Backgrounder

The Muddled Notion of "Human Security" at the U.N.: A Guide for U.S. Policymakers

James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., and Janice A. Smith

Introduction

Most Americans would probably define "human security" as a summation of the founding principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence:

> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The Founding Fathers understood that there will be no life, liberty, or pursuit of one's dreams without security. It is security that enables us to enjoy every other right enumerated and implied in our founding documents and the charters of organizations like the United Nations that we helped create. These documents recognize that the first responsibility of the nation-state is to provide that security. Hence, Article 1 of the U.N. Charter lists as its first purpose "To maintain international peace and security." This is followed by purposes that enumerate "respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples" and "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all."[1]

Regrettably, many non-Americans have come to view "human security" quite differently. Over the years, various groups have stretched the definition of "security" to mean supranational entities intervening ostensibly to protect individuals anywhere and the

Talking Points

- The right and responsibility of the state to secure its own territory and populations from external threats is a long-standing principle underpinning international relations and international law.

- At the United Nations, a new definition of human security is being promoted as superior to national security. The new definition includes guaranteeing individuals everything from a minimum income to food and protection from diseases and disasters to protection from violence and the loss of traditions and values.

- This attempt to broaden the definition of security has the potential to undermine the principles of sovereignty, accountability, and national security that the United States holds as fundamental.

- International deliberations should seek to strengthen states as the best guarantors of security and liberty. The U.S. government must make every effort to resist language in U.N. declarations, resolutions, and agreements that embraces a faulty understanding of security.

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definition of "rights" to include everything from a right to life to a right to development and resources. The well-developed entry on Wikipedia, the popular online "free encyclopedia," demonstrates how far this concept has come.[2]

Today, the United Nations is pursuing a broad "human security" agenda that proponents claim is merely complementing national security. In reality, they aim to shift the focus of U.N. and other international activities away from state relations to protecting groups of people based on a plethora of needs and wants. As U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan puts it:

> We must also broaden our view of what is meant by peace and security. Peace means much more than the absence of war. Human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather, it must encompass economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.[3]

As Anne-Marie Slaughter, Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, explains, the "principal conclusion" of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change is that:

> [I]nternational security comprises both state security and human security. Human security, in turn, is a function above all of the quality and capacity of domestic governments across the globe. International-security problems are irretrievably intertwined with domestic political, economic, and social problems.[4]

The impetus for these statements was the failure of the U.N. Security Council to keep the United States from enforcing the U.N. resolutions on Iraq, which drew great attention to U.N. failures in the Middle East, Rwanda, Sudan, and the Balkans. Proponents of human security no longer believe that nation-states are capable of securing "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" for individual peoples. They advocate an international system that makes paramount the determination of the "general will" and "common good" by bureaucrats and elites.

This is a dramatic and fundamental distortion of the right to be secure. The effort to "broaden our view of what is meant by peace and security" obscures and runs counter to the long-standing right of nation-states to secure their own territories and populations from external threats—a principle upon which international legal traditions and treaty organizations such as the U.N. are based.[5] The human security agenda has the potential to undermine not only the nation-state model on which the U.N. was founded, but also the principles of sovereignty, accountability, and national security that the United States holds as fundamental.

Most Americans are already skeptical about the ability of the U.N. to advance global security and peace.[6] Commonly cited reasons are the U.N.'s inability to secure peace in the Middle East, to keep Iran and North Korea from developing nuclear weapons, and to prevent internal fraud and abuse such as the Oil-for-Food scandal and sexual abuse by U.N. peacekeepers. Their confidence has been deeply shaken by a number of highly critical reports that confirm the U.N.'s record of ineffective-

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1. Charter of the United Nations, Article 1, at *www.un.org/aboutun/charter* (August 29, 2006).

2. Wikipedia, s.v. "human security," at *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_security* (August 29, 2006).

3. Kofi Annan, "Towards a Culture of Peace," at *www.unesco.org/opi2/lettres/TextAnglais/AnnanE.html* (August 23, 2006).

4. Anne-Marie Slaughter, "To Pursue Primacy for Its Own Sake Seems an Odd Way to Reassure Other Nations," *Boston Review*, February/March 2005, at *bostonreview.net/BR30.1/slaughter.html* (August 23, 2006).

5. For more on the issue of international law, see Lee A. Casey and David B. Rivkin, Jr., "International Law and the Nation-State at the U.N.: A Guide for U.S. Policymakers," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1961, August 18, 2006, at *www.heritage.org/Research/WorldwideFreedom/bg_1961.pdf*.

6. Gallup Poll, "Americans' Rating of United Nations Among Worst Ever: Sixty-Four Percent Say It Is Doing a Poor Job," March 13, 2006, at *http://poll.gallup.com/content/?ci=21871* (August 23, 2006).

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ness and a politicized U.N. agenda that promotes failed social and economic policies.

Therefore, it is understandable that Americans question the U.N.'s seemingly constant pursuit of binding documents on themes that purportedly would advance security or development but in actuality would restrain U.S. power and leadership and undermine America's democratic and free-market practices.

The human security agenda is one such effort that may well prove inimical to U.S. interests, and some observers believe that the goal could be a declaration on human security in 2006 and a convention in 2007. One indication of this is that the U.N. has made "human security" the theme of a three-day conference for nongovernmental organizations preceding the opening of the U.N. General Assembly in September 2006. The U.N. Department of Public Information expects over 2,500 civil society "partners" to attend its three-day conference on "Unfinished Business: Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development."[7]

It is incumbent upon Congress, the Administration, and federal courts to be vigilant. They should resist language in international declarations, resolutions, and agreements that embraces this faulty understanding of security. Rather, they should clarify what is meant by any references to security and insist on using the term "national security" wherever sovereignty is at stake. In legislative enactments, agency regulations, and case decisions, they should rely exclusively on human rights instruments that have been officially adopted and ratified by the United States.

Defining Human Security

According to its proponents, human security involves protecting "the dignity and worth of the human person."[8] To the extent that poverty, famine, conflict, pandemics, and lack of access to resources pose an affront to individuals' dignity and worth, they believe these problems must be addressed in *supranational* ways, since nation-states, in their view, are failing to do so.

The definition of human security in the 2003 report of the U.N. Commission on Human Security shows the breadth of this agenda:

> Human security means protecting vital freedoms. It means protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations, building on their strengths and aspirations. It also means creating systems that give people the building blocks of survival, dignity and livelihood. To do this, it offers two general strategies: protection and empowerment. Protection shields people from dangers. Empowerment enables people to develop their potential and become full participants in decision-making.[9]

The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) uses an expanded definition:

> [Human security means] the protection of "the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and fulfillment."… It means *creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems* that, when combined, give people the building blocks for survival, livelihood and dignity.
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> Human security is far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance and access to economic opportunity, education and health care. It is a concept that comprehensively addresses both "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want."[10]

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7. U.N. Department of Public Information, "Unfinished Business: Effective Partnerships for Human Security and Sustainable Development," at *www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/index.asp* (August 28, 2006).

8. Charter of the United Nations, Preamble.

9. U.N. Commission on Human Security, "Outline of the Report of the Commission on Human Security," at *www.human security-chs.org/finalreport/Outlines/outline.pdf* (August 29, 2006).

10. U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Human Security," at *http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?MenuID= 10473&Page=1494* (August 23, 2006) (emphasis added).

Under this expansive definition, human security covers needs that are traditionally the responsibility of families, civil society, and local, state, and national governments. Specifically, as one 1994 U.N. document explains, the definition of human security includes:

- Economic security, such as ensuring individuals a minimum income;

- Food security, such as guaranteeing access to food;

- Health security, such as guaranteeing protection from disease and unhealthy lifestyles;

- Environmental security, such as protecting people from short-term and long-term natural and man-made disasters;

- Personal security, such as protecting people from any form and perpetation of violence;

- Community security, such as protecting people from the loss of traditions and values and from secular and ethnic violence; and

- Political security, such as ensuring individuals' basic human rights.[11]

The purpose of such a broad-brush agenda is not the protection of human rights, but rather the promotion of social entitlements through an internationally protected welfare system.[12] The Commission on Human Security even acknowledged the immensity of the task: "To attain the goals of human security, the Commission proposes a framework based on the protection and empowerment of people"—a bottom-up approach that empowers individuals and communities to "act on their own behalf" in addition to the traditional top-down approach by which states have the primary role of protection from "critical and pervasive threats."[13]

Examples of this broad agenda abound on U.N. Web sites. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) describes its human security focus this way:

This rebuilding of security, which is now human rather than inter-State, imposes new directions for reflection and action. It presupposes first of all a *sociological* conception of security, which must be perceived in its social and cultural environment. It also implies an act of *political engineering*, the peacemaker being vested with the role of rebuilder of battered political communities but also with that of designing new political communities dispensing with those features of the nation-State which make for war: working for peace means promoting regional integration, opening up political communities to globalization and human flows, and establishing new forms of democratic deliberation that go beyond the national setting. It must be *responsible* before being sovereign, with everybody accountable for the failings in the social contract of the other and thus being led to act in a subsidiary way with the other. Lastly, it is bound to be *interactive* since States operate in interaction with an international public space made up of non-State actors increasingly involved in international life, monitoring and watching over the use of power by States, and helping to define the conditions of war and of peace (nongovernmental organizations, media, transnational networks, etc.).[14]

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) describes human security as "an effort to re-conceptualize security in a fundamental manner. It is primarily an analytical tool that focuses on ensuring security for the individual, not the

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11. U.N. Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 24, at *http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/pdf/hdr_1994_ch2.pdf* (August 23, 2006).

12. For a more detailed discussion of the issue of rights versus entitlements, see Helle C. Dale, "Economic and Political Rights at the U.N.: A Guide for U.S. Policymakers," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1964, August 30, 2006.

13. U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Human Security" (emphasis omitted).

14. "Objectifs," in U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Human Security," updated March 13, 2002, at *www.unesco.org/securipax* (August 23, 2006) (emphasis in original).

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state."[15] UNDP also acknowledges on its Web site that it is the largest recipient agency of funds from the U.N. Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS):

> Between 1999 and June 2005, UNDP received approximately $55 million for 28 projects which consisted of 36% of the overall allocation of UNTFHS….

> UNTFHS has been enabling UNDP to conceptualize and operationalize the notion of Human Security initially suggested in the Human Development Report 1994. UNDP's operation and partnership building with the people-centred approaches and principles is considered as an integral part of Sustainable Human Development.…

> Activities supported by UNTFHS overlaps [sic] UNDP's five focus areas; Democratic Governance, Poverty Reduction, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Energy and Environment, HIV/AIDS, and has been helping efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.…

> UNTFHS has strengthened UNDP's coordination and partnerships with other UN agencies, and civil society and other partners, which promotes effective use of UN and international aid resources.[16]

In a May 2006 report, UNDP analyzed its various National Human Development Reports and "the notion of human security as a useful tool of analysis, explanation and *policy generation*." It recommended using human security as an "opera-tional approach to people-centred security that is able to identify priorities and produce important conclusions for national and international policy."[17]

The U.N. Environmental Program (UNEP) refers to UNDP's work in explaining its own human security agenda:

> In 1994, the UN Human Development Report introduced the concept of human security, predicating it on the dual notion of, on the one hand, safety from chronic threats of hunger, disease and repression and, on the other hand, protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in daily life. Environmental insecurity became shorthand for the dimension of human insecurity induced by the combined effects of natural disasters and mismanaged environmental endowment.[18]

Thus, myriad U.N. agencies increasingly find the human security theme beneficial to their aims.

The Nation-State Buy-In. Regrettably, many U.N. member states have also adopted the human security mindset and are incorporating its language and goals into their foreign policy.[19]

Japan. Japan was the initial contributor to the U.N. Human Security Trust Fund and has stated:

> [T]he concept of "human security"…means in addition to providing national protection, focusing on each and every person, eliminating threats to people through cooperation by various countries, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, and striving to strengthen

15. Richard Jolly and Deepayan Basu Ray, "The Human Security Framework and National Human Development Reports," U.N. Development Programme, *National Human Development Report Occasional Paper* No. 5, May 2006, p. 5, at *http://hdr.undp.org/docs/nhdr/thematic_reviews/Human_Security_Guidance_Note.pdf* (August 23, 2006).

16. U.N. Development Programme, "UNDP and Human Security," at *www.undp.org/partnerships/untfhs/humansec.html* (August 23, 2006).

17. Jolly and Ray, "The Human Security Framework and National Human Development Reports," pp. 1 and 2 (emphasis added).

18. U.N. Environment Programme, *Africa Environment Outlook: Past, Present and Future Perspective*, Chapter 3, December 2002, at *www.unep.org/dewa/Africa/publications/aeo-1/235.htm* (August 23, 2006).

19. Currently, several countries use "human security" as a foundation for their foreign policy. These countries include Austria, Chile, Greece, Iceland, Jordan, Mali, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Slovenia, Thailand, Costa Rica, Japan, and South Africa. Japan heavily funds the Human Security Trust Fund.

the capacity of people and society so as to enable people to lead self-sufficient lives.[20]

European Union (EU). "A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: The Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities" explains the breadth of the EU's human security agenda in this way:

> Human security means individual freedom from basic insecurities. Genocide, widespread or systematic torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, disappearances, slavery, and crimes against humanity and grave violations of the laws of war as defined in the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) are forms of intolerable insecurity that breach human security. Massive violations of the right to food, health and housing may also be considered in this category, although their legal status is less elevated. A human security approach for the European Union means that it should contribute to the protection of every individual human being and not only on the defence of the Union's borders, as was the security approach of nation-states.[21]

Canada, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The governments of Canada, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.K. fund a Web site, "The Human Security Gateway," that describes itself as a "rapidly expanding searchable online database of human security-related resources including reports, journal articles, news items and fact sheets. It is designed to make human security-related research more accessible to the policy and research communities, the media, educators and the interested public."[22]

Human Security vs. National Security. The Human Security Gateway Web site succinctly explains the challenge that the human security agenda poses to the principle of national security:

> Human security focuses on the protection of individuals, rather than defending the physical and political integrity of states from external military threats—the traditional goal of national security. Ideally, national security and human security should be mutually reinforcing, but in the last 100 years far more people have died as a direct or indirect consequence of the actions of their own governments or rebel forces in civil wars than have been killed by invading foreign armies. *Acting in the name of national security, governments can pose profound threats to human security.*[23]

Although it is perhaps understandable that some might wish to update conceptions of national security to reflect the realities of a 21st century world, the notion that human security should supplant national security and the preservation of freedom as the fundamental responsibilities of the state is wrongheaded. During the Cold War, national security was considered largely within the context of a bipolar world in which the United States and the Soviet Union, and their spheres of influence, squared off against each other ideologically, diplomatically, economically, politically, and militarily. National security was often measured in terms of nuclear warheads, weapons platforms, military divisions, and defense spending.

The dissolution of the Soviet Union changed the dynamics. States now understand and view security not solely in terms of military threats and territorial invasions, but also in terms of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction; economic dangers (e.g., cyber attacks); and global environmental

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20. Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Diplomatic Bluebook 2004*, p. 185, at *www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2004* (August 23, 2006).

21. Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities, "A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: The Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities," presented to Javier Solana, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Barcelona, September 15, 2004, p. 9, at *www.lse.edu/Depts/global/Publications/HumanSecurityDoctrine.pdf* (August 23, 2006).

22. Human Security Gateway, "About the Human Security Gateway," at *www.humansecuritygateway.info/about_en* (August 23, 2006).

23. *Ibid.* (emphasis added).

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threats (e.g., avian flu). The term "national security" has come under scrutiny because of the growing number of threats that are transnational.[24] The Bush Administration has encouraged a robust dialogue on how states can best address these threats through cooperative actions to ensure their security in a globalized world.

Discarding the principle of national security is not the answer. Neither is creating a binding international agreement on human security. Yet from the initial report of the Commission on Human Security in 2000[25] to the latest draft documents from UNESCO conferences in the developing world and the May 2006 UNDP Human Security Framework report, promoters of human security have set in motion a multi-year plan that may well culminate in a declaration or universal convention on human security.[26]

The process is quite similar to the six-year process at UNESCO that in 2005 culminated in a binding Convention on Cultural Diversity. Despite intense efforts to make that convention acceptable, the United States could not sign it because of its core protectionist policies.[27] The first successful use of this new deliberative U.N. process is described on Wikipedia as the NGO effort to push governments to adopt a convention banning anti-personnel land mines:

> Arms control is also an important priority for Human Security advocates, closely linking with the Freedom from Fear agenda. An oft-

claimed example of this is the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines. The Convention has been described as an illustration of how human security can work in the real world, as a coalition of like-minded powers, along with civil society worked together to eliminate anti-personnel land mines. The process leading up to the formation of the Convention was quite a departure from that of traditional security instruments with massive involvement from non-government groups and civil society—it could almost be seen as NGO's bringing governments to the negotiating table.[28]

David Davenport indicates in an extensive piece on this "new diplomacy," as he calls the Ottawa Process, that NGOs have learned from these successes how to exert enormous pressure on governments to achieve binding international conventions to improve human security. Following success in Ottawa, the process proved successful in Rome in creating an International Criminal Court. Says Davenport:

> NGOS and like-minded states continue to meet to discuss what additional projects they might tackle together. One need only listen to their rhetoric, and that of the U.N. leadership, to speculate about what other projects might be on the new diplomacy horizon. In a larger sense, their agenda is no less than set-

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24. "The end of the Cold War unleashed a debate that had been growing for years, provoked by scholars and practitioners increasingly dissatisfied with traditional conceptions of security." Dan Henk, "Human Security: Relevance and Implications," *Parameters*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Summer 2005), p. 92, at *www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/05summer/contents.htm* (August 23, 2006). See also Steve Smith, "The Increasing Insecurity of Security Studies: Conceptualizing Security in the Last Twenty Years," in Stuart Croft and Terry Terriff, eds., *Critical Reflections on Security and Change* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 72–101, and Emma Rothschild, "What is Security?" *Daedalus*, Vol. 124, Issue 3 (Summer 1995).

25. For example, see Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, 2003, at *www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/English/FinalReport.pdf* (August 23, 2006), and Jeffrey Thomas, "U.S. Deeply Disappointed by Vote on UNESCO Diversity Convention," U.S. Mission to the UN Agencies in Rome, October 21, 2005, at *http://usunrome.usmission.gov/UNISSUES/sustdev/docs/a5102403.htm* (August 23, 2006).

26. This was in fact proposed at the initial meeting of the Commission on Human Security on June 8–10, 2001. See Commission on Human Security, "Report: Meeting of the Commission on Human Security," June 8–10, 2001, p. 3, at *www.humansecurity-chs.org/activities/meetings/first/report.pdf* (August 28, 2006).

27. Janice A. Smith and Helle Dale, "Cultural Diversity and Freedom at Risk at UNESCO," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 885, October 17, 2005, at *www.heritage.org/Research/InternationalOrganizations/wm885.cfm* (August 23, 2006).

28. Wikipedia, "Human Security."

ting the global agenda and, as U.N. documents describe it, constructing a "new global architecture for the twenty-first century." The report of the Commission on Global Governance, with its lovely title ("Our Global Village") and anti-American tone, speaks of organizing life on the planet not by balancing the power among nations, but by constraining the states themselves. This is the agenda of the new diplomacy.[29]

In essence, these efforts to achieve binding documents are aimed at recasting the traditional meaning of human rights and development as national security challenges that are better addressed by "people-centric" rather than state-based activities. Getting multilateral organizations to use individuals, instead of states, as the reference points for evaluating security policy is extremely problematic because it diffuses accountability and fiduciary responsibility.

The United States government, which prioritizes national security and homeland security, has wisely not yet tried to formulate a specific human security policy, but that does not mean the mindset is not already being advocated. Indeed, Members of Congress such as Senator Barbara Boxer (D–CA)[30] and scholars such as Professor Slaughter[31] have adopted the language of human security and have published pieces on how to deal with the myriad issues that it subsumes.

For example, Professor Slaughter, in the introduction to a 2004 Trilateral Commission report, explains that theory about the legitimate use of force is undergoing transformation. She believes the basic tension is now "state security vs. human security" or how to:

integrate traditional understandings of state security—whereby the principal threat to a state's survival was posed by another state and the security of a state was largely synonymous with the security of its people—with an appreciation of the magnitude and importance of what Kazuo Ogura [the Japan Foundation] calls "global security issues"—terrorism, environmental degradation, international crime, infectious diseases and refugees? These issues cross borders with disdain for the divisions of national and international authority.[32]

This misunderstanding of the nature of security poses significant threats to the international order because it undermines the primacy of nation-state relations and sovereignty. Providing for the security and public safety of citizens is a principal attribute of national sovereignty. Indeed, nation-states that are democracies are best prepared to fill this role because their leaders are held accountable by the governed. As the U.N.'s problems in responding to crises around the world show, the nation-state, not any international organization, is the best guarantor of individual freedoms for the 21st century. Shifting the focus of security policy from the collective will of free people to provide for their common defense to one of protecting a range of individual and collective political, economic, and cultural "rights" as defined by international bodies or non-state actors like NGOs confuses the nature of the modern state's roles and responsibilities.

Regrettably, the United States is unintentionally helping to promote this misunderstanding of secu-

29. David Davenport, "The New Diplomacy," *Policy Review*, No. 116 (December 2002/January 2003), at *www.policyreview.org/DEC02/davenport.html* (August 29, 2006).

30. Barbara Boxer, "Providing Basic Human Security," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Spring 2003), pp. 199–207, at *www.twq.com/03spring/docs/13-boxer-noc.pdf* (August 23, 2006). She quotes Peter Piot, executive director of the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS): "There is a world of difference between the root causes of terrorism and the impact of AIDS on security. But at some deep level, we should be reminded that, in many parts of the world, AIDS has caused a normal way of life to be called into question. As a global issue, therefore, we must pay attention to AIDS as a threat to human security and redouble our efforts against the epidemic and its impact." *Ibid.*, p. 203.

31. Anne-Marie Slaughter, Carl Bildt, and Kazuo Ogura, "The New Challenges to International, National and Human Security Policy," Trilateral Commission Task Force Report No. 58, 2004.

32. *Ibid.*

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rity by funding the U.N. organizations that are engaged in promoting human security activities.

Philosophical Underpinnings: Repackaged Wilsonianism

The concept of human security is closely connected to the neoliberal conception of foreign policy that evolved over the first half of the 20th century. Neoliberalism contends that state actions represent the collective will of groups within society. Foreign policy and national security strategy are the products of the cooperative view of the state's "empowered" elements, such as Congress, the courts, special-interest groups, and NGOs. According to neoliberalism, states are not monolithic rational actors; instead, their decisions represent the cumulative influence of group interests.

Neoliberalism also takes a structuralist approach to international relations, believing that power is exercised and distributed through formal organizations and institutions, but that its theoretical framework includes domestic players (e.g., legislatures, unions, and corporations) and non-state actors (e.g., NGOs and international organizations). In the neoliberal paradigm, conflict and competition are not inevitable. Institutions can act to ameliorate international conflict and promote cooperation, trust, and joint action.[33] President Woodrow Wilson's foreign policies and his effort to create a governing international security institution through the League of Nations are often cited as the foundation of neoliberal thinking in the United States.[34]

Four Freedoms. A dialogue on using the collective power of states to protect the rights of individuals emerged as part of the debate over the post–World War II order. The challenge was to prevent the reemergence of fascist ideologies, which became state policies during the Nazi era, without interfering in the legitimate sovereignty of individual states.

President Franklin Roosevelt attempted to provide an answer in his Four Freedoms speech on January 6, 1941, to the 77th Congress. Roosevelt outlined the world he would like to see in the future—one that the United States would be helping to make secure. This world would be founded on four freedoms:

- "Freedom of speech and expression everywhere in the world."

- "Freedom for everyone to worship God in his or her way throughout the world."

- "Freedom from want," which Roosevelt translated as grounded in economic relationships. He envisioned a world order in which all peoples would have a secure, peacetime life.

- "Freedom from fear," which he interpreted as meaning "a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world."[35]

In July 1941, Roosevelt and Winston Churchill relied on this world view to draft the Atlantic Charter, but reportedly, not even its signers were satisfied with that document. In fact, Roosevelt, a former member of the Wilson Administration, left an ambivalent record of what he believed the charter meant.[36] Josef Stalin declined even to sign it.

Many U.S. postwar initiatives encouraged international governance by democratic processes, with international organizations serving as arbiters of disputes and protectors of the peace. The years after World War II saw the establishment of mechanisms that stabilized the international economy

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33. Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 12–13.

34. For example, see Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Wilsonianism: Woodrow Wilson and His Legacy in American Foreign Relations* (London: Palgrave-MacMillian, 2002).

35. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "The Four Freedoms," January 6, 1941, at *www.libertynet.org/~edcivic/fdr.html* (December 20, 2005).

36. Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 21–43.

and further promoted a vision of collective security. The Bretton Woods Agreement in 1944 established rules, institutions, and procedures to regulate the international monetary system. It required each country to adopt a monetary policy that fixed its currency exchange rate at a certain value of gold, plus or minus 1 percent, and established the International Monetary Fund as a way to bridge temporary payment imbalances.

The signing of the U.N. Charter on June 26, 1945, provided another push toward a new principle of collective security. It established the following stated goals:

- "to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and

- "to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and

- "to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and

- "to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples."[37]

Over the course of decades, the U.N. bureaucracy has come to see its role as facilitating not only peace and security, but also human rights, development, and social equity.

Human Rights and Human Security. Much of the U.N. agenda involves the protection of human rights. Although use of the term "human rights" preceded 1945, its meaning was largely recast in the postwar years. In Western thought during the 18th century, human rights were associated with concepts of natural law, often interchanged with the term "rights of man." Human rights also served as a synonym for "civil rights," a narrow set of individual legal entitlements.[38] After World War II, the term "human rights" was used to delineate the difference between democratic and authoritarian societies. Democratic societies recognized that individuals were entitled to certain rights merely by being human. In 1948, the U.N. published a Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 300 languages.[39]

The outbreak of the Cold War, however, did much to dampen the drive toward international governance. While there was much discussion of the role of human rights in foreign affairs, their protection was considered a matter of national policy. Charges of human rights abuses were endemic during the Cold War. Some were valid complaints. Others were made for propaganda value or as part of psychological warfare campaigns. In part because of the Cold War standoff between the nuclear superpowers, the international community found it difficult to interfere in the internal governance of other countries, even in the face of human rights abuses and genocide.

After the Cold War, the term "human security" came into vogue, signaling a movement away from a focus on national security and states as actors.[40] The concept was meant to define security within a broad global framework as "political, strategic, economic, social, or ecological [in] nature."[41] Arguments were made that security represented more than physical security and the right of common defense and that the international community had rights and responsibilities that superseded those of individual states.

Globalization and the increasing interconnectedness of societies around the world added impetus to the human security movement. The growth of international, multinational, transnational, nongovernmental, and non-state actors challenged aca-

37. Charter of the United Nations, Preamble.

38. Paul Gordon Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 21.

39. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, see Jennifer A. Marshall and Grace V. Smith, "Human Rights and Social Issues at the U.N.: A Guide for U.S. Policymakers," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 1965, August 31, 2006.

40. Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, *Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

41. Peter Vale, "Can International Relations Survive?" *International Affairs Bulletin*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1992).

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demics and practitioners of security studies to think more broadly and to reconsider the world construct and the role of traditional state actors.

Current Challenges

In the early 1990s, UNDP published a series of annual reports that cast its work in the new paradigm of human security: "Now that the cold war is over, the challenge is to rebuild societies around people's needs," argued UNDP. "Security should be reinterpreted as security for people, not security for land."[42] The emphasis was clear: In the post–Cold War world, individuals—not the collective community or the state—mattered most.

Secretary-General Annan recalled Roosevelt's Four Freedoms at the U.N. Millennium Summit in 2005, when he called upon nations to advance the goals of "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear." He relied on this theme in his "In Larger Freedom" report of 2005,[43] to which he added "freedom to live in dignity." As he described it in *Foreign Affairs*, "the states of the world must create a collective security system" that promotes freedom from want and freedom from fear.[44] Rhetorically, these terms—like human security—sound laudable, but they dissemble rather than clarify how states and non-state actors should think about national security and on what state activities international organizations should focus. While non-state actors may voluntarily monitor, assist, and facilitate states in fulfilling their responsibilities, the state is ultimately responsible and accountable for the population in its charge.

The human security movement has made significant progress in promoting a redistributionist regime as a reasonable approach to providing national security. A good example of this is provided by the conclusions of a March 2005 International Conference on Human Security in the Arab Region organized by UNESCO and the Regional Human Security Center at the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy. In attendance were officials from U.N.

agencies and programs, ministers from Jordan, government officials from the Middle East and North Africa region, local and international civil society groups and nongovernmental organizations, and academics. They concluded with these specific points:

(1) At a minimum, every citizen should enjoy access to education, health services and income-generating activities. Citizens who are unable to meet their basic needs through their own efforts should have public support. In particular, particular attention should be given to vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly, the handicapped, the chronically ill and people in isolated or remote areas. *If States are unable to provide assistance, such assistance should be provided by the international community.*

(2) The concept of human security and its underlying values of solidarity, tolerance, openness, dialogue, transparency, accountability, justice and equity should be widely disseminated in societies. To that effect, human security should be incorporated at all levels of education. The media, particularly radio and television, should be mobilized to organize awareness-raising campaigns. It should also encourage people to explore ways to enhance their own security and that of members of their communities.

(3) Civil society should be mobilized to participate in the promotion of human security. Special efforts should be made to mobilize women's associations, academics, professional organizations and the private sector. This is to benefit from their resources, skills and proximity to ensure ownership of the concept of human security by local stakeholders and a wide dissemination of the culture of human security.[45]

42. U.N. Development Programme, *Human Development Report 1993* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 1, at *http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1993/en/pdf/hdr_1993_overview.pdf* (August 23, 2006).

43. U.N. Secretary-General, "In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All," A/59/2005, U.N. General Assembly, 59th Sess., agenda items 45 and 55, March 21, 2005, at *www.un.org/largerfreedom* (August 23, 2006).

44. Kofi Annan, "'In Larger Freedom': Decision Time at the UN," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 3 (May/June 2005).

Human Security as Welfare Entitlements. UNESCO officials appear to have determined that the human security agenda can best be advanced through changes in domestic policies based on social science data, independent from the difficult traditional member-state negotiations process. Through UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Program, they are encouraging the formation of regional research and policy think tanks comprised primarily of university social science researchers and representatives of NGOs sympathetic to the human security agenda. At the prompting of UNESCO, these regional bodies are producing social science research and policies for a UNESCO database—a database that, significantly, makes no provision for countervailing research. Advocates are encouraged to rely on this database and research to lobby states to make changes in domestic laws.

The foundational and motivating sentiments of the MOST Program can be found in the Buenos Aires Declaration adopted in February 2006 at the International Forum on the Social Science-Policy Nexus, which mirrors much of the established language of human security in other documents:

> *Taking into account* several United Nations reports highlighting the sharp increase in inequalities between and within countries, and *greatly concerned* that the universal thrust of human rights, human dignity and justice is in many instances being eroded under contemporary social and economic pressure.
>
> *Assuming* that the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals are not only the statement of new moral purpose but also the minimum threshold compatible with the proclaimed values of the international community, and

affirming that failure to make serious progress toward achieving them would entail tremendous cost in terms of human lives, quality of life and social development.

> *Convinced* that without moral vision and political will, the challenges of the Millennium Development Goals cannot be met, that meeting these goals requires new knowledge used in innovative ways and better use of existing knowledge, and that, in this regard, the social sciences have a crucial contribution to make in formulating development policy.[46]

The human security agenda has progressed quite rapidly since 2001, when the U.N. first tasked the Commission on Human Security with developing the concept as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation and proposing a concrete program of action to address critical and pervasive threats to human security.[47] The commission's 2003 report called specifically for linking human security initiatives and the establishment of joint public, private, and civil society activities. It made no effort to disguise its philosophy that nation-states are incapable of providing security:

> It is no longer viable for any state to assert unrestricted national sovereignty while acting in its own interests, especially where others are affected by its actions. There has to be an institutional system of external oversight and decision-making that states voluntarily subscribe to.[48]

The commission also recommended the creation of the U.N. Trust Fund for Human Security with an advisory board of a group of nations committed to spreading the human security agenda. The fund is supposed to be used to address threats to "human lives, livelihoods and dignity currently facing the international community." Any U.N. agency can

45. U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "International Conference on Human Security in the Arab Region," March 14–15, 2005, at *http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?Page=1957* (August 23, 2006) (emphasis added).

46. U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Declaration," Buenos Aires, at *http://portal.unesco.org/shs/en/ev.php-URL_ID=9004&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html* (August 23, 2006) (emphasis in original).

47. Commission on Human Security, "Establishment of the Commission," at *www.humansecurity-chs.org/about/Establishment.html* (December 20, 2005). The commission's secretariat disbanded in May 2003 with the publication of its final report.

48. Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, p. 12.

apply for funding to address issues like poverty, refugees, medical and health care, drug control, and transnational crime. For example, the World Health Organization uses its funding to provide emergency reproductive health services to displaced populations in the Solomon Islands. UNDP uses its funding to establish support groups for those with HIV/AIDS in Trinidad and Tobago.[49]

The problem here is not that the U.N. is trying to help people in need, but that it uses the Human Security Trust Fund to advance an agenda for security that bears no resemblance to established security paradigms.

UNESCO is intensifying its human security activities. It has an on-line forum where anyone in the world can post opinions on human security.[50] It is holding a series of regional conferences in 2006–2007 in Africa, the Arab states, and Southeast Asia to consider priorities. The outcome will likely mirror recommendations that came out of the March 2005 International Conference on Human Security meeting in the Arab region. As noted above, those recommendations treat issues such as education, health, and welfare—issues already addressed by other U.N. programs—as rights that require the international redistribution of wealth and a greater reliance on supranational organizations if states are not meeting their standards.

It is no wonder that human security appears to be more like an elaborate international welfare scheme than an endeavor to protect against real security threats. Proponents treat human security as a grand and noble cause and a responsibility of the human community as a whole. Their use of the term suggests broad international consensus over which political, economic, cultural, legal, and physical rights constitute human rights. However, neither of these presumptions is factually true.

Arguably, no state can meet all of the security needs of its people as described by the U.N.'s definition of human security. The United Nations bureaucracy frequently issues reports that criticize states for failing to do so, and the United States receives its share of criticism. For example, the July 28, 2006, report of the U.N. Human Rights Committee expresses concern that the United States "has not succeeded in eliminating racial discrimination such as regarding the wide disparities in the quality of education across school districts in metropolitan areas, to the detriment of minority students." It concludes that the United States should take "remedial steps."[51] The report fails to mention the federalism principle of U.S. government, which gives states the primary responsibility for education. Nor does it point out that the school districts in many major U.S. cities, where those disparities are greatest, already spend tens of thousands of dollars per student.

In reality, no state will ever be able to meet even a majority of the needs proponents now associate with human security for every individual within its borders. Without careful prioritization, a state seeking to meet the demands of human security could well disburse its resources inefficiently on peripheral but politically sensitive priorities.

Not only could this focus on human security undermine a state's authority and sovereignty, but its broad scope could also be exploited by authoritarian states as an excuse for unwarranted internal oppression. Given that "community security" is considered essential to human security, a state could argue that it can justifiably suppress any form of free expression that it believes jeopardizes a community's traditions and values.

Given all of these concerns, the notion that human security should become an integral part of the U.S. lexicon of international relations is troubling.

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49. Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Trust Fund for Human Security for the 'Human-Centered' 21st Century," at *www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/press/pr/pub/pamph/pdfs/t_fund21.pdf* (August 23, 2006).

50. "This Forum should become a meeting place to exchange ideas and debate about topical issues which we shall present to you in an interactive manner." U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Human Security."

51. U.N. Human Rights Committee, "Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 40 of the Covenant," advance unedited edition, 87th Sess., July 10–28, 2006, paragraph 23, at *www.ushrnetwork.org/pubs/CCPR.C.USA.CO.pdf* (August 23, 2006).

Conclusion

Human security, as conservatives understand it, is really all about protecting ourselves from national security threats and securing fundamental freedoms and human rights while providing opportunities to improve one's own standard of living. They see globalization and competition in a free-market economy as enablers of the opportunities that lead to prosperity and the achievement of human dignity, not as threats to human security.

In international agreements, the term "human security" should be used only as a description of a desirable human condition, not as an alternative to national security or an entitlements issue. Careful attention to its use is critical to counter the notion that international organizations have more moral right to protect people than the state has. Moreover, careful attention to its use should preserve, not confuse, the historical understanding of human rights.

The goal of international deliberations should be to strengthen democratic states as the best guarantors of security and liberty. In no case should something as broadly defined as human security be considered appropriate for international declarations and conventions. To that end, the Administration and Congress should:

- **Protect** the use of "national security" and "national sovereignty" in international statements, documents, and treaties;

- **Discourage** use of the term "human security" in international deliberations unless it is defined within the boundaries of nation-states and sovereignty;

- **Retain** the term "human rights" as the international standard for moral behavior by the state toward its citizens, and

- **Rely**, in legislative enactments, agency regulations, and case decisions, exclusively on human rights instruments that have been officially adopted and ratified by the United States.

In May 2006, the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO provided U.S. negotiators with welcome guidance in this respect in its statement regarding UNESCO's "Draft Medium Term Strategy for 2008–2013 and Draft Program and Budget for 2008–2009":

> Any human security agenda or program developed, facilitated, or promoted by UNESCO should be defined, designed, and pursued only with the meaningful participation and approval of all Member States and should not involve the pursuit and adoption of any human security standards or normative instruments.[52]

War, aggression, violence, and all the other negative aspects of living in today's world will continue to endanger the lives of individuals, states, and regions of the world. As long as this is true, security—which provides the environment in which all other liberties and opportunities are possible—will remain a function and responsibility of the sovereign state.

—James Jay Carafano, Ph.D., is Senior Research Fellow for National Security and Homeland Security, and Janice A. Smith is Special Assistant to the Vice President of Foreign and Defense Policy, in the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies at The Heritage Foundation. David Gentilli, Research Assistant for Homeland Security at The Heritage Foundation, and Todd Schmidt, graduate student at Georgetown Public Policy Institute, also contributed to this report.This paper is one of a series prepared as part of the Freedom Project of the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at The Heritage Foundation.

52. U.S. Department of State, *U.S. National Commission for UNESCO*, Vol. 2, Issue 2 (April/May/June 2006), at *www.state.gov/p/io/unesco/media/68984.htm* (August 23, 2006).

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