

10 Global Governance and Human Security

Mary Kaldor

During the 1990s, there was great optimism about the future of global governance. The United Nations greatly expanded its role, as did regional organisations such as the European Union and the African Union, especially in the context of conflict. The global consensus that made possible a series of peace agreements and a great expansion of multilateral peacekeeping operations undoubtedly contributed to a reduction of violence (Human Security Report 2005). However, the very dramatic failure of the United Nations in 1994 to prevent the genocide of at least half a million Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda and to protect the UN-declared safe haven of Srebrenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995, which resulted in the massacre of 8,000 men and boys, greatly weakened the perception of the United Nations as a security provider.

In the ensuing years, unilateral behaviour by the United States and other powers as well as growing geopolitical contestation have constrained the opportunities for multilateral action. But even without taking these factors into account, the point remains that if international organisations are to act with authority, they need political legitimacy and not just formal legitimacy. And central to the political legitimacy of such institutions is the effective implementation of human security—a genuine sentiment among people affected by existential threats that international organisations can actually help them. It is said that human security is the ‘foundational principle’ (Mine and Mute 2022) of the United Nations, but it is not just a principle; it has to have real everyday substance.

The legitimacy of political authority, the readiness of people and organisations to comply with laws or regulations issued by that authority, is intrinsically bound up with security. We trust our institutions if we believe they keep us safe. For states, this has to do with national security, by which we mean protecting national territory from external enemies, and the visible manifestation of national security consists of armed forces. For municipalities, this refers to everyday law and order, something we might call civic security. And for international and regional organisations, it has to do with preventing war and addressing the global challenges of climate change, pandemics, famines, transnational crime, or extreme poverty. This is what is meant by human security—protecting individuals and the communities in which they live from a range of existential threats. If we are to construct an effective system of global governance, then human security is the foundation both in principle and substance. At present, the practice of global institutions is far from this ideal as a consequence both of the geopolitical and nonaccountable behaviour of states, as well as inadequate resources.

Japanese scholars talk of the ‘conceptual resilience’ of human security (Mine and Mute 2022). Coined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994, the

term has evolved in meaning and has been increasingly adopted by multinational institutions and national governments. The original UNDP concept is often known as the ‘broad’ version of human security, which refers to the inclusion of economic, environmental, cultural, and social dimensions of security. Yet the most recent applications of the term have to do with the role of traditional security providers, especially the military.

My argument is that this last aspect of human security is essential if human security is to be effectively implemented. This does not mean that I support the so-called narrow version of human security. Rather, the role of traditional security providers has to be understood as one essential element of the broader version. In other words, a broad version of human security that addresses the full range of existential threats would require an overall change in spending priorities from excessive expenditure on military establishments, especially nuclear weapons, to spending on the environment, health or overall economic and social development. But it would also involve a fundamental shift in the role of the military, from fighting to the protection of people from both external aggression and massive violations of human rights, an emphasis on community policing instead of the use of the police as tools of repression, and a change in the role of peacekeepers from separating ‘sides’ to upholding human rights, as well as increased spending on poverty, climate change, health, and so on. Some of these changes have already happened or are in the process of happening. Such a transformation would also mean a change in the nature of states, from more or less unilateral actors to nodes in a system of global governance.

The war in Ukraine; the continuing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq; the wars in Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Palestine, in Central and East Africa; and the spread of both the drone campaign and jihadism, combined with growing economic crisis, not to mention climate catastrophe, suggest that the world is entering a very dangerous phase. In this chapter, I ask whether the concept of human security helps us to ponder ways of navigating the new dangers.

In developing this argument, I start with an outline of the evolution of the term ‘human security’, including the ways in which the term has been integrated into international and regional institutions. I then briefly describe some of the radical critiques of human security that were put forward in the early 2000s. And in the last section, I focus on the recent resurgence of human security, especially in unexpected quarters such as national militaries and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and what it could mean for traditional security providers.

The Evolution of Human Security

The story of human security usually starts with the UNDP Human Development Report of 1994. Yet the ideas and practices that came together under the umbrella term ‘human security’ had a much longer trajectory.¹ Indeed, the reiteration of ‘freedom from want’ and ‘freedom from fear’ in the UN Secretary-General’s 2005 follow-up to the Millennium Summit (United Nations Secretary-General 2005) is a deliberate echo of President Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms address in 1941 and the preamble to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).² Likewise, the preamble to the UN Charter commits the United Nations to end war and to support human rights and ‘social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom’. Even earlier, Jane Addams, a member of the American delegation to the Women’s Peace Congress in The Hague in 1915 and the 1931 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, wrote in 1922 of ‘two of men’s earliest instincts ... the first

might be called security from attack, the second security from starvation' (Addams 2002: p. 116, citing Sharp 2015).

As it developed during the last decades of the Cold War, the concept can be said to have emerged from two strands of thinking that became increasingly salient in this period. One strand of thinking had to do with disarmament and development. It was expressed through concern with the burden of the East/West arms race and the idea that resources devoted to the amassing of arms could be better directed towards solving social problems such as those of poverty and disease. This preoccupation was the subject of a series of reports undertaken by the United Nations, as well as a number of independent commissions that all tried to broaden the concept of security and provide a blueprint for human survival (Brandt Commission 1980, Palme Report 1982, Brundtland Report 1987, Nyere Report 1990). The term 'human security' was used a year before the 1994 Report in the press release for UNDP's 1993 Human Development Report, which was primarily about people's participation. The press release drew attention to

new concepts of human security that stress security of the people not just nations and territory. This means accelerated disarmament using defence cuts to boost development. It also means a new role for the United Nations, increasingly intervening to provide human security in areas such as the former Yugoslavia and in Somalia, where people are fighting within countries rather than between countries.

(Bosold 2011)

For UNDP, the emphasis was on material security, even though it insisted on the link between freedom from fear and freedom from want. The 1994 Report lists seven types of security (economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political), of which only one, 'personal security', referred to physical safety from violence. There was an underlying assumption that deprivation and income inequality are the main causes of war, and, through development, the problem of war and violence could be solved.

This version of human security has been followed through by UNDP with a series of human security reports focusing on different regions and countries and is also widely used within the broader UN system. Ten years later, in May 2004, a Human Security Unit was established within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to administer the Japanese-funded UN Trust Fund for Human Security and to mainstream human security within UN activities. The fund has undertaken a series of human security projects that largely but not exclusively focus on material insecurity. A human security adviser to the Secretary-General was appointed in 2010 who is responsible for regular reporting on the implementation of human security.

In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 66/190, providing a definition of human security that emphasised the development orientation of the concept, and while it explicitly recognised the link between development, peace and human rights, it also ruled out 'the use or threat of force' and distinguishes itself from Responsibility to Protect (R2P), which is associated with the second strand of thinking. In 2014, a Framework for Co-operation for the System-Wide Application of Human Security' was established by the Human Security Unit. And, most recently, in 2022, UNDP produced a new report on human security stressing the importance of solidarity (UNDP 2022).

The second strand of thinking drew on the growing influence of human rights in international affairs and the link that came to be made between security and human rights. The UN Human Rights Covenants (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) adopted in 1966 and which came into force in 1976, gave legal weight to and furthered the emerging human rights movement, particularly in Eastern Europe and Latin America. Within the former, a key moment was the Helsinki Agreement of 1975, which ushered in a period of East-West détente. The three baskets of Helsinki (security, economic and social cooperation and human rights) essentially constituted a human security concept even though the term was not used at the time. This human rights focus became especially influential in both Canada and Australia, where innovative foreign ministers (Lloyd Axworthy and Gareth Evans) pioneered the idea of human security.

The high point of this strand of thinking is often considered the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), established by the Canadian government and chaired by Gareth Evans and Mahmoud Sahnoun. This was the report that developed the concept of R2P (Right to Protect)—the idea that the international community has a responsibility to intervene, even to the extent of using military force, in cases of genocide, ethnic cleansing and massive violations of human rights, where states fail to act (ICISS 2001).

The concept of R2P was adopted in the report by the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, which was supposed to consider how the United Nations could be reformed, and it was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in the World Summit Outcome document of 2005. As Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon appointed special advisers on genocide prevention and R2P. He also established a \$2 million R2P Fund supported by Sweden, the United Kingdom and Australia and produced a series of reports on the implementation of R2P.

An R2P operation was authorised in Libya by the United Nations in Resolution 1973 in 2011; neither China nor Russia vetoed the resolution. As it turned out, the NATO forces who were responsible for implementing the resolution carried out air strikes, which are not an appropriate instrument for protecting civilians and, in effect, changed the mission to regime change rather than protection of civilians, bringing the concept into disrepute. The intervention did prevent an attack by Gaddafi on newly liberated Benghazi and may have reduced overall casualties because of the destruction of the regime's air capabilities compared with Syria, for example. But although the airstrikes minimised civilian casualties, they also provided support to opposition armed groups trying to topple the regime, who were then to be embroiled in many years of violence, and this did result in many civilian casualties (Chinkin and Kaldor 2017).

The idea that human security is linked to R2P and is primarily about the right to life is also reflected in the Human Security Reports and Briefs produced at Simon Fraser University in Canada, which reports on trends in armed conflict. The Human Security Report Project (2005) defines human security as 'the combination of threats associated with war, genocide, and the displacement of populations. At a minimum, human security means freedom from violence and from the fear of violence'.

This strand of thinking is also reflected in what are sometimes known as the human security treaties—a series of treaties on banning land mines, cluster munitions and, above all, the International Criminal Court, which were promoted by Canada and like-minded countries, with considerable participation from civil society in the early 2000s.

These two strands of thinking produced a debate about the narrow versus the broad version of human security. Those who favoured the broad version argued that the narrow version was too focused on military intervention, while those who favoured the narrow

version argued that the broad version was indistinguishable from development and covered too much to be analytically useful; moreover, it was argued that the broad version risked securitising development. The debate about the broad versus narrow version was to some extent reconciled by the report of the Commission of Human Security, 'Human Security Now', chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen. The report developed what has become known as the threshold approach to human security. The definition of human security contained in the report was 'to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms— freedoms that are the essence of life'. This notion of the 'vital core of all human lives' implied that human security comprises both human rights and human development but is concerned with what Amartya Sen called the 'downside risks'.

Worth noting is the emphasis put by Sadako Ogata in the Japanese version of human security on empowerment. Ogata emphasised the bottom-up character of human security and the idea that human security is both about protection and empowerment.

A third strand of thinking also formulated in the period 2003–04 is that of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities (later renamed the Human Security Study Group). The version of human security put forward by the study group had its roots in the experience of the Helsinki process in Europe but could not be construed as the 'narrow version' of human security, as manifested in the R2P, nor the approach of the UNDP. Rather, it added a new component to the definition of human security. As well as the usual elements of human security—focus on the individual as opposed to the state and on the link between 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'—it put particular emphasis on the link between human security and law, the blurring of the difference between internal and external security, and what it would mean to implement human security.

Human security, according to the Human Security Study Group, is about the kind of security that individuals expect in rights-based, law-governed societies. In a rights-based, law-governed national society, it is assumed that the state will protect individuals from existential threats and that emergency services—among others, ambulances, firefighters, police—are part of state provision. In the approach of the Study Group, human security is about extending individual rights, political and civil, as well as economic and social, beyond domestic borders and about developing a capacity at a regional or global level to provide those kinds of emergency services to be deployed in situations where states either lack capacity or are themselves the violators of rights. What this means is that national security cannot be assured unilaterally, that security in any part of the world depends on a global or human security system. Thus, instead of military forces designed to fight wars against other states, security capabilities would be designed to contribute to global emergency services. A capacity for global intervention in emergencies is not the same as military intervention, though there may be a role for military force but only used for the direct protection of civilians. Classic military interventions are often justified in humanitarian terms, as was the case in both Iraq and Afghanistan, but unless the military is directly used to protect people from violent attacks, they cannot count as human security, as will be developed in the last section.

Unlike earlier enunciations of human security, the Barcelona Report (and its follow-up, the 2007 Madrid Report) focused on the practical implementation of human security and on recommending the kind of capabilities required to operationalise this understanding of human security. It was proposed to establish human security forces composed of both military and civilian officers under civilian control and with substantial participation of women. This coming together of military and civilians for human

security is only possible if they both conform to certain principles, which guide the way they are used and operate.

Human security, in its various guises, has been taken up by regional organisations, especially the European Union and the African Union. The thinking of the Study Group on Human Security did have an influence on the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and on the role of ESDP missions—for example, the anti-piracy mission in the Gulf. The term is now routinely used in European Union documents such as the 2016 Global Strategy and the 2021 Strategic Compass. The study group approach was echoed in the State of the Union address by Ursula von der Leyen in 2021:

The European Union is a unique security provider. There will be missions where NATO or the UN will not be present, but where the EU should be. On the ground, our soldiers work side-by-side with police officers, lawyers and doctors, with humanitarian workers and human rights defenders, with teachers and engineers. We can combine military and civilian, along with diplomacy and development—and we have a long history in building and protecting peace.

(von der Leyen 2021)

Human security also played a central role in the establishment of the African Union in 2002, which replaced the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Human Security was promoted by the Kampala movement, an initiative of civil society groups that met in Kampala in the early 1990s, and by newly emerging African elites, including Nelson Mandela and Salim Ahmed Salim, the Tanzanian Secretary-General of the OAU, who were interested in promoting pan-Africanism. A key role was played by the newly established Peace and Security Council and by the African Citizens Directorate (Tieku 2014). Various initiatives have been undertaken, including a proposal for a Human Security Index based on UNDP's seven types of security and a recent initiative entitled 'Silencing the Guns'. The African Union is responsible for peacekeeping missions in Somalia, Sudan, Chad, and the Sahel. Nevertheless, Africans experience deep human insecurity, and the idealism of the early years of the African Union has been constrained both by a combination of recent developments, including the war on terror, the return of authoritarianism and geopolitics and the continued emphasis of African states on state security.

In Latin America, the emphasis of the Organization of American States (OAS) is on human rights rather than human security per se, with a significant role played by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court on Human Rights. In Asia, the term has largely been taken up by individual countries. The important role of Japan has already been mentioned. There has also been considerable interest in China, where the concept is understood rather differently as applying to the collective term 'humanity' or 'humankind' rather than to the individual human, and the focus is on socio-economic development (Breslin, 2015). The term was also promoted by Swin Pittsuan, the former Foreign Minister of Thailand and former Secretary-General of ASEAN (Mine and Mute 2022).

Critiques of Human Security

According to David Chandler (2011), the heyday of human security was during the decade of the 1990s. In the early 2000s, the human security discourse was integrated into international institutional apparatuses, and 'the radicals appeared to be on the

other side, critiquing human security as the ideological tool of biopolitical, neoliberal global governance' (Chandler 2011). This was also the period of the war on terror and the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the Russian intervention in Georgia. These were classic military interventions despite the use of humanitarian language. The combination of radical critiques and the renewed use of military force, it can be argued, narrowed the emancipatory space for human security. The use of humanitarian language to frame geopolitical interventions can be said to have played into the radical critiques.

The radical critiques of human security were drawn from feminist and postcolonial scholarship and covered roughly three lines of argument. The first set of arguments had to do with what it is to be human. Feminist scholars point out, not necessarily critically, that humans cannot be conceived as autonomous individuals. They are social beings intimately connected through networks of social relationships (Robinson, 2011). Human security, it is argued, often fails to recognise the culturally contested and embedded nature of individual identities. Calling something a humanitarian emergency is said to strip 'people of their history, culture and identity' (Alt 2011).

A second set of arguments has to do with the meaning of securitisation. The idea of 'securitisation' developed by what is known as the Copenhagen School (Buzan, Waever, de Wilde, 1997) is that by calling something a security issue, it does something. What it does, however, depends on how the term security is understood. One meaning of security is safety. This is the sense in which it was used by those who formulated the original version of human security. For them, calling something a security issue meant that it was important. And so, by calling development a security issue, they wanted to draw attention to its importance. Understood in this way, the significance of securitisation is rather trivial, and the charge that the broad vision of security securitises development is unserious; indeed, it may have positive consequences, as the originators of human security believed.

However, security is also often understood as referring to security services (the police, the military, intelligence services, etc.). Used in this sense, securitisation is about the way in which security services expand their remit to cover fields formerly addressed by social services or development agencies. This sense of securitisation is evidently very relevant and especially worrying in understanding the effect of extensive counterterror measures.

But it is yet another meaning of security that preoccupies the critics of human security. This is the understanding of security as having to do with a supreme emergency, which is intrinsically linked to sovereign power. In this sense, securitisation is defined as the 'speech act of labelling an issue a "security issue" [which] removes it from the realm of normal day-to-day politics casting it as an "existential threat" and justifying extreme measures' (Robinson 2011). Sovereignty, from a Schmittian perspective, is all about the ability to decide what is an 'existential threat'. Carl Schmitt (1985) is famous for the dictum: 'Sovereign is he who decides on the exception'. What he means by this is that the ability to act is revealed at moments of crisis or emergency when normal laws can be suspended. Thus, the U.S. Patriot Act of October 26, 2001, and the subsequent 'Military Order' issued by President Bush on November 13, 2001, gave the President far-reaching powers to suspend the rule of law and, in particular, permitted the indefinite detention and trial of non-citizens suspected of involvement in terrorism. Effectively, it established a 'state of exception'; indeed, Agamben argues that a state of exception has become normality for contemporary states. A more recent example is the harsh penalties imposed by the Russian government for protesting against the Ukraine War.

Critics of human security suggest that if sovereignty is constructed through the exception, then human security represents a way of establishing global sovereign power. The ICISS argued that R2P applies in ‘cases of violence which so genuinely ‘shock the conscience of mankind’ or which present such a clear and present danger to international security, that they require coercive intervention’ (Doucet and De Larrinaga 2011). According to Doucet and Larrinaga,

In this the concept of human security plays a central role in identifying and defining those extreme and exceptional circumstances that not only set the conditions for the suspension of the law but also for its refounding in the language of new international norms on intervention.

A very similar argument is put forward by Anne Orford (2011) in relation to R2P; she suggests that R2P is the way in which the United Nations acquires executive power.

Even if it were the case that international institutions had the capacity to act decisively in emergencies and were not constrained both by their member states and by lack of resources, this reading of sovereignty is at variance with the idea of conditional sovereignty that underpins a human security approach. What conditional sovereignty means is that the sovereignty of states (and international institutions) depends on respect for the framework of international rules including human rights. Sovereignty, on this reading, is constructed through a social contract negotiated at national levels but supplemented by negotiations in the international arena on which the international rules are based. Any human security intervention has to operate within the framework of rules, just as would be the case for emergency services in domestic settings. This is what makes a human security intervention different from a military intervention. The rules of war do represent a suspension of ‘normal’ laws. This cannot be the case for human security. Nevertheless, this argument offers an important insight that human security is potentially associated with the executive power of the United Nations, although this is currently constrained by the Security Council veto.

The third set of arguments has to do with the Foucauldian idea that human security and the multilateral operations responsible for implementing human security, which Mark Duffield (2001) calls ‘strategic complexes’, constitutes a form of biopower. Biopower refers to the form of power that focuses on the population rather than territory. It has to do with technologies of health and welfare rather than with coercive technologies; it is about the ‘power to make live’ rather than the ‘right to kill’. Duffield, who pioneered this approach, suggested that biopower can be regarded as a social mechanism used to maintain stability in what he describes as the uninsured part of the world—a way to maintain the quarantine of rich countries and salve their consciences. The strategic complexes of human security constitute a new paraphernalia of international intervention—a technology of power that preserves the submission of conflict-ridden parts of the world to an unequal world order.

But actually, to describe human security as a global extension of biopower is not necessarily a critique. Of course, human security is about power. Power is intrinsically linked to notions of security, as I argue in this chapter. The question concerns which notions of security and what sort of practices and ideas are entailed. In other words, to suggest that human security is a form of biopower is a research strategy rather than a normative standpoint. Undoubtedly, ideas of human security have coincided with the dominance of neoliberal ideas, and it can be argued that human security offers the sort of minimum

safety net that neo-liberalism requires. The question is whether such approaches actually constitute obstacles to structural change or whether by offering an alternative set of norms, they contribute to further pressure for change; whether people are being helped whatever the consequences, whether such help sustains existing inequalities of wealth and power, or whether it represents a challenge to such structural inequalities.

The problem with the critiques of human security is that they offer a bleak future. They offer no alternative for protecting and empowering people in faraway places. The implication of the critiques is that all forms of state-based international intervention are harmful. Yet in our globalised world, the local is imbued with the global—surely the refusal of all types of intervention amounts to the application of *laissez-faire* in the political arena alongside dominant *laissez-faire* economics? Indeed, the absence of multilateral intervention in Syria and the consequences of American withdrawal from Afghanistan draws our attention to the need for an alternative and more effective human security approach.

The value of some of the critiques is that they do offer some pointers to how this might be accomplished. First, human security has to understand the human as gendered, contextual and social. It has to be a strategy that emanates from the context rather than imposed from above. Secondly, human security does have to be about the extension of rights-based international law, but that process is also contextual. Law can be used as an instrument of resistance by local groups trying to reduce violence and enhance the safety of their communities, and it is only through such pressure that international tendencies to override law can be constrained. And thirdly, we need a micro empirical picture of the variety of international intervention in practice, what Duffield calls the strategic complexes of global governance, to identify nodal points of resistance to violence and other existential threats.

Human Security in Military Operations

A new development in the trajectory of human security is the growing interest among militaries in the concept. NATO's new Strategic Concept, the outcome of the June 2022 Summit in Madrid, 'emphasises' the need to 'integrate' human security, along with climate change and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda 'across all our core tasks' (NATO 2022). And several NATO members—notably the United Kingdom—are 'mainstreaming' human security throughout the armed forces. The new left government in Colombia has also adopted human security, especially in relation to the military and police. What is common among all these initiatives is the idea that what is required is a sea change in security culture.

For both NATO and the United Kingdom, human security is understood as an umbrella concept that encompasses Building Integrity (Anti-corruption), Protection of Civilians, Cultural Property Protection, Children and Armed Conflict, Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Human Trafficking, and WPS. A Human Security Unit was established inside NATO by the Secretary-General in 2019. A similar initiative was taken by the then Minister of Defence, Gavin Williamson, in the U.K. Ministry of Defence. Subsequently, these plans have speeded up with a new directive being developed in SHAPE and a 2021 Ministry of Defence Joint Service Publication in the United Kingdom. There is an emphasis on integrating human security in training and in technological development, and, in the U.K. case, the introduction of human security advisers in all operational units.

This new emphasis on human security among Western militaries is the consequence of several overlapping factors. The first factor has been the actual experience of out-of-area operations, particularly, but not only, Afghanistan. According to one British officer,

A lot of this was circulating in government for a while in our stabilisation policies. The need to think about inclusive politics, justice and accountability. [It] is a progression on thinking that has been there for a while. It can be traced back to the Responsibility to Protect/Libya. The UK arrived in this via the Woman, Peace and Security perspective and linking this to other issues. Also important was the experience in Basra in 2008–09 where the commanding officer, General Andy Salmon, adopted an explicitly human security agenda.

A human security approach was also adopted in Helmand: ‘Helmand was an innovation but the way we were attacked closed down space and the approach fell apart. It was a tripartite approach with MoD, FCO and DFID but because of attacks MoD became preminent’. Other examples include the conflict in Mali, the Royal Navy in the Caribbean for humanitarian relief and in the Mediterranean for migrants, while the experiences of Kosovo and Iraq were important in drawing attention to the issue of cultural heritage. The NATO role in Afghanistan has been particularly salient:

There is real appetite for understanding the human environment better—a different way of analysing the human environment that is conflict sensitive. It took a long time to understand the local dynamics in Afghanistan, the multiple reasons for fighting ... the human environment. ... We tend to think about the adversary as a group. But sometimes it is about the structural factors that produce conflict. ... Framing through the adversary is not always the most useful analytical lens. There needs to be a Human Security approach in understanding and engaging.

(Author’s interview with British officer)

Particularly important was the growing emphasis on protection of civilians—something that gained traction because air strikes and night raids were undermining the legitimacy of the international presence in Afghanistan. A comprehensive Protection of Civilians policy was adopted in July 2016. ‘Not only was NATO receiving significant international backlash over highly publicised incidents of civilian harm, but commanders began to identify civilian harm as fuelling the growing insurgency’ (Holt, 2021).

A second factor was the evolution of the European Security and Defence Policy along human security lines. Both NATO and the European Union have distinct security cultures, but it was always assumed that NATO would influence ESDP rather than the other way round (Mazurkiewicz 2018). It can be argued that the European pillar of NATO has been enhanced partly as a consequence of the Trump years, when the United States was less present, but more importantly under the impetus of the war in Ukraine and the impending membership of Sweden and Finland.

A third factor is the growing influence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and a much greater readiness for working together with civilians, including other government agencies, international organisations and industry and academia. NATO cooperates with a range of NGOs, including the International Red Cross; the Stimson Centre, which has played a pioneering role in protection of civilians; Civilians in Conflict, the NGO that collects data on civilian casualties; PAX for Peace in the Netherlands, which

has long spearheaded demands for human security; and the Center for Cultural Heritage and Armed Conflict.

And the final, and perhaps counterintuitive, factor is the war in Ukraine. One might have expected that the war in Ukraine would encourage a return to a more traditional emphasis on war-fighting. But according to a senior NATO official, 'Ukraine has been a wake-up call. Traditional NATO planning was based on the assumption of a World War II type conflict with millions of civilian casualties. That is completely unacceptable nowadays'. This may explain both the emphasis on conventional and defensive forms of deterrence in the new Strategic Concept. It is not just concern about minimising loss of life and preventing escalation; a very important issue is legitimacy. As a U.K. Ministry of Defence official put it, 'Russia is focused on delivering human insecurity—brutality towards civilians, destruction of cultural heritage, sexual violence, looting'. Conforming with International Humanitarian Law (IHL) is hugely important for legitimacy, something that the United Kingdom stresses in contingency training for Ukrainian soldiers.

What is not clear as yet is whether this new application of human security actually does involve a paradigm shift in how military operations are conducted. In particular, it is not clear whether the new emphasis on human security merely means taking IHL and the various components of the umbrella terms very seriously when conducting military operations—something that is, of course, a positive development—or whether it portends more far-reaching change in how the military operates. One NATO official expressed frustration about the difficulty of changing mindsets. It has 'not yet materialized in a heartfelt manner'; it has not yet reached a 'tipping point'.

So, what might human security in future military operations mean? Evidently, implementing human security requires a range of non-military capabilities—humanitarian responders, health workers, engineers, firefighters, police, and so on. The military contribution to human security is focused on meeting large-scale physical threats to individuals and their communities; these might include military invasions, genocide or massive violations of human rights. There are two main roles in which the military may be required in order to implement human security. One is defence of people against the crime of aggression, as in Ukraine, and the other is the contribution to international peacekeeping and crisis management.

Defence against aggression is different from engaging in military competition along geopolitical lines. Rather than matching capabilities of potential aggressors, the idea is to be able to demonstrate effective defence, to show that aggression cannot succeed without at the same time being perceived as a potential threat to other states. During the 1980s, there was much concern about the offensive posture of NATO and the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. At that time, proposals were put forward for what was known as defensive deterrence (Boserup, Neild and Carlton 1990), i.e., deterring foreign attacks through a credible conventional defensive posture rather than through the threat of nuclear or conventional retaliation. It was the idea behind Gorbachev's notion of 'reasonable sufficiency'. Proposals for area defence or in-depth defence were put forward that would have meant drawing down nuclear weapons as well as conventional offensive capabilities, such as bombers or massed tanks (though evidently some are needed for defensive purposes). It is worth asking whether Putin would have invaded Ukraine had he realised that Ukraine would put up such an effective conventional defence.

In terms of crisis management and peacekeeping—that is to say, intervention in intractable conflicts—the aim is to end such wars by dampening down conflict and reducing the incentives for violence rather than through victory or a single top-down peace

agreement. Central to this goal is the establishment of legitimate and inclusive political authority and a rule of law. Human security interventions are always civilian led and involve a combination of civilian and military actors. The tasks of the (external) military in these circumstances could include protecting civilians from attack and creating a safe environment in which a legitimate political authority can be established; monitoring and upholding local peace agreements and ceasefires as part of multilevel peacebuilding involving civil society, especially women; establishing humanitarian space through corridors and safe havens that allow for the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and arresting war criminals. A similar approach was adopted by the British in Northern Ireland or the European Union-led anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden, which combined the arrest of pirates with non-military measures such as the introduction of fishing licences on the coast of Somalia.

This is very different from counterinsurgency and counterterrorism where the goal is victory over an enemy. In Afghanistan, for example, the goal was the destruction of the Taliban, al Qaeda and later ISIS Khorasan, rather than the security of Afghans. This meant continuing attacks that legitimised the insurgency as well as allying with corrupt commanders who undermined the legitimacy of the Afghan government. It also marginalised the civilian leadership of the international intervention, notably the United Nations Special Representative (Kaldor 2021).

How such operations are conducted is as important as why. The practice of the military in protecting civilians must conform to human security principles. Human security is about human rights rather than war. It is about saving all lives, including the lives of enemies. It is about law-based security rather than war-based security; in other words, it is more like policing than war-fighting. One way to think about it is an inversion of the law of armed conflict. Under IHL, the killing of civilians is sometimes permitted if it is necessary to achieve a military objective, and the harm is proportionate to what would be achieved by victory. For human security, it is the other way round. The killing of enemies is permitted if it is necessary to protect civilians or save lives.

These kinds of considerations have also influenced thinking in Colombia. The new government of President Gustavo Petro, a former guerrilla, and Vice-President Francia Marquez, a woman environmental activist, is committed to what they call Total Peace, implementing and filling gaps in the peace agreement of 2016, which left out several armed groups. In Latin America, the concept of citizen security has been historically more important than human security, and, in the case of Colombia, this concept has been successfully applied in big cities like Bogota and Medellin. The application of human security, emphasised by President Petro, goes beyond citizen security and is aimed at dealing with organised violent groups (ORGs) mainly operating in rural areas. While human security is understood as a wholistic concept that addresses economic, social and environmental issues and involves local citizens in its implementation, it also recognises the role of the military and the police in assisting local citizens in establishing safe spaces where they can act effectively and weaken the role of ORGs. It is understood that this requires a change in the culture of the military and police. The President has announced a series of measures aimed at changing the behaviour of and reducing corruption within the military and police. This includes insisting on respect for IHL and human rights as a condition for appointments and promotion, the use of indicators to evaluate the performance of the police and military chiefs linked to the protection of citizens and aimed at deterring potential inaction, collusion or misconduct. He has also established a new Ministry of Peace, Security and Coexistence to oversee the Colombian Police and other

civilian institutions. He has eliminated the practice of lower-ranking police and soldiers having to pay fees to rise in rank. And after seven young police were killed in a conflict-affected area, President Petro asked for the removal of all young, less experienced personnel from high-risk areas and emphasised the need to strengthen the relationships between police and local communities as an essential form of security (Guardo forthcoming).

Implications for Global Governance

The modern nation state started out as a war machine. In the 17th and 18th centuries, most state spending consisted of military spending (Krause 2013). Central to the self-conception of states was the idea of geopolitics, the assumption that power depends on the control of territory, which is achieved through military power. The critical geography scholar Simon Dalby (1996) talks about geopolitics as the use of ‘geographical reasoning in the service of state power, a power that is often about war and violence’.

Central to geopolitics is what international relations (IR) scholars call the ‘great divide’ between the inside and the outside (Clarke 1999). The world of the outside is the world of war and diplomacy, where states are treated as individuals and, according to the geopolitical narrative, act according to their interests. Outside, as Bismarck famously declared, is the world of ‘blood and iron’ (Bismarck 1862). Inside is the world of law and politics, where security is based on law and policing rather than military force.

Of course, the world never truly resembled this model. From the Treaty of Westphalia 1648 (or some say even earlier in the Peace of Augsburg 1555) that is said to be the founding moment of the European states system, the existence of states depended on mutual recognition and some shared agreement about rules; state sovereignty was always to some extent conditional—conditional on that shared agreement. According to Chayes and Chayes (1995),

Sovereignty no longer consists in the freedom of states to act independently in their perceived self-interest, but in membership in reasonably good standing in the regimes that make up the substance of international life. ... Sovereignty in the end is status—the vindication of a state’s existence as a member of the international system.

Actually, this was always true, but over time, the regimes within which states were situated became increasingly dense networks of rules, organisations and institutions.

Whether we are talking about the global peace and security architecture, including the United Nations, the International Criminal Court and regional organisations like the European Union or the African Union; or whether we are talking about the emergence of economic and financial institutions, like World Bank, the IMF or WTO; or the array of technical institutions, such as the World Meteorological Organisation, the Food and Agriculture Organisation or the World Health Organisation, all of these have come to be described as global governance. But these international institutions are composed of member states. While they have acquired their own momentum as a consequence of organisational growth and are often under pressure from transnational civil society organisations, they are nevertheless constrained by the behaviour of states. Their effectiveness in contributing to the global public good is repeatedly weakened by the continuing tension between, on the one hand, the imperatives of geopolitics and, on the other hand, the need for institutions that uphold a human-rights-based international system.

The latter is sometimes described as a rule-based or law-based system, but geopolitical actors often frame their actions in legal language and as rule followers, but they favour an interpretation of international rules that legitimate war and coercion.

Geopolitics is epitomised in the commitment to national security and the unilateral capacity to use force. The capacity to fight wars of aggression is central to the imaginary of geopolitics. This is why a shift from national to human security on the part of states or alliances like NATO would entail a fundamental shift in the nature of states with profound implications for global governance. The central lesson of the war in Ukraine, a lesson that should have been learned in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, or Afghanistan, is that wars of aggression no longer work. They can be immensely destructive and destabilising (and that may be Putin's aim in Ukraine), but they rarely achieve a long-term and decisive capture of territory as in the past. On the contrary, they contribute to instability, fragmentation and chaos.

In Europe, as a consequence of the way individual states were integrated into military alliances, almost no individual state possesses the capacity for unilateral wars of aggression; possible exceptions are the United Kingdom and France. Even though NATO has been, up to now, a geopolitical alliance, many of these states see themselves as multilateralist states committed to a human-rights-based international system. Within the European Union, a common external security policy has been developed that is primarily designed to contribute to international missions, even though there are voices calling for a European army along classic geopolitical lines. The European Union has had an uneasy relationship with NATO since most but not all European Union members are also members of NATO, and arrangements are in place for a sharing of capabilities. A shift within NATO towards human security would facilitate that relationship. It would mean greater European influence over NATO and would involve a shift from geopolitics to the type of arrangement envisaged by the Helsinki Agreement of 1975.

Much depends on how this change of posture would affect the United States and especially intrinsic geopolitical instruments of power such as nuclear weapons. The Trump years and the risk-averse behaviour of the Biden administration suggest that change is underway even in the United States. Support for Ukraine has been tempered by fears of escalation, and discussions around possible reactions to the use of nuclear weapons by Russia suggest that any response will be conventional or political (Schlosser 2022). There has also been talk about applying human security to the U.S. military.

A meaningful shift from national to human security necessarily implies a shift from the dominant geopolitical narrative to the narrative of a human rights-based world order. In practical terms, a change in military posture from war-fighting to non-offensive defence and protection of civilians at state or alliance level as a contribution to a global military-civilian human security service would dramatically reduce the capacity to fight wars and increase the capacity for emergency responses to the challenges of our time—natural disasters, pandemics, famines, and political violence. And the substantive provision of human security would greatly increase the legitimacy of international institutions. Whether this is feasible depends on how far the geopolitical narrative is entrenched in the deep state or whether democratic accountability offers a space for change.

We live in a world that is starkly at variance with human security, in the way that I have expressed, in which authoritarianism in states like Russia, China, India, or Israel is intrinsically linked to aggression and military interference. And a plausible scenario for the future is the further spread of fragmentation and chaos as a consequence of the failure of military interventions. But a shift in some parts of the World—Europe, Africa or Latin

America—could help to make such warlike acts less likely, thereby weakening the dominance of geopolitics. The war in Ukraine could mark a turning point because it has demonstrated the impossibility of successful aggression. According to Bertrand Russell, ‘Wars will cease when and only when it becomes evident beyond reasonable doubt that in any war the aggressor will be defeated’ (Lopez-Claros, Dahl and Groff 2020). That moment should have been reached at the end of World War II as the failure of post-war invasions testifies and as we are now witnessing in Ukraine. The practical implementation of human security at the level of capabilities is a way of embedding that proposition.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to give practical content to the term ‘human security’ by tracing the history of the concept over nearly three decades. The so-called broad version, originated by UNDP, drew attention to the range and interconnectedness of existential threats to individual humans and communities. The so-called narrow version focused on threats of physical violence and became associated with justifications for military intervention. After 2001 and the so-called war on terror, human security was often discredited by apparent conflation with all forms of military intervention, often as a consequence of radical critiques. I have tried to show that human security interventions are different from military interventions, even though they may sometimes require the use of the military. I have suggested that they are more similar to the kind of responses to emergencies that might be expected in domestic settings. In so far as the military force is used, it operates under different principles and methods from classic war-fighting, with the aim of saving all lives (both combatants and civilians). This version of human security has been associated with the European Union’s external policy and is now beginning to influence NATO as well as individual militaries, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands or Colombia.

Even if such changes were only partial, as is likely given the persistence of authoritarian militaristic states, this could lessen the risk of war as well as levels of violence and could increase readiness to respond to all types of existential threats, including natural disasters, pandemics or famines. Interestingly, President Zelensky’s ten-point peace plan, presented to the G20 summit, began with radiological, energy, environmental, and food security.

Improved national contributions to an effective human security policy by the United Nations and regional organisations, such as the European Union or the African Union, would indeed enhance the executive power of these institutions. While we should share the critics’ concerns with the risks that this might serve to uphold existing global hierarchies, there is also the very real possibility that such institutions could offer a lifeline to ordinary citizens who lack responsible local or national institutions able or willing to respond to dire emergencies and that such institutions could be more accountable to citizens than currently their states are. More to the point, at a time of greater risk to humankind than probably any previous moment, a practical human security policy is desperately needed.

Notes

- 1 For a ‘prehistory’ of human security see MacFarlane and Khong (2006); for more detail on human security, see Kaldor (2007); Beebe and Kaldor (2010).
- 2 United Nations General Assembly (1948): ‘the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people’.

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