



Sustainable Security 101

Why We Need a New Security Paradigm

Why do we need a new concept of national security?

The global economic crisis, the swine flu pandemic, and the looming climate catastrophe are just a few examples that illustrate the global nature of the challenges confronting us today. Traditional state-based threats are still with us. Simultaneously, however, new *kinds* of problems—border-hopping terrorists, global poverty, and the world's climate, energy, and food supply—have emerged as long-term threats to our security. The United States' national security concepts and policies have not adapted to the complexities of this new world. A new policy is needed.

What is sustainable security?

We live in an interconnected world in which our security is now irrevocably linked to that of others. This reality calls for a new paradigm—a progressive approach to foreign policy and national security that emphasizes development alongside defense and diplomacy.

Sustainable security is a bold rethinking of national security that introduces the notions of collective and human security and rebalances the three tools of foreign policy—defense, diplomacy, and development.

Collective security

While traditional security focuses on threats to single nation-states, collective security deals with emerging threats to the entire world. But it is not enough to deal with immediate or emerging threats. Investing in development can help to promote the global common good and even prevent situations from becoming threats.

The 21st century will be shaped by transnational threats such as terrorism, money laundering, illicit trade, criminal and drug syndicates, and global warming. Because these problems cross borders, no state can tackle them alone. All countries are responsible for them

and their impact will be felt everywhere. To meet these challenges we must adopt a global perspective and strategy.

Confronting these common problems is in the shared interest of all countries. The United States must act cooperatively—in partnership with our allies and in collaboration with strengthened international institutions such as NATO and the United Nations—to prevent and manage them.

Human security

Human security shifts the focus from the survival of states to the security and well-being of individuals. It aims to bring freedom from fear and freedom from want to the world's people.

It is well known that poverty and deprivation foster conflict, crime, violence, and extremism. Sustainable economic development is therefore the key to long-term stability and security. Development promotes human welfare. And it facilitates a rise in living standards abroad that can create new markets for American goods and services while offering potential to alleviate the pressure on the American consumer to propel global economic growth.

Human security thus advances our strategic, moral, and economic interests. It could also restore the moral leadership we lost during the Bush administration. It makes us safer and it's the right thing to do.

While humanitarian aid and peacekeeping are a part of human security, the United States' pattern of reaction to crises has been costly in terms of taxpayer dollars and human life. Human security favors preventing crises by addressing their root causes. It's about curing the disease and not the symptoms.

Rebalancing defense, diplomacy, and development

Defense currently dominates our approach to security. The United States spent \$611.1 billion on the military in fiscal year 2009 but only \$49.8 billion on foreign aid. This approach might have made sense during the Cold War, but it must now adapt to the changing nature of challenges confronting the world.

Sustainable security argues for a rebalancing of the so-called “3Ds,” or defense, diplomacy, and development. Diplomacy and development must be rehabilitated, and all three tools must work together synergistically if we are to advance our national, collective, and human security interests.

We desperately need a robust diplomatic and development capacity to address collective threats and human insecurity. Until the final years of the Bush administration, Congress steadily cut the budget of USAID and the Department of State. Current funding is still far short of what is needed.

Sustainable security recognizes the inherent relationship between development and security. Lack of development breeds the underlying causes of instability and insecurity. Conversely, we can alter our development programs so that they strategically address the underlying causes of instability, thus making host countries safer and strengthening our own security.

But some daunting problems must be overcome for us to do so. We have no coherent strategy for development. Our foreign aid spending has steadily declined for the last two decades, and our foreign aid system is fragmented. Aid programs are scattered across 20 agencies, resulting in inefficiency and a crippling lack of coordination.

Putting it all together

In sum, sustainable security is about crafting a smart foreign policy that deals simultaneously with immediate threats and global challenges, prevents crises rather than merely reacting to them, cares about people—as well as states—out of compassion and enlightened self-interest, understands the strategic necessity of strong alliances and cooperation, and restores diplomacy and development as vital tools of foreign policy.

How can we achieve sustainable security in practice?

A few bold steps need to be taken to implement this new strategy.

First, we must reform our broken foreign aid system. We propose consolidating our dispersed aid programs and integrating their work through a National Strategy for Global Development.

Second, we must integrate diplomacy and development into our strategic planning by treating them as two separate tools that can work together. The Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review recently announced by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is a step in the right direction.

Third, we must dramatically increase funding for development to build our government's capacity.

Fourth, we must emphasize building capacity for strong national institutions that can promote economic integration and growth, and wide distribution of the benefits from growth to reduce poverty and vulnerability.

And finally, we must re-engage the international community by strengthening our alliances and leading in the reform and creation of strong international institutions. We will be unable to tackle our most pressing global challenges without a platform for cooperation and working to regain international support. And doing so will also allow us to build nimble partnerships with rising powers and leverage our influence on current national security issues.