

The Developing Global Crisis and the Future of Global Security

For the JoGSS group, by Michael Andregg, mmandregg@stthomas.edu, Aug. 7, 2014, d1c

“The Developing Global Crisis” is a term we use to label a bewildering array of old and emerging problems with large security consequences. Only some are military *per se*, but all have significant implications for human security and most have big impacts on conventional military issues as well. Examples include: Climate change, population pressure, failed and failing states, emerging diseases, transnational crime, terrorism, cyberwarfare, globalized economics that promotes severe income inequality and social unrest, peak oil transformations of the global energy system, and most important in our opinion, corruption of governance which frustrates solution to many of the other problems. All these together are ‘the developing global crisis.’

These problems matter to any professional military because the worst case scenarios end with global thermonuclear war or release of exotic biological weapons and collapse of civilization. This could occur even if the triggering event involved uneducated, unemployed teen-aged males acting out common frustrations. Gavrilo Princip was no Weapon of Mass Destruction, but he still managed to start World War I, which echoes to this day in Eastern Europe and the Mideast.

These problems are very interdisciplinary, so we identify three fields that should be of particular interest to the Security Studies community. Those are behavioral biology and two emerging fields, peace studies and intelligence studies. The first helps predict behavior among individuals and small groups, and the last two approach the problems of human and civilizational survival from very different starting points.

Of course technology affects everything also, so we could have included engineering, computer science, etc. Of particular interest are strategic consequences, like how the IT revolution has made the NSA so much better known today than it prefers. That has strained near breaking point some of our most important intelligence liaisons, and alienated whole countries. That has very large security consequences. So there are big downsides to publicly known power to monitor anyone, anywhere. This has greatly increased tensions between ‘security’ and ‘civil liberty’ interests in democracies, while empowering police states like North Korea to exert ever more ruthless control of their peoples. The “Arab Spring” provides other examples where IT technology enabled revolution, with quite diverse consequences of military significance.

The editors ask: How should we think of security? One answer = globally, with an emphasis on searching for win-win solutions rather than medieval-type, one side kills all the other’s men and enslaves all the women and children, outcomes. Genocide is still attractive to some of the more ruthless powers on this earth, but it is never attractive to the losers. And historical memories of past genocides run deep. If losers acquire WMD by any method, no one should be surprised that the laws of war mean little to people facing imminent destruction, or avenging the violent deaths of their parents and children. This calls for a real transformation of ancient security paradigms.

Transformations of paradigms are not easy, and they often call for transformations of cultures which is also very hard. People resist change, and bureaucracies resist change like death itself. So if this paper is encouraged, we will spend considerable space on how relevant transformations might be encouraged, especially among the intelligence and security communities.

How should we think about *global* security, and how should we *study* global security? Answer = collaboratively, by which we mean across countries as much as across disciplines. Military institutions value secrecy for the obvious reason that their people can **DIE** if operational plans and other issues become known to their enemies. Intelligence organizations are often even more extreme in their affection for secrecy. But rising needs for real time intelligence about extremely diverse terrorist groups, and extremely hard targets like North Korea, require more fluid and fast information exchanges with both allies (like South Korea and Japan for the Korean case) and adversaries (like China, or Russia). This is very difficult to achieve using ancient paradigms.

Another way to illustrate the word "collaboratively" here would be promoting "need to share" over the declining paradigm "need to know" without reckless disregard for the safety of sources and methods.

Defining "reckless disregard" could take a team of philosophers and practitioners forever. Right now the chattering classes underrate the risks that spies and their agents assume to do their work, and often overrate the power of "reason" or other abstractions. Practitioners have excuses for every disaster that agents with no real oversight or accountability create. Somewhere between such extremes lies the optimum domain, where critical secrets are preserved, but not reified, and oversight by democratic institutions is more powerful and effective than is now the case.

From that middle ground, solutions to the Developing Global Crisis that threatens everyone can be found.

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