

Development and Security

I wish to thank the organizers of this important conference for the invitation to talk about the issues of development and security. Before I turn to the main topic though, I feel the need to provide somewhat of a reality check to the discussions we have been having so far. It concerns the role and interests of the United States.

When the audience was asked by Minister Gareth Evans to decide which were the two most urgent of the six threats discussed in the high-level panel report, the audience here voted for Poverty, infectious disease and environmental degradation and Conflict within states. This is a very enlightened sense of priorities, but it is not universally shared. If the same poll had been conducted in the United States, I think that the answer would have been Terrorism and Nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons. This tells us a lot about the interests and priorities of the United States and the issues that it wishes to see given top priority.

I also want to make it clear that the United States is walking away from the United Nations; if an issue is important to it then it does not go through the United Nations system. The U.S. preference is to use a coalition of the willing, an alternative structure such as NATO or a different international organization. Thus, despite the UN's excellent record on non-proliferation, the most recent Weapons of Mass Destruction initiative from the U.S. went to the G8, not to the UN.

Over the last few years the U.S. has become more insular and more clearly dedicated to looking after its own interests. This is not only a governmental attitude. Let me illustrate this. During the early days after the Tsunami in Asia, when the extent of the devastation was becoming apparent, a major U.S. news network was reporting on the issue. According to the news anchor there was only one question on everyone's lips — I assumed that the question would be how can I help? — but I was wrong. According to this news network, the question was could it happen here? and there followed a segment on why the continental United States was unlikely to be hit by a Tsunami. This is a very searing example of the insularity of the U.S.

One of the challenges to the international community in the run up to the September Conference to discuss the high-level panel reports and consider UN reform is to manage the narrow U.S. interests in the process and ensure that the other issues (which we care about) don't get lost.

In the field of development and security two of the biggest tasks that we face are first, to show the nexus between the two and second, to make the United Nations system the prime actor on these issues and the only one able to speak for the majority of the international system.

Development and security are two absolutely central themes for the work of the United Nations, but they have tended to be dealt with separately and prioritized differently in different parts of the system. Thus, the Security Council, neglecting its title, worked

primarily on the high political issues. By contrast, the General Assembly, neglecting the interests of the majority of its members, concentrated more on issues of development.

This division between development and security issues has also been evident within the UN system, its organizations and internal departments. The natural bureaucratic tendencies to defend ones turf combined with weak mechanisms for coordination meant that the two issues were generally dealt with in isolation.

This also reflected the dominant thinking of the Cold War years — as during the period of Dag Hammarskjöld's leadership — that security was about military power and particularly about weapons of mass destruction. Development issues were placed in a humanitarian category by the major powers and not seen as inherently connected to their own security.

This is now beginning to change, but even today the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are seen as humanitarian. We need to broaden understanding of the intimate connections between security and development.

In the aftermath of the Cold War, the UN System was the incubator for a concept that tried to break out of this narrow definition of security. The UN gave birth to the concept of Human Security. This idea has given some political traction or momentum to some important correctives to narrow definitions of security:

- it brought into focus a new level of analysis, *the individual*, to sit alongside the accepted levels of the state and the system
- it also highlighted a wider range of threats to security beyond military power, both positive threats (eg conflict within the state focused against individuals) and negative threats (eg the shortage of clean water due to salination in the Middle East).

This re-casting of individuals as important to security was partly a bid to secure more resources for development and in this it has not been very successful.

There are two main reasons for this that also relate to definitions of human security. The first is that its very breadth and inclusiveness also makes it difficult to pin down -- what issue is not encompassed by human security? The newly released Sachs Millennium Project Report, which looks at progress to reaching the Millennium Development Goals, potentially has a lot to say about human security. However, it is thirteen volumes thick and the executive summary is eighty pages long. If the ideas it encompasses cannot be expressed more concisely than that, how likely is it that any politician is going to invest the time in reading it all, figure out what is important and act upon it?

The second difficulty is in drawing a causal connection between aspects of human security and the traditional security agenda. This led those committed to the traditional security agenda to dismiss the idea.

So, there remains somewhat of a disconnection between the issues of development and security, but now we have a new opportunity to see the two brought together in a more coherent and convincing manner. This has been done through the work of the High Level Panel in *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*.

The panel began with certain presumptions that are worth repeating:

- threats to security recognize no national boundaries
- states working alone cannot make themselves invulnerable
- states will not always be able to meet their responsibilities to protect their own peoples and not harm their neighbors

The definition of threats that they used is also important. Any event or process that leads to large-scale death or lessening of life chances and undermines states as the basic unit of the international system is a threat to international security. (p.23)

So this brings it all together in a string of pearls from individuals, to states, to the system. However, it also implies a sense of scale; that a certain amount of a problem has to occur — a tipping point passed — before it becomes a security issue.

The work of the High Level Panel on bringing together security and development is an excellent re-orientation of the agenda. However, there is a danger that all this work will get swept away at the September meeting as the UN system becomes engulfed in the issue of Security Council reform. This high politics issue has the potential to completely overwhelm all the other issues. This means that in the run up to September interested parties need to orient their diplomacy to keeping the issues of security and development linked together and firmly on the agenda. Otherwise they will be swept away.

This is an opportunity to bring the two concepts together more effectively, but as yet we are not quite there. This can be shown by looking at the relationship between the two at three different points in time; before conflict, during conflict and after conflict.

Before Conflict: The relationship between poverty and conflict is not a clear *causal* line — there are lots of states living in poverty that do not resort to armed conflict either against internal groups or as a diversionary tactic. Something more must be happening if some states in poverty become violent, but others do not. Because the relationship between lack of development and insecurity is more *associational* than causal it has been easier for powerful states to ignore development issues.

There is currently a big debate going on about the relationship between greed and grievance in causing war. Many of you will be familiar with the work of Paul Collier of the World Bank, he and his unit were key in igniting this debate by using statistical data to pinpoint states that were likely to descend into conflict.¹ Collier and his colleagues

¹ Paul Collier, *Doing Well Out of War*, in Mats Berdal and David Malone (eds.), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2000).

work has been controversial — not least because of the lack of attention to local factors in their analysis — and has spawned a lively literature refuting their approach². Through this debate we are reaching toward a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between development and security in the pre-conflict phase.

During Conflict: Development becomes a target in conflict — hospitals, food, schools etc. all become the victims of war. Inevitably, development is set back. The weakening of individuals during the traumas of war leads to stress, fear, displacement etc. This makes populations more vulnerable to disease. It is no coincidence that the major international disease pandemics followed international conflicts, for example, the influenza after World War One killed more than the war had. One of the unexpected outcomes of the ongoing Congo crisis has been the emergence and spread of Ebola. We should also note that Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and refugees sometimes spread poverty and conflict elsewhere. For example, the flow of people from Rwanda in 1994 had negative impacts on a number of neighboring states, including stressing resources and leading to conflicts over land.

After Conflict: Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration (D, D, R & R) is the first opportunity to create a more positive relationship between development and security. The aim is to establish a political economy for peace. Such a political economy has to hold out the promise of real development so that groups do not have to struggle to obtain diminishing resources.

I know that the Swedish Foreign Ministry is taking a big interest in D, D, R & R. This is excellent news and I hope that they are able to put the same amount of energy into the UN system on this as they did when they took on the sanctions issue. I would commend the Ministry to consider the fact that the way D, D, R & R is practiced today tends to the most emphasis on establishing physical security. This is certainly important, but it is not in itself enough; it needs to be coupled with an emphasis on establishing economic security. This means that D, D, R & R efforts need to place greater emphasis on the final phase of the process, Reintegration, to ensure that ex-combatants and the communities that absorb them are able to support themselves without recourse to violence.

Within the United Nations system and in national practice, the development aspects of the D, D, R & R process are under valued and often under-resourced. For example, Reintegration is often not included in the Peacekeeping budget for UN operations, so there is no set amount of money available for establishing a political economy of peace. More than that, responsibility for reintegration usually falls to the new state, when it is often not clear that there is a political economy to reintegrate ex-combatants back into.

In conclusion, we need to ensure that the September conference continues to focus on the key issues of the connections between development and security. The UN system needs to increasingly treat the issues as one, to move outside traditional bureaucratic divisions

² Karen Ballentine and Jake Sherman (eds.), *The Political Economy of Armed Conflict: Beyond Greed and Grievance* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003).

of labor and to increase coordination on these issues. This is a massive but vital task, it will ensure that the UN has a central role to play in world issues for the Twenty First Century. One area where specific reforms are required is in the practice of D, D, R & R and I look forward to positive actions by the Swedish government to change the mindset on these issues.