

Warming to a New Definition and Call for Global Action: Humanity's Security

Denise Garcia

Introduction

The world is in the throes of two classically defined global problems that confront humanity: climate change and a ruinous pandemic. Everyone is affected; only global solutions can solve them and a truly commonly agreed blueprint is needed not only to face ongoing threats, but to avoid the worst to come in the near future. Preventing the vilest effects of climate change, impeding the continuous iterations of the current pandemic, and averting the next pandemic are essential, but require decisive joint action in the interests of all humanity. In the light of the stark losses incurred by the world economy as a consequence of both these problems, I argue that a new conceptualization of security must be embraced now: *humanity's security*. This is a call for action that requires states to pool their resources, capacities and strengths for the common good of humanity to attain global public goods on a planetary scale.

At the centre of this new concept is the idea that the security of states is fundamental (national security). However, the safety of individuals, especially vulnerable populations, must also be safeguarded (human security); crucial is the realisation that the security and safety of states and individuals in one country is inextricably intertwined with the security and safety of individuals in all countries. The notion of humanity's security emphasises that

the fate and wellbeing of individuals in one country is tied to and dependent upon the welfare of all individuals in all other countries.

The pandemic has proven that no one is safe until everyone is protected, and climate change has shown that there is no place to stand by and watch from afar. The effects of anthropogenic interference with the climate at calamitous levels are ongoing everywhere. What is different about humanity's security, derived from the concepts of national and human security, is that it attests to the urgent need for solutions that must come from all countries, in collective preventive action, to respond to the threats by pooling their resources. The design of solutions must be scaled up globally if they are to have an impact. Additionally, humanity's security calls for a more self-aware and purposeful integration between human beings and their natural environment and ecological systems. Without the realisation of this inextricable connection, there will be no easy way out of the conundrum that humans face. Humanity—the partnership between governments, scientists, individuals, aboriginal communities and international institutions—is at the centre of the communal and global changes needed to contain the ongoing planetary mega threats.¹ Instead of privileging only the state as the hub for action, I would say the state remains essential but is no longer capable of acting alone, so it must muster the necessary strategic partnerships: scientific, collective and practical.

Climate change is generally viewed as humanity's greatest contemporary challenge.² The Nobel Peace Prize laureate global group of scientists that was established in 1998, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), released a harrowing report in August 2021 detailing the latest scientific evidence on the irreversible damage humanity has inflicted on the climate. The report admonishes the world to act to avoid catastrophic consequences from “widespread, rapid, and intensifying climate change.”³ The landmark report is the most definitive collection of scientific evidence to date, with data gathered from more than 14,000 studies and the empirical evidence of a changing climate based on real life observations. The report, drafted by 234 scientists, and reviewed and approved by scientists and officials from 195 countries, presents irrefutable robust evidence.⁴ Earlier, in 2014, the IPCC found that climate change will progressively threaten human security by undermining livelihoods, compromising culture and identity, intensifying migration, and undercutting states' ability to provide the conditions for human security to be achieved.⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated beyond any doubt that ensuring international security, world order and stability is interwoven with sustaining universal human security.

¹ Denise Garcia (2021). Global commons law: norms to safeguard the planet and humanity's heritage. *International Relations*.

² Nina von Uexkull, & Halvard Buhaug. (2021). Security implications of climate change: A decade of scientific progress. *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(1), 3–17.

³ IPCC, 2021: Climate Change, August 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Masson-Delmotte, V., et alii (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press.

⁴ For the list of scientists: <https://archive.ipcc.ch/report/authors/report.authors.php?q=35&p=&p>

⁵ Adger, W Neil; Juan M Pulhin et alii (2014) Human security. In: CB Field, VR Barros (eds) Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change. Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 755–791.

The debilitating pandemic cost the world economy 10 trillion dollars in 2020-21.⁶ This is not a time for sabre-rattling or peddling failed strategies. A genuinely groundbreaking 21st-century blueprint for forestalling the next pandemic by focusing on the common good of humanity is needed. The two global problems, climate change and pandemics, dovetail in their causes and solutions. Reversing some of the factors causing climate change (such as deforestation) and enhancing factors such as preservation of biodiversity can contribute to the prevention of new pandemics.⁷ Many of the solutions to climate change are also pandemic-prevention solutions.

Humanity's security is a helpful concept by which to evaluate the impact of non-military threats on national security, such as infectious diseases or climate change, and to determine the best way to marshal the forces for action.⁸ These are the real challenges facing humanity today. War is not entirely out of the picture, but there are more pressing immediate challenges of a non-military nature that threaten all human beings worldwide. For instance, climate-induced natural disasters displaced 24 million people in 2019; in contrast, 7 million people were displaced by armed conflict.⁹ In the United States 916,000 people were displaced in 2019 because of natural disasters (fires, floods and hurricanes). The United States also had the most significant number of recorded disasters and had the fifth largest number of displaced people in the world.¹⁰ By 2040, a total of 5.4 billion people—more than half of the world's projected population—will live in the 59 countries experiencing high or extreme water stress, including India and China. The continued unbridled expenditure on the military and ways to counter violence arising from insecurity robs societies of the means to invest in other areas. The global economic impact of violence was \$14.96 trillion in 2020, equivalent to 11.6 percent of global GDP, and this includes military expenditure, expenditure on internal security, violent crime, conflict and other variables.¹¹ Syria, South Sudan and Afghanistan suffered the most significant economic impacts at 81%, 42%, and 40% of GDP respectively.¹² The Institute for Economics and Peace, which offers authoritative measures for achieving peace, states that if the world would decrease its levels of violence by 10%, US\$ 1.5 trillion could be targeted at other activities.

But the key question is: What makes us, human beings, secure? Governments have their priorities wrong when it comes to aiming to create a "secure" world.

The continued privileging of the military aspects of security weakens individual security as the actual risks to individuals in countries that must prioritise spending continue

⁶ The Economist: What is the economic cost of covid-19? 7 January 2021.

⁷ Jeff Tollefson, Why deforestation and extinctions make pandemics more likely, *Nature*, August 2020. Branca-lion, Pedro HS et al. "Emerging threats linking tropical deforestation and the COVID-19 pandemic." *Perspectives in ecology and conservation* 18, no. 4 (2020): 243-246. Lorenz, Camila, Mariana de Oliveira Lage, and Francisco Chiaravalloti-Neto. "Deforestation hotspots, climate crisis, and the perfect scenario for the next epidemic: The Amazon time bomb." *Science of the Total Environment* 783 (2021): 147090.

⁸ Albert C, Baez A, Rutland J. "Human security as biosecurity Reconceptualizing national security threats in the time of COVID-19." *Politics Life Sci.* 2021 May;40(1):83-105.

⁹ See Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP) Ecological Threat register dataset (p. 4): IEP dataset: https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/ETR_2020_web-1.pdf

¹⁰ See IEP dataset, p. 52, table 3.3.

¹¹ Institute for Economics & Peace. *Global Peace Index 2021: Measuring Peace in a Complex World* (IEP, 2021).

¹² Ibid.

unaddressed.¹³ The context created by heightened human security enhances the quality of life;¹⁴ this in turn highlights how futile it is to continue viewing security solely through the lenses of military threats, which is a disservice to those working to improve the human condition. The COVID-19 pandemic has cast an urgent light on this in stark contrast to the old, officially ordained ways of viewing security. There were no effective multilateral structures in place to prevent the pandemic and even the advanced democracies were hit hard. In this light, the annual global two trillion dollar expenditure on the military and purchasing of new armaments now seems excessive and reckless.¹⁵ The pandemic has shown the true meaning of what the lack of preparedness can hold for the stability of the international system: no military, not even the mightiest, could contain the virus.¹⁶ In the current post-pandemic world order it is imperative to maintain the integrity of nature and the environment as mutually enforcing platforms to avoid future large-scale harm to human security.¹⁷ The scale of the threats requires a shift in the way we view security towards an all-inclusive approach that prioritises sustaining the conditions of life on the planet.¹⁸

From National to Human to Humanity's Security

To embark on an examination of how to secure the wellbeing of humanity, we must first understand the concept of security to determine whether the existing global governing mechanisms suffice and whether a more holistic approach is needed.

What does security mean? Most of the time security was understood as the absence of war between the major powers and an absence of military threats and challenges from one clearly defined enemy. As a result, one view would be that security involves protection from the threat of armed violence. Another view advances the notion that security is tied to guarding individual wellbeing. Is security primarily about asserting the primacy of the state or is it about protecting the individual? Traditionally, the scholarship on security has viewed the answer to this question as conceiving the notion of security vis-à-vis a referent object, i.e., a specific source of threat or danger. In this light, the state or the individual could become the referent object to be secured against the identified threat. In the realist school, the initial approaches claimed that the state was the sole referent object of security, and nothing else mattered. Taking into account the realist view that prioritises the national interest, there are three recognisable dimensions to security that presuppose the state as the only referent object of security: the way states prepare to wage war; the protection of the national territory against external threats of a military nature in a zero-sum anarchical world with no norms and rules; and the protection of the state against defined external

¹³ Matt McDonald (2002) Human Security and the Construction of Security, *Global Society*, 16:3, 277-295.

¹⁴ Ramesh Thakur, "From National to Human Security", in S. Harris and A. Mack (eds.), *Asia Pacific Security: The Economics Political Nexus* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1997).

¹⁵ Tian, N., Kuimova, A., Lopes da Silva, D., Wezeman, P. D. & Wezeman, S. T. *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2019* (SIPRI, 2020).

¹⁶ Carlos R. S. Milani (2020). COVID-19 between global human security and ramping authoritarian nationalisms. *Geopolítica*, 11, 141-151.

¹⁷ Anne Peters, 'Novel practice of the Security Council: Wildlife poaching and trafficking as a threat to the peace', *EJIL: Talk!*, 12 February 2014.

¹⁸ McDonald 2018, 174.

enemies. Arising from this approach, at the core of the pursuit of security is the procurement of arms to protect the national territory against these perceived military threats.

Other approaches that challenged this narrow view of security posited that the latter, the individual, should take precedence as the referent object and the state should be the protector. The concept of human security emerged and gradually achieved some prominence. In 2012, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on human security by consensus for the first time.¹⁹ The resolution represented a milestone, because it harmonised the understanding of human security across the UN by helping the member states identify preventive and people-centred responses to problems and address widespread challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people with which governments were entrusted. I will highlight three elements as part of the newfound common understanding of human security. The first is a person's right to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair, and with equal opportunities to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential. The second element recognises the interlinkages between peace, development and human rights, and equally takes into account civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The third is that human security does not replace state security and recognises that human security varies significantly across and within countries. National solutions are more robust when compatible with local realities. The notion of humanity's security builds upon the gains won by the concept of human security, decisively going above and beyond its achievements to underscore the necessity for collective action in a concerted way.

Alternatively, more recent analyses view ecosystems as the object of security – ecological security.²⁰ Many cultures operate in a way that is inextricably intertwined with, and honors, nature. In the West, nature is perceived as occupying a place outside of the human realm, which allows for over-exploitation and for the assumption that ecosystems need not be a central factor in making economies grow.²¹ Thus far, the separation of humans from their environment has been obstructive in advancing new long-term policies to protect the climate and biodiversity.²² The contemporary politics of climate and security are falling short of effectively suppressing the threat posed to humanity by climate change.

Matt McDonald recognises four discourses that focus on different referent objects: the state, people, international society, and ecological security.²³ The latter ensures that the temporal separation between current and future generations is bridged. Additionally, McDonald's view provides a framework for giving expression to the unrepresented in the predominant security discourses (the natural world and all non-human living beings). It also moves the analysis away from the unhelpful dichotomy of anthropocentric versus eco-centric by establishing the profound linkages between them. The appearance of human security marks

¹⁹ United Nations General Assembly, A/RES/66/290 Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 September 2012 as a follow-up to paragraph 143 on human security of the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

²⁰ Matt McDonald, 2021, *Ecological Security: Climate Change and the Construction of Security*, Cambridge University Press.

²¹ Lopez-Claros, et alli 2020.

²² Matt McDonald, 2018.

²³ Matt McDonald, 2018, *Climate change and security: towards ecological security?* *International Theory* (2018), 10:2, 153–180.

the first broadening of the concept of security and represents the dissatisfaction with, and an insufficiency stemming from, the state-centric focus of security issues. This first enlargement of the concept of security—from national to human—incorporated various new threats from the environment to food insecurity, environmental protection and a concept deepening to consider the individual. This first redefinition of security places the state as the protector and enabler of governance structures that maintain and sustain human beings by providing them with the safety and freedom to pursue longer-term aspirations.

The wide-ranging evolving framework introduced by the notion of human security compels states to view and practice the attainment of security in a more sweeping and inclusive way. The United Nations Charter mandates states to maintain peace through the regulation of armaments. Most importantly, it instructs its chief deliberative body on peace and security, the General Assembly, to be the lodestar to peace through disarmament. By the same token, the Charter charges the Security Council to act by overseeing the regulation of arms worldwide. With these international legal tools in hand, demilitarizing security in the 21st century is even more pressing with a degraded security environment. In "Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament", the United Nations Secretary-General states that during the Cold War arms control was integral to security in an environment that included constant communication and negotiations, despite the geopolitical tensions.²⁴ There was a sense that no one should rely so exclusively on military means to attain security.²⁵ The UN Secretary-General calls for the continuing evolution of the concept of human security to achieve an end goal: establishing a credible vision for sustainable security to contribute to the attainment of human security in this century.²⁶

The Role of the United Nations

At the international level, the United Nations (UN) Charter tasks the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with determining threats to security as emanating from risks and dangers to the international order. The international order has changed, and rapidly became much more complex after the UN was founded.²⁷ Certain events signaled a shift in the world order: the bloody proxy wars fought during the Cold War in Cambodia, Vietnam, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Afghanistan as well as the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, with their tragic humanitarian consequences, including the horrific chemical gas attacks that slaughtered the Kurds in Northern Iraq in March 1988.²⁸ One million Kurds fled to Turkey and Iran, and hundreds of thousands were internally displaced, triggering a humanitarian catastrophe. This paved the way for the first Gulf War after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, but he was defeated by US-led forces in 1991. The US carried out Operation Northern Watch,

²⁴ United Nations Secretary-General, "Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament", 2018, Office for Disarmament Affairs New York.

²⁵ "Securing our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament", p. 10-11.

²⁶ "Securing our Common Future", p. 12.

²⁷ Malone, David. *The international struggle over Iraq: Politics in the UN security council 1980-2005*. Oxford University Press on Demand, 2007.

²⁸ Gallant, Judy A. "Humanitarian Intervention and Security Council Resolution 688: A Reappraisal in Light of a Changing World Order." *Am. UJ Int'l L. & Pol'y* 7 (1991): 881.

supplying humanitarian aid and enforcing a no-fly zone over Iraqi Kurdistan that allowed the Kurds to return and gain de facto autonomy.²⁹

In the light of these events, it is critical to understand how the UNSC has changed its practice over recent decades and how it could be made fit for a role protecting humanity's security. The UNSC changed its approach to what is considered a "threat to peace and security" in five ways, signaling a shift in the world order and addressing new threats beyond those to national security.³⁰ Firstly, the UNSC started regarding large-scale human rights violations and the resulting humanitarian tragedies as threats to peace and security by adopting new legally binding resolutions. Resolution 688 in 1991, dealing with the Kurds in Northern Iraq, unequivocally referred to the destabilization caused by the flows of refugees as threats to international peace and security. Resolution 770 on 13 August 1992, on Bosnia-Herzegovina, pressed upon all states the need to expedite the delivery of humanitarian aid.³¹ After the Cold War, several similar resolutions followed on Somalia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Haiti, and Albania. Those on East Timor and Sierra Leone in 1999 authorised Security Council mandates for humanitarian purposes, with large peace-keeping operations.³² But how does this pave the way for the UNSC to potentially play a role in implementing the preservation of humanity's security in practice? The shifts in the way the UNSC operates marks a new world order that has emerged from the need to ensure human security from diffuse threats not anticipated by the original Charter.

In the second change to its approach, the UNSC established two ad hoc tribunals, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The UN has also been involved with the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, and others. It is evident that in its practice the UNSC has progressively widened the concept of "threats to international peace and security to encompass intrastate conflicts."³³

What does this mean for the new world order? This signifies a significant departure from the role of the UNSC as initially conceived by the Charter, and implies that change is possible.

The third change entailed the transformation of its peace-keeping operations. UN peacekeepers were first sent to implement peace agreements, then to support action in conflict, and more recently to suppress conflicts and protect civilians by building up public safety and security in still unstable areas. The 51 peace-keeping operations conducted since 1990 have involved a range of complex missions such as holding elections, disarmament and demobilization of warring parties, and stabilization, i.e. ensuring safe conditions for the

²⁹ Malanczuk, Peter. "The Kurdish crisis and allied intervention in the aftermath of the Second Gulf War." *Eur. J. Int'l L.* 2 (1991): 114.

³⁰ Lillich, Richard B. "The Role of the UN Security Council in Protecting Human Rights in Crisis Situations: UN Humanitarian Intervention in the Post-Cold War World." *Tul. J. Int'l & Comp. L.* 3 (1995): 1.

³¹ Blokker, Niels. "Is the authorization authorized? Powers and practice of the UN Security Council to authorize the use of force by coalitions of the able and willing." *European Journal of International Law* 11.3 (2000): 541-568.

³² Krisch, Nico. "Unilateral enforcement of the collective will: Kosovo, Iraq, and the Security Council." *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law Online* 3, no. 1 (1999): 59-103.

³³ Cohen, David. "Hybrid justice in East Timor, Sierra Leone, and Cambodia: lessons learned and prospects for the future." *Stan. J. Int'l L.* 43 (2007): 1.

delivery of humanitarian aid. The most prominent examples are the peace-keeping turned transitional authority missions in East Timor and Kosovo.³⁴

In the fourth change, the UNSC embraced the global problem of climate change as a threat to peace and security. The first-ever meeting of the Security Council examining the linkages between climate change and insecurity was held in April 2007. The UNSC held four open debates specifically on climate security risks—in 2007, 2011, 2018 and 2019—while also addressing the issue within broader debates on water security, conflict prevention and complex challenges to peace. The UNSC recognised that climate change has adverse effects on political stability, increases social unpredictability and is a threat multiplier.

Since 2007, the UNSC has increasingly taken steps which effectively acknowledge that security and climate change are linked: in July 2011 another open debate on the matter was held; in March 2017 resolution 2349 was adopted, highlighting the need to address climate-related risks to tackle the conflict in the Lake Chad basin; and in July 2018 a debate was held on "understanding and addressing climate-related security risks".³⁵

In the fifth change to its practice, the UNSC acts as an international legislator. After the terrorist attacks against the United States in 2001, the UNSC passed resolution 1373. The historic resolution included sweeping mandates to criminalise the financing of terrorism, freeze funds, suppress safe havens, share intelligence and enhance cooperation, and implement effective border control measures. The resolution also established the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), a subsidiary body composed of 15 Council members.³⁶ The CTC remains the central point of action in the international system to combat terrorism.

Getting Security Wrong and Leaving People Vulnerable Everywhere

Despite the ascendance of the vital concept of human security, most governments continue to get security wrong by misplacing their focus on inapposite priorities. Global military spending continues to rise (with a record 2 US\$ trillion global expenditure in 2019)³⁷ and, whilst cross-border conflicts are in decline, political and societal instability and unrest are steadily rising. During the Cold War, the drive to stay ahead in military expenditure to fuel the arms race led to the accumulation of 70,000 very costly and impracticable nuclear weapons and a deadly global arsenal that currently still holds 13,100 warheads. This led to extortionate maintenance costs, such as 70 billion dollars a year to maintain nuclear weapons by all nuclear countries, not to mention the horrific humanitarian and ecological

³⁴ Barnett, Michael. "Partners in peace? The UN, regional organizations, and peace-keeping." *Review of International Studies* 21.4 (1995): 411-433.

³⁵ Scott, Shirley V., and Charlotte Ku, eds. *Climate change and the UN Security Council*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2018.

³⁶ Day, Adam, and David M. Malone. "The Role of the United Nations in Shaping Global Security Law." *The Oxford Handbook of the International Law of Global Security*.

³⁷ Tian, N., Kuimova, A., Lopes da Silva, D., Wezeman, P. D. & Wezeman, S. T. *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2019* (SIPRI, 2020).

toll in the places where they were tested, such as in the islands of the Pacific,³⁸ in a way that magnifies inequities and disparities of power and capabilities.

The second expansion of the concept of security from human security should occur now: humanity's security. Two factors have accelerated this call for action. The first, the ability of humankind to alter the environment on a planetary scale, points to the risk of humanity exceeding the boundaries of the planetary ecosystem – the limits within which humanity can live safely on the planet.³⁹ The planetary boundaries framework was devised in 2009 and establishes nine boundaries that should not be breached, including ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, ocean acidification and climate change, to sustain life on the planet. This framework, like humanity's security, calls for the integration of humans and their ecosystems. The second factor is the pandemic, which has accelerated the realisation that the security of every population living in every country is connected and inextricably intertwined with everybody's safety. Even though protecting human beings along with nature and their environment is a pressing priority, states continue to prepare for war, and to establish armies and build arsenals. This means that there is a fundamental disconnect between what each country's population needs to be secure and the continuation of the old, officially ordained ways of organising and implementing security measures.

What is more, both climate change and pandemics are threat multipliers that complicate development efforts and the necessary provisions for safety. Therefore, they should be viewed as the main sources of menace to security everywhere. The number of climate change-related disasters has quadrupled over the last decade. Data from the Institute for Economics and Peace show that the United States and China are highly vulnerable to climate change and would benefit from preventive public investment at the highest level of national security considerations to avert the worst of these threats. The pandemic has demonstrated that no one is secure until everybody is secure. As the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: "The fury of the virus shows the folly of war". Defense would have to be progressively reoriented to prevent the worst effects of a changing climate, as the IPCC warns.

Humanity's security is about making the national interest coincide with the shared global interest, a common good built to protect everyone.

The reality is that climate change and pandemics, along with the risks from exceeding the planetary boundaries, are anthropogenic existential threats to the survival of humanity that radically transform the way we should view and practice security. Nathan A. Sears, a scholar whose work straddles security and existential risk studies, warns that this new material context—apart from defined military threats from known enemies—lays bare the growing paradox of the relationship between what is threatening humanity and the continuing security practices of preparing for war, building up military force and sustaining practices

³⁸ The data is produced by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) that received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017: https://www.icanw.org/report_73_billion_nuclear_weapons_spending_2020

³⁹ William Steffen, Katherine Richardson, Johan Rockström, et al., 'Planetary Boundaries: Guiding Human Development on a Changing Planet', *Science*, 347(6223), 13 February 2015.

that will not help to tackle the existential threats.⁴⁰ Additionally, spending exorbitant amounts of money annually to maintain decaying and indiscriminate weapons systems (i.e. nuclear weapons specifically) and developing new ones will serve little purpose in confronting the range of threats posed to human beings and nature.⁴¹ Yet the meaning and practice of security, despite the emergence of the invigorating concept of human security, remain resistant to change, as Sears notes, and this exposes the perpetuation of customs and traditions belonging to an era that no longer exists. The notion of humanity's security takes into account this transformation of the concept of security, which seems to be ignored in the high circles of most countries' security strategists, and integrates it not only with the preservation of ecosystems,⁴² but also with the wellbeing of future generations.⁴³ I concur with Sears's contention that there is a discrepancy between the heightened mega threats of the contemporary world and the outdated modes of protection – assertive defense, military force and a balance of geopolitical power. This is all the more incongruous if we consider the security ideologies that are supposed to protect, namely, national security and self-help that do not take into account the threats arising from climate change and pandemics as a menace for which the state should account.

Humanity's Security: Constitutive Elements for a Framework for Global Action

An eye-opening body of literature from a few security scholars has been emerging on the existential risks facing humanity, warning that we are at a crossroads and need new concepts and action frameworks to preserve our security.⁴⁴ The concept of existential security, from Nathan A. Sears, is the most persuasive in establishing that humanity is the referent object and should therefore be the focus of the pursuit of security.⁴⁵ As such, Sears and I are like-minded in realising that the security literature, and most disturbingly, the practice of security today lacks a theoretical and policy framework to comprehensively address the actual threats to humanity.

I advance three constitutive elements for a framework for global collective action based upon the goal of advancing humanity's security: nations must pool their resources, protect

⁴⁰ Nathan Alexander Sears, *International Politics in the Age of Existential Threats*, *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 6(3), 2021.

⁴¹ Denise Garcia, 'Redirect Military Budgets to Climate and Pandemics', *Nature*, 584, August 2020, pp. 521–3.

⁴² Matt McDonald, 2021, *Ecological Security*.

⁴³ Denise Garcia (2021). *Global commons law*.

⁴⁴ Rees, Martin. 2003. *Our Final Hour: A Scientist's Warning: How Terror, Error, and Environmental Disaster Threaten Humankind's Future in this Century—On Earth and Beyond*. New York: Basic Books. Martin Rees 2018. *On the Future: Prospects for Humanity*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. Des Gasper (2005) *Securing Humanity: Situating 'Human Security' as Concept and Discourse*, *Journal of Human Development*, 6:2, 221-245. Torres, Phil. 2017. *Morality, Foresight & Human Flourishing: An Introduction to Existential Risks*. Durham, North Carolina: Pitchstone Publishing. Daniel Deudney (2018) 'Turbo Change: Accelerating Technological Disruption, Planetary Geopolitics, and Architectonic Metaphors', *International Studies Review*, 20 (2), 223–231. Burke A, Fishel S, Mitchell A, Dalby S, Levine DJ. *Planet Politics: A Manifesto from the End of IR. Millennium*. 2016;44(3):499-523.

⁴⁵ Nathan Alexander Sears, 2020. "Existential Security: Towards a Security Framework for the Survival of Humanity." *Global Policy* 11 (2): 255–66.

future generations and ecosystems, and engage preventively with interdisciplinary blueprints.

Pooling Resources

The animating premise of the concept of human security is that the state is increasingly less capable of tackling problems of a global nature. Therefore, the consistent and systematic pooling of resources seems to be a prudent way to break the cycle of ineffectiveness at the global level. Here the role of regional diplomatic networks is prominently critical. The most visible example of regional pooling of resources today is the European Union with its 27 members, each with different strengths, capacities and technical skills. They form the most advanced form of cooperative collective action and represent a moral force and a compass leading efforts on data protection, human rights, and disarmament, and play a prominent role in addressing climate change and transitioning to the green economy.⁴⁶ Another, albeit less prominent, example is the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS). The group of 15 countries has been successful in resolving conflicts, peacefully settling disputes among its members, and preventing the spread of Ebola.⁴⁷

Putting humanity's security at the centre of the practice of states' security today involves acknowledging that most states lack the full range of technical means, financial capacity and wherewithal to cope with the sort of mega perils and trends discussed here. Fundamentally, states would have to develop specific skills together, and reinforce and create new regional and international cooperative frameworks to contain threats that affect all. States must mount collective responses where they can tap into each other's capacities and strengths. The shared burden that lies in collective action may assist states in moving forward with addressing threats more meaningfully. Once there is a full realisation that the security of each state's population and the wellbeing and vigor of each state's action can be enhanced by collective action, then every state is better off. One can see that in the relationships in the Arctic, for instance. Despite the promise of riches and untold potential for wealth in minerals, oil and access to lucrative routes, cooperation rather than conflict has prevailed in that region. Peaceful collaboration has been the predominant feature in the relations among the eight Arctic states.⁴⁸ Current security scholarship has not explained why peace prevails in this region, where regional cooperation through the Arctic Council is the norm.⁴⁹ Beverly Crawford contends that the region has a web of overlapping governing regimes that enables the management of peaceful relations amongst Arctic nations, where the governors are states in partnership with scientists and the many indigenous communities of the region.

⁴⁶ Cross, Mai'a. K. Davis. "The EU global strategy and diplomacy." *Contemporary Security Policy* 37.3 (2016): 402-413.

⁴⁷ Yabi, Gille Olakounle. "The role of ECOWAS in managing political crisis and conflict." FES Peace and Security Series, Abuja (2010).

⁴⁸ Riddervold, Marianne, and Akasemi Newsome. "Introduction: Cooperation, Conflict, and Interaction in the Global Commons." *International Relations*, (August 2021).

⁴⁹ Takle, Marianne. "Common Concern for the Global Ecological Commons: Solidarity with Future Generations?" *International Relations*, (July 2021).

These guarantors of governance are imbued with the principled and shared purpose of guarding the region's rich human heritage, environment, and protecting human security.⁵⁰

The eight nations of the Arctic cooperated in designing three international instruments which demonstrate that they have pooled their different technical capabilities and means to collaborate on technically challenging areas in the inhospitable environment of the Arctic: the 2011 Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic, the 2013 Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic, and the 2017 Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation. The same prevailing cooperation also holds true for outer space, where cooperation rather than conflict is the predominant *modus operandi*.⁵¹ Here again, as Mai'a Cross explains, obstinate differing national positions have been reconciled through purposeful and meaningful cooperation propelled not only by states but principally by scientists, innovators, and the general public's passions and enthusiasm for seafaring exploration.

Humanity's security has to do with transcending the limited notion of survival of the unit—the state—at the national level. This notion has scant relevance today in a highly threat-interdependent world where the security of all depends on the safety of each one. Therefore, the only way forward is an aggregate way of viewing such threats and challenging them in intensely cooperative undertakings that engage each other's respective strengths and capabilities.

The protection of future generations

Will ensuring security now protect future generations? How can change occur in a way that benefits people living today and also advance future generations? How can change take place in the areas where states are recalcitrant and frequently unwilling to change? The idea of common custodianship in a communality of interests that views nations as guardians of the interests of future generations has been rising since states first met in Stockholm in 1972 in the first summit on the environment. Concomitantly, the role of states as stewards instead of users and beneficiaries only, also implies a responsibility to future generations. To protect current and future generations, the call for humanity's security represents an appeal for global cooperation that includes addressing the rights and duties of present and future generations.⁵²

As our current global governance system is strengthened to accomplish humanity's security, one central challenge is for national representatives to rise above local party lines and the short-term goals that represent only the needs of their part of one nation or ethnicity, and

⁵⁰ Crawford, Beverly Kay. "Explaining Arctic Peace: A Human Heritage Perspective." *International Relations*, (August 2021).

⁵¹ Cross, Mai'a K. Davis. "Outer Space and the Idea of the Global Commons." *International Relations*, (July 2021).

⁵² Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade, 'International Law for Humankind' *Hague Academy of International Law Monographs*, Martinus Nijhoff; 2nd ed. Edition, 2013.

instead to transcend the purely national interest and represent the welfare of all of humanity as whole.⁵³

One area where states are often resolutely unwilling to change is vis-à-vis their decisions to pursue armaments and are habitually unreceptive to pressures from civil society calling on them to disarm. However, there is evidence that change may be occurring even in this area of the armaments industry. The creation of new humanitarian security regimes lends impetus to concretely entrenching humanity's security, despite antagonism and opposition from the most powerful states with the largest and most advanced arsenals of deadly weapons. Has innovative global cooperation managed to have an impact on the process of disarmament? Has it contributed to the creation of new international laws and novel norms? The answer to these two questions is a resounding yes. A new form of disarmament diplomacy has emerged in the aftermath of the advent of the norms of human security, while the international law that emerged as a consequence is the manifestation of a new era.

Human security has found expression in recent new international disarmament treaties and therefore gained a concrete foothold within an area of security previously thought to be impervious to change. Disarmament contributes to the common good by enhancing human security and by integrating once separate areas such as human rights, security, international humanitarian law and beyond.⁵⁴ For instance, the 2014 Arms Trade Treaty is a tangible accomplishment for creating common global standards for the arms trade that forges a direct connection between global arms transfers and human rights and humanitarian law. The global bans against landmines (1997), cluster munitions (2008), and nuclear weapons (2017) occurred outside of the usual disarmament diplomacy frameworks, often adopted by member states of the UN. Both the landmines and nuclear weapons ban campaigns received the Nobel Peace Prize, in 2007 and 2017 respectively. They used exceptional negotiation channels and means that were anchored in the remarkable partnerships among countries, non-governmental organisations and scientists. They were inspired by and served to operationalize the human security framework even though states had other motivations beyond improving the state of human security worldwide, such as seeking prestige or maintaining their reputation as law-abiding members of the international community.⁵⁵ These prohibitions gave rise to pioneering new ways of conducting disarmament diplomacy and fittingly originated novel international norms.⁵⁶ Concurrently, disarmament diplomacy processes that had started in the same period—in the aftermath of the Cold War—inaugurated the first-ever treaty to regulate conventional arms (small arms and light weapons and larger conventional weaponry).⁵⁷

⁵³ Lopez-Claros, Augusto, Arthur L. Dahl, and Maja Groff. *Global governance and the emergence of global institutions for the 21st century*. Cambridge University Press, 2020.

⁵⁴ Oberleitner 2005.

⁵⁵ Jennifer Erickson, 2015. *Dangerous Trade, Arms Exports, Human Rights, and International Reputation* [Online]. Berlin; Boston: Columbia University Press.

⁵⁶ Matthew Bolton (2020). *Imagining Disarmament, Enchanting International Relations*. New York: Palgrave Pivot.

⁵⁷ Denise Garcia, 2014. *Global Norms on Arms: The Significance of the Arms Trade Treaty for Global Security in World Politics*. *Global Policy*, 5(4), pp.425–432.

There is overwhelming support from UN member states for the human security-inspired law-making on disarmament and non-proliferation that has taken place since the 1990s. All the recent treaties—the 1997 Landmines Convention,⁵⁸ the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions,⁵⁹ the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty,⁶⁰ and the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the so-called Nuclear Ban Treaty)⁶¹—have been propelled forward by close cooperation between most countries and embraced by the adoption of binding commitments when they entered into force in record time.⁶² For instance, most countries belong in nuclear-weapon-free zones, which are parts of the world where countries commit not to manufacture, possess or test nuclear weapons. There are five nuclear-free zones: Latin America (established in the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific (1985 Treaty of Rarotonga), Southeast Asia (1995 Treaty of Bangkok), Africa (1996 Treaty of Pelindaba), and Central Asia (2006 Treaty of Semipalatinsk). The new vintage of humanitarian security regimes that are human security-shaping treaties may not only propel a transformation of the way that security issues are dealt with, but they have also impacted definitively on human life.⁶³ Gradually, these treaties have been contributing to the dissolution of the deeply held notion that weapons provide security.⁶⁴ They have mobilised the world to recognise the possibilities of real change by reducing violence against civilians and by cutting down the number of pernicious weapons by “affirming the collective revulsion of the international community at morally unacceptable weapons of catastrophic destruction”.⁶⁵ These examples demonstrate that change is possible even in the areas where

⁵⁸ The 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (the Landmines Convention) was opened for signature on 3 December 1997 and entered into force on 1 March 1999, just 15 months later: at that time, the shortest period for any international agreement in history.

⁵⁹ The Convention on Cluster Munitions was signed by 94 states when it opened for signature in Oslo on 3 December 2008. On 16 February 2010, just 15 months later, Adopted on 30 May 2008 in Dublin, Ireland, and signed on 3-4 December 2008 in Oslo, Norway, the Convention on Cluster Munitions entered into force on 1 August 2010. To date, 123 states have committed to the Convention's goals, of which 110 have become States Parties, and 13 are Signatories.

⁶⁰ The Arms Trade Treaty was adopted on 2 April 2013 by resolution 67/234B when 154 states, including the US, voted in favor of the first-ever comprehensive, legally binding international treaty governing arms: 67/234. The Arms Trade Treaty. The Treaty came into force on 24 December 2014 and has 110 States Parties and 31 States that have signed but not yet ratified the Treaty. The arms covered by the treaty are battle tanks; armored combat vehicles, large-caliber artillery systems; combat aircraft; attack helicopters; warships; missiles and missile launchers; and small arms and light weapons.

⁶¹ The Conference adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (by a vote of 122 States in favor, with one vote against and one abstention) at the United Nations on 7 July 2017. It opened for signature by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 20 September 2017. Following the deposit of the 50th instrument of ratification or accession of the Treaty on 24 October 2020, it entered into force on 22 January 2021.

⁶² Margarita H. Petrova (2018) “Weapons prohibitions through immanent critique: NGOs as emancipatory and (de)securing actors in security governance,” *Review of International Studies*. Cambridge University Press, 44(4), pp. 619–653. Richard Price, ‘Reversing the gun sights: transnational civil society targets land mines’, *International Organization* 52: 3, 1998, pp. 613–44.

⁶³ For a database of articles and figures about how the treaties have positively impacted human security and transformed lives see: https://www.hi-us.org/landmines_and_cluster_munitions_facts. Jody Williams, Stephen D. Goose and Mary Wareham (eds), *Banning Landmines: Disarmament, Citizen Diplomacy and Human Security*, Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2008.

⁶⁴ Sears 2021, Denise Garcia, Stop the emerging AI cold war, *Nature* 593, 169 (2021).

⁶⁵ Ramesh Thakur, “The Nuclear Ban Treaty: Recasting a Normative Framework for Disarmament” (2017) 40 (4) *The Washington Quarterly* 71.

states resist it most intensely. Cooperation can occur when there is concerted effort around principled action for the common good.

Nevertheless, resistance to change may occur from a smaller group of states that oppose multilateral interference in their security affairs at the high-level politics of the security domain, i.e., where states prepare to wage war. Despite the vitriol of their opposition, their objections can be gradually and inexorably overcome by the increasing force of the growing customary obligations.⁶⁶ For instance, most major powers have not formally ratified the Landmines Convention, but all abide by its norms.⁶⁷ The collective significance of this, as well as the combined effect of the human security norms that these new international treaties have engendered, is remarkable. Beyond the academic study of international security and law, these treaties impact on the lives of millions of people across the world by improving their human security.

Preventive action and interdisciplinary blueprints

Three and a half billion people could suffer from food insecurity by 2050. This is an increase of 1.5 billion people from today. This figure from the Ecological Threat Registrar throws into sharp relief the need for thinking preventively. One way to do this is to embrace the concept of humanity's security and put in place preventive frameworks with interdisciplinary blueprints for action to bring about change. In general, international relations tend to be more reactive than preventative or proactive. Along the same lines, there is not much in International Law to confront uncertainty beyond the precautionary principle. The origins of the precautionary principle can be found within environmental law and have now been extended to other fields of scientific and global cooperation concern such as nanotechnology, disarmament and health. The precautionary principle provides a valuable framework to confront future problems whose magnitude is still uncertain. Its two interrelated foundational pillars are the assessment and quantification of risks and scientific inputs. The principle can be invoked if there is a possibility of harm and damage even without scientific certainty. This is considered a central tenet of the principle; the causal link between action and effect has not been fully established in most cases.

The concept of security has been gradually evolving to be a common good rather than solely a matter of national interest. The new path-breaking norms introduced by the United Nations guarantee all peoples' mutual benefit and the common good. The United Nations' global norms represent a remarkable collective achievement. It is time now for them to be strengthened and updated to carry out humanity's security to enhance the common good. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a concrete global map to do so. Examples of the common good would be creating and distributing vaccines,

⁶⁶ International Committee of the Red Cross, Customary International Humanitarian Law database Rule 81. Restrictions on the Use of Landmines. The rule states: "there is a strong case for the existence of a customary rule in non-international armed conflicts that mines must not be used in ways that amount to indiscriminate attacks and that particular care must therefore be taken to minimize their indiscriminate effects." See also Adam Bower. 2020. "Entrapping Gulliver: The United States and the Antipersonnel Mine Ban." *Security Studies* 29 (1): 128-161.

⁶⁷ Bower, Adam. 2017. *Norms Without the Great Powers: International Law and Changing Social Standards in World Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

combatting climate change, or eliminating nuclear weapons, leading to the better living conditions that those commitments would entail. As a result, the pursuit of the common good would arise from the collective attempts to create processes, mainly within the frameworks sustained by different transnational networks that form anew or within existing international and regional organisations. The common good is attained when various networks cooperatively combat a mutual challenge. The emergence of the idea of 'human security' by the mid-1990s consolidates the trend toward viewing security as a common good, where the understanding of security must transcend the focus on national security and include the ideas of "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want".⁶⁸ Several governments, like those in Canada and Japan, and international organisations took up the concept and applied it to search for solutions to new problems. Humanity's security furthers the attempt to elevate the notion of security to encompass the fundamental challenges posed to the individual by global conflict, infectious diseases that become pandemics and climate change on a planetary scale.⁶⁹ The current pandemic caused by the disease COVID-19 illustrates how countries must sharpen their security policies by starting to redirect their security expenditure from purely military preparations for wars that may never materialize to investing in prevention against other kinds of menace that affect human beings.⁷⁰ All the existential risks to humanity today are beyond the control of any one state. The best protection is collective action. Yet both China and the United Kingdom are expanding their nuclear arsenals.⁷¹ When in reality did nuclear weapons protect humankind?

The rise of mega perils such as climate change and the current pandemic has proven that protection from nuclear weapons arsenals is futile in the face of such hazards. Therefore, more concerted redirected effort is needed. And the whole concept of security needs to be reconceptualized and further integrated into security policies toward achieving the common good.

Preventive action must be part of the blueprints to avert the worst that is forecast to happen. Two years ago, the IPCC published a seminal report with an admonition:⁷² Humanity only had 12 years left to contain and reverse the most dramatically horrible effects of climate change on the planet. Well, now we have nine years left. Let us take this chance to rebuild the world's economies in a sustainable green way and create millions of desperately needed jobs along the way. Humanity is linked together in this endeavour: the global economic recovery is inextricably intertwined with equitable access to a healthy future. For the first time, humanity is firmly absorbed in finding solutions united in one collective endeavour. The enormity of the mega threats posed by climate change and pandemics as well as the

⁶⁸ Gerd Oberleitner (2009). Human Security. In Encyclopedia of Human Rights: Oxford University Press.

⁶⁹ Albert C, Baez A and Rutland J, "Human Security as Biosecurity: Reconceptualizing National Security Threats in the Time of COVID-19" (2021) 40 Politics and the Life Sciences 83. Miriam Bradley, *Protecting civilians in war: the ICRC, UNHCR, and their limitations in internal armed conflicts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁷⁰ Denise Garcia, "Redirect military budgets to tackle climate change and pandemics", *Nature* 584, 521-523 (2020).

⁷¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/29/podcasts/the-daily/china-nuclear-arsenal.html>. Accessed on 08/22/2021.

⁷² IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.

shared threats have intensified the need for coordinated action across borders. Imagine what kind of global governance you would like to see in the post-COVID-19 world: a strengthened role for the World Health Organization, prevention mechanisms in place to avert future pandemics, a role for interdisciplinary private-public partnerships (the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, for instance), the GAVI Vaccine Alliance, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI).

Deforestation is one of the key causes of emerging infectious diseases.⁷³ Without managing the global commons—from our oceans and air to healthy forests and biodiversity—universal human and planetary health will not be possible. The COVID-19 pandemic is a blunt reminder of humankind's over-exploitative relationship with nature. Half of the world's GDP is highly or moderately dependent on nature. For every dollar spent on the restoration of nature, at least nine dollars of economic benefit can be expected.⁷⁴ The interdisciplinary links described below must be addressed in any framework designed to enhance humanity's security.

1) Biodiversity loss, and combating and curbing the wildlife trade – an industry worth an estimated US\$20 billion annually in China. China has temporarily halted this trade. Controlling deforestation and the wildlife trade could prevent pandemics. Managing the global wildlife trade and reducing deforestation would cost \$40-58 billion per year. But the pandemic is estimated to have cost the global economy \$8-16 trillion by July 2020. The increasing frequency of disease outbreaks is linked to climate change and biodiversity loss.

2) Climate change and biodiversity. The frequency of disease outbreaks has been rising steadily. Between 1980 and 2013 there were 12,012 recorded outbreaks, with 44 million individual cases, affecting every country in the world. A number of trends have contributed to this rise, including high levels of global travel, trade and connectivity, and high-density living – but the links to climate change and declining biodiversity are the most striking.

3) Deforestation. Deforestation has increased steadily over the past two decades and is linked to the outbreaks of Ebola, and the Zika and Nipah viruses. Deforestation drives wild animals out of their natural habitats and closer to human populations, creating a greater opportunity for zoonotic diseases – that is, diseases that spread from animals to humans.⁷⁵

The continued privileging of the military aspects of security weakens individual security as the actual risks to individuals continue to be unaddressed in countries that must prioritise spending on education, public health and climate mitigation.⁷⁶ The human and economic cost of militarization arising from the US\$2 trillion in annual spend on the military and defense resulted in a decline of nearly 11% in global economic activity in 2019, totaling \$14.5 trillion.⁷⁷ Enhancing the quality of life becomes possible because of the context

⁷³ Ellwanger, Joel Henrique, et al. "Beyond diversity loss and climate change: Impacts of Amazon deforestation on infectious diseases and public health." *Anais da Academia Brasileira de Ciências* 92 (2020).

⁷⁴ UNEP, FAO, Strategy of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2020).

⁷⁵ Andrew P. Dobson et al. Ecology and economics for pandemic prevention, *Science* 24, July 2020: 379-381.

⁷⁶ Matt McDonald (2002) Human Security and the Construction of Security, *Global Society*, 16:3, 277-295.

⁷⁷ Institute for Economics & Peace. *Global Peace Index 2020: Measuring Peace in a Complex World* (IEP, 2020).

created by enhanced human security;⁷⁸ this highlights how futile it is to continue to view security issues exclusively through the lenses of military threats, which is a disservice to those working to improve the human condition. The COVID-19 pandemic has cast an urgent light on the question, in stark contrast to old, officially ordained ways of viewing security. There were no structures in place to prevent the pandemic, and many of them had actually been dismantled recently, and so even the advanced democracies were hard hit. Therefore, the annual global two trillion-dollar expenditure on the military and on purchasing new armaments now seems excessive and reckless.⁷⁹ The pandemic has shown the true meaning of what the lack of human security can mean for the stability of the international system: no military force on earth, even the mightiest, could contain the virus.⁸⁰ In the light of the current post-pandemic world order, assuring humanity's security should be viewed as an imperative. It is essential to maintain the integrity of nature and the environment as mutually enforcing platforms to avoid future large-scale harm to the health of the whole ecological system.

International relations are hard to change but are not immutable or unalterable, and the persistent efforts of activists, an informed civil society and scientists may bring change through new ideas and rising norms. The movements for the abolition of slavery, the prohibitions of genocide, torture and piracy, along with the whole process of decolonization and the end of apartheid, show that change is possible and transformation has been occurring. Global security is in a state of flux and uncertainty. As I argued, preventing climate change and pandemics often exceeds the operational, financial, technical and political capacities of states and global governance institutions to an alarming degree. When the United Nations was founded, the planet had fewer than 2.5 billion people. By the time of the UN Millennium Goals, there were 6 billion, and now we are some 8 billion people. People will seek the benefits of knowledge, political stability and economic growth, which are increasingly vital yet remain unevenly shared. The growing disparities and inequalities are likely to grow ever more acute in the face of the present inability of global institutions to offer practical and innovative solutions which enable the flourishing and justice for all. Therefore, the need to achieve humanity's security is pressing.

⁷⁸ Ramesh Thakur, "From National to Human Security", in S. Harris and A. Mack (eds.), *Asia Pacific Security: The Economics Political Nexus* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1997).

⁷⁹ Tian, N., Kuimova, A., Lopes da Silva, D., Wezeman, P. D. & Wezeman, S. T. *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2019* (SIPRI, 2020).

⁸⁰ Carlos R. S. Milani (2020). COVID-19 between global human security and ramping authoritarian nationalisms. *Geopolítica*, 11, 141–151.

The Author

Denise Garcia is Professor at the Experiential Robotics Institute at Northeastern University. She is Vice-chair of the International Committee for Robot Arms Control, a member of the International Panel for the Regulation of Autonomous Weapons (Germany's Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Global Initiative on Ethics of Autonomous and Intelligent Systems. She has given testimonies to the United Nations on the question of lethal autonomous weapons and their impact on peace and security. Prior to joining the faculty of Northeastern University in 2006, she held a three-year appointment at Harvard, at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, and the World Peace Foundation's Intra-State Conflict Program. Author of **Small Arms and Security: New Emerging International Norms**, and **Disarmament Diplomacy and Human Security: Norms, Regimes, and Moral Progress in International Relations**, her articles have appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, the *European Journal of International Security*, *International Affairs*, and elsewhere.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/authors/denise-garcia>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02460-9>

<https://www.northeastern.edu/cssh/faculty/denise-garcia>

Toda Peace Institute

The **Toda Peace Institute** is an independent, nonpartisan institute committed to advancing a more just and peaceful world through policy-oriented peace research and practice. The Institute commissions evidence-based research, convenes multi-track and multi-disciplinary problem-solving workshops and seminars, and promotes dialogue across ethnic, cultural, religious and political divides. It catalyses practical, policy-oriented conversations between theoretical experts, practitioners, policymakers and civil society leaders in order to discern innovative and creative solutions to the major problems confronting the world in the twenty-first century (see www.toda.org for more information).

Contact Us

Toda Peace Institute

Samon Eleven Bldg. 5th Floor

3-1 Samon-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0017, Japan

Email: contact@toda.org

Sign up for the Toda Peace Institute mailing list:

<https://toda.org/policy-briefs-and-resources/email-newsletter.html>

Connect with us on the following media.

YouTube: [@todapeaceinstitute3917](https://www.youtube.com/@todapeaceinstitute3917)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TodaInstitute>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TodaInstitute/>