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TOWARDS FREEDOM FROM FEAR : AN AGENDA FOR HUMAN SECURITY

Abstract

While the security of most countries has been enhanced in the post-Cold War period, the security of many people has not. Due to the persistence of civil wars and failing states, coupled with growing transnational threats such as the trade in small arms and narcotics, freedom from fear remains an elusive goal. Security policy needs to become "people-centred," and to be refocused on a broad range of threats. Addressing individual insecurity enhances national security by strengthening the state's legitimacy and stability, and complements the promotion of human development by creating a safer and more conducive environment. For the past three years, Canada and its partners have been promoting "human security." Two clear examples of this perspective are the banning of landmines and the establishment of an International Criminal Court. It is at the heart of an initiative on the protection of civilians in armed conflict within the Security Council, and the growing movement to respond to the needs of children in armed conflict. In the face of genocide and crimes against humanity, such a perspective also demands military intervention by the international community. These issues require urgent attention and can best be addressed through a new approach to diplomacy based on partnerships with countries, international organizations and NGOs, and by direct engagement with civil society and the public at large.

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Introduction

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 under-development, 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. These threats include the proliferation of civil wars, transnational crime, pollution, international drug trafficking and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms.

A few figures from the past decade demonstrate this worrying state of affairs starkly: more than 80% of the casualties in war zones have been civilians, more than two million children have been killed, four million disabled, one million orphaned and three-hundred thousand actively serving in armies and rebel groups. The most obvious images of human insecurity come from the war-torn regions of Africa and the Balkans, but South Asia as a region is far from immune as the trade in small arms and the trafficking in women and children demonstrate.

In recent decades, armed conflict has taken on a different shape, often rooted in religious or ethnic discord. While the number of armed conflicts between states has declined over the last 25 years, the number of intra-state conflicts has increased. Of the 103 wars since the end of the Cold War, 97 have been fought within rather than between states. The crises in the Great Lakes region of Africa, in Bosnia and Kosovo, in East

Timor and most recently, in Sierra Leone, are only some of the more noted examples in a series of conflicts with tragic implications for the affected populations.

Individuals are increasingly the principal victims, targets and instruments of modern war. 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 conflicts. It is a situation with which ordinary people from Sierra Leone to Sudan to Central Africa to Angola are all too familiar. Casualties from armed conflict have doubled in just the past 10 years. About one million people lose their lives each year. And whereas during the first world war only 10 percent of casualties were civilians, today that figure is closer to 80 percent.

Civilians are also paying the heaviest price from the rise in intra-state conflict and from failed states. 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 weapons of modern war, such as landmines and military small arms and light weapons. Civilian casualties and mass displacement are no longer mere by-products of the today's conflicts, but often explicit in the strategy of the combatants.

Threats to individual security are not limited to situations of violent conflict. For all its promise, globalization has also shown a dark underside. Transnational phenomena like terrorism, illicit drugs and crime, environmental degradation and infectious disease, financial and economic instability put

all of us at risk. Indeed, they have already caused tremendous suffering. The dimensions of the problem are staggering. According to the UN, organized crime syndicates command a gross amount of $1.5 trillion per year which is greater than all but three of the world's national economies. These are profits made from the misery of the vulnerable and innocent.

Instantaneous communications, rapid transportation, increasingly porous borders, and rising business, cultural and academic ties have undeniably and unalterably merged all our lives into a common destiny. 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 imperiled.

Thus, this paper addresses human security defined as freedom of the individual from fear. This is not to denigrate the freedom of the individual from want. This has been a longstanding objective. Rather this paper aims to separate out human security as worthy of specific attention and deserving of special measure to address it. At the same time, it recognizes that freedom from fear and from want are inextricably linked. A Canadian perspective is taken but wider relevance of the subject matter is readily evident.

The Concept of Human Security

Canada's promotion of human security is a response to these new global realities. Human security is a condition or state of being characterized by freedom from pervasive threats to people's rights, safety or even their lives.

Rethinking the meaning of security has been a growth industry throughout the 1990s. In large measure these efforts have focused on expanding the list of threats to security to include issues such as the narcotics, the environment, refugees and migration, and infectious diseases. To the degree that these challenges are increasingly inter-related demanding comprehensive integrated responses, broadening the range of threats considered is absolutely essential. From the Canadian perspective, however, more significant than widening the definition of security, is changing its principal focus. In essence, human security is about safety for people from threats to their rights, their safety and even their lives.

The focus on the safety of individuals raises the question about the relationship between human security and national security. Contrary to some claims, human security and state security are not incompatible. When states act in the security interests of their people, state security and human security are mutually supportive. Building an effective, democratic state that values its own people and protects minorities is central to promoting human security. At the same time, improving the human security of its people strengthens the legitimacy, stability and security of a state. The importance of effective states is clear, for where human security exists as a fact rather than an aspiration, that situation can be attributed in large measure to effective governance.

States, however, are not necessarily guarantors of human security. When states are externally aggressive, internally repressive or too weak to govern effectively, they threaten the security of people. In the face of massive state-sponsored murders, appalling violations of human rights and the

calculated brutalization of people, the humanitarian imperative to act cannot be ignored and can outweigh concerns about state sovereignty. Ultimately, state sovereignty is not an end in itself -it exists to serve citizens and to protect their security.

Another important conceptual clarification is the link between human security and human development. The specific phrase "human security" is most commonly associated with the 1994 UNDP *Human Development Report*. As the report called for the redirection of the post-Cold War peace dividend towards the development agenda, the definition advanced was extremely ambitious. Human security was defined as the summation of seven distinct dimensions of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political. By focusing on people and highlighting non-traditional threats, the UNDP made an important contribution to post-Cold War thinking about security.

The very breadth of the UNDP approach, however, made it unwieldy as a policy instrument. Equally important, in emphasizing the threats associated with under-development, the Report largely ignored the continuing human insecurity resulting from violent conflicts. Yet by the UNDP's own criteria, human insecurity is greatest during war. Of the 25 countries at the bottom of the 1998 Human Development Index, more than half are suffering the direct or indirect effects of violent conflicts. The UNDP definition of human security was proposed as a key concept during the preparatory stages of the 1995 Copenhagen Summit on Social Development. But it was rejected during the Summit and has not been widely used thereafter.

The revival of the concept of human security over the past three years has been due in large measure to the focus on the human costs of violent conflict. Here, practice has led theory. Two initiatives in particular, the campaign to ban landmines and the effort to create an International Criminal Court, have demonstrated the potential of a people-centred approach to security. Both measures are practical and powerful applications of the concept of human security.

By focussing on violent threats, human security addresses gaps in existing approaches and suggests new responses. Non-violent threats to human well-being, such as poverty, famine, disease, population, natural disasters and environmental degradation, require urgent attention. But the conceptual tools already exist (sustainable development and human development), and global action plans have been largely agreed (particularly through the World Conferences of the 1990s). Progress in these areas now depends principally on a greater infusion and better targeting of resources. The same cannot be said about the insecurity people face due to violence. The need for a conceptual shift towards a people-centred approach to physical safety is clear. Furthermore, inspite of calls more than a decade ago for a "New International Humanitarian Order," there is no global action plan for reducing people's vulnerability to violence.

It is sometimes argued that attending to the violent threats that people face divert funds from the more basic priority of development. But human security and human development are opposite sides of the same coin. Together they address the twin goals of freedom from fear and freedom from want. Human security provides an enabling environment for human

development. Where violence or the threat of violence makes meaningful progress on the developmental agenda impossible, enhancing the safety of people is a prerequisite. Promoting human development is also an important strategy for furthering human security. By addressing the root causes of violent conflict, by strengthening governance structures, and by providing humanitarian relief, development assistance complements political, legal and military initiatives in enhancing human security.

In many ways, the concept of human security attempts to do for the theory and practice of security what human development did for approaches to development. Through the 1950s and 1960s development was defined in narrow economic terms and measured through abstract national figures such as growth in GDP. The notion of human development challenged both the scope and the level of analysis; a broader range of indicators was employed including health and education, and an attempt was made to measure the effects on people rather than states. Similarly, human security attempts to reconceive security by examining a broader range of threats, and by focusing directly on the effects on people.

Canada's human security agenda is ultimately aimed at developing new concepts, adapting diplomatic practice and updating the institutions on which the international system is based, with a view to enhancing the security of all people. While there are obviously wide-ranging implications to adopting a human security perspective, emphasis is given to two particular dimensions: the protection of civilians in times of war; and the prevention and resolution of violent conflicts.

The Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

As outlined above, people's safety is most clearly at risk in situations of armed violence. While the international community is generally effective in the provision of material assistance to civilians in war zones, it is much less good at providing physical safety. Enhancing their safety involves a broad range of measures for improving legal and physical protection for people, with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as women, children, the displaced and the elderly. These measures include the issuing of more robust mandates and the provision of human rights monitors for UN peace support operations, the development of a more humane and targeted approach to economic sanctions, ending impunity by bringing to justice those who perpetrate atrocities, and reducing the availability of small arms, including landmines, that most directly affect the security of people.

One of Canada's central objectives during our two-year tenure on the UN Security Council has been to make the protection of civilians a central focus of the Council's work. The Council has a central role to play in addressing this new reality. There are signs it is moving in the right direction. Last fall, the Council authorized UN peacekeeping operations for Sierra Leone and East Timor, with robust mandates explicitly involving the protection of civilians -- a result Canada fought hard to achieve. These mandates are now being put to the test, particularly in Sierra Leone. Canada has also been working to adapt the blunt instrument of Council sanctions so that they target the ability of belligerents to wage war while minimizing the impact on civilians.

Minimizing the impact of violent conflict on civilians also underpins three priority initiatives for Canada's human security agenda: the elimination of landmines, the creation of an International Criminal Court, and addressing the needs of children in armed conflict.

Anti-personnel Landmines Mines

The widespread use of anti-personnel mines has a direct impact on the security of individuals. These weapons last for decades after conflicts end and do not distinguish between soldiers and civilians. The use of these weapons has created a humanitarian crisis in dozens of countries impeding the return of refugees after conflicts end, preventing the use of productive land in some of the poorest countries on the planet and previously killing or injuring as many as 24,000 innocent civilians each year. While contributing only marginally to the security of states, landmines have a devastating impact on the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people attempting to rebuild their lives in war-torn societies.

In December of 1997, the majority of the world's countries joined Canada in its determination to do something about this human security crisis by signing the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction the Ottawa Convention. On March 1, 1999, the Ottawa Convention entered into force and by the beginning of May 2000, 94 states have agreed to be legally bound by the Convention.

The Ottawa Convention serves as a major step forward in addressing the humanitarian crisis caused by anti-personnel

mines. However, the establishment of a new global norm is only the beginning. The Convention must be implemented in an effective manner to ensure that mined land is cleared and returned to communities, that mine victims receive assistance and rehabilitation services and that the global ban on anti-personnel mines is universalized. Canada is doing its part through the Canadian landmine fund, by supporting mine action activities in places like Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique, Central America, Peru and Ecuador.

The International Criminal Court

The promotion of human security also requires the means to hold accountable those responsible for violating human rights and humanitarian law. There can be no lasting peace without justice. The International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia, as well as a similar tribunal for Rwanda, were established to prosecute individuals responsible for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Investigators from the Yugoslavia tribunal are gathering evidence on the atrocities committed in Kosovo, so that the perpetrators do not go unpunished.

These tribunals provided an inspiration for the creation of the International Criminal Court. In June of 1998, the international community adopted the statute of the International Criminal Court. This achievement will help deter some of the most egregious breaches of international humanitarian law   not only in the Balkans or Rwanda, but everywhere. Negotiations on the details of the Court's operations are moving forward. The Court will ensure that justice is done by prosecuting offenders wherever national systems are unable or unwilling to do so.

War-affected Children

The welfare of the world's children merits special priority in Canada's human security agenda. In the new global environment, it is the most vulnerable, particularly children, whose security is most at risk, who pay the highest price and who consequently demand close attention. Nowhere is this more true than in situations of armed conflict. The record of the past decade is grim: close to two million children killed; more than four million children disabled; more than one million children orphaned; over three-hundred thousand girls and boys serving in armies and rebel groups as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies, labourers and sex slaves; and more than ten million children psychologically scarred by the trauma of abduction, detention, sexual assault and witnessing the brutal murder of family members.

Canada is working both to improve international legal instruments and to ensure compliance with existing humanitarian standards and norms that protect the rights of children. One of the most notorious practices in conflicts is the recruitment of child soldiers. It is a barbarism that defies all standards of moral behaviour. We have been vividly reminded of this during the fighting in Sierra Leone. Outlawing this appalling activity has been a long-standing objective for many of us. To that end, Canada strongly supported the development of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child raising the legal age for recruitment and participation in hostilities. In May of 2000 the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers held a conference in Kathmandu in order to strengthen compliance with these norms throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

Raising the international bar against the exploitation of children in conflict is important. We also need to redouble efforts to ensure the respect of existing humanitarian norms in conflict situations. Internationally accepted standards already exist for a number of practices, including the targeting of children, child abduction, sexual exploitation, access to humanitarian assistance, and respect for sanctuaries. Promoting children's security is indispensable to promoting human security. Protecting children from the traumas of armed conflict is inescapably linked to our broader objective of building peaceful and stable societies. We cannot possibly hope to build a secure world without due regard to those who will inherit it.

Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

Attempts to mitigate the effects of violent conflict on civilians are essential for human security. But no matter how effective, they are remedial, not preventive; they respond to the symptoms, not to causes. The most effective approach to limiting the human insecurity caused by violent conflict is to prevent its emergence and to seek peaceful resolutions where prevention fails. While calls for the prevention of violent conflicts are hardly new, these are auspicious times for turning hortatory sentiments into political action. In the wake of recent crises Kosovo, East Timor and Sierra Leone, the human and financial costs of allowing crises to spiral out of control are clear. The Secretary General, in his report on the State of the Organization, highlighted this dimension in calling for a shift from a "culture of reaction" to a "culture of prevention."

There can be no doubt that a responsive Security Council is an essential component of effective conflict prevention. Nothing in the Council's basic Charter mandate precludes it from taking preventive action in the pursuit of international peace and security. It does, of course, require the Council to embrace a broader definition of security, one which takes into account the multiple factors that contribute to conflict and which addresses it in its earliest stages and manifestations. It means focussing not only on aggression between states, but also on intra-state security issues such as gross and systematic human rights abuse or catastrophic humanitarian emergencies, utter failures of governance and the rule of law, and gross instances of economic deprivation. In short, it means paying greater attention to threats to human security which, as recent experience has shown, has been key sources of conflict in recent decades. Responding to such threats early and effectively requires a political decision by the Council which, after all, has the discretionary power to determine what constitutes a threat to peace and security. Early preventive action by the Council, whether persuasive or coercive, will help to pre-empt both the emergence and the escalation of conflict, thus providing an important deterrent effect.

Small Arms and Light Weapons

One key structural challenge that must be addressed if conflicts are to be prevented is the unrestricted flow of small arms and light weapons. The excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms poses a major threat to international peace and security. In virtually all conflicts that have erupted since 1990 they have been the

principal weapons system employed. Many millions of small arms are in circulation around the globe, many thousands more are manufactured each day.

South Asia is not immune from the adverse effects caused by the excessive accumulation of small arms. These weapons find their way to insurgent groups aggravating political instability, while international arms flows traverse the region fuelling conflicts in other parts of the world. In June 2000, Canada sponsored a Conference in collaboration with the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies in Colombo to examine more carefully the problem of small arms in South Asia.

Ultimately, the demand for small arms is fuelled by those whose ambitions perpetrate human misery. They are aided and abetted by the dubious business interests that profit from the marketplace of conflict.

Non-state Actors and the War Economies

Non-state actors are becoming increasingly powerful actors on the world's stage, and they have profound effects, both positive and negative, for conflict prevention. Civil society and the private sector have demonstrated the growing positive contribution they can make to promoting human security. At the same time, other non-state actors, militias, warlords and unscrupulous commercial interests play a role in perpetuating human insecurity in conflict zones and beyond.

One of the failures of globalization is that it has permitted the creation of a new war economy where, in exchange for diamonds and other natural resources, certain corporations provide warlords with the financial resources they need to

operate   money that is funneled back to yet other dubious businesses that are only too happy to make their profit through the illicit arms trade.

As Chair of the Angola Sanctions Committee, Canada has attempted to improve the effectiveness of the sanctions regime imposed against UNITA. In particular, we have attempted to limit revenues from the illicit mining of diamonds fuelling further bloodshed, a problem that has also plagued the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone in recent years. Canada has also recently sent a fact-finding team to Sudan investigating the alleged links between the oil industry and human rights abuses.

The prevention of deadly conflicts is the single most effective way of enhancing human security. This premise is equally true in reverse. Ultimately, effective conflict prevention begins with ensuring that people are secure. Although broadening the focus of security policy from states to citizens may at first appear to be a radical shift, it is a logical extension of current approaches to international peace and security. The Charter of the United Nations embodies the view that security cannot be achieved by a single state in isolation. The phrase "international peace and security" implies that the security of one state depends on the security of other states. A human security perspective builds on this logic by noting that the security of people in one part of the world depends on the security of people elsewhere. A secure and stable world order is built both from the top down, and from the bottom up. The security of states, and the maintenance of international peace and security, are ultimately constructed on the foundation of people who are secure.

Humanitarian Intervention

There can be no doubt that preventive, non-coercive action is always preferable. As suggested above, we should put a premium on improving capacity, increasing resources and acting sooner in these areas in order to avoid the necessity of stronger measures. It remains true, though, that these actions are not always feasible and they do not always work. When they do not work, humanitarian intervention is one option.

The recent reports by the Secretary General on the massacres in Rwanda and at Srebrenica point to the failure of the international community to respond robustly when civilians are threatened. A full discussion about humanitarian intervention is, therefore, unavoidable and indispensable, because we will undoubtedly be confronted with new humanitarian tragedies in the future. In the absence of clarity, we will certainly be faced with the same questions, the same paralysis and the same lack of preparedness   with the same tragic results.

Kosovo, where NATO was compelled to take action, is perhaps a turning point in this regard. In cases where human security is imperiled on a massive scale within state borders, the challenge for all of us is to consider the limits of sovereignty and the need for humanitarian intervention. Intervention is one of the most difficult decisions that leaders can make. It is fraught with complications. It challenges established thinking about the international order. Those who have suffered under colonialism and other outside involvement in their countries might well be sceptical. Yet there can be no doubt that there have been, and undoubtedly will be,

circumstances where the consequences of inaction are unthinkable, and where forceful military intervention will be necessary.

There are legitimate questions about the purposes, limits and standards for military action on humanitarian grounds. Clear and consistent criteria are needed against which the necessity, or not, of humanitarian intervention can be judged and applied. These tests must be very demanding, based on fundamental breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law. It is important to be clear on this point. Canada is not advocating military intervention in response to minor violations of human rights. There are other ways to censure such misgovernance. Humanitarian intervention is called for only in severe cases such genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and massive and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

Towards a New Diplomacy

An emphasis on human security determines not only the objectives of our foreign policy, but also the manner in which we pursue those objectives. While this so-called "new diplomacy" is not exclusively linked to our human security agenda, the mixture of powerful ideas, persistent persuasion, public advocacy and partnership with civil society has proven remarkably effective. Developing innovative global partnerships helps link countries, institutions and non-governmental organizations with like-minded objectives. Such coalitions between governments and civil society helped make the campaign to ban landmines a success and were instrumental to progress in adopting the statute of the

international criminal court. They are harbingers of the future, demonstrating the power of good ideas and pooled resources.

This is not to suggest that traditional foreign policy priorities such as strong effective multilateral institutions are any less important. Fostering human security has likewise been the motive behind efforts to adapt existing global and regional institutions in order to integrate human concerns into their activities. This is particularly important at the United Nations Security Council. Rather than avoiding engagement, the Council, as the legitimate decision-making body for peace and security, should be actively involved in setting the rules   and limits   for international involvement in the new, admittedly more complex, situations of modern armed conflict.

Conclusion

At its core, the aim of human security agenda is to construct a global society in which the safety and well-being of the individual is an international priority and a motivating force for international action; a society in which international humanitarian standards and the rule of law are advanced, woven into a coherent web protecting the individual, where those who violate these standards are held fully accountable; and finally, a society in which our global, regional and bilateral institutions   present and future   are built and equipped to promote and enforce these standards.

These are indeed grand objectives, and while the international community has made impressive progress in recent years, daily reports from Sierra Leone, Chechnya,

Angola, Colombia or Afghanistan indicate that we are far from achieving these objectives. Much remains to be done in ensuring that states and international institutions place the security of people at the centre of their security agenda.