
Security in The Transforming World: Balancing Traditional and Non-Traditional Threats

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Abstract

Twenty-first-century security is reshaped by a concept that expands defense by military means to include political stability, economic prosperity, human rights, and social justice. Interstate war and frontier war contrasted with traditional vs. non-traditional threats of terrorism, extremism, economic marginalization, pandemics, environmental insecurity, and state failure. The management of conventional and non-conventional threats from state to state is addressed in this article through a multidisciplinary approach. There are five highest order points of concern in the Human Security Paradigm and the Conflict Transformation Theory, and these are: economic development, protection of rights and removal of deprivations, political negotiation as the highest order point of concern, reintegration of the opposition dissident of the national society, and upholding the rule of law. Given the South African, Colombian, Pakistani, and Nepali experiences through a qualitative case study with thematic analysis, the study arrives at the conclusion that exclusive reliance on the exercise of military power can never amount to a guarantee of long-term stability. Rather, people-centered, participatory approaches have to be engaged in attempting to deal with the causes of insecurity at their source. The last observation to be made from the paper is that the new world is founded on political, social, economic, and legal strategy and customary defense institutions uniting for the sake of discovering lasting peace.

Keywords: Security, Traditional Threats, Non-Traditional Threats, Political Dialogue, Deprivation, Reintegration, Rule of Law, Economic Development, Human Security.

Introduction

Security has always been of great interest to the state in terms of strategy. During the Cold War, security almost had all of its military connotation: frontier defense, defense against occupation, and power balancing in the alliance (Walt, 1991). Bipolar rivalry is a thing of the past with the passing away of the narrow perspective. Post-Cold War conflicts no longer became an aftermath of great power rivalry but intrastate war, terrorism, economic imbalance, and failure of governments.

The postmodern international order is an age of profound interdependence and rapid change. The traditional threats include interstate war, nuclearization, and border war. These are most applicable to international relations so far. They are accompanied by, and are followed by, non-traditional threats:

- Extremism and terrorism, including South Asian, Middle Eastern, and sub-Saharan African.
- Economic poverty and inequality are boiling over into revolutions like the Arab Spring.
- Failed states, like Somalia and Yemen.

- Climate insecurity triggers displacement and initiates the struggle for resources.
- Pandemics and health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have exposed vulnerability at the international and national security systems.

Security today is no longer a question of protecting borders but of protecting people. The 1994 Human Development Report (UNDP) was one of the pioneering reports globally when it reinitiated the notion of human security and placed special emphasis on "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want". It placed the trend in security thinking in the majority of the contexts, i.e., political, economic, social, and environmental. This study embraces five interlinked axioms upon which national policy against non-conventional and conventional threats must operate:

- Political means as the ultima ratio of war.
- Eradication of deprivation and assertion of rights.
- Reintegration of the dissidents into national life.
- Synchronization of governance and rule of law.
- Rapid economic growth as an umbrella of peace.

Resilient stability is believed to necessitate an equilibrium between military preparedness and people inclusive policies.

Literature Review

Common Security Approaches

Security analysis has been leaning predominantly towards military power and deterrence. It has been the argument of the realists that in the state of nature, they do exist by exercising maximum power (Morgenthau, 1948). Walt (1991) has institutionalized security studies as threat, use, and management of military power analysis. Classical security thus stayed on sovereignty, national security, and the balance of power.

Though this type of paradigm is still used particularly in instances like border conflicts, such as the South China Sea or Russia-Ukraine, it has been decried for not being able to surmount social and economic causes of insecurity.

Expanding Security

Barry Buzan went on to extend security to political, economic, social, and environmental realms in 1991. The Copenhagen School continued to develop securitization theory by showing how migration patterns or outbreaks could be securitized as existentially dangerous (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998).

Human security was a signature mark of intellectual excess. Human security, as UNDP (1994) discusses, is all about guaranteeing human beings their security from threats in the form of ongoing threats of hunger, disease, and repression. Paris (2001) quotes that human security unites development and security studies and reaffirms the vision of the state towards people.

Johan Galtung (1996) likewise utilized conflict transformation in efforts to prevent violence and even its origins. What South Africa transitioned from apartheid to peace is optimally summarized as a model of the success of inclusive consensus negotiation in preventing civil war. Afghanistan, however, reminds us of how amazingly military invasion without a so-called political settlement is the root of security problems in the long term.

Deprivation and Human Rights

The most tangible conflict determinant is economic poverty. Poverty and inequality were discovered by Collier and Hoeffler (2004) to be good predictors of civil war. Amartya Sen (1999) also previously thought that development is freedom and right-less governments are conflict-prone. Unemployment, corruption, and

denial of rights already triggered mass mobilization in the Arab Spring protests. She reminds us that poverty is not just a lack of money; it is a lack of capability.

Reintegration of Dissidents

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) is a mechanism behind peacebuilding. Muggah (2008) also adds that ex-combatants, in the absence of employment and reintegration, will default to violence. The Colombian peace process with FARC discusses the scope of DDR, but the failure in Sierra Leone discusses the potential failure in reintegration.

Rule of Law and Governance

Francis Fukuyama (2011) places good institutions and the rule of law on the pedestal of stable states. Corruption, selective justice, and poor governance delegitimize and empower extremism. The worst example is Somalia's failure, and Singapore's fifty years of rule of law is the best example of the rule of law.

Economy and Security

Experts also agree that economic growth will be enough to cover security deficits. Sen (1999) and Booth (2007) speculate that development discourages complaints. Poverty reduction success in China solidified internal legitimacy, as death-trapped economies such as Yemen support instability.

Research Question and Objectives

Research Question

How do governments learn to manage traditional and non-traditional security threats in a new world order?

Research Objectives

1. To think politically about the prevention of conflicts.
2. To examine reasons for insecurity by deprivation and denial of rights.
3. To redefine dissident reintegration as peacebuilding.
4. To examine the contribution of the rule of law to state legitimacy building.
5. To examine the transformation of economic growth into sustainable security.

Theoretical Framework

Human Security Framework

Human Security Approach (UNDP, 1994) translates security from states to people. It is achieved in the form of 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from want'. It identifies that poverty, hunger, and repression are as devastating to human security as foreign occupation.

Conflict Transformation Theory

Johan Galtung's Conflict Transformation Theory of 1996 is the structural change and reconciliation theory. Conflict management utilizes the short-term band-aid, while conflict transformation constructs the causality. It has peacebuilding pillars of social justice, dialogue, and inclusiveness. The combination of two theories ensures that war strategies do not work, and inclusive, multi-faceted policies need to be utilized by the state.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is tri-angulatory in nature as it includes qualitative, descriptive, and analytical approaches. In this research paper, the researcher has employed secondary data sources like books, refereed journals, policy documents, and international organizations' reports. This paper has utilized case studies of South Africa (political reconciliation), Nepal (Maoists' integration), Pakistan (development and counterinsurgency) and Colombia (DDR campaigns). Thematic analysis of customary security policies and social, economic, political, and legal policies has been employed.

Findings and Results

Political Solutions Avoid Escalation

South African transition shows that negotiation of inclusivity can be avoided by non-violent means. Truth and Reconciliation Commission gave the platform to speak, forgive, and build the state (Du Toit, 2017). In Afghanistan, extensive militarized policies never gave peace because problems were not addressed (Tayah et al., 2025).

Deprivation Fuels Insecurity

Arab Spring uprisings revealed how poverty and suffering had been used against a nation to destabilize it (Rui et al., 2025). A few decades of oscillating between extremes in the tribal region of Pakistan had planted rich ground for the forces of extremism, and they had been successful in taking advantage of the state vacuum by providing welfare and justice (Shah, 2024).

Reintegration as a Means of Controlling Violence

Colombia's peace deal with FARC trained and employed its former rebels and made the deterrent dependent on avoiding relapse (Caserotti, 2024). Nepal brought Maoist combatants into Nepal's political mainstream ten years after having rebelled against it. Without reintegration opportunities, as in Sri Lanka following war, there is frustration (Acharya & Muldoon, 2017).

Rule of Law Builds Trust

Well-oiled legal institutions of successful governments like Singapore and Norway are defined by stability and greater institutional confidence. Somaliland and Yemen occupied the power vacuum created by collapsed extremist regime's downfall. Rule of law trumps justice, reduces corruption, and enhances legitimacy (Hassan, 2021).

Economic Growth Increases Security

Economic growth legitimates and diffuses discontent. That over 800 million Chinese have been taken out of abject poverty is a measure of the success of stability through economic growth (Knight, 2016). Economic stagnation in Syria before the war had run frustrations to a level that would metastasize into war (Koolae et al., 2021).

Facts have been used to prove that classical and non-classical threats converge. Political, economic, and social solutions are playing a prominent role in sustainable peace, while military preparedness is contributing to the scene (Igbuzor, 2011).

Political discourse is the best vaccine against violence. Denial and disempowerment are the elements of radicalization. Reintegration policies transform enemies into hardworking citizens; vicious circles being left out. Rule of law contributes further legitimacy to the state and economic development contributes to build

sustainable peace (Ezeogu, 2024).

Case studies validate the lessons: South Africa reminds us of reconciliation, Colombia reminds us of effective DDR, Nepal reminds us of effective integration, and Pakistan reminds us of assaults on rights and failure of development. Taken together, they remind us that new-world security must be inclusive, multidimensional, and human-centered.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Twenty-first-century security cannot be equated to ungoverned violence. Political exclusion, poverty, governance, and economic inequality are the determinants of insecurity that have been highlighted through research. Political participation, rights protection, return of dissidents, police, and economic development must be included in traditional defense if peace must prevail.

Furthermore, comparative case studies reveal that successful security policies are grounded in human-centered approaches. The reconciliation in South Africa, DDR in Colombia, and political inclusion of insurgents in Nepal all show that politics of discourse and reintegration reduce violence. Those other regions that are impoverished, badly governed, or excluded, however, are still haunted by insecurity even after enormous investment in the armed forces. This teaches the greatest lesson of all: that security is not achieved through violence but by addressing the root causes of instability through political, social, economic, and legal reforms.

Recommendations

Political Dialogue First: State must conduct negotiations and reconciliations ahead of time, in that matters are already resolved before they warm them up.

Protect Rights and End Deprivation: Human rights, social justice, and fair share of resources is a reverse against radicalization.

Reintegration Processes: Disarmament and reintegration as process must be implemented to armed groups.

Empower Institutions: Rule of law and good government constructs legitimacy and develops trust.

Support Economic Progress: The policy principles of inclusive development must be paramount in the national security policy.

Having such policy proposals available, governments are better positioned to accomplish both conventional and unconventional threats and be capable of accomplishing peace in modernization.

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