Why Human Security?

by P. H. Liotta and Taylor Owen

The human tragedy reaches its climax in the fact that after all the exertions and sacrifices of hundreds of millions of people and of the victories of the Righteous Cause, we have still not found Peace or Security.

—Winston Churchill

At its core, human security is about protecting people. Despite the multiple, contending views that have emerged regarding human security since it gained prominence in the 1990s—ranging from viewing human security as a radical departure from "traditional" security forms, to a focus on moderate evolutionary changes to the existing security infrastructure and mandate—the central feature of most arguments addresses how best to both protect and empower people.[1] Contending views on human security range from broad to narrow definitions; indeed, amongst human security specialists, there remains a vigorous argument about purpose and scope. Although we will consider some of these alternative approaches in this essay, we argue that human security—despite its theoretical difficulties—may suffer in conceptual integrity but can work in practice.

We approach this multifaceted concept by first distinguishing it from traditional security articulations. While human security proponents may disagree about the concept's exact definition, there is consensus on its fundamental deviation from state-based security. Second, we look at the history of this referent shift in security thinking, rooting the idea, not to post–Cold War scholarship or policy, but to Enlightenment Liberalism. This history is traced up to the present, arguing that the two contemporary broad and narrow schools of human security both suffer from conceptual and practical difficulties. With the hope of both progressing beyond these difficulties as well as capturing recent work on the concept, we discuss three ways of viewing human security's future: as Liotta's threats versus vulnerabilities model, as a potential guiding principle for EU foreign policy, and as Owen's human security threshold.

In simple terms, the United Nations Commission on Human Security defines human security as the protection of "the vital core of all human lives in ways that

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enhance human freedoms and fulfillment."[2] As such, this encompassing approach does not distinguish "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" for individual citizens. To achieve this protection, nonetheless, requires far more than just protecting people and their fundamental freedoms. While there must be short-term protection from severe situations and threats, there must also exist the will and ability to sustain security and stability by the successful integration of political, social, environmental, economic, military, and cultural systems and processes that allow individuals to prosper over time.[3]

Increasingly, we argue, decision makers will need to focus on a broad—and broadening—understanding of the meaning of security. Regarding human security specifically, the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report attempted to recognize a conceptual shift that needed to take place following the decline of the bipolar threat of the Cold War:

> *The concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of nuclear holocaust. It has been related to nation-states more than people. . . . Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime [or terrorism], social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards. With the dark shadows of the Cold War receding, one can see that many conflicts are within nations rather than between nations.*[4]

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, it should have become clear that despite the macro-level stability created by the East-West military balance of the Cold War, citizens were not safe. They may not have suffered from outright nuclear attack, but they were being killed by the remnants of proxy wars, the environment, poverty, disease, hunger, violence, and human rights abuses. Ironically, the faith placed in the realist world view, and the security it provided, masked the actual issues threatening the individual. The protection of the person was all too often negated by an overattention to the state. Allowing key issues to fall through the cracks, "traditional security" failed at its primary objective: protecting the individual.

This new type of instability led to the challenging of the notion of traditional security by such concepts as cooperative, comprehensive, societal, collective, international, and human security. Although these concepts moved away from a

Table 1: Traditional vs. Human Security [5]

Type of Security	Referent Object	Responsibility to Protect	Possible Threats
Traditional Security	The State	The Integrity of the State	Interstate War, Nuclear Proliferation, Revolution
Human Security	The Individual	The Integrity of the Individual	Disease, Poverty, Natural Disaster, Violence, Landmines, Human Rights Abuses

focus on interstate relations, human security takes the most dramatic step by making the referent object not the state, society, or community, but the individual. This shift is meant to direct research and policy towards the actual issues threatening people's lives (Table 1).

The cultural and political philosopher J. Peter Burgess has aptly summarized, for example, a major European shift regarding the concept of security since the end of the Cold War:

> *In* New & Old Wars *Mary Kaldor argues that a new type of organized violence has developed, beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, as one aspect of the globalized era. The new wars are, according to Kaldor, characterized by a blurring of the distinctions between war, organized crime, and wide-scale violations of human rights. In contrast to the geo-political goals of earlier wars, the new wars are about identity politics. Kaldor argues that in the context of globalization, ideological and territorial cleavages of an earlier era have increasingly been supplanted by an emerging political cleavage between cosmopolitanism, based on inclusive, universalist multicultural values, and the politics of particularistic identities. The evolution of the European Defense and Security Policy has evolved in the shadow of this mutation. A European culture with dubious historical reputation for cosmopolitanism is being thrust upon the global stage at the very moment when its geopolitical concepts are poised on the precipice of desuetude. With Solana's Thessaloniki Summit document "A Secure Europe in a Better World" the European community of values is being transformed into a security community.*[6]

Notably, in 2004 the European Union issued a follow-up report to the Thessaloniki Summit document, titled *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: The Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities*.[7] Equally, the UN Commission on Human Security attempted to expand the 1994 UNDP concept to include protection for peoples suffering through violent conflict, for those who are on the move (whether due to migration or as refugees), for those in post-conflict situations, and for protecting and improving conditions of poverty, health, and knowledge.[8]

To emphasize, Emma Rothschild describes human security as one of four changes taking place in the concept of security. Beginning with the state, she sees security being brought down to the individual, brought up to the international system or supranational physical environment, broadened from a focus on the military to include the environment, society, and economy, and finally, diffused in all directions to include local governments, international agreements, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), public opinion, forces of nature, and the financial market as sources of responsibility. Although not an explicit definition, this conceptualization provides an example of both how narrow the traditional paradigm has been, as well as how complex the expansion of the concept can become.[9]

Yet the purpose of this essay is not expressly to detail the chronology, conceptual development, and evolution of human security.[10] Rather, we intend to offer an overview of why this concept may have increasing importance for policy actions. We begin, therefore, with a brief consideration of how thinking about security has changed over time and then address why human security might prove significant as a security agenda item.

APPROACHING HUMAN SECURITY: FROM PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS TO VARYING DEFINITIONS

Philosophical Roots

In the classical sense, security—from the Latin *securitas*—refers to tranquility and freedom from care, or what Cicero termed the absence of anxiety upon which the fulfilled life depends. Notably, numerous governmental and international reports that focus on the terms "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" emphasize a pluralist notion that security is a basic, and elemental, need.

From this rather general—and quite European—understanding of security, the human security concept centers on a concentration on the individual (rather than the state) and that individual's right to personal safety, basic freedoms, and access to sustainable prosperity.[11] In ethical terms, human security is both a "system" and a systemic practice that promotes and sustains stability, security, and progressive integration of individuals within their relationships to their states, societies, and regions. In abstract but understandable terms, human security allows individuals the pursuit of life, liberty, and both happiness and justice.

While one could find little to argue with in these principles, there are problems. On the one hand, all security systems are not equal—or even very similar. Moreover, all such systems collectively involve codes of values, morality, religion, history, tradition, and even language. Any system that enforces human security inevitably collides with conflicting values, which are not synchronous or accepted by all individuals, states, societies, or regions.

The *responsibility* for the guarantee of the individual good—under any security rubric—has never been obvious.

On the other hand, in the once widely accepted realist understanding, the state was the sole guarantor of security. Realists believe that security necessarily extends downwards from nations to individuals; conversely, the stable state extended upwards in its relationship to other states to influence the security of the international system. This broadly characterizes what is known as the anarchic order.

Yet individual security, stemming from the liberal thought of the Enlightenment, was also considered both a unique and collective good.[12] The *responsibility*, however, for the guarantee of the individual good—under any security rubric—has never been obvious. Moreover, the right of states to protect themselves under the aegis of "national security" and through traditional instruments of power (political, economic, and especially military) has never been directly, or sufficiently, challenged.

To be blunt, there are specific reasons for those intending to affect the security debate to employ (perhaps even unintentional) strategies in terms of "threats" and causal, seemingly inevitable, linkages to violence: doing so makes the topic both accessible for decision makers and provides a basis for determining present and

future policy. Most often such decision makers conceive of security concepts only in power-dominant, state-centric mindsets. There is the hazard, nevertheless, of adding the term "security" to emerging concerns that affect the lives of many individuals— and many regions.

This hazard is clearly present in the use of the term "human security." And although some might argue that the term has roots in a neo-Marxist critique of the 1970s, one can reasonably illustrate that human security is a principle clearly embedded in Enlightenment Liberalism.[13] Thus, while all agree on the necessity of individual safety, some have always insisted that such protection could best be achieved only through the security of the state.[14] The state, traditionally, acts as protector from both external and internal threats.

A broad approach to human security is based on the concept of "freedom from want" and the narrow approach on "freedom from fear."

For Thomas Hobbes, the classic state-centered realist, an individual's insecurity sprang from a life that was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."[15] The state protected the individual from threats, whether these threats came at the hands of a local thief or from an invading army. For this protection, the citizen essentially relinquished individual rights to the state, as the state was the sole protector. Thus, in contrast to principles embedded in documents such as the US Declaration of Independence and Constitution, security always trumped liberty. Clearly, in an age where terrorism and extremist violence are constant challenges and where legislation such as the US Patriot Act and individual surveillance measures continue unabated in what are considered "open" societies, the conflict between collective/individual security and individual liberty remains. Indeed, Benjamin Franklin's adage remains an uncomfortable dilemma even today: those who give up their personal liberty for increased security deserve neither.

In more recent history, human security has been bifurcated by both broad and narrow definitions. A broad approach to human security is based on the concept of "freedom from want" and the narrow approach on "freedom from fear." While these categorizations are, admittedly, rather simplistic in their labels, they do prove useful in illustrating how different advocates of human security follow quite different paths in pushing for human security action.[16]

The Broad Definition

The broad conceptual approach to human security, for example, largely draws on the work of the UNDP, as well as subsequent work of the UN-appointed Human Security Commission, the Japanese Government, and a host of academics.[17] In this "freedom from want" approach, the previously referenced 1994 UNDP report argues that freedom from chronic threats such as hunger, disease, and repression (which requires long-term planning and development investment), as well as the

protection from sudden disasters (which requires often immediate interventions of support from outside agents), require action under the security rubric. Thus the UNDP offers seven human security components:[18]

1) Economic security: poverty; vulnerability to global economic change
2) Food security: hunger and famine; vulnerability to extreme climate events and agricultural changes
3) Health security: injury and disease; vulnerability to disease and infection
4) Environmental security: resource depletion; vulnerability to pollution and environmental degradation
5) Personal security: violence; vulnerability to conflicts, natural hazards, and "creeping" disasters
6) Community security: violations of the integrity of cultures; vulnerability to cultural globalization
7) Political security: political repression; vulnerability to conflicts and warfare

In this conceptual approach to human security,[19] the overarching focus is on, in the words of the Human Security Commission, protecting the "vital core" of the individual from critical and pervasive threats. Even as the above components fracture human security into separate identities, the focus remains on the human citizen and people's ability to live without dramatic hindrance to their well-being, whatever the cause. In pragmatic ways, the broad conceptualization of human security is revolutionary—and quite different from a traditional, state-centric view of security. Most notably, perhaps, it brings what are traditionally considered "development" or "humanitarian" considerations into the security discourse. This, of course, has profound implications.

The Narrow Definition

The so-called "Canadian Approach" represents another end of the spectrum of human security—the narrower conception.[20] By relying primarily on violent threats, the Canadian Approach separates human security from the much broader and already established field of international development. As Owen notes in earlier work,

> *[T]he Canadian government acknowledges the UNDP conception as a phase in the development of human security, but envisions a much more focused definition, one centered on violent threats, as an instrument of policy.*[21]

The Canadian definition, therefore, largely restricts the parameters of human security to violent threats against the individual. This can come from a vast array of issues, including the drug trade, landmines, ethnic discord, state failure, and trafficking in small arms. The Human Security Centre (part of the Liu Institute for Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia) clearly expresses the purposes of this approach:

> *Since the end of the Cold War, armed conflicts have increasingly taken place within, and not between, states. National security remains important, but in a world in which war between states is the rare*

exception, and many more people are killed by their own governments than by foreign armies, the concept of 'human security' has been gaining greater recognition.

Unlike traditional concepts of security, which focus on defending borders from external military threats, human security is concerned with the security of individuals.

For some proponents of human security, the key threat is violence; for others the threat agenda is much broader, embracing hunger, disease and natural disasters. Largely for pragmatic reasons, the Human Security Centre has adopted the narrower concept of human security that focuses on protecting individuals and communities from violence.[22]

This narrower focus on human security emphasizes the more immediate necessity for intervention capability rather than long-term strategic planning and investing for sustainable and secure development. Given the choice of being broad and ideal, or narrow and operable, by focusing on violence—only a small component of human vulnerability—the Canadian government has clearly sided with pragmatism.

Despite clear differences, both human security approaches rely on noncoercive methods as much as on having the ability to intervene effectively and swiftly. Some of these noncoercive measures include security sector reform, sustainable economic development, preventive diplomacy, post-conflict statebuilding and mediation, and negotiation efforts by parties external to conflicts.

Human security, nonetheless, may rest uncomfortably on the horns of a dilemma. The required focus should perhaps not be on either a narrow or broad definition, but both. Indeed, for example, protection from human rights violations is only one component of ensuring human security. Individuals also need protection from poverty, disasters, conflict, and disease. Put another way, protection from gross violations of human rights is a necessary but not sufficient condition of human security. Yet human security could be said to be a necessary but not sufficient precondition for human development. If human security could cover the most urgent threats, development would then address societal well-being. Moreover, human rights should be seen as one of many components of human security—a necessary but not sufficient condition. Just like some, but not all, environmental disasters cross the threshold of severity to become human security threats, so too do some, but not all, human rights abuses.[23]

Ultimately, while the effort to promote human security in the arena of "high politics" on the part of the Canadian and Norwegian governments since the 1990s is well known, there is a tempting sense of proselytizing righteousness as well. Such so-called "middle power" states, after all, can exercise significant moral clout by emphasizing that the rights of the individual are at least as important as protecting the territorial and sovereign integrity of the state. Yet when larger powers, particularly those with significant militaries (such as the United States or United Kingdom) advocate similar positions, it is their overwhelming power that is recognized, respected, and resented.

On the one hand, what is perceived as the "moral clout" of the middle power is sensed as "hegemony unbridled" when it is emphasized in an attempted similar

fashion by major powers. On the other hand, when actions taken in the name, or in the principled following, of human security do occur, they are often inextricably linked to issues that are embedded in the more traditional concepts of national security and protection of the state. Idealism thus becomes enmeshed in realism; actions taken on behalf of the powerless are determined only by the powerful.

Undoubtedly, increasing numbers now speak out on behalf of what the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty has termed the "responsibility to protect": the responsibility of some agency or state (whether it be a superpower such as the United States or an institution such as the United Nations) to enforce the principle of security that sovereign states owe to their citizens.[24] But the dark side of this proposition, of course, is that the "responsibility to protect" also means the "right to intervene." In the topology of power, dominant states will likely continue to intervene at the time and place of their choosing.

Although it is unclear how permanent or deep the damage was from the 2003 transatlantic rift (over the US intervention in Iraq), there are warning signals. As Kagan notes, a crisis of legitimacy has emerged, with roots in the Balkan interventions of the 1990s:

> *The fact remains that the Kosovo war was illegal, and not only because it lacked Security Council authorization: Serbia had not committed any aggression against another state but was slaughtering its own ethnic Albanian population. The intervention therefore violated the sovereign equality of all nations, a cardinal principle—of the UN Charter and the bedrock principle of international law for centuries. During the Kosovo conflict, Henry Kissinger warned that "the abrupt abandonment of the concept of national sovereignty" risked unmooring the world from any notion of order, legal or otherwise. Many Europeans rejected this complaint at the time. Back then . . . before the Iraq war . . . they did not seem to believe that international legitimacy resided exclusively with the Security Council, or in the UN Charter, or even in traditional principles of international law. Instead they believed in the legitimacy of their common postmodern moral values.*[25]

In 2003, during the dispute over Iraq, those postmodern values did not seem to be universally shared or even understood. How advocates of human security reconcile these undeniable conceptual and normative challenges will define the future of the young, but potentially significant, concept. Part of that confusion, however, may lie with the necessity to distinguish between threats and vulnerabilities and their individual and collective impacts on human security.

THREATS AND VULNERABILITIES: DISTINGUISHING HAZARDS

The authors admit that they are not in complete agreement on the following distinctions. While we will outline Owen's useful emphasis on threats and thresholds in our conclusion, we include here a brief synopsis of Liotta's writings on threats and vulnerabilities. Specifically, Liotta argues that not all security issues involve "threats"; rather, the notion of vulnerabilities is as serious to some peoples—and some regions—as the familiar "threat" metaphor of armies massing at the borders, or barbarians at the gates. Those who form policy and make critical decisions on behalf

of states and peoples will need to focus on aspects of traditional "national security," in which military forces will likely continue to play a preeminent role, as well as human security, in which "nontraditional" security issues may well predominate.

Commonly, a threat is regarded as an external cause of harm: identifiable, often immediate, which requires an understandable response. Military force, for example, has traditionally been sized against threats: to defend a state against external aggression, protect vital national interests, and enhance state security. For example, the size of the US and USSR nuclear arsenals during the Cold War matched the perceived threat of global holocaust in the context of a bipolar, ideological struggle that was far greater then than is viewed today. A threat, in short, is either *clearly visible or commonly acknowledged.*

A vulnerability, however, can be both internal and external in exerting complex influence. Bohle, O'Brien, and Vogel have addressed this "double bind" of vulnerability in analyses addressing environmental change and its impact on human security. Bohle, for example, presents a simple framework for assessing this internal/external phenomenon across varying levels of analysis (Figure 1).[26]

Figure 1: The Double Structure of Vulnerability

Human Ecology Perspectives

Entitlement Theory

The "external" side of vulnerability
EXPOSURE

Political economy approaches

The Double Structure of Vulnerability

Crisis and Conflict Theory
COPING
The "internal" side of vulnerability

Action Theory Approaches

Models of Access to Assets
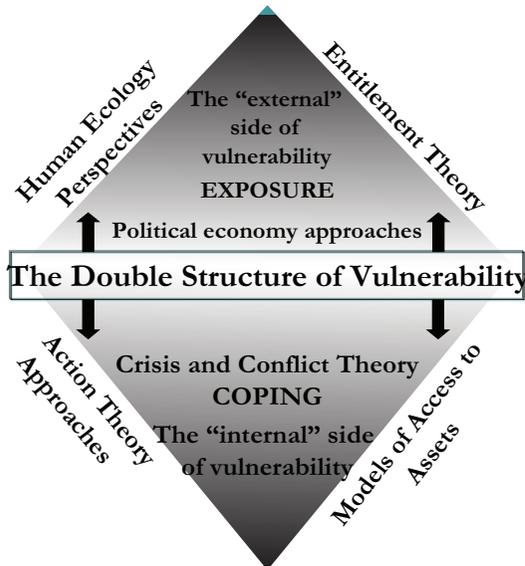
Source: adapted from Bohle, 2001

Vogel and O'Brien further suggest that a vulnerability perspective focus places attention as well on "risk," which they define in general terms as "the chance of a defined hazard occurring."[27] They suggest that examining and assessing vulnerability is both relevant and applicable to policy issues concerning human security—

vulnerability approaches can also identify regions and peoples at risk within the seven categories identified in the 1994 UNDP report: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.

In the broadest understanding, vulnerability may not even be recognized or understood—which can be maddeningly frustrating for decision makers. When it is recognized, a vulnerability often remains only an indicator, often not clearly identifiable, often linked to a complex interdependence among related issues, and not always suggesting a correct or even adequate response. While disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, criminality, narco-trafficking, political repression, and environmental hazards are at least somewhat related issues and do impact security of states and individuals, the best response to these related issues, in terms of security, is not at all clear.

Further, a vulnerability—unlike a threat—is not clearly perceived, often not well understood, and almost always a source of contention among conflicting views. Compounding the problem, the time element in the perception of vulnerability must be recognized. Some suggest that the core identity in a security response to issues involving human or environmental security is that of recognizing a condition of extreme vulnerability. *Extreme vulnerability* can arise from living under conditions of severe economic deprivation, to victims of natural disasters, and to those who are caught in the midst of war and internal conflicts.

A vulnerability—unlike a threat—is not clearly perceived, often not well understood, and almost always a source of contention among conflicting views.

But there are also cases of long-term vulnerability in which the best response is uncertain. We term these problematic security concerns creeping vulnerabilities. Given the uncertainty, the complexity, and the sheer nonlinear unpredictability of *creeping vulnerabilities*, the frequent—and classic—mistake of the decision maker is to respond with the "gut reaction." Thus, the intuitive response to situations of clear ambiguity is, classically, to do nothing at all. The more appropriate response is to take an adaptive posture and to avoid the inclination to act on instinct.

To be clear here: avoiding disastrous long-term impacts of creeping vulnerabilities (which can evolve over decades) requires strategic planning, investment, and attention. To date, states and international institutions seem woefully unprepared for such strategic necessities. Moreover, environmental and human security issues, since they are contentious, often fall victim to the "do nothing" response because of their vulnerability-based conditions in which the clearly identifiable cause and the desired prevented effect are often ambiguous. Plausible "creeping vulnerability" scenarios thus might reasonably include the following:

• Different levels of *population growth* in various regions, particularly between the "developed" and the "emerging" world

- The outbreak and the rapid spread of *disease* among specific "target" populations (such as HIV/AIDS and new strains of emerging contagions such as SARS or H5N1)
- Significant *climate change*
- The *scarcity of water and other natural resources* in specific regions for drinking and irrigation
- The *decline in food production* and the need to increase imported goods
- Progressing *soil erosion and desertification*
- Increased *urbanization and pollution* in "megacities" (populations of ten million or more) around the globe
- The lack of *warning systems* for natural disasters and environmental impacts—from earthquakes to land erosion

These emerging vulnerabilities will not mitigate or replace more traditional hard security dilemmas. Rather, we will see the continued reality of threat-based conditions contend with the rise of various vulnerability-based urgencies. Creeping vulnerabilities, nonetheless, may likely receive the least attention from policymakers, as their interdependent complexities grow increasingly difficult to address over time.

Yet in making distinctions between threats and vulnerabilities, we admit as well that sometimes problematic contradictions emerge. Suppositions that insist on a distinction between threat and vulnerability become somewhat suspect in the so-called "Age of Terror." While no one doubts that certain states and actors are under "threat" from al Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah, the shadowy nature of such loosely grouped networks defies the traditional sense of threat. Loose terrorist "networks" often display the following characteristics: the facility to operate effectively as a lateral (and noncentralized) network, the ability to learn, the capacity to anticipate, and the capability to "self-organize" or reconstitute after they have been struck. As such, these networks operate on the fault line between threat and vulnerability, and too narrow a focus on either "threat" or "vulnerability" will only lead to frustration—and failure.

The US-led Iraq invasion of 2003 offers another powerful example. Nominally an intervention made in response to a national security "threat" (Hussein's alleged ability to develop, produce, and deploy weapons of mass destruction), the follow-up commitment has largely been to support human security "vulnerabilities." In taking down a state regime, one that clearly brutalized its own people, a vacuum was created in the absence of a functioning replacement state. Citizens within that vacuum suffered both in terms of freedom from fear and freedom from want. Notably, armed forces were sized and structured to defeat an enemy threat but were woefully equipped to deal with the challenges of an insurgency while needing to address basic human needs for citizens of the deposed state.

These examples underscore that no single instrument—no matter how seemingly powerful in its application—is sufficient to address new and emerging security issues. The old adage that describes the "blowback" that otherwise often occurs is an apt reminder: *If all you have is a hammer, then every problem begins to look like*

a nail. Surely, as the interventions in Somalia and in the Balkans illustrate, traditional applications of military security are often necessary, but certainly not sufficient, instruments for achieving real security—human or otherwise.

INCORPORATING HUMAN SECURITY: THE EUROPEAN EXAMPLE

Seemingly ambivalent to conceptual debates and ambiguities, human security has emerged as a serious challenge to traditional security policy. In September 2004, the European Union released *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe*, which detailed the scope, organization, and intent that the EU "should build its security policy on a 'human security doctrine,' aimed at protecting individuals through law-enforcement with the occasional use of force."[28] Taking into account the need for complementarities in civil and military operations for EU missions in the Balkans, in the Great Lakes region of sub-Saharan Africa, and in the South Caucasus, the document proposed the development of a civil-military force of 15,000 personnel, to include one-third civilian professionals who would support crisis management operations.

Concerning this proposal, two notable aspects arise. First, the convener of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities was Mary Kaldor, author of the widely acknowledged work *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era.* According to Kaldor,

> *Europeans cannot be secure while millions of people live in intolerable insecurity . . . Where people live in lawlessness, poverty, exclusivist ideologies and daily violence, there is fertile ground for criminal networks and terrorism. Conflict regions export or transport hard drugs and guns, to the European Union. That is why a contribution to global human security is now the most realistic security policy for Europe.*[29]

The document does not shy from expressing high ambitions for the European Union and its capability to project force on a global scale. While some observers remain skeptical that the EU often pronounces lofty ambitions without the ability to integrate and organize or to support such a global force, *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe* may be the most direct document to date to so openly declare Europe's responsibility to act independently, and, if necessary, to act beyond the borders of Europe. Indeed, these responsibilities are clearly stated: "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."[30]

This rationale, however, falls victim to one of the difficulties of any potential human security–based foreign policy, namely, how direct a link must be made between vulnerability abroad and EU security. Once the human security doctrine is applied to people outside of the EU's political responsibility, must they justify intervention on national security grounds? If so, there are significant difficulties with relying solely on the "terror breeding ground" argument in guiding an entire foreign policy. If not, they will have to move beyond direct causal links to a more nuanced

argument connecting suffering abroad to security at home.

The document also presents a decidedly *narrow* definition for human security. By emphasizing "law-enforcement with the occasional use of force," the focus on human security remains strictly limited. However, the report does state that in extreme circumstances, a human security intervention may be needed against the more egregious, nonviolent threats, thus incorporating some aspects of the broader human security conceptualization, though notably using the type of threshold suggested above as a limiting mechanism. Generally, however, while the term "human security" is still evolving, the EU "doctrine" seems to intentionally limit itself to a focus on violence and how to stop it. Yet with this limiting focus, the EU human security doctrine emphasizes legal frameworks and institutions (such as the International Criminal Court, which the US has refused to recognize) and developing specific guidelines and criteria that could authorize intervention exclusive of UN Security Council authorization.[31] While stressing the need to prevent "gross human rights violations," the declaration is quite specific in other ways regarding norms, expectations, and the responsible commitments of states to their citizens.

> *The* [Human Security Doctrine for Europe] *comprises three elements:*
>
> * *A set of seven principles for operations in situations of severe insecurity that apply to both ends and means. These principles are: the primacy of human rights, clear political authority, multilateralism, a bottom-up approach, regional focus, the use of legal instruments, and the appropriate use of force. The report puts particular emphasis on the bottom-up approach: on communication, consultation, dialogue and partnership with the local population in order to improve early warning, intelligence gathering, mobilisation of local support, implementation and sustainability.*
> * *A 'Human Security Response Force', composed of 15,000 men and women, of whom at least one third would be civilian (police, human rights monitors, development and humanitarian specialists, administrators, etc.). The Force would be drawn from dedicated troops and civilian capabilities already made available by member states as well as a proposed 'Human Security Volunteer Service'.*
> * *A new legal framework to govern both the decision to intervene and operations on the ground. This would build on the domestic law of host states, the domestic law of sending states, international criminal law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law.*[32]

By detailing "capabilities" in the form of force structure and organization—especially the EU Human Security Response Force of 15,000 personnel—the doctrine notably comprises both military and civilian specialists, able to deploy to locales as disparate as Macedonia, Kosovo, or the Democratic Republic of Congo. The force itself would be tiered, drawing first on staff and headquarters capabilities from Brussels, with a secondary force of 5,000 personnel able to deploy within ten days of notice. The final tier of 5,000 personnel would remain at a "lower level of readiness, but would…periodically train and exercise together."[33]

The force would also draw from a professional core, with a civilian component of doctors, other medical personnel, legal specialists, human rights monitors, and

those who straddle the military/police divide such as *carabinieri* or *gendarmerie*. The final aspect of this organization would be the Human Security Volunteer Service.[34] All would be expected to be culturally aware, multinational, attuned to the multiple dimensions of conflict and intervention, and imbued with a specific, dedicated *ethos*. NGOs and private corporations might also comprise part of the Human Security Volunteer Service.

In short, this EU Human Security Force would represent an ambitious, even breathtaking, initiative to respond to crisis challenges. In moving toward an evolving commitment to global security, the EU has demonstrated some new, useful thinking. As a force proposal, the EU human security doctrine does not address all problematic issues, and raises internally a few problems of its own in terms of feasibility. It remains unclear, for example, how the EU is truly broadening its capabilities to respond with an overarching human security policy—other than addressing the necessity to act, to be ready to intervene when necessary, and to have the organization and structure to do it.[35] Equally, how to deal with strategic challenges (such as long-term investment and planning) or pragmatic factors (such as the question of how unarmed civilian specialists would themselves be vulnerable in intervention situations) remain, as yet, unanswered. But at least the dialogue has begun.

ON THE THRESHOLD: IN LIEU OF CLOSURE

Focusing exclusively on threats, Owen argues that human security analyses have varied widely in their emphases over the last decade. Returning to the seven human security sub-categories originally identified in the 1994 UNDP report, there has been a wide array of definitional and relative weight placed on each (Table 2).

Notably, none of the subsequent analyses incorporates the full range of the original seven UNDP subcategories. Indeed, as the list of included hazards increases, so too does the difficulty in conceptually articulating and measuring human security. The resulting paradox, that the closer one gets to the original conception of human security, the more difficult operationalizing it becomes, is a major stumbling block.

Table 2: The Human Security Spectrum

	Environment - Economic - Health - Political - Personal - Food - Community						
UNDP	environment	economic	personal	health	community	food	political
Sadako Ogata	environment	economic	personal	health	community	political	
Kanti Bajpai	personal	health	environment	political	food	economic	
Japan	health	personal	food	economic	environment		
Jennifer Leaning	economic	community	personal	health	food		
GHECHS	environment	economic	political	community			
Jorge Nef	environment	economic	political	community			
King and Murray	political	health	community	economic			
Astri Surke	personal	economic	environment				
Caroline Thomas	food	community	health				
Anne Hamerstad	political	environment	community				
Canada	personal	political					Strong Weight
Human Security Report	personal						Med Weight
							Weak Weight

That difficulty, nonetheless, is no excuse for inaction.

Human security conceptualizations must depart—sometimes radically so—from traditional security understandings; otherwise, they offer little utility or value to mechanisms already in place. Yet Owen argues that the closer the concept gets to its original UNDP conceptualization, the more difficult both human security policy and theory become. While some argue that including all possible threats can be workable, most attempt to narrow the concept by choosing which hazards, or security subcategories, should be included. Narrow proponents have sacrificed nonviolent threats for policy utility and broad proponents have sacrificed analytical rigor and policy clarity for inclusiveness.[36]

A threshold-based conceptualization, one that limits hazards (both for threats *and* vulnerabilities) by their severity rather than their cause, allows all possible harms to be considered, but selectively limits those that at any time are prioritized with the "security" label. As a concept and as a threshold beyond which action should take place, human security is the protection of the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive environmental, economic, food, health, personal, and political hazards.[37] Sadly, the list of all relevant harms to people in the world is vast; narrowing the focus on the list of *relevant* hazards to regions, populations, and states, however, provides considerable more refinement for action.

Today, when we speak of the business of security—for the individual, the state, the community, and regions—we find ourselves mired in a complex web of seemingly endless contradictions. Yet we live in a globalized context and can no longer afford solely to emphasize national security issues without recognizing that abstract concepts such as values, norms, and expectations also influence both choice and outcome. Moreover, although new in its present manifestation, the core principle of human security, that the individual rather than the state should be at the center of security policy, has its roots in eighteenth-century Enlightenment Liberalism. While the core ideas of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Condorcet have been overshadowed by the dominant traditional state-based security paradigm over time, the end of the Cold War did provide opportunity for a shift in security thinking. The majority of hardship and death in the world is not caused by interstate war but rather by disease, poverty, natural disasters, civil conflict, and small arms. As the primary hazards have changed, so too must our security mechanisms.

Early conceptualizations of human security, we readily admit, have run into problems of definitional clarity and measurement methodology. A more refined, threshold-based definition should allow policy and decision makers to better determine what the actual risks to peoples and places are.

Some argue that a universal definition is not necessary and that human security can in fact thrive on its ambiguity, manifesting for various purposes in various contexts. Human security, like sustainable and human development, would be understood via the successes and failures of its varying advocates. We remain skeptical about such a laissez-faire approach. The purpose of human security is to reevaluate current security theory and policy. It remains critical to rally the world's

thinkers, leaders, and resources to issues affecting people, rather than to those the military establishment deems important.

Advocates of the narrow conceptualization of human security are aware of the dangers of vague and amorphous conceptualizations. Thus, they tend to focus, almost exclusively, on violence. This will, however, do little to protect the millions who will die this year from nonviolent preventable human security threats.[38] The conception and apparatus of security should, nonetheless, be capable of protecting people from most, if not all, of the serious harms they face.

Why human security? The answer, we hope, is increasingly apparent: Until we can ensure that people are safe not just from interstate war and nuclear proliferation, but also from preventable disease, starvation, civil conflict, and terrorism, then we have failed in the primary objective of security—to protect.

Notes

[1] For some background, on human security and its origins as an issue to influence and affect policy, see the United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), as well as the Commission on Human Security work within the United Nations. Available at: http://www.humansecurity-chs.org (Accessed November 5, 2005). In 2004, the Human Security Unit (HSU) was created within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Available at: http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?MenuID=9670&Page=1516 (Accessed November 5, 2005).

[2] Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now* (United Nations Publications, 2003), 4.

[3] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Human Security. Available at: http://ochaonline.un.org/webpage.asp?MenuID=9671&Page=1494 (Accessed December 19, 2005).

[4] UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 3 and 22-23.

[5] First published in Taylor Owen, "Challenges and Opportunities for Defining and Measuring Human Security," *Disarmament Forum* 3 (June 2004): 17.

[6] Drawn from an abstract of a presentation at the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy, Newport, Rhode Island, titled "Culture Wars? War Is Already a Culture," December 6, 2004, at a workshop titled "Prepared for Peace? The Use and Abuse of 'Culture' in Military Simulations, Training and Education." Professor Burgess refers to the work by Mary Kaldor, titled *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[7] Mary Kaldor was also instrumental in the creation and production of *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: The Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities*. Available at: http://www.lse.ac.uk/ Depts/global/Publications/HumanSecurityDoctrine.pdf (Accessed December 19, 2005).

[8] Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*.

[9] Emma Rothschild, "What is Security? The Quest for World Order," *Dædulus: The Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 124, no. 3 (June 1995): 53-98.

[10] For such conceptual overviews, see: Sabina Alkire, "Concepts of Human Security," in *Human Security in a Global World*, eds. L. Chen, S. Fukuda-Parr, E. Seidensticker (The Global Equity Initiative, Asia Center, Harvard University: 2003); Osler Hampson and J. Hay, "Human Security: A Review of Scholarly Literature" (paper presented to the Canadian Consortium on Human Security Annual Meeting, Ottawa, April 2002); and Peter Burgess and Taylor Owen, eds., "Special Section on Human Security," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (September 2004).

[11] There is considerable debate, as we will highlight, as to how far this conceptualization should go. Indeed, there is a degree of disagreement between the authors that we will discuss below. While Owen believes that human security should be limited to the very worst threats in any one location, Liotta sees it as a more holistic concept encompassing wider vulnerabilities and the mechanisms to counter them.

[12] Adam Smith, for example, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, mentions only the security of the sovereign, who possesses a standing army to protect him against popular discontent, and is thus "secure" and able to allow his subject the liberty of political "remonstrance." By contrast, M. J. de Condorcet's argument, in the late eighteenth century, suggested that the economic security of individuals was an essential condition for political society; fear—and the fear of fear—were for de Condorcet the enemies of liberal politics. These distinctions are ably considered in Emma Rothschild, "What is Security? The Quest for World Order." Also see: Emma Rothschild, "Economic Security and Social Security" (paper presented to the UNRISD Conference on

Rethinking Social Development, Center for History and Economics, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995).

[13] For further background on the recent conceptual development of human security, including the Neo-Marxist influence, see: Astri Suhrke, "Human Security and the Interests of States," *Security Dialogue* 30, no. 3 (September 1999): 265-276.

[14] Portions of this section draw on an essay-in-progress, nominally titled "Why Human Security?" coauthored by P.H. Liotta and Taylor Owen.

[15] Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*, ed. and with introduction by C. B. MacPherson (London: Penguin Books, 1985).

[16] Owen notes that the "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want" categorizations are one-dimensional. While much of the literature is based on the broad conception, for example, many of the definitions used in the literature incorporate elements of both want and fear. While some definitions might be broad in that they stress human development priorities, they may in fact still be very narrow in the scope of the threats they include—such is the case with the King and Murray conception (G. King and C. Murray, "Rethinking Human Security," Harvard University Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, 2000). While a large amount of literature has emerged on Human Security, a full review falls out of the reach of this essay. For three solid literature reviews on human security see: Sabina Alkire, "Concepts of Human Security"; Hampson and Hay, "Human Security: A Review of Scholarly Literature"; and The Harvard Program on Human Security. Available at: http://www.cbrss.harvard.edu/programs/hsecurity/hspapers.htm (Accessed November 5, 2005).

[17] Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People* Available at: http:www.humansecurity-chs.org/finalreport/index.html (accessed November 5, 2005); Jorge Nef, *Human Security and Mutual Vulnerability: The Global Economy of Development and Underdevelopment*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 1999). Nef, for example, "describes five interconnected subsystems of human security: ecosystem, economy, society, polity and culture. For Nef, these five are all in complex interplay, their linkages defining the nature of systemic balance."

[18] UNDP, *UN Human Development Report*, Chapter 2, "New Dimensions of Human Security," 22-25. Vulnerability aspects are adapted from Coleen Vogel and Karen O'Brien, "Vulnerability and Global Environmental Change: Rhetoric and Reality," *Aviso: An Information Bulletin on Global Environmental Change and Human Security* 13 (March 2004), 6.

[19] Most subsequent definitions, broad or narrow, use these seven conceptual categories as their reference, incorporating varying combinations of categories in their conceptualizations. For a review of this phenomenon see Taylor Owen, "Measuring Human Security: Overcoming the Paradox," *Human Security Bulletin* 2, no. 3 (October 2003).

[20] Also used and promoted by the Norwegian Government, as well as forming the conceptual bedrock of the Human Security Network, a coalition of like minded 'middle power' governments. The narrow approach is also promoted by a number of academics, notably Andrew Mack, Keith Krause, and Neil MacFarlane. For summaries of their positions see: Peter Burgess and Taylor Owen, "Special Section on Human Security."

[21] Drawn from a paper titled "The Human Security Threshold," (presented at the Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University, and the Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy, Salve Regina University, June 2005).

[22] From the Human Security Centre website. Available at: http://www.humansecuritycentre.org (Accessed November 5, 2005).

[23] This argument is spelled out in greater detail in Taylor Owen, "Are We Really Secure?: Challenges and Opportunities for Defining and Measuring Human Security," *Disarmament Forum* 2 (June 2004): 15-24.

[24] The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect: The Report of the International Commission on Intervention and States Sovereignty*. Available at: http:// www.iciss.ca/report-en.asp (Accessed November 5, 2005).

[25] Robert Kagan, "America's Crisis of Legitimacy," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 2 (March/April 2004): 75.

[26] Hans-Georg Bohle, "Vulnerability Article 1. Vulnerability and Criticality," *IHDP Update: The Newsletter of the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change* 2 (2001). Available at: http://www.ihdp.uni-bonn.de/html/publications/update/update01_02/IHDPUpdate01_02_bohle.html (Accessed November 5, 2005).

[27] Coleen Vogel and Karen O'Brien, "Vulnerability and Global Environmental Change: Rhetoric and Reality," *Aviso: An Information Bulletin on Global Environmental Change and Human Security* 13 (March 2004): 5-6.

[28] From the press release, S239/04, "Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, Responds to Report by Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities." Available at: http://ue.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/declarations/81931.pdf (Accessed February 7, 2005).

[29] Press Release, "Europe Needs a Human Security Doctrine—And a New Force with One Third Civilians." Available at: http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/solana/040915PreRelBar.pdf (Accessed December 19, 2005).

[30] *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe*, 9.

[31] Ibid., 24-26.

[32] Ibid., 5.

[33] Ibid., 22-23.

[34] Ibid., 24.

[35] For the argument that human security requires a critical transformative ethos, see Kyle Grayson, "Securitization and the Boomerang Debate: A Rejoinder to Liotta and Smith-Windsor," *Security Dialogue* 34, no. 3 (2003): 337-343; and "A Challenge to Power over Knowledge in Traditional Security Studies," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (2004): 357.

[36] For discussion of both the paradox and the threshold see Owen, "Challenges and Opportunities for Defining and Measuring Human Security."

[37] This definition is proposed in greater detail in Taylor Owen, "Human Security⸺Conflict, Critique and Consensus: Colloquium Remarks and a Proposal for a Threshold-Based Definition," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 3 (September 2004). It should also be noted that it illustrates the different approaches of the authors. Liotta argues that "hazards"—even those that are critical and pervasive—vary across time, and thus must include considerations of both threats and vulnerabilities. Owen, in work that cleanly articulates the need for operationalizing human security and providing analytical rigor as well, has consistently focused on threats.

[38] Indeed, it is communicable disease, which kills 18,000,000 people a year, not violence, which kills several hundred thousand, that is the real threat to individuals. In 2000, approximately 310,000 people were killed by war, 520,000 thousands by homicide and 17,777,000 by communicable disease. Figures from: E. Krug, G. Etienne, L. Dahlberg, J. Mercy, A. Zwi, and Rafael Lozano, eds., *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002), 4; and World Health Organization, *World Health Report 2001* (Geneva: WHO, 2001), 114.