Human Security and the Globalization of International Security

by George A. MacLean

Human security deals with the protection of people from external threats, as well as those that originate domestically. It is both revolutionary and evolutionary from a conceptual standpoint and in terms of its implementation. Revolutionarily, it concentrates on the primary unit of analysis, the person, and embraces what simply should be the foremost concern of national governments. Evolutionarily, it builds on our existing understanding of security, adding the human element to territory, environment, economics, and governmental authority. Human security is no mere addition, however, and it presents serious consequences for the field of international security and the role of policymakers.

A proper examination of human security requires some thought about the foundations of security, what it means to be safe, and the basis of globalization. In what ways does human security depart from established practices and analysis? Does it drive policy change, or is it policy-driven? Are we discovering something new, or reinterpreting what already exists? How does the process of global integration affect security? In answering these questions, this article provides a conceptual explanation of human security and relates the concept to globalization in the international environment. It suggests some skill sets at both the national and international level that will be required to incorporate human security competently. And as evidence of the effects of implementation, some consideration is given to the Canadian experience in projecting human security as a foreign policy goal.

HUMAN SECURITY: THE EVOLUTION OF A CONCEPT

No generation of academics or policymakers has a lock on any concept, and the same is true for international security. Moreover, it is misleading at best, to argue that there has ever been consensus on what security means; there has never been a common definition of security and to suggest otherwise is to reinterpret a long-standing debate.

International security must be seen as evolving, with changes in its meaning and effects. Even the traditional concept of security has many variations. For instance, it

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can be thought of as a social obligation that preserves a culture, social order, and identity. Politically, it involves the protection of ideology and government organizations. From the standpoint of defense and military affairs, security covers the physical protection of citizens, government, and resources. Security also may be viewed economically, as the stable management of welfare and access to markets, capital, and finance. With regard to the environment, security may be further defined in terms of the conservation of natural ecosystems.

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Security is accepted in social, political, military, civil, economic, and environmental contexts. As a starting point then, it is difficult to see how extending an already broad definition to include the basic unit of analysis in all of these categories—the person—is such a stretch of theory. Given the human thread that winds its way through these existing representations of security, it is only logical that human security would emerge.

Nonetheless, human security has been criticized as ambiguous and uncertain. This is despite any agreement on what human security may be or how it changes things. It thrives, however, in both conceptual thinking in the field of international security and in an expanding policy agenda. This is because in functional terms, human security moves our attention from territory to the person. Unlike physical concepts of security, it recognizes that personal safety and defense come from individual welfare and well-being, not just from safeguarding the state. Human security does not replace the state as the viable provider of social welfare, however. Rather, it recognizes that a secure state does not necessarily mean a secure people.

While conventional territorial insecurity includes structured threats such as war, human insecurity emerges from unstructured threats. Human security involves protection of the individual from violence or harm; access to the basic essentials of life; safety from crime, terrorism, and disease; human rights; freedom from rights infringement based on gender; cultural and community rights; development; natural resource preservation; and environmental sustainability. Each of these, at their most severe level, contains the threat of unstructured violence. Human security relates to traditional security since both defend against adversity felt by either the person or society. It is not just a defensive concept however; it is also an integrative concept,[1] constructed to merge governance and protection of political communities with the broader ambitions of personal welfare and invulnerability.

Traditional security is not just about conflict resolution, but also conflict prevention. Similarly, human security comprises the operative prevention of conflict, and it encapsulates attempts to diminish or avoid disputes. In brief, human security is not an alternative for a conventional conception of security.[2] Rather, as Edward

Newman has argued, the emergence of the concept of human security reflects a broad, evolving concept of security. Moreover, human security, Newman suggests, is a reflection of changing values and norms in contemporary international relations.[3] On this point Newman reflects the contribution of the critical security studies literature in the early 1990s. Spurred by Ken Booth's 1991 analysis of security theory, the critical approach claimed that the state posed a potential threat not just externally, but also to its citizens.[4] The dialogue was generally split between statist and value-oriented viewpoints, with the human security standpoint championed as providing a more development-oriented conception that was both universal and interdependent.[5] In sum, if we recognize that a secure environment—territorial or human—is one where conflict is dissuaded, not just resolved, a more constructive way of viewing the relationship of human security with other interpretations of security is to allow for a broader conception that incorporates various aspects of security.

We are presently witnessing an extension of the accepted—and certainly wide-ranging—definition of security in international affairs. Human security, rather than requiring a new and rigid meaning for security, reconsiders all realms of social interaction, including international and domestic security. The human security agenda rearranges approaches and skill sets used by governments and institutions in policymaking. As a means of suggesting some directions regarding their application, the next section of this article takes into account these strategies and their implementation.

NEW STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH HUMAN SECURITY

Human security reflects the growing "mutual vulnerability"[6] posed by globalization and the higher level of interconnectedness in the international system. This interconnectedness is by no means new, but the degree of vulnerability that it creates is important. Political communities have always been affected in some manner by the actions of others. However, vulnerability affects not just states, but also local communities and individuals. Furthermore, the interconnectedness of individuals and communities has implications for the entire international system, as problems in the weakest regions have ramifications for the more powerful ones. This has resulted in a condition where no region in the international system may be immune to human security risks in another.

Conceptually, one reason why human security does not fit easily into traditional notions of security concerns is that many human security matters are often thought to be within the realm of domestic, not international, responsibility. But while we may examine issues at the domestic level, there is still an intractable link between domestic events and the international community. This is not to suggest that the state is somehow eliminated from this relationship. Rather, responses to human security encompass the interests of the state, multilateral or transnational actors, and the international community as a whole. Given the interconnectedness of states in the international system, events at the domestic level unavoidably spill over into the international arena.

Table 1: Dimensions of Traditional and Human Security

Dimension	Traditional Security	Human Security
Spatiality	Territorially sovereign	Not necessarily spatially determined
Targets	State	Community and individual
Subject Matters	Diplomatic and military	Socio-political, socio-economic, environmental
Pattern of Control	Institutionalized	Non-institutionalized
Decision Making	Formal (political)	Informal (intuitive)
Potential Threats	Structured violence	Unstructured violence
Responses	Diplomatic and military; unilateral	Scientific, technological; multilateral governance

Responding to human security requires unconventional approaches and skill sets. Table 1 distinguishes human security from traditional security, outlining several dimensions that delineate the two. Responding to traditional security threats which involve sovereign territorial states with institutionalized politics and regularized forms of decision making requires diplomatic and military skill sets—the conventional tools of statecraft. Securing the individual in his or her community is a different matter.

Theoretically, human security is often understood as a non-territorial concept, involving non-state and non-institutional actors whose decisions are limited, or even mandated, by external forces. A diverse range of approaches is needed to address the broadly defined concerns encapsulated in the human security concept. Table 2 combines these concerns with some necessary skill sets. Importantly, these move beyond diplomatic and military competencies, incorporating science, technology, law enforcement, judiciaries, social services, as well as governments.

Table 2 illustrates some of the complexities involved with human security. Part of people's insecurity often arises from conditions experienced outside of the managed realm and authority of the nation-state. Responsibility for providing adequate legal institutions and health care, for example, involves non-state as well as state actors. Not surprisingly, this raises the important issue of state sovereignty. Human security, I have argued, is a logical extension of other conceptions of security—national, environmental, economic, and governmental. It cannot and should not be considered as a form of trans-border welfare state encumbrance. Rather, I suggest that the focus on the individual still permits the state to remain sovereign, provided the responsibilities of sovereignty are preserved. Intervention, humanitarian and otherwise, has legitimate precedents in international relations and law, and there can be no doubt that the responsibilities of states (as opposed to the rights of states) have received much more attention in recent years.[7] The difficulties

Table 2: Responding to Human Security Threats

Human Security Issue	Required Skill Sets and Approaches
Personal security of the individual from violence or harm	Local policing; peacekeeping/building
Access to the basic essentials of life Protection of the individual from: o Crime and terrorism o Pandemic diseases o Political corruption o Mass migration	Local governance; public goods allocation; health policy; transnational cooperation
Provision of human rights Freedom from violation based on gender Rights of political and cultural communities	Legal, constitutional, and juridical
Political, economic, and democratic development	Democratic development; aid and trade strategies

encountered with human security therefore raise broader issues of implementation and which actors—both state and non-state—are engaged.

Thus far, this article has raised a number of issues of concern: bridging the perceived gap between international and domestic affairs; responding to unconventional threats without abrogating the principles of sovereignty; reflecting the interests of several layers of actors; and incorporating unorthodox skill sets in the effort to prevent conflict or unstructured violence. Human security concerns are made more urgent due to the growing interconnection of political communities, often characterized as globalization. The following section examines this phenomenon, with particular emphasis on its effects for international security policy.

GLOBALIZATION AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

International relations in the 1990s were generally described as the post–Cold War era, reflecting the significance of the end of the Cold War. Gradually, the new era has been examined for what characterized it and what it stood for. Globalization is a reasonable and legitimate term to describe the process of change, in light of the range of socio-cultural, technological, economic, and political effects it encompasses. It defines much of what we consider as important in the current international system; but while we often consider globalization to be a contemporary phenomenon, it has been underway since the post–World War II economic recovery of the European states, driven primarily by the economic interests of the United States and other parts of the globe.

Globalization denotes a process of integration in international relations, one that is not merely political but also cultural, social, and economic. From an economic perspective, globalization involves corporate and financial actors trading and investing across borders and thus integrating national markets into a liberalized international flow of goods, services, and capital. From a sociological and cultural

perspective, we observe the emergence of a global society and global norms. Individuals are entering associations not only within national borders, but also with outside communities, often in areas where no previous affiliation had existed. As communications become easier and faster, and as opinions and experiences are shared, global norms and cultural standards are also mounting, though not superseding local customs.

The rise of human security as a foreign policy option is closely related to, and even buffered by, the corresponding acceleration of globalization worldwide.

Politically, globalization has the greatest implications for how we think about the structure of the international system. Political processes span national borders and often circumvent them entirely. This pertains not just to international diplomacy but also to policymaking at the national and international levels, which is no longer solely the concern of national governments. The process of policymaking now involves non-governmental actors and inter-governmental institutional links. In the context of this discussion, it is important to note that globalization denotes a process, rather than an outcome, a *fait accompli*. Furthermore, globalization should not be confounded with globalism, its ideological basis. It is important to note that there is nothing in this understanding of globalism to suggest that globalization is inevitable.

From a security point of view, the process underpinning the new international environment is both complex and distinct from the previous order, requiring meaningful consideration about the nature of security. Simply put, Cold War strategic thought does not satisfactorily address the security challenges of a globalized era. The kinds of challenges faced by state and sub-state actors today give rise to new threats to security, and require new tactics for dealing with them. Though the traditional security agenda is not at all immaterial—weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms, terrorism, and civil war—contemporary security concerns, such as ethnic violence, peacekeeping, environmental degradation, migration, and intra-state conflict are now at the forefront of a much expanded list of potential threats. These latter threats, which are intertwined with the process of globalization, require a broader definition of security—one that is at the heart of the human security agenda.

The rise of human security as a foreign policy option is closely related to, and even buffered by, the corresponding acceleration of globalization worldwide. Globalization connotes not the abrogation of sovereignty but rather the extension of a degree of political authority to transnational actors, whether it is multinational corporations negotiating with state actors for market access, multilateral actors such as the UN seeking to impose objectives on sovereign states through the International Criminal Court (ICC), or peace-building actions intended to benefit dispossessed persons or populations in sovereign states. Therefore, within the context of the process of globalization, human security appears as a logical extension of the

traditional agenda of security issues.

Leaving theory aside, the rest of the article explores the implications of incorporating human security in the making of foreign policy. Canada provides a good example of the promise and challenge of adopting a human security agenda. The following section examines the Canadian initiative and some of the benefits and costs of promoting human security as a goal of foreign policy.

CANADA'S NEW FOREIGN POLICY: INTRODUCING HUMAN SECURITY

Canada has strongly emphasized human security in its foreign policy in recent years, based on a tradition of humanitarianism in its foreign relations. According to the Canadian government, human security is a legitimate enhancement of international security, with the individual as a point of reference. Canadian foreign policy statements reflect the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) criteria regarding human security—economic, food, health, environment, personal, community, and political. However, Canadian government statements also observe that such a wide-ranging interpretation makes human security "unwieldy as a policy instrument."[8] Canada's stance is that the UNDP specifications do not give adequate consideration to the unstructured threats faced by people and communities. Whereas the protection of the state, economy, or access to resources contributes to national security, economic security, and security of resources; projecting human security requires the protection of individuals. Moreover, Canadian foreign policy statements point to a concrete link between state and human security. To wit:

> *Fundamentally, these two concepts are complementary. People are made safer by an open, tolerant and responsive state capable of ensuring the protection of all of its citizens. At the same time, enhancing human security reinforces the state by strengthening its legitimacy and stability. A secure and stable world order is built both from the bottom up and the top down. It is clear, however, that states are not always guarantors of human security. When states are externally aggressive, internally repressive or too weak to govern effectively, people suffer. In the face of massive state-sponsored murder, the calculated brutalization of people and appalling violations of human rights, the humanitarian imperative to act cannot be ignored and can, in some cases, outweigh concerns about state sovereignty.[9]*

Because human security is often criticized as being conceptually and fiscally impossible, Canada's selective interpretation of the UNDP definition is significant. Incorporating all aspects of the UNDP agenda would be implausible, given the wide range of concerns: disease and epidemics, natural disasters, environmental challenges, and economic turmoil. The central consideration for the Canadian government is how such insecurities affect the individual and how to protect people from such threats. With a view to promoting individual security, Canada's human security agenda has identified five priorities: the protection of civilians, peace support operations, conflict prevention, governance and accountability, and public safety.

Protection of civilians includes the protection of war-affected children, both

legal and physical; human rights field operations, efforts to ban the manufacture and use of anti-personnel landmines, and humanitarian intervention, including Canada's support for the controversial Independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. Regarding peace support operations, Canada's efforts lie mainly in the field of peacekeeping, a long-standing dimension of its foreign policy. Canada approaches peacekeeping in a multifaceted manner—it provides military and civilian police forces, as well as experts in the areas of democratic governance, judicial reform, child protection, freedom of the press, human rights, and conflict resolution and reconciliation. At the institutional level, Canada's agenda advocates greater capacity-building in both public and private contexts.

In the area of conflict prevention, Canada has worked within the G8, the UN, and regional organizations to address the root causes of conflict. At the time of the Chrétien government, the Foreign Affairs Ministry included the use of targeted sanctions, control over small arms, and post-conflict peace building as means of supporting conflict prevention in the context of human security. Canada's human security position on governance and accountability encompasses the creation of the ICC, security sector reform, efforts against corruption and for greater transparency, fostering freedom of opinion and expression, democratic governance, and corporate social responsibility. With regards to public safety, Canadian priorities have been transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, and terrorism. These priorities reflect the application of Canada's human security agenda.

Based on a long tradition of interventionism and humanitarianism, Canada's human security strategy has had implications for policymaking and implementation. To begin, the Canadian government has had to defend human security as a policy option and in practice. For example, the 1999 intervention in Kosovo was termed a human security emergency. Though other states—notably Great Britain and the United States—avoided such a characterization, Canada justified its role in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) bombing missions by invoking human security:

> *Kosovo was a conflict, within a state, where basic human rights were violated, and where the primary interest of the international community as we saw it from Canada was [in] the protection of individuals. To Canadians, it was a classic case of Human Security, where the international community took action, not to protect their state interests, but to address the security of individuals. [T]he use of military force in Kosovo showed that if you want to be involved in providing human security you would be well advised to have the ability to use force, including military force, in your tool kit. "Soft power" and "hard power" can both make critical contributions to the Human Security agenda.*[10]

Canadian policymakers have recognized the need to involve the military. Former UN ambassador and Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister Paul Heinbecker argued that human security requires a hard edge, as demonstrated by the Kosovo bombings:

> *[T]he war against Serbia was a war of values, a war for human security, and once*

started, wars for values must be won or the values themselves are placed at risk.... One thing that has been confirmed by the crisis in Kosovo is that a commitment to the protection of people also requires a commitment to back diplomacy with the threat of military force and, when necessary, with the use of force.[11]

This is not to be taken as a complete redrafting of the notion of human security. Rather, it is grounded in a history of defining and redefining security as we contend with various threats. It is a logical extension of existing notions of political, economic, societal, collective, environmental, or national security.

The inclusion of human security in Canadian foreign policy has been criticized as contradicting other commitments and policies. For example, the nongovernmental organization Project Ploughshares, which has been a long-standing critic of Canada's arms trade, used the human security mandate as a platform to denounce Canada's arms trade and military procurement. Project Ploughshares argued that

Canada's military contracting and procurement policies need to be reviewed to make them consistent with a human security–based defense policy, [and that] emphasis on the "human" elements of security is meant to redress an imbalance in security preoccupations—that is, where disproportionate attention is paid to military support for state structures, ideological orthodoxy, and regime survival at the expense of the security of persons.[12]

Implementing human security, then, presents the risk of criticism that advocating a new platform (such as human security) may be inconsistent with established endeavors (such as military procurement and arms trading). The human security agenda has also complicated Canadian relations with its nuclear allies. Given the notion of individual security inherent in human security, coupled with the 1996 International Court of Justice finding on the illegality of nuclear weapons,[13] several assessments of Canadian foreign policy have suggested that Canada's tacit support of its nuclear allies contravenes its own human security position.[14]

Human security also has implications for assessing the human costs of state and international security. By integrating human security, Canada's international security policy promotes the individual as an integral unit of analysis. This is not very different from Canada's traditional understanding of security, which has regarded the notion that "protection of people is at least as important as the sovereignty of states...as a principle of international relations since the end of the Second World War."[15] However, human security has both human and material costs. For instance, in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, a human security approach will mean that Canada will have to make some "hard choices—and put money and lives on the line."[16] More humanitarian missions focused on the protection of individuals will undoubtedly create an increased risk to military and civilian personnel involved in such endeavors.

There also are implications for foreign trade interests. The range of human security concerns—protection of individuals, peace support, conflict prevention, governance, and public safety—affect foreign economic relations when they involve

regions and countries troubled by political instability. The alleged Canadian involvement in the diamond trade in Sierra Leone provides a good example of the interconnection between security and economic policies. The illegal diamond trade posed severe threats to human security and helped fund the civil war in Sierra Leone. Thus, Canadian commercial interests in Sierra Leone may have posed a threat to the security of citizens of that country.[17]

Canada's human security policy has utilized non-state actors, such as nongovernmental organizations, to a great extent. Organizationally, this has given new emphasis on the coordination of state and non-state authorities in foreign policy implementation. Moreover, Canada has had to integrate human security with human rights, democracy, and political and economic development. Although normatively similar, these principles have different meanings and consequences. In making an explicit link between human security and development, the Canadian government has defined them as "mutually reinforcing concepts."[18] The link, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs, rests in the manner in which human security creates "an enabling environment"[19] for human development. By promoting humanitarian assistance, stronger governance structures, and ultimately, sustainable development, human security deals with issues of inequality and deprivation, which lie at the root of violent conflict.

CONCLUSION

Michael Renner has argued that the "greatest threats to security today come from within nations, not from invading armies."[20] There is an increasing shift from military to civilian casualties in conflict areas as unstructured violence emerges from decidedly unconventional security threats. Global integration has given emphasis to much broader dimensions of security. Promoting human security will require effective coordination at the domestic and international levels, as well as among multilateral institutions.

Globalization is more than just a means of describing international security and insecurity. It introduces different vulnerabilities and a new set of concerns and constraints for international security. Globalization is no *fait accompli* but rather a process with important implications for the locus of political authority and state sovereignty.

The notion of human security has been misunderstood at times. The focus on the individual is a reasonable extension of what we define as security and its implementation has implications for national and international authorities. With broad consequences for foreign and defense policy, trade and commercial relations, and government decision making, human security is nevertheless not far removed from traditional security concerns. Its effects are significant implications both for the process of foreign policy decision making, as well as for alliance relations and multilateral institutions.

Notes

[1] This adoption has been made by the United Nations Development Programme. Cited in "What Is 'Human Security'?" *Changes: An Information Bulletin on Global Environmental Change* 5 (1997). Available at http://www.globalcentres.org/cgcp/english/html_documents/publications/changes/issue5/index1.htm (accessed February 25, 2006).

[2] This is also suggested by Canadian foreign affairs officials. See Paul Heinbecker, "Human Security: The Hard Edge," *Canadian Military Journal* 1 (Spring 2000): 13.

[3] Edward Newman, "Human Security and Constructivism," *International Studies Perspectives* 2 (August 2001): 239–251.

[4] Ken Booth, "Security and Emancipation," *Review of International Studies* 17 (1991): 313–326.

[5] The concept of human security first appeared in the United Nations Development Programme's 1994 *Human Development Report.* United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[6] An expanded discussion on this issue may be found in Ivan Head, *On a Hinge of History: The Mutual Vulnerability of South and North* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

[7] See, for example, The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001).

[8] Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada (DFAIT), *Human Security: Safety for People in a Changing World* (DFAIT, April 1999), 3.

[9] DFAIT, *Freedom from Fear: Canada's Foreign Policy for Human Security* (DFAIT, 2000), 3.

[10] CF Perspectives on Human Security, speech of Lieutenant-General William Leach, Chief of the Land Staff, November, 5, 1999, 1999 Atlantic Canada Diplomatic Forum. Available at http://www.forces.gc.ca/site/newsroom/view_news_e.asp?id=457 (accessed February 25, 2006).

[11] Heinbecker, "Human Security: The Hard Edge."

[12] "Human Security and Military Procurement," *Ploughshares Monitor* 20 (June 1999), 1.

[13] Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion, July 8, 1996. Available at http://disarm.igc.org/DisarmTimes/dticj.html (accessed February 25, 2006).

[14] See, for instance, Robin Collins, "Nuclear Weapons Abolition on Canada's Human Security Agenda?" *Liaison* 2 (November 1998). See also Robert Bedeski, "The Future of Nuclear Weapons" Center for Global Studies, University of Victoria, November 1999. Available at www.globalcentres.org/html/docs/bedeski.html (accessed March 6, 2006).

[15] DFAIT, *Freedom from Fear,* 1.

[16] Press Release, "Human Security Policy Poses Difficult Choices," North-South Institute, August 21, 2000.

[17] See, for instance, Ian Smillie, Lansana Gberie, and Ralph Hazleton, *The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds, and Human Security,* (Ottawa: Partnership Africa Canada, 2000).

[18] DFAIT, *Freedom from Fear,* 3.

[19] DFAIT, *Freedom from Fear,* 3.

[20] Michael Renner, *Fighting for Survival: Environmental Decline, Social Conflict and the New Age of Insecurity,* (Washington: Worldwatch Institute, 1996).