and remedial efforts.

Third, the HSI would be an aid in defining – or re-defining – national and international priorities. Analyses of HSI trend lines and HSI components could help reorient the policy priorities of governments and international institutions. Patterns of funding, laws and regulations, norms and standards, administrative procedures and approaches, and the identification of social “target groups”, all these could be calibrated to changing HSI scores.

Fourth, and more controversially, an HSI that has widespread acceptance could be a tool in setting national and international standards. Various incentives and disincentives might be directed towards governments or government agencies whose behaviors or actions are held to be responsible for HSI scores that are deemed unacceptable. The standard setting function of the HSI would be most controversial in

terms of international policies directed against national governments. However, to the extent that global intervention on these issues could occur anyway in the years to come, an HSI could well serve to reassure governments that outside involvement will be based on a universal and well-accepted measure rather than on arbitrary judgments. This presumably is how various economic measures have come to be both accepted by governments and used by international financial and lending institutions such as the World Bank and IMF.

Fifth, an HSI might serve to generate new social scientific knowledge. A valid and reliable measure of human security would take its place alongside measures of human development and humane governance – the Human Development Index and Humane Governance Index, respectively – in mapping the human condition. Correlations between these and other measures may reveal interesting relationships not clearly or systematically comprehended. For instance, measures of globalization and human security may be correlated to deepen the debate on whether the opening up of the world economically is producing social instabilities and turbulence. The HSI may also produce “counter-intuitive” insights into the condition of various societies. Countries that otherwise do rather well on measures of development or governance or that are generally thought to be secure may turn out to be less “advanced” than qualitative judgements would suggest. Others that are usually thought of as “backward” may well turn out to be better off than is superficially apparent.

No measure of human security will be absent imperfections. The following limits or challenges to an HSI should be noted. First of all, an HSI, as other indices, will encounter the dual problems of validity and reliability. Constructing an overall index that

adequately represents the concept of human security is the challenge of *validity*. Also, the various *component* measures of human security must be valid representations of what they are each intended to represent. In addition, and perhaps more seriously in an operational sense, the various measures should be *reliable*, that is, they should be constructed in the same manner cross-nationally and cross-temporally so that the measure of human security is “stable” and therefore comparable across space and time.

Second, as with other indices, the HSI will be limited by problems of aggregation. In aggregating various measures, it would be preferable to assign different weights to them. As things stand, there seems to be no terribly satisfying way of determining the value of those weights.

Third, the HSI represents an aggregate measure at the national level. That is, it is based on data for, say, the total number of violent deaths in a country in a particular year. Within that country, the experience of violent death may vary considerably in time and space. Many areas will report few if any violent deaths. Some areas, for various reasons, will report very high numbers of deaths. People living in those areas which are relatively safe may, in an existential sense, find the national score exaggerated or “out of sync” with their day-to-day “lived” experience. Others may find the national score seemingly too low given the high amount of violence in their environment.

Fifth, and relatedly, the HSI is an “objective” measure of human security and suffers from the limits of such interpretations of social reality. It will need to be supplemented by other methods of assessing human security. One supplement would be public opinion surveys. The human development report for South Asia in 1999, produced by the Human Development Centre in Pakistan, reports in an annexure on the

results of a “Citizen’s Survey” of governance. The survey attempted to assess “how South Asian people perceive structures and processes of governance”.⁹¹ While the sample was small and biased in a number of ways, a number of interesting results emerged from the survey.⁹² A second supplement to the HSI is to produce annual qualitative assessments or audits of human security. As noted earlier, the HSI will not measure human security at the global level, either in terms of direct or indirect violence. That is, it will not numerically measure the degree of tensions between the great powers, the state of play of disarmament, or the stability of global economy and ecology. An annual audit that records the developments in great power relations, in disarmament politics, and in global economic and ecological trends would round out an annual Human Security Report far better than some stray and not very useful numbers that purport to summarize human security possibilities in these as yet non-quantifiable areas.

VIII. Conclusion

The point of human security studies, at this stage, is to describe a map of violence that goes well beyond the map created by the neo-realist/statist view of security. Evidence indicates that the map is much larger than the map of organized inter-state violence. With all its imperfections, a human security audit, done systematically and rigorously, will map a massive area of human experience that is presently unmapped (or mapped in scattered bits and pieces). Its promise is not to get every contour absolutely right; it is, rather, to start to fill in, however incompletely, what is presently a very blurry picture – a picture of a turbulent and complex world system, composed of a ramifying set of actors and linkages, as well as an emergent world society increasingly latticed by globalized

⁹¹ HDC, *Human Development in South Asia, 1999*, p. 159.

norms and institutions. Our understanding of the workings of that world system/world society and of the appropriate management strategies is incipient and imperfect, but it will be advanced in part by the mapping of the human security terrain.

⁹² HDC, *Human Development in South Asia, 1999*, pp.159-161.

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