
UNIT 14 GLOBAL STATE OF HUMAN SECURITY

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14.1 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations was born into a world emerging from the shadows of war and hitherto unimagined destruction. The organisation was founded on the ideals of peace and justice, with an international system of law and procedures which would replace military aggression and war with negotiation and collective security. Although the UN was fundamentally constructed around the concept of national sovereignty, it could also be argued that, from the very start, the security of people was of equal importance. The UN Charter's first words state - in no uncertain terms - that: "We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind..." (**Charter of the United Nations**).

The dominant concept of security at the time was state-centric, privileging the instruments and agents of the state, carrying forward the principles of state sovereignty as first articulated in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. The UN principles for security were initially focused on ways in which the structures and practices of the modern state might address threats to its sovereignty. These threats encompassed compromises to territorial integrity, issues surrounding political stability, military and defence arrangements, and economic and financial activities. The behaviour of states was understood 'rationally' as the pursuit of power. To that extent, the security calculus was based on a zero-sum outcome, with gains on one side coming only as a result of losses on the other. This 'Realist' approach to security was most sharply applied in relations between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics from the onset of the Cold War in the 1950s.

In the years that followed, attempts to mediate between the USA and the former USSR probably presented the most difficult test for the UN and its mandate. Operating in a world perilously close to a devastating nuclear confrontation forced the organisation to develop innovative and creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems such as limiting the threats posed by the nuclear arsenals stockpiled by each super-power. The UN's role in disarmament led to the establishment of standards such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), the Anti-Ballistic-Missiles Treaty (1972), the Biological Weapons Convention (1972) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (1993). Since the principal target of these weapons were communities and, by extension, individuals, it could be argued that although states had the principal responsibilities for action, individuals and communities were ultimately the main beneficiaries of these UN-led initiatives (Krause, 1997).

With the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union over 1989-1991, the strategy of dealing with conflict by the UN shifted from containment to prevention. In 1992, the UN Secretary General issued 'An Agenda for Peace, Peacemaking, and Peacekeeping' (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Early optimism for a more peaceful world was however dashed by a rising number of conflicts in developing countries. These were overwhelmingly internal conflicts, though sometimes national groups received external support. Most of these conflicts were outside the inter-state mould espoused by Realists. The causes of these conflicts were seen to be linked to non-state and non-traditional factors such as internal socio-political conditions, rapidly deteriorating economic conditions, environmental threats, identity politics, and powerful organised crime rings (Buzan, 2001).

In an attempt to address these transformations, the UN system once more engaged with alternative views of security, articulating the concept in terms of a re-framed emphasis on empowerment of individuals by addressing systemic-level policies and practices that contributed to insecurity. Despite having embodied the concept of collective security since its inception and witnessed the transformation of the concept beyond its original parameters during the Cold War competition of super-power interests, the UN increasingly championed alternative approaches to development and security.

Aims and Objectives

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- analyse the Global State of Human Security
- distinguish between Traditional Security and Human Security
- explain the Theory of complex World

14.2 EMERGING CONCEPT OF HUMAN SECURITY

The idea of human security is as old and derives from many idealist and moral thinkers but the modern concept of human security emerged as part of the holistic paradigm of human development cultivated in the UNDP by Mahbub ul Haq, with strong support from Amartya Sen (Sen, 1999). The UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report (HDR-94) was the first major international document to articulate human security in conceptual terms with proposals for policy and action.

Though this marked the most high profile launching of the concept and approach, Mahbub ul Haq and several others involved in 1994 had in fact explored the topic at a North

South Roundtable on the “Economics of Peace”, held in Costa Rica in January 1990. The Roundtable produced a clear statement that the post-Cold War world needed “a new concept of global security”, with the “orientation of defence and foreign policy objectives changed from an almost exclusive concern with military security...to a broader concern for overall security of individuals from social violence, economic distress and environmental degradation.” The new concept of global security would require “attention to causes of individual insecurity and obstacles to realisation of the full potential of individuals.” The report placed these challenges in the context of the post-Cold War world along with an emphasis on reducing military spending and creating a peace dividend - to ensure greater human development, and ease economic and environmental imbalances (North-South Roundtable, 1990).

The HDR-94 argued that the concept of security has “for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from a nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation states than to people”. This narrow approach was categorically widened to include the safety (of individuals and groups) from such threats as hunger, disease, and political instability; and protection from “sudden and hurtful disruptions in patterns of daily life” (Ibid., p.23). The report went on to further identify seven core elements which – when addressed together – reflect the basic needs of human security: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security.

The evolution of human security also had the support of Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, who linked human security with proposals for a “Global Demilitarisation Fund”. Designed to provide support for disarming and demobilising armed forces, re-integrating military personnel into society and other measures to promote arms control and civic education for democracy, this effort would become an integral element for increasing human security in many countries.

14.3 ESSENCE OF HUMAN SECURITY

Human security represents an effort to re-conceptualise security in a fundamental manner. It is primarily an analytical tool which focuses on ensuring security for the individual, not the state. Exploring options aimed at mitigating threats to the insecurity of individuals thus becomes a central goal of policy recommendations and actions. In line with the expanded definition of human security, the causes of insecurity are subsequently broadened to include threats to socio-economic and political conditions, food, health, environmental, community and personal safety. Policy initiatives generated through the application of the human security framework have incorporated considerations far beyond the traditional focus on military force, greatly reducing the emphasis on armies, if not replacing them altogether.

Human security is therefore:

- people centred
- multi-dimensional
- inter-connected
- universal

In principle, human security reflects the aggregate gains as a result of the mitigation of each and every factor that contributes to insecurity. Now there is a need to focus on a

core of insecurities within each specific context. A country by country approach, as with the NHDRs, helps to do this. For example, realising human security in Afghanistan can and should involve policies which address democratic governance, trans-national crime, human rights, poverty and basic needs. The human security needs of the people of Mozambique could and likely would include protection from external regional conflicts, socio-economic exploitation, civil unrest stemming from ethnic identities, poverty, and public health issues such as HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis. Each of these country cases therefore represents sub-sets of human security, linked together by the common condition of insecurity – which manifests itself in decidedly different terms of reference for both Afghanistan and Mozambique. In each case, the drive to eliminate insecurity is informed by considerations of human development and human rights, and not strategic calculations of power and military gains/advantages. Through this framework, it would therefore be possible to develop a collection of policies which successfully address the specific insecurities in each country, while ensuring that the primary beneficiaries of these policies are individuals, not the state. As a result, State security becomes a direct reflection of the perception of security of its citizens.

It is important to recognise *when* the human security framework is most useful in its analysis. For instance, attempting to locate human security within the super-power rivalry of the Cold War world order does not demonstrate the theoretical strengths of this framework. As such, in cases where security threats to the state are addressed through actions aimed at external state-based actors, traditional security studies appears better situated to undertake effective analysis. For example, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime by the US-led coalition is far better understood through a traditional security lens. The resultant impacts of US Army actions on the population of Iraq are however much better understood through the human security framework.

14.4 THE PRAXIS OF HUMAN SECURITY

Human Security can be regarded as a paradigm shift from traditional national security approaches. A common criticism of the concept of Human Security is that it is too idealistic and much too broad. But it can be argued that this paradigm shift is already under way and, moreover, is more realistic than traditional national security approaches since it represents the only possible approach to the kinds of insecurities that human beings face in the contemporary global era. How we develop the concept of Human Security and imbue it with relevant meaning is, in fact, part of the process of implementing a paradigm shift.

14.5 TRADITIONAL SECURITY VS HUMAN SECURITY

The Traditional Security paradigm refers to a realist construct of security in which the referent object of security is the state. The prevalence of this theorem reached a peak during the Cold War. For almost half a century, major world powers entrusted the security of their nation to a balance of power among states. In this sense international stability relied on the premise that if state security is maintained, then the security of citizens will necessarily follow (Bajpai, K, 2000). Traditional security relied on the anarchistic balance of power, a military build-up between the US and the Soviet Union (the two superpowers), and on the absolute sovereignty of the nation-state Owen, T, 2004). States were deemed to be rational entities, national interests and policy driven by the desire for absolute power (Ibid.). Security was seen as protection from invasion, executed during proxy conflicts using technical and military capabilities.

As Cold War tensions receded, it became clear that the security of citizens was threatened by hardships arising from internal state activities as well as external aggressors. Civil wars were increasingly common and compounded existing poverty, disease, hunger, violence and human rights abuses. Traditional security policies had effectively masked these underlying basic human needs in the face of state security. Through neglect of its constituents, nation states had failed in their primary objective (Baylis, 1997).

More recently, the traditional state centric notion of security has been challenged by more holistic approaches to security. Among the approaches which seek to acknowledge and address these basic threats to human safety include cooperative, comprehensive, collective measures, aimed at ensuring security for the individual and, as a result, for the state.

To enhance international security and potential threats caused by terrorism and organised crime increased co-operation within police forces internationally has been applied. The international police Interpol shares information across international borders and this co-operation has been greatly enhanced by the arrival of the internet and the ability to transfer documents, films and photographs worldwide instantly.

Human Security is an emerging school of thought about the practice of international security. Human security offers a critique of, and advocates for an alternative to, the traditional state-based conception of security. Essentially, it argues that the proper referent for security is the individual and that state practices should reflect this rather than primarily focusing on securing borders through unilateral military action. The justification for the human security approach is said to be that the traditional conception of security is no longer appropriate or effective in the highly interconnected and interdependent modern world in which global threats such as poverty, environmental degradation, and terrorism supersede the traditional security threats of interstate attack and warfare. Further, state-interest-based arguments for human security propose that the international system is too interconnected for the state to maintain an isolationist international policy. Therefore, it argues that a state can best maintain its security and the security of its citizens by ensuring the security of others.

| Traditional vs Human Security | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Type of Security | Referent | Responsibility | Threats | |
| Traditional | The state | Integrity of the State | Interstate war, Nuclear proliferation, Revolution, Civil conflict | |
| Human | The individual | Integrity of the individual | Disease, Poverty, Natural disaster, Violence, Landmines, Human rights abuses | |

Source: Owen, T, 2004

14.6 THEORY FOR A COMPLEX WORLD

There is much disagreement among rival schools of thought on the essential nature of world politics today. In particular, the three major schools of thought – realists, liberals and neo-Marxists – differ strongly on the nature of world politics and the role of the state in it. For realists, the world is characterised primarily by conflicts of power and interest among states in an anarchic system, i.e., a system in which there is no legitimate authority

above states to regulate their behaviour. In their view, the process of globalisation, which has made the world more and more integrated, has not changed this fundamental reality very much. The state remains the central provider of security – seen primarily in military and secondarily in economic terms – for its citizens.

Liberals perceive the world by looking at institutions and individual rights. Some, who adhere to a state-centric conception of world politics, stress the growth of inter-state cooperation in an evolving society of states. Others, who regard the world as multi-centric, emphasise the growth of interdependence among states, firms, nongovernment and inter-government organisations, and other entities. Both observe a process of global integration and collaboration that contrasts starkly with the realists' worldview. The former group of liberals tends to see the state as the key to security within the framework of inter-state cooperation, while the latter stress the autonomous role of supra-state institutions and non-state entities in a world where the capacities of states to deliver security are declining.

Finally, neo-Marxians hold that the world is a unified capitalist system of unequal exchange between periphery, semi-periphery and centre. Globalisation is altering the geography of inequality: the three categories permeate all societies, though some societies, notably in Africa, are largely excluded from the process. In this world, real security can only be realised by energising popular movements in a struggle to overturn the exploitative capitalist system.

The position here is synthetic. Human security is determined both by states and by non-state forces. Though the state is in many respects a weakened entity, it still retains significant capacities to shape its multi-faceted environment with regard to the security of its citizens (Burchill, 2001). In other words, ordinary people still depend primarily, though not exclusively, on the state for their security. They depend on the state to

- secure them from foreign military threats by means of defence preparedness, if necessary with external assistance;
- carry out appropriate economic policies that maximise their material well-being by shaping the domestic economy and by regulating the interaction between the domestic and the global economies;
- manage the environment by means of domestic and inter-state regulation;
- protect and promote their cultural identity by regulating the linkages between the national community and the rest of the world; and
- conserve and advance their political identity and freedoms by creating a firmly-founded democratic political community that guarantees human rights.

The state may have lost much of its autonomous capabilities, but it still remains the main provider of security, whether autonomously or in concert with other states. No other agency possesses comparable capability, though many (for instance, firms and nongovernment organisations) affect the provision of security to a significant degree. Hence, the conception of security, even in the widest sense of "human security," must remain state-centric even as the state is treated as instrumental.

14.7 HUMAN SECURITY AT GLOBAL LEVEL

After 1994, the concept of human security became a central theme of a number of governments through their foreign and defence policies. In particular, the Canadian, Japanese and Norwegian governments led the way in institutionalising human security concerns into their respective foreign policies.

According to Foreign Affairs Canada, “human security means safety for people from both violent and non-violent threats. It is a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people’s rights, their safety, or even their lives”. (Human Security Programme, Government of Canada, 2005, p. 52). Canada, Norway and other ‘middle-power’ countries have also supported the Human Security concept, and developed the concept, emphasising the desire for ‘freedom from fear, freedom from want’ first used at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference of 1944. In 1997, Lloyd Axworthy, the then Foreign Minister, called for an extension of the security framework, to increase the peacebuilding capacity of his country, and address issues such as anti-personnel mines, and child soldiers (Axworthy, 1997).

A Human Security Network was set up in 1997, with countries such as Japan and Norway, as well as NGOs. The intention of this was to develop a new form of diplomacy which could encourage stable democracies to develop on a sound basis of Human Security. The assumption was that this would create a more stable and secure world. The emphasis of the Canadian school of thought was on a ‘responsibility to protect’ before, during and after conflict.

Canada has gained influence on the global stage through active participation – not by withdrawing. International institutions are not perfect, but Canada has been at the forefront in seeking reforms at the United Nations and other organisations. Such changes can only come about through active engagement.

Canada’s outward-looking stance, until recently, enjoyed support from all Canada’s major political parties since the founding of the United Nations almost 55 years ago. Isolationism has long been an unfortunate undercurrent in American politics, but it has not taken root in Canada. That is why some of the recent dialogue on Canada’s foreign policy has been particularly disturbing.

Canada has used its seat on the Security Council to advance, among other goals, a broader interpretation of the Security Council’s mandate to include human security issues along with traditional security issues and drew attention to the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

14.8 CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT

Conflicts from Kosovo to Sierra Leone to Sudan show that “civilianization” of armed conflict has become one of the most common and disturbing features of modern war. More than ever, non-combatants, especially the most vulnerable, are not merely caught in the crossfire, but are themselves principal targets. In the past decade, casualties from armed conflict have doubled to about one million a year. In the First World War, in contrast, civilian casualties accounted for only five per cent of all casualties. Today, in modern conflicts, closer to 80 per cent of the casualties are civilians.

The forced exodus, the appalling brutality, the state-sponsored murders and disappearances perpetrated against thousands of innocent people – all of this underscores the fact that in our world, civilians suffer the most from violent conflict. They bear the brunt of the new practices of war – for example, the deplorable use of child soldiers or savage paramilitaries. And they suffer most from the inexpensive – yet all-too-readily-available – tools of modern combat, such as landmines, small arms and other weapons.

The nature of war has changed in other ways. Most conflicts today occur inside rather than between states. Wars from within can be just as brutal and ugly as conflicts between states. While the number of armed conflicts between states has declined over the last 25 years, the number of intra-state conflicts has increased dramatically. Among the 103 wars fought since the end of the Cold War, around 97 were fought within rather than between states. The crises in the Great Lakes region of Africa, in Bosnia and Kosovo, and East Timor are only some of the best-known examples in a series of conflicts with tragic implications for affected populations.

Brutalisation and exploitation of civilians, involving gross violations of humanitarian law, have led to massive refugee flows. Such situations cannot simply be seen as internal matters but as matters that affect us all.

14.9 HUMAN SECURITY FOCUS

“Human security” then – putting people and not only states as the focus of security analysis – is a cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy in the United Nations and elsewhere. Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy has brought this dialogue to the world stage on numerous occasions. A hallmark of the changing nature of violent conflict and the “new generation” of transnational human security threats is that they increasingly put people at the centre of world affairs.

Understanding this concept of human security involves seeing the world through a different lens from that used in the decades of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War was hailed as the beginning of an era of peace and prosperity. There was a widespread optimism that with the easing of the grip of the ideological divide, the world community would be freer than at any time in the past to turn its attention to global problems such as underdevelopment, poverty and the environment.

The reality of the past decade has been more sobering: we have seen a wide range of new security threats emerge. Globalisation clearly has a dangerous underside. Instantaneous communications, rapid transportation, increasingly porous borders, and rising business, cultural and academic ties have for better or worse unalterably merged all our lives into a common destiny in this world. The security or insecurity of others has become very much our own security or insecurity. As a result, we have both a responsibility and an interest to act when the safety of others is imperilled. Canada’s human security agenda is an effort to respond to these new realities.

In a stirring speech to both houses of our Parliament, Czech President Vaclav Havel noted the declining role of the state and the notion that what takes place within a country’s borders is nobody else’s business. “I believe,” he said, “that in the coming century most states will begin to transform from cult-like objects, which are charged with emotional contents, into much simpler and more civil administrative units, which will be less powerful and, especially, more rational and will constitute merely one of the levels in

a complex and stratified planetary societal self-organization. This change, among other things, should gradually antiquate the idea of non-intervention, that is, the concept of saying that what happens in another state, or the measure of respect for human rights there, is none of our business.”

Havel observed that the responsibilities of the state can go in only two directions: down or up, downwards to the organs and structures of civil society, or upwards to various regional, transnational or global communities or organisations. This transfer, he said, has already begun. He went on to note the obvious implication of this phenomenon: the United Nations must undergo substantial reform if it is to perform the tasks it faces in the new century. It can no longer maintain conditions from the period when it was formed; it must become less bureaucratic and more effective, and must belong to all inhabitants of the globe. In other words, it must not simply be a club of governments in which one state, through its Security Council veto, can override the will of the rest of the world.

The Canadian government shares much of Havel’s vision, in particular on the need to reform the UN to bring it in line with a changing environment and taken a strong stand against the abuse of the veto or the threat of its use that the five permanent members hold and aim on making the Security Council’s work more transparent and reasserting the primacy of the Council in peace and security issues.

Developments in European foreign and security policy have helped catalyse an emerging European discourse, but the lexicon of terms used – ranging from crisis management to conflict prevention and civil–military cooperation – is a muddled affair that obscures rather than clarifies the nature of European foreign policy.

Human Security is part of human development and human rights, but it is at the sharp end of both. It is also about feeling safe on the streets or being able to influence political decision-making. Human Security policies are concerned with crisis management, but they go beyond crisis management since they offer a perspective on crises. Human Security is about how we respond to an urgent physical or material threat to individuals and communities. From a Human Security perspective, the aim is not just political stability; it also encompasses notions of justice and sustainability. Stability tends to entail the absence of overt conflict or, in economic terms, halting a downward spiral of GDP or the value of a currency. In recent years, the international community seems to have learned how to stabilise conflicts; how to reach and sustain peace agreements and how to stabilise economies (Final Report of the Commission on Human Security, 2007). But it has not yet learned how to address the security of individuals and communities and deal with crime, human rights violations and joblessness. The parlance of crisis management, especially on the civil side, within the European Union does, of course, emphasise some of these ‘vulnerabilities’ – for example, the critical focus on strengthening the ‘rule of law’. The language of Human Security would further entrench this kind of thinking and would help to underline the need to address these ‘vulnerabilities’ so as to reduce the risk of renewed crisis.

Human Security capabilities, such as crisis management, require civil–military coordination. But it is more than just a matter of coordination – or of ‘integration’ or ‘synergies’ to borrow from current parlance. Human Security is about *how* and *why* civil and military capabilities are combined, rather than a reflex action to use them as part of a standard conflict toolkit. In a Human Security operation, the job of the military is to protect and preserve rather than to fight an enemy. Thus Human Security is not just about developing

a culture of civil–military cooperation; it is about an entirely new way of functioning in crises that is best described by the new language of Human Security.

In Arab countries, a widespread lack of human security undermines human development. Human security is a prerequisite for human development, and that the widespread absence of human security in Arab countries undermines people's options. Human security refers not only to questions of survival, but also basic needs such as access to clean water and quality of life concerns. Human security in the Arab countries is often threatened by unjust political, social, and economic structures; by competition for power and resources among fragmented social groups; and, in some cases, by the impacts of external military intervention (Arab Human Development Report, 2009). "The tendency is to think of security only in military or state security terms," said Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, Director of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States and UN Assistant Secretary-General. "But the security of people themselves is threatened not just by conflict and civil unrest, but also by environmental degradation, discrimination, unemployment, poverty, and hunger. Only if these sources of insecurity are addressed in a holistic manner will the people of the Arab region be able to make progress in human development."

The concept of human security offers a way to reorient development policy in the Arab region towards areas that will have the greatest impact on human well-being. In effect, to focus on human security is to focus on a broader development agenda that determines whether people are able to live secure lives and achieve their potential. The report makes it clear that piecemeal policy approaches will not suffice. Employment generation programmes, for example, will not reach their full potential if people do not have proper nutrition and healthcare.

14.10 SUMMARY

Human Security, as a term, can be understood to encompass the concepts of conflict prevention, crisis management and civil–military coordination, but it takes them further. It draws on the debates generated by these concepts, as well as other terms used more broadly in current global discourse, such as 'responsibility to protect', 'effective multilateralism' and 'human development'. Insecurity is closely related to crisis. Human Security can be treated as the crisis end of terms such as human rights and human development. It has to do with human need at moments of extreme vulnerability, not only in wars but in the face of natural and technological disasters as well. Security is often viewed as the absence of physical violence, while development is viewed as material development, improved living standards. These distinctions pervade much of the literature about Human Security as a policy concept, but they are misleading. Many conceptual boundaries, such as those between political, civil, economic or military, have to be redrawn in an era of globalisation because they are defined largely in terms of a nation-state frame. Human insecurity, even in conflict, is not just about the impact of military violence; it is also about the consequences of human rights violations and violent crime, and also the material consequences of conflict. The conceptual framework of the Report is rooted in the UNDP 1994 Global Human Development Report, *New Dimensions of Human Security*. It identified seven interdependent threats to human security and argued that human security can only be a reality if all threats are taken seriously and acted on without hierarchy.

14.11 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Distinguish between traditional security and human security.
 2. Give an overview of Global State of Human Security.
 3. Write short notes on:
 - (a) Human Security and Development
 - (b) Civilians in Armed Conflicts
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