

“Sustainable Security”

**for the
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Christopher Cushing,
Director,
Centre for International Security and Cooperation (CICS),
Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford,
United Kingdom.

Sustainable Security.

Session 1: “Emerging new phenomena of conflicts in the world”.

Key Questions:

1. What would be an appropriate ‘security strategy’ for the 21st Century?
2. How would it differ from today’s dominant approach to security?

Sustainable Security:

An appropriate security strategy would have four objectives:

1. address imminent **threats** and respond to **crises**;
2. identify and respond to **trends and changes** in the international security environment;
3. strengthen **trends and institutions that sustain peace and security**; and
4. strengthen **trust** - the world's primary security currency.

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Global Threats in the 21st Century:

- The most important challenges to international peace and security come in the form of **trends** containing the **causes** of global and regional insecurity and conflict.
- Future security concerns need to be placed in a **broad perspective** which takes into account the economic, health, environmental and other long-term threats to human survival and well-being.
- This applies today, and will apply even more so in the coming years.

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Oxford Research Group: the most important inter-connected trends are:

1. **Climate Change;**
2. **Competition Over Resources;**
3. **Marginalisation of the Majority World; and**
4. **Global Militarisation.**

Future insecurity will arise from four main groups of factors:

1. The adverse affects of climate change and global warming;
2. Competition over increasingly scarce resources (oil and water);
3. Increasing socio-economic divisions and the marginilsation of the majority of the people in the world; and
4. Increased use of military force and further spread of military technologies.

Sustainable Security:

(1) Climate Change 1:

May not be a direct cause of violent conflict, but will “contribute to the risk of internal and interstate conflict” and “exacerbate existing tensions”. (Stern)

The effects of climate change are likely to lead to:

- the displacement of peoples from island, coastline and river delta areas;
- severe natural disasters and changing weather patterns; and
- increasing food shortages.

This would contribute to:

- increased human suffering;
- greater social unrest;
- revised patterns of living (adaptation and mitigation); and
- the pressure of migration across the world.

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(1) Climate Change 2:

- This has **long-term security implications** for all countries which are far more serious, lasting and destructive than those of international terrorism.
- **However**, the response to climate change should not be the greater use of **nuclear power**, which would only encourage the spread of technology and materials that could be used in the development of **nuclear weapons** and their use by “rogue” states or terrorist networks.
- **Instead**, a more secure and reliable response is the development of **local renewable energy resources** and **radical energy conservation practices**.

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(2) Competition Over Resources 1:

- Industrialised and industrialising states are increasingly dependent on **imported resources**, especially oil, natural gas and water.
- **Oil** is currently the main marketed fossil fuel and the Persian Gulf is the dominant region, with 2/3 of world reserves (733.9 thousand million barrels: BP/2004).
- **Persian Gulf** = deeply unstable region with continuing potential conflict as USA seeks to maintain control against opposition from regional state and sub-state paramilitary groups.
- **Long-term concern over trends in oil supplies and markets** (peak oil?), with China becoming rapidly significant.

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(2) Competition Over Resources 2:

- **Oil consumption** is primary cause of climate change and should be rapidly reduced for this reason alone.
- **Competition over oil supplies** means that the Middle East experiences deep instability and conflict. This situation could be eased if dependence on oil could be diminished = change to renewable energy sources.
- **Water** is a source of security and prosperity and with water shortages likely to increase (affecting food production, growing populations, urbanisation, etc.), some tensions could develop into violent conflict unless we follow a multi-lateral approach to cooperative water management agreements.

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(3) Marginalisation of the Majority World 1:

- There is a clear and present danger in the world today.
- A complex interplay of **discrimination, global poverty, Third World debt, infectious disease, global inequality and deepening socio-economic divisions**, together make up key elements of global insecurity.
- While overall global wealth has increased, **the benefits of this economic growth have not been equally shared**, with a heavy concentration of growth in relatively few parts of the world.

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(3) Marginalisation of the Majority World 2:

- These divisions are being exacerbated by **increasing oppression and political exclusion**, couple with a **growing sense of marginalisation** as a result of improvements in **education and modern communications technologies**, leading in places to **increased levels of political violence**.
- **Current security policies** and the “war on terror” are **not** reacting appropriately to this key trend, and are actually **increasing** support for radical and violent movements such as the al-Qaida network.

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(3) Marginalisation of the Majority World 3:

- Policies to ‘control’ (manage?) such developments will need to go beyond traditional methods of counter-terrorism to incorporate a wide range of conflict prevention and resolution methods.
- They will also need to go beyond these to include determined efforts to address underlying global socio-economic divisions that the world is currently experiencing.

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(4) Global Militarisation 1:

- The first six years of the ‘war on terror’ shows that the **current approach** of maintaining international security by the vigorous use of military force combined with the continuing development of new nuclear and conventional weapons systems is **failing**.
- The Cold War shows us that there is a **persistent tendency by the authorities to maintain an aura of control and responsibility**, when this is very far from what is happening.
- Post-Cold War nuclear developments involve the **modernisation and proliferation of new nuclear systems**, with an increasing risk of limited nuclear weapons use in warfare – breaking a threshold that has held for the last 60 years.

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(4) Global Militarisation 2:

- **Biological weapons** have the potential to become effective weapons of war, given likely developments in **genetic manipulation** and **biotechnology**.
- The negotiation of a much-strengthened **Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention** should be a priority.
- These dangerous trends will be **exacerbated** by the development of **Directed Energy Weapons** (lasers) and a race towards the **weaponisation of space**.

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The “Control” Security Strategy:

- To-date, the international community has followed a ‘security strategy’ which is pre-occupied with maintaining key elements of the status quo and controlling pressures for change.
- This approach to security is called the “control paradigm” because it seeks to keep threats to the status quo ‘under control’.
- Given the extent to which the USA influences the international security agenda, the control paradigm will continue to define security and defence policies across much of the world.

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The “Control” Security Strategy:

- American national security strategy aims to maintain the status quo of military, economic and political advantages enjoyed by the USA:
 1. Control access to fossil fuels;
 2. Maintain global military supremacy;
 3. Protect US domination of international financial institutions; and
 4. The military-political advantages enjoyed by key regional allies.

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The “Control” Security Strategy:

This perspective puts forward the following responses to global threats:

(1) Competition over Resources:

- Obsession with national energy security through control of key resources which leads to further conflict and tension in region (oil, etc);

(2) Climate Change:

- Unshakable and unrealistic belief in in capacity of technological advances operating in free markets as the primary means of responding to the ‘myth’ of climate change.

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(3) Marginalisation of the Majority World:

- Problems of poverty and socio-economic divisions are largely ignored. Immediate threats to 'homeland' are met with heavy social control to keep lid on civil discontent. Belief that free market will enable people to work their way out of poverty.

(4) International Terrorism:

- Follows a series of counter-productive, controversial and often illegal counter-terrorism measures and attacks on civil liberties (i.e., indefinite detention of suspects without trial; 'extraordinary rendition' of suspects to countries that use torture, torture, etc.)

(5) Global Militarisation:

- Counter-proliferation measures focus on preventing WMD materials from being acquired by terrorist groups or rogue states. Where actors desire / possess such capability a strategy of pre-emptive military strikes is the best course of action.

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The “Control” Security Strategy:

- This approach of attempting to maintain the status quo through military means and ‘keeping the lid on’ insecurity without addressing the root causes **will not work in the long term** and in fact is **already failing** in the face of increased paramilitary action and asymmetric warfare.
- The current approach to security is **deeply flawed** and is **distracting the world’s political elites** from developing realistic and sustainable solutions to the non-traditional threats facing the world, amongst which terrorism is by no means the greatest or most serious.

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The control paradigm is failing - even by its own standards:

- Peace and Democracy are elusive in the Middle East;
- Significant support for radical Islamic terrorism (Jordan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt);
- Increase in number of terrorist attacks after Sept 2001 (6x);
- Home grown radical Islamic terrorism is a problem in Europe and elsewhere;
- Competition over energy supplies is increasingly unstable;
- The 2006 Israeli war with Hezbollah in Lebanon exposed the limits of Israeli power;
- Strategic competitors to US dominance are emerging around the world;
- Iran and North Korea remain emboldened regional powers;
- Iraq is in a state of bloody chaos;
- The Taliban are re-emerging as a powerful force in Afghanistan;
- Price of oil remains volatile and increases with each crisis;
- USA influence waning in Africa and Middle East;
- USA increasingly viewed as threat to world peace; and
- Western countries seem to be entering an economic recession.

Sustainable Security:

- ‘Sustainable’ Security is an alternative approach that would begin by reassessing global threats.
- Instead of focusing almost exclusively on countering immediate threats, it would also attend to the long-term drivers of insecurity and conflict.
- It would be based upon a more appropriate balance between:
 - countering and defending against imminent threats;
 - tackling the root causes and trends of conflict and insecurity; andthe most effective means for achieving these ends.
- Today’s dominant approach to security focuses almost exclusively on the former with little consideration to how foreign and security policies impact over time on the latter.

Sustainable Security:

- A **sustainable security strategy** is a more effective approach because it is based on **cooperative means** and **long-term planning** to tackle imminent threats alongside the root causes of conflict and insecurity.
- Unless the **root causes** are addressed, our only option is to try to control their results (i.e., attack the symptoms).
- **Since 2001**, most international actors have focused on '**international terrorism**' as the greatest threat to world security despite the fact that the evidence does not support this claim.
- In an increasingly integrated world, it is unrealistic to believe that a US-led political elite can rely on **military measures** and the prism of the '**war on terror**' to keep global threats at bay for much longer.

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“Sustainable” Security Strategy:

Key alternative responses include:

(1) Competition over Resources:

- Comprehensive energy efficiency;
- recycling;
- resource conservation and management policies and practices; and
- large scale funding for renewable alternatives to oil.

(2) Climate Change:

- Introduction of a carbon tax and rapid replacement of carbon-based energy sources by diversified local renewable sources as the primary basis of future energy generation.

Sustainable Security:

(3) Marginalisation of the Majority World:

- Reform of global systems of trade, aid and debt relief in order to make poverty reduction a world priority.

(4) International Terrorism:

- Addressing the legitimate political grievances and aspirations of marginalised groups, coupled with intelligence-led counter-terrorism POLICE operations against violent revolutionary groups and dialogue with terrorist leaderships whenever possible.

(5) Global Militarisation:

- Alongside non-proliferation measures, states with nuclear weapons must take bold, visible and substantial steps towards disarmament, at the same time as halting initiatives such as the development of new nuclear and bio-weapons..

Sustainable Security:

- Together these elements constitute a **new approach to security**.
- The **main difference** between Sustainable security and current strategies is that **this approach does not attempt to control threats unilaterally through the use of force (attack the symptoms)**, but rather, it aims to resolve cooperatively the root causes of those threats using the most effective means available (curing the disease).
- In this way, a sustainable approach is inherently **preventable**, in that it addresses the likely causes of conflict and instability well **before** the ill-effects are felt, **rather than waiting** until a crisis is underway and then attempting to control the situation – **at which point it is often too late**.

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Table: Key Causes of Instability and Alternative Responses:

Security 'Control' Paradigm:	GLOBAL THREATS:	'Sustainable' Security Paradigm:
Control Persian Gulf	(1) Competition Over Resources	Consumption Reduction
Nuclear Power	(2) Climate Change	Renewable Energy
Societal Control	(3) Marginalisation	Poverty Reduction
Counter-terrorism	(4) International Terrorism	Political Dialogue
Counter-proliferation	(5) Global Militarisation	Non-Proliferation / Disarmament

Sustainable Security:

- **Over the next decade, a radical shift towards sustainable approaches to security will be hugely important.**
- **If there is no change in thinking, security policies will continue to be based on the mistaken assumption that ‘the status quo can be maintained’:**
 - (a) an elite minority can maintain its position;
 - (b) environmental problems can be marginalised; and
 - (c) the lid can be kept on dissent and insecurity.
- **In this scenario, little attempt will be made to address the core causes of insecurity, even if failure to do so threatens the elite minority as well as the marginalised majority.**
- **Alternatively, a change in thinking could lead to an era of substantial progress in developing a more socially just and environmentally sustainable world order.**

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Thank you!

Any questions?