Promoting Human Security: Ethical, Normative and Educational Frameworks in the Arab States

UNESCO

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During the last decade, human security has become a central concern to many countries, institutions and social actors searching for innovative ways and means of tackling the many non-military threats to peace and security. Indeed, human security underlines the complex links, often ignored or underestimated, between disarmament, human rights and development. Today, in an increasingly globalized world, the most pernicious threats to human security emanate from the conditions that give rise to genocide, civil war, human rights violations, global epidemics, environmental degradation, forced and slave labour, and malnutrition. All the current studies on security thus have to integrate the human dimension of security.

Thus, since the publication of the United Nations Development Programme's 1994 *Human Development Report* on new dimensions of human security, major efforts have been undertaken to refine the very concept of human security through research and expert meetings, to put human security at the core of the political agenda, at both national and regional levels and, most important of all, to engage in innovative action in the field to respond to the needs and concerns of the most vulnerable populations. Two landmarks in this process were the creation of the Human Security Network in 1999, made up of twelve countries from all regions, which holds ministerial meetings every year; and the publication of the 2003 report of the Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People*, which has called for a global initiative to promote human security.

UNESCO has been closely associated with these efforts from the outset, in particular in the framework of its action

aimed at promoting a culture of peace. Thus, as of 1994, the Organization launched a series of regional and national projects relating to the promotion of a new concept of security, ensuring the participation of regional, national and local institutions, and involving a wide array of actors, including the armed forces, in Central America and Africa.

On the basis of the experience acquired through the implementation of those projects, human security became a central concern for the Organization as a whole. A plan of action for the promotion of human security at the regional level was adopted in 2000, as a result of the deliberations of the First International Meeting of Directors of Peace Research and Training Institutions on the theme 'What Agenda for Human Security in the Twenty-first Century?', held at UNESCO Headquarters; and in 2002 human security became one of the Organization's twelve strategic objectives as reflected in its *Medium-Term Strategy for 2002-2007*. This strategic objective is closely linked to UNESCO's contribution to the eradication of poverty, in particular extreme poverty, to the promotion of human rights, as well as to its action in the field of natural sciences, in particular regarding the prevention of conflicts relating to the use of water resources.

The choice of adopting regional approaches to human security has been most fruitful to date. In Africa, UNESCO, in close cooperation with the Institute for Security Studies of South Africa and the African Union, has initiated action aiming at the formulation of a regional human security agenda, addressing conflict prevention and many of the issues raised in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative, which UNESCO has fully supported from its inception. In Latin America, cooperation with FLACSO-Chile in 2001-03 led to important discussions of human security issues in the region, and to the formulation of policy recommendations that have been submitted to the ministerial meetings of the Human Security Network and to regional intergovernmental meetings on

hemispheric security. In East Asia, building on important progress made by subregional academic and political institutions, UNESCO, in collaboration with the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and Korea University, organized the 2003 meeting on Human Security in East Asia, whose results were widely disseminated. After the International Conference on Human Security in the Arab States, jointly organized by UNESCO and the Regional Human Security Center in Amman (Jordan), in March 2005, UNESCO will be developing similar projects in Central and South-East Asia in 2005, to conclude with Africa and Eastern Europe in 2006.

With a view to opening new perspectives for focused research, adequate training, preparation of pilot projects, and to further consolidate public policy and public awareness on human security issues, UNESCO is launching a new series of publications: *Promoting Human Security: Ethical, Normative and Educational Frameworks*. These will emphasize three important elements in order to translate the concept of human security into action: (a) the need to have a *solid ethical foundation*, based on shared values, leading to the commitment to protect human dignity which lies at the very core of human security; (b) buttressing that ethical dimension by *placing existing and new normative instruments at the service of human security*, in particular by ensuring the full implementation of instruments relating to the protection of human rights; and (c) the need to reinforce the education and training component by better articulating and giving enhanced coherence to all ongoing efforts, focusing on issues such as *education for peace and sustainable development, training in human rights and enlarging the democratic agenda to human security issues.*

We hope that the new series – each publication focusing on a specific region – will contribute to laying the foundations of an in-depth and sustained action for the promotion of human security, in which the individual has a key role to play.

Moufida Goucha

Introduction

If there were any doubts that the Arab world is faced with a wide variety of problems and challenges, they were dispelled by the first *Arab Human Development Report 2002* (AHDR1) from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2002*a*). According to the report, 'Over the last five decades, remarkable progress has been achieved in advancing human development and reducing poverty. However, much still needs to be done to address the backlog of deprivation and imbalance' (p. 1). The main challenges that need to be met have been identified as:

   • insecurity arising from wars and occupation;
   • lack of participatory governance;
   • gender inequality;
   • poor management of the development process, which creates various forms of deprivation and numerous economic and social problems; and
   • shortfall in the acquisition, absorption, use and production of knowledge.

The last point is the focus of the second report issued in 2003 (UNDP, 2003*a*) subtitled *Building a Knowledge Society* (AHDR2). This report describes the current state of various components of the knowledge society in the Arab world (education, research, use of technology, etc.), and proposes a strategy for constructing such a society.

According to a document issued by UNDP on the day AHDR2 was released (20 October 2003) knowledge 'is the foundation stone of human development because it represents an essential capability that increases people's choices. It is also a means of human fulfilment. And today, knowledge more than

capital drives economic progress. The establishment of a knowledge-based society is crucial if Arab states are to flourish and achieve genuine human development' (UNDP, 2003*b*, p. 1).

This paper reviews the current status of human development/human security in the Arab world and proposes possible ethical, normative and educational frameworks for advancing and enhancing it. First of all, however, the relationship between human development and human security is examined and a working definition of the concept of human security is proposed.

Part One

Definition of human security and identification of sources of insecurity

I

Conceptualization of human security

It is commonly acknowledged that human security was first used as a concept with a specific meaning in the UNDP 1994 *Human Development Report*. Human security was defined there as freedom from fear and freedom from want, and the report distinguished between seven forms of security: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political. Since then the UNDP has taken up human security in most of its annual reports, sometimes devoting a special section to the topic.[1]

Several international organizations started using the concept as a basis for their activities, and some countries followed the lead of Canada and Norway in making it a pillar of their foreign policy. Japan established in 1999 a trust fund for human security under United Nations authority, and led the drive for the creation of a Commission on Human Security (CHS). When the Commission was set up in 2001 its tasks were:

• to promote public understanding, engagement and support of human security and its underlying imperatives;

• to develop the concept of human security as an operational tool for policy formulation and implementation; and

• to propose a specific programme of action to address critical and pervasive threats to human security.[2]

1   See for example the report *Human Security – Under Siege* (UNDP, 1998), which states: 'Human security – another essential dimension of human development – involves safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease and repression. It also involves protection from sudden and hurtful disruption in people's daily lives – in the home, workplace and community' (p. 24).
2   See the Commission on Human Security website. http://www.humansecurity-chs.org/index.html

The introductory chapter of the Commission's report (CHS, 2003) argues that human security is similar to human development in that both are concerned with human welfare and basic freedoms. However, human development focuses on achieving growth and distributing its benefits equitably among people, whereas human security goes beyond that to consider 'conditions that menace survival, the continuation of daily life and the dignity of human beings' (p. 10). The Commission then proceeds to give its definition of human security: 'to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways to enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment' (p. 4). Recognizing that what people may consider as vital or fundamental varies across time and space, the Commission refrains from proposing a detailed list of components of human security. Instead, it identifies broad categories of insecurity – 'want' and 'fear' – and proposes generic tools for dealing with them – protection and empowerment.

The CHS calls for a global initiative to achieve the following objectives (pp. 131-33):

• to prevent conflict and advance human rights and development: There is evidence that a correlation exists between violence and conflict on the one hand, and poverty and human rights abuses on the other. However, there is no conclusive evidence concerning the causal link between violence and poverty/non-respect of human rights. Nevertheless, peace, well-being and the enjoyment of basic rights should be considered as intrinsic values, and their pursuit a matter of ethical obligation.

• to protect and empower people and their communities: Many societies mobilize a great deal of resources to protect the state against actual or potential threats, but make few or no provisions for dealing with clear and present dangers confronting citizens. This has to change and appropriate means should be set up to shield 'all people's lives from critical and pervasive threats' (p. 132) and to allow people to cope with, and overcome any 'downside risks' that may arise.

• to deepen democratic principles and practices.

• all of the above to promote a human security culture and framework.

The Commission then lists ten tasks that should be undertaken to advance human security on all fronts (p. 133), including:

• providing minimum living standards everywhere;
• ensuring universal access to basic health care;
• empowering all people with universal basic education; and
• clarifying the need for a global identity while respecting the freedom of individuals to have diverse identities and affiliations.

Since the early 1990s, the concept of human security has thus been the focus of many debates in the UN system, in international organizations and governments of different regions, as well as in the academic and intellectual fields. In November 2000, UNESCO convened an International Meeting of Directors of Peace Research and Training Institutions in order to define a common agenda on the theme of human security and conflict prevention. One of the most important recommendations of that meeting was to invite UNESCO to promote regional approaches in order to define the most suitable needs and modalities of action, and to jointly promote human security and conflict prevention in each specific regional and cultural context. The latter was to be achieved by duly considering the guidelines of the main international initiatives on human security, especially those of the Canadian Government and the Human Security Network, as well as those of the UN Commission on Human Security.

Cognizant of these recommendations, the enactment of regional approaches to human security is proving extremely useful. Together with local partner organizations, UNESCO has initiated regional dialogue and actions aiming at addressing human security issues in the various regions of the world. More specifically, in Africa, UNESCO partnered the Institute for Security Studies (South Africa) to address conflict prevention and

other issues raised in the NEPAD initiative. In Latin America, the result of UNESCO's partnership with FLASCO-Chile (2001-03) has been the submission of recommendations to the ministerial meetings of the Human Security Network and other pertinent high-level policy forums on security issues. In 2003, UNESCO was joined by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and Korea University in the organization of an International Conference on Human Security in East Asia. A similar conference was held in Amman (Jordan), in March 2005, for the Arab States. Also in 2005, UNESCO is organizing two conferences on Human Security in Central and South-East Asia respectively.

In parallel, UNESCO has launched a new series of publications entitled *Promoting Human Security: Ethical, Normative and Educational Frameworks*, which will deal with the five regions of the world.

The concept of human security has been criticized on a number of grounds. In particular, it is considered as difficult to define, to measure and to implement. The journal *Security Dialogue* has recently devoted a special section to the concept in which editors Burgess and Owen reproduced and analysed responses by twenty-one academics and practitioners to the question: 'What is human security?' (Burgess and Owen, 2004). In a concluding piece that summarizes the replies, Owen indicates that there is a consensus concerning the existence of a 'qualitative difference' between human security and human development, the former being 'a necessary but not sufficient precondition' for the latter, suggesting that '[i]f human security could cover the most urgent threats, development would then address societal well-being' (Owen, 2004, p. 381). He then proposes what he calls a 'threshold-based conceptualization of human security':

'Human security is the protection of the vital core of all human lives from critical and pervasive environmental, economic, food, health, personal and political threats' (p. 383).

According to the author this definition has the advantage of flexibility, and allows decision-makers or observers to decide at what point a given situation becomes sufficiently serious to be considered as a threat to human security and to warrant an appropriate response.

However, Owen is aware that his definition may satisfy neither realists who believe that only situations associated with violence should be considered as threats to security and that the referent actor of security analysis should be the state, nor post-modernists who point out that millions of people face the ultimate form of insecurity – loss of life – not because of wars but because of hunger, illness or natural disasters, and who argue, therefore, that a valid definition of human security must have the person as a referent and include every situation that threatens individual welfare. In an attempt to take human security beyond this conceptual deadlock Owen calls upon both groups to consent to a 'degree of sacrifice' in order to 'rally the world's thinkers, leaders, and resources to the issues actually affecting people' (p. 385). He believes that his proposed threshold-based definition allows for a differentiation between global, regional and national human security threats, avoids predefined or arbitrary forms or categories of threats, and permits policy responses to be identified on the basis of the actual severity of the threats.

Owen's definition of human security will be adopted here in combination with the CHS suggestion that the 'vital core of human lives' be considered from the vantage point of the area under study. With respect to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, one can start with the premise that Arabs, like other human beings, aspire to enjoy a set of basic rights and freedoms that would allow them:

• to protect their physical integrity;

• to have access to goods and services needed to satisfy material and non-material needs;

• to be able to cope with contingencies and emergencies that threaten survival; and

• to participate in processes used to delineate, revise, achieve and advance individual and collective welfare.

This study is organized as follows. The remainder of Part One presents an overview of the main conditions or factors that prevail at global, regional and national levels and that have an impact on efforts aimed at achieving human security. At the global level, four factors are discussed: the end of the Cold War; the emergence of global threats such as pandemics and climate change; the scientific and technological revolution and its political, economic and social effects; and globalization, its meaning, its most visible manifestations, and its impact on the Arab world.

At the regional level, the discussion focuses on the role and position of the region in international relations in the post-Cold War era, and patterns of conflict and cooperation, with particular emphasis on the concepts of *qawmyya* (قومية) or allegiance to the Arab nation (*umma* أمة), and *watanyya* (وطنية) or allegiance to the state in its current configuration.

Finally, at the national level we examine the nature of the state (الدولة), the relationship between the state and its citizens, and the concept of sovereignty and its relevance in the current international context.

Part Two turns to the operationalization of the four elements of the definition of human security proposed above (physical integrity, needs, capabilities and participation). For each of the indicators retained an assessment is made of the current standing of the Arab region, identifying those aspects of human security where critical levels have already been reached, and those that are likely to reach such levels in the short, medium and long term.

In the light of this discussion, the section concludes with a proposal for ethical and normative frameworks that ought to serve for achieving and sustaining human security in the Arab

world. It is argued that a set of values, some of which are universal, others having been or needing to be adopted to Arab culture, should be adopted as a foundation for defining norms or standards relating to minimal levels of human security that every Arab should enjoy or, in Owen's terminology, relating to the threshold beyond which a given situation may be considered as critical and jeopardizing human security. In this respect, different alternatives are discussed for benchmarking: whether norms should be defined on the basis of ideals such as the total absence of any form of insecurity, or on the basis of a comparison with other regions/countries, or on the basis of resources that are already available and/or that could be mobilized, or on the basis of a combination of criteria.

On the premise that education plays a major role in meeting present and future challenges, an educational framework is proposed to allow the Arab world to reduce insecurity and to set in motion the process of achieving a desirable level of human security.

II

General framework:
factors affecting Arab human security

As the globe is becoming increasingly interconnected and interdependent, the Arab world, like any other region, is bound to be affected by this situation which creates, simultaneously, opportunities to be seized and threats to be mitigated or dissolved. In this situation, the Arab region must decide whether to be a spectator who watches the unfolding events, or to be an actor with something more than a walk-on part, or – why not? – to aim at becoming one of the producers who distribute the roles, or even one of the playwrights who write the parts.

A multitude of factors have an impact on the present and future of the Arab world. Some of these are global in nature, i.e. they affect the entire world including, of course, the MENA region. Two of these factors are discussed: the end of the Cold War, on the one hand, and the transformation of the world into a 'global village' as a result of globalization, on the other.

Other factors are more specific to the Arab world itself. They include classical social and economic variables such as production, wealth, natural resources, education, health and employment. But a number of issues need to be discussed in the framework of the region taken as a whole, firstly the weight and influence that the Arab world has in world affairs, and secondly patterns of intra-Arab cooperation and conflict. A third issue relates to the perception and conceptualization of *sovereignty* and *citizenship*, which entails a discussion of the concept of the state within the Arab context, as well as an examination of the relationship between the state and its citizens. It is argued that this is a crucial aspect of human security.

Before taking up these issues, it may be useful to briefly recall the region's recent history.

Figure 1: The Arab world

The Arab world is often viewed as a unit or single entity. This is not totally unjustified. We are dealing with area of some 10 million km^2 (more than $2^1/_2$ times the size of Western Europe) that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Zagros Mountains in south-west Asia (Figure 1). The vast majority of the people living there share the same language (Arabic) and the same religion (Islam). For extensive periods up to the beginning of the twentieth century the area has been ruled by a *de jure* single political authority.

On the other hand, there are today few reasons to justify looking at the Arab world as a single entity. Arabs have the same religion but belong to different sects; they share a language but speak different dialects; they have the same history but do not have the same vision of their future. In short, whatever

centripetal forces may have been at play in the past have been eroding over the last fifty years or so, to be replaced by far stronger centrifugal forces which have become so well entrenched that many Arabs doubt they can be rolled back – much less eliminated – in the foreseeable future.

The current political configuration of the Middle East started taking shape with the dismembering of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War and continued through the end of the Second World War. By then France and the United Kingdom, which were already present in North Africa, had completed the process of putting the Arab world under their control in the form of trust territories, protectorates or outright colonies. As one observer of the region puts it, by the late 1940s 'the region was carved out into states, and regimes were implanted to serve British and French interests'.[3] He further considers that this was the culmination of a process that lasted 150 years during which the people of the region 'ha[d] experienced a loss of control of their own history. Imperial and colonial conquests had a dramatic impact ... If anything, the roots of extremism in the region come from this loss of control, this sense of powerlessness, this sense of humiliation'.[4]

It was also during this period that many of the problems that are currently besetting the region had been created, most particularly the Palestinian problem. Historical facts such as the Mandate system, the UN partition of Palestine, and the drawing of boundaries creating new states, are well known and need not be restated here.

In an effort to better protect their interests through common action, six countries (Iraq, Transjordan [later Jordan], Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen) joined Egypt in 1945 to form the League of Arab States. The initial project envisioned

3   Dr James Zogby, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Arab American Institute, in a speech given in Washington DC on 3 June 2003. http//:www.aaiusa.org/zogby/JZ_openforum.htm
4   *Ibid.*

the creation of a union, or a federation, or at least a confederation, but the prospective members proved too jealous of their newly-acquired sovereignty to abandon it in favour of a supranational state. Subsequently, other members joined the League as sovereign states, and the organization was never given any effective means to achieve close cooperation between its members, much less unity, although it continued to pay lip service to Arab unity.

At that juncture, the United States was focusing its attention on Iran and Turkey which had a vital role to play in containing Soviet expansionism. But after the creation of Israel in 1948 it joined France and the UK as a major player in the Middle East. Its two main objectives were to protect Israel against Arab hostility, and to secure control over the region's vast oil supplies. As antagonism between the Western and Soviet blocs intensified, and as the West persisted in its support to Israel, some Arab countries decided to turn to the Soviet Union for political and military support. Thus, a new rift was created in the Arab world between pro-Western and pro-Soviet camps, and it became a major stake in the Cold War.

1   End of the Cold War and its aftermath

In retrospect it may be argued that the strategy of putting the ex-Soviet Union on the Middle-Eastern chequerboard did not bring Arabs any closer to a resolution of their main problem, the liberation of Palestine. Nevertheless, the Cold War did protect the region against being totally dominated by one of the superpowers. But at the same time it was instrumental in settling the Arab world with political systems and regimes that have blocked efforts towards modernization, reform and integration, as each bloc extended unlimited support to its client regimes as long as the latter protected the patron's interests and supported its policies.

When communist regimes in Eastern Europe began disintegrating and the Soviet Union itself disappeared, the United States proclaimed the victory of capitalism over communism. Because it considered itself to be the main artisan of that victory, the US expected the rest of the world to acknowledge the superiority of its ideology and to pledge allegiance to the victor. Anyone who rejects or challenges US leadership would be guilty of immorality and would be fought as an ally of Evil.

In the general euphoria that prevailed following the downfall of dictatorial regimes in Eastern Europe and elsewhere, US views appeared reasonable and justified. In the Arab world those that had dropped out of the communist camp or abandoned socialism long before the fall of the Berlin Wall appeared as prophets who had correctly anticipated the march of history. Thus, as early as 1977, the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat had come to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was not going to help resolve the Middle East conflict, and that only the United States could help Egypt to recover territories it had lost to Israel. He became a pariah in the Arab world and his initiatives cost him his life, but it was not long before other Arab states and the Palestinian Liberation Organization itself followed in his footsteps. So, when the Soviet Union was formally dissolved in 1991, states had to make appropriate adjustments so that international relations could be carried out in a unipolar system.

Adjusting to a new international structure

As far as Arab security (conventional and human) is concerned, and bearing in mind the demise of the Soviet Union, the Arab world will have to deal with the following parameters.

The United States is fully determined to implement the Bush doctrine, but reserves the right to determine where, when and with what means to implement it.

It is equally determined to project power and to show willingness to use it so that no one doubts or challenges US domination.

Now that '[t]he Global War on Terrorism [has] replaced the Cold War as a [US] national security meta narrative' (DSB, 2004, p. 17), and being convinced that democracy and free enterprise are the best barriers against extremism and terrorism, the US will seek to institute these principles wherever it deems they are lacking, especially in Muslim countries, as it is evident to US decision-makers that Islam is the main incubator of terrorism.

If a regime refuses to cooperate, it will be considered as rogue, and if a society clings to backward ideas, it will be brought into the folds of civilization – by force, if necessary.

Arabs need to determine whether the Bush doctrine is a threat to them and, more importantly, whether this policy is really something new or a continuation of past policies that are likely to persist beyond the current administration and, lastly, whatever the verdict, how to deal with the situation.

The doctrine is already being applied in Iraq, and despite the lack of success so far, the US is envisioning extending it to other countries in the wider Middle East, including Arab countries. The possibility of US intervention is likely to persist as long as attitudes towards Islam and Muslims, validated (or exacerbated) by September 11, are not changed, and as long as *authoritative* political institutions are not set up in the Arab world to resist intervention by any outsider.

Impact of September 11 on Arabs and Islam

The fact that the terrorist acts perpetrated against the United States on 11 September 2001 were carried out by Arab Muslims served to confirm the perception that Islam nurtures and encourages terrorism. The association between Islam and terrorism has been in existence for decades; it goes back to the

period when Palestinian and, later, Algerian groups were carrying out terrorist acts (holding hostages, hijacking and blowing up aircraft) against Israeli and Western interests. Initially, the negative image of Arabs prevailed mostly in Europe. The official US attitude towards the Arab world was rather friendly, including towards the Palestinians, especially after the rapprochement between the latter and Israel. But things began to change when the US became a target of terrorist activities carried out by Arabs, and took a turn for the worse after September 11.

When it became known that the perpetrators of the attack were from the Middle East, the war against terrorism, that the US declared in retaliation to the attack, identified Muslims in general, and Arabs in particular, as its primary target. Various measures were taken against nationals of Muslim countries (and even against Muslim Americans) living in the US or seeking entry to the country. The outcry that these measures raised domestically and internationally prompted the administration to issue declarations denying any antagonism towards Islam or Islamic culture, and assuring that its only aim was to bring the authors of September 11 to justice and to destroy their organization, al-Qaeda.

On the other hand, Arabs perceive the United States as a major threat to their security, especially in view of that country's unwavering support to Israel, its interventions in Iraq, and its threats to some Arab countries. The current administration is well aware of its standing in the Arab world: the report quoted above, commissioned by the Defense Department and prepared by the Defense Science Board (DSB), states that '*in the eyes of Muslims*, American occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq has not led to democracy there, but only more chaos and suffering. US actions appear in contrast to be motivated by ulterior motives, and deliberately controlled in order to best serve American national interests at the expense of truly Muslim self-determination' (DSB, 2004, p. 40) [italics in original text]. It also affirms that 'US policies on Israeli-Palestinian issues and Iraq in

2003-2004 have damaged America's credibility and power to persuade' (p. 18).

However, instead of adopting policies that logic – if not ethics – would require, such as putting pressure on Israel to respect its international obligations, and refraining from intervening in the internal affairs of sovereign nations, the US has chosen to wage a 'war to eradicate terrorism', and to promote various political, social and economic reforms in the framework of its Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) which, in effect, is part of a broader policy 'seeking to convert a broad movement within Islamic civilization to accept the value structure of Western Modernity' (DSB, 2004, p. 36).

The paradox of US policy towards Muslims and Arabs is that while it has failed to pacify public opinion, it had the unintended result of alienating rulers who were traditionally US allies in the region, as was seen at the Forum for the Future, a conference held in December 2004 in Morocco to allow Arab and Western ministers to discuss reforms in the Arab world.[5] At the same time, the policy has strengthened the very enemy that it is seeking to defeat, namely, radical fundamentalism. The net result is that, in the words of the DSB report, '[t]he United States finds itself in the strategically awkward – and potentially dangerous – situation of being the longstanding prop and alliance partner of [Arab] authoritarian regimes. Without the US these regimes could not survive ... [on the other hand] American actions and the flow of events have elevated the authority of the Jihadi insurgents and tended to ratify their legitimacy among Muslims. Fighting groups portray themselves as the true defenders of an Ummah [*sic*] (the entire Muslim community) invaded and under attack – to broad public support' (DSB, 2004, p. 35).

We now turn to the second factor that affects human security: globalization.

5   Official Arab opposition to the US initiative has been widely reported in the press; see for example articles in the *New York Times*, 4 December and 12 December 2004.

2   Globalization and its effects on the Arab world

The term 'globalization' is used to refer to the condition of the world that has prevailed since the last decade of the twentieth century. It is used indifferently in a neutral way to describe various social, economic and technological situations, or as a value-laden concept to praise or denounce the existence or the spread of various activities or events such as trade, travel, communications, etc. Thus, the term is often used to indicate that there is an increase in the volume of goods and capital crossing borders, a rapid development of global telecommunications infrastructure (internet, telephony, satellite television ...), greater international travel, etc. In general, users of the term maintain that globalization is a fact, an objective state of affairs that needs to be neither applauded nor decried: it can only be described, analysed and maybe measured. Others, however, make a value judgement about globalization: some consider it as a new feature of human life that is bound to bring about important improvements in the way we live, whereas others believe that it constitutes a major threat to human welfare.

Although there is yet no agreement about a definition of the concept, it is necessary to adopt at least a provisional or a working definition in order to be able to identify the effects of globalization on the Arab world and suggest approaches to deal with these effects. Towards this end, it may be useful to follow Jan Aart Scholte's suggestion to make a distinction between globalization on the one hand, and four other terms used as synonyms: internationalization, liberalization, universalization and westernization (Aart Scholte, 2002). These four concepts are defined as follows:

Internationalization: growth of transactions and interdependence between countries;

Liberalization: a process of removing officially imposed restrictions on movements

	of resources between countries in order to form an 'open' and 'borderless' world economy;
Universalization:	a process of dispersing various objects and experiences to people at all inhabited parts of the Earth, which entails a homogenization and a worldwide cultural, economic, legal and political convergence;
Westernization:	a particular type of universalization in which the social structures of modernity (capitalism, industrialism, rationalism, urbanism, etc.) are spread the world over (Aart Scholte, 2002, pp. 8, 10, 11, 12 respectively).

The author argues that research that equates globalization with one or more of the four preceding concepts 'fail[s] to open insights that are not available through existing vocabulary' and ends up either not capturing or mistakenly rejecting 'the novelty and transformative potential of globalization in contemporary history'. Clearly, something new is taking place over and beyond the four preceding processes, that is, 'the spread of trans-planetary – and in recent times more particularly, supra-territorial – connections between people. From this perspective, globalization involves reduction in barriers to trans-world contacts. People become more able – physically, legally, culturally, and psychologically – to engage with each other in «one world» ' (Aart Scholte, 2002, p. 14). Consequently, what we are currently witnessing is an unprecedented *growth* in trans-planetary connections and a *widening* of a fairly new phenomenon – trans-territoriality. This historical process is said to be sufficiently different from globalization as it is commonly defined to deserve being given a different name, the one suggested by the proponent of this idea being 'globality'. It is not

our purpose to discuss the merits of this approach, but the distinction made between the various definitions of globalization, and the proposal of an additional angle from which to view the concept, may be useful – at least as a heuristic device – to capture various aspects of globalization that are not always explicitly taken into consideration. We will therefore examine the effects of internationalization, liberalization, universalization, westernization and globality on Arab human security.

Internationalization

It is undeniable that there is an intense cross-border exchange of goods, services, capital, humans and ideas. All indicators measuring such exchanges (volume of trade, telephone traffic, number of internet users, air travel …) show that they are important and have been steadily increasing, the growth rate being particularly high during the last decade or so.

However, inter-state or inter-nation exchanges are not peculiar to the modern era. For centuries traders, missionaries, soldiers, scientists and adventurers have been roaming the globe moving biota, goods and ideas. Therefore internationalization is not a new phenomenon, and the Arabs themselves have actively participated in that process by taking their religion, their language and their political authority from their native Arabia to far away places in Africa, Europe and Asia.

However, if internationalization has intensified in the last few years, the trend has affected the region much less than other parts of the world. Thus, whether one looks at the Arab world's share in world trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), internet use, or other indicators of globalization, one finds that the Arab world is more and more marginalized (Table 1). The reasons for this situation vary from one sector to another. For example, with respect to trade there has been a worldwide decline in the exchange of raw materials and unfinished goods in favour of high-technology products and services, whereas the Arab world

continues to produce and export mainly little-processed materials and low-technology goods. This, in turn, is due to the region's inability to promote scientific and technological research and production (a major problem to which we shall return shortly). As for capital flow to the region, it has been stagnating or declining as foreign investors find the region unattractive because of political instability, opacity of the administration, rampant corruption, insufficient infrastructure, etc.

Table 1: Some comparative indicators of participation in globalization

	Year	Arab States	East Asia & the Pacific	Latin America & the Caribbean
Telephone mainlines (per 1,000 people)	1990	35	17	62
	2000	77	104	147
Cellular mobile subscribers (per 1,000 people)	1990	(.)	(.)	(.)
	2000	38	74	121
Internet hosts (per 1,000 people)	1990	(.)	(.)	0.1
	2000	0.2	0.6	3.9
Receipts of royalties and licence fees (US$ per person)	2000	106.0	784.0	501.0
Manufactured exports (% of merchandise exports)	1990	20	75	34
	2000	19	86	48
High technology exports (% of manufactured exports)	1990	–	–	6
	2000	2	31	16
Net foreign direct investment (% of GDP)	1990	0.9	1.7	0.7
	2000	0.3	2.8	3.9

Source: UNDP (2004*b*)
Note: (.) indicates an insignificant value.

On the other hand, internationalization creates interdependence between states, which is supposed to lead to mutual benefits. However, the Arab world is in a highly unfavourable position because its relations with the rest of the

world are extremely unbalanced in that it depends on the world much more than the world depends on it. Of course, the region's oil and gas resources are strategically important, but they have not been properly used to the short-term or long-term advantage of their owners. At present, the Arab world is highly dependent on the outside world for most of its needs: food, industrial products, technology, skills and expertise. The implications of this situation for human security and possible ways of dealing with them are discussed below.

Liberalization

The second meaning that is often given to globalization is liberalization, i.e. the dismantling of tariffs and other barriers to trade in goods and services. According to some economists, protectionism leads to a waste of scarce resources in that it protects inefficient production behind tariff walls, whereas free trade and open competition would allow those producers that have a comparative advantage to supply the market with goods and services on the most advantageous terms.

This neoliberal theory has been espoused by many academics and policy-makers as well as by international organizations such the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). It served as a basis for advocating a universal adoption of policies such as the abolition of controls on the movement of goods and capital, the free play of market rules and, more generally, the disengagement of the state from economic activities. This was the case, for example, of the IMF which incorporated such measures in the so-called 'structural adjustment plans' that it imposed on all developing countries that sought its assistance in the 1980s to resolve their financial problems. Similarly, the WTO has adopted many neoliberal rules and expects all its members to abide by them.

Experience has shown that liberalization does not systematically bring prosperity, as its proponents claim. In fact, it has led to inequalities within and between countries, social conflicts, unemployment, poverty, ecological damage and many other problems. One reason for this is that human intervention cannot be totally abandoned in favour of the 'invisible hand of the market'. Another reason is the failure of developed countries to apply liberalization in a consistent manner. In this respect, two contradictions may be underlined. First, industrialized countries advocate the free movement of factors of production, but they apply this rule only to capital and to manufactured goods, and not to labour or agriculture. Second, they reject government intervention in the economy, but they continue to control trade in agricultural products and to subsidize the agricultural sector.

Such incoherence is visible in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) agreements that the European Union (EU) has signed with a number of Arab countries, with the objective of creating a free-trade area among the signatories. The agreements stipulate that tariffs will be gradually reduced until they are totally abolished. However, this applies only to manufactured products. The consequence is that European goods are gaining easier access to Arab markets, displacing similar goods produced locally but at a higher cost. If one were to argue that this is the price to pay to achieve economic efficiency, then agricultural goods which are produced more efficiently in the South should be given greater access to EU markets even if they displace local products. This, however, is not the case.

The EMP agreements further fail to provide for the free movement of labour, a measure that would greatly help the South to alleviate the unemployment problem that it faces, partly as a result of the agreements themselves.

In sum, the EU – and the industrialized world at large – retain from neoliberalism only those parts that enhance their short-term interests, and are reluctant to make concessions or to share sacrifices, even if this should achieve a more equitable

distribution of prosperity and protect European interests in the long term. In this situation, Arab countries that have signed free-trade agreements with Europe or the US, and those that are contemplating such agreements, should have a second look at them. This is not to say that free trade is to be rejected as a matter of policy. Rather, the suggestion is that the Arab world examine whether other economic measures need to be adopted instead of, or in addition to, free trade, and whether such measures are best implemented within the region or in cooperation with other regions.

Universalization

The third way in which the term globalization is used is to refer to the fact that many products, ideas, attitudes, and types of behaviour have spread across geographical areas and cultures to the point of becoming universal or global. For example, the way people dress, what they eat, how they work, how they behave in a given setting, are all becoming standardized. To some extent, this process is desirable, even necessary, if communication is to be facilitated. However, homogenization risks giving prevalence to conformism over creativity and, more importantly, it may lead to the domination of patterns of behaviour whose merit is not to be intrinsically better but to be associated with a particular country or culture. In other words, universalization can create concern if it is equated with Westernization – the fourth meaning often given to globalization.

Westernization

Because the world has been shrinking as a result of technology designed and produced largely in the West, and because one of the main effects of globalization has been to make the West visible to the rest of the world in real time, many have come to equate globalization with Westernization and, more

specifically, Americanization.[6] It is true that American pre-eminence in various forms of human endeavour is not new. For generations the United States inspired awe and admiration. For many people it was the land of opportunity, where anybody can go from rags to riches, where anybody can become president – a paradise on earth, an El Dorado. The American way of life was the standard by which people evaluated their lives, and the dream they wished to realize. This perception of America has only increased as a result of globalization.

But at the same time, what other societies, including Arab societies, find objectionable is America's desire to impose its views and opinions by any means, its biased and selective way of enforcing what it proclaims to be universal values and principles, and its failure to apply those values and principles to its own behaviour. Clearly, the US is taking advantage of the absence of any substitute to the Soviet Union that could effectively deter or challenge its hegemony. However, to bemoan or to denounce this situation is not likely to change it. Arabs (and others) should realize that it is natural for a hegemon to behave like one. Therefore, what they should do is to adopt the same policy that the US adopted towards the ex-Soviet Union: containment. They can mobilize sufficient resources, and seek extra-regional support, to persuade the US to adopt a more cooperative attitude in international affairs. This requires determination and unity of purpose, for a superpower will not easily accept downgrading its status to that of an ordinary member of the international community.

Globality

If internationalization, liberalization, universalization and westernization/Americanization have been long-standing features of international relations, as Scholte argues, what is then the nature of the process that is distinctive of the recent period and

6   A number of Arab scholars make this point; see for example as-Sawani [in Arabic; translations of titles and texts by present author].

that is commonly called globalization? It may be recalled that Scholte proposes calling it 'globality' and defines it as the growth of social interactions that transcend national territories and that need to be processed by supranational structures. Phenomena such as pandemics, environmental degradation and pollution do not respect national boundaries, and they can be dealt with effectively only through measures adopted and implemented at global level. Many aspects of international relations are already governed by global rules and regulations (e.g. allocation of radio frequencies and names of domains on the internet), or by regional ones (such as Community laws within the EU), but this does not mean that states accept easily the transfer of their competencies to supranational institutions. The debate currently taking place in Europe concerning the adoption of a European Constitution clearly shows this. But the fact remains that technology *is* transforming the globe into a single space. When states fail to agree on common regulations, the global space will be mismanaged (as in the case of global warming), or unmanaged (as in the case of drug trafficking), or managed by private actors on the basis of selfish interests (as in the case of movement of capital).

It is likely that supraterritoriality will become more generalized in the future, and the need for supranational decision-making processes more pressing. Rules and regulations will continue to reflect the relative influence of the actors who participate in the adoption of rules. This can be seen in various international organizations such as the WTO where rules reflect the interests of major trading nations, but not those of the developing world or of civil society. Similarly, negotiations of the EMP agreements were carried out between the European Commission as the representative of all members of the EU, and southern Mediterranean countries acting individually, and there too the final texts reflect much more the interests of the EU than those of the southern partners. If the Arab world wants to avoid this pitfall, it needs to participate in future multilateral

negotiations as a bloc. That, in turn, requires the creation of Arab supranational institutions that have the kind of authority, competencies and resources enjoyed by the European Commission.

Globality is a fact: geographical distance is less and less a factor in establishing relations between humans. However, globality is unevenly distributed between and within societies. Thus, the number of internet users increases steadily, but there are millions who have never used a telephone. Science and technology are advancing rapidly, but millions are and will remain illiterate. Furthermore, globality can be – and *has* been – used to spread liberalization, universalization and westernization. But this should not lead to its wholesale rejection.

In dealing with the many facets of globalization, the Arab world needs to be pragmatic. It should analyse whether and to what extent globality, internationalization, liberalization, universalization and westernization can promote or threaten human security; in the light of that it should take measures to exploit positive aspects of globalization and to avoid those that it considers undesirable. If, for example, scientific research requires teamwork, we should encourage our scientists to work with each other, and not just with colleagues from the North. In the economic field, if the trend is towards free trade, more trade in services, and a growing role of large corporations, then Arabs should move to create a single market that would encourage local investors to produce and sell freely in the region.

In sum, *regionalization* can be an effective way for the Arab world to take an active part in the process of globalization/globality, instead of being a passive recipient – and victim – of its effects. Given the fact that, 'in the current regime of intensified globalization ... market imperatives consistently outrun existing institutional capacities for effective regulation [and create] increasing inequalities', and as experience has shown that development strategies applied within national boundaries are largely ineffective, there is an urgent need for developing

countries in general, and the Arab world in particular, 'to create and sustain the kinds of agglomerations [i.e. cross-border regions] without which they can never hope for entry into the highest ranks of the global economy, while ensuring that income disparities remain well within the limits of the socially just and politically tolerable'.[7]

Having looked at global factors that affect human security, we now turn to factors that are specific to the Arab world, focusing on three of these: the geostrategic position of the Arab world, regional cooperation, and the conceptualization of nationalism.

7   Regionalism as a path to economic development is coming back into the mainstream of economic theory. These two quotes are taken from an article whose authors argue in favour of such a return: Scott and Storper (forthcoming, p. 32 in draft).

III

Regional factors affecting human security

Why have some societies been able to keep up with scientific and technological progress and achieve high levels of human development, whereas others, including Arab society, have been bypassed by progress and remained undeveloped or underdeveloped? This question has been raised by many Arab intellectuals, and received a variety of answers.[8] Some thinkers argue that the Arab world has been a victim of imperialism, exploitation and foreign domination. Others consider that these factors are important but should not be overemphasized: 'Holding exogenous factors responsible for underdevelopment in the Arab world may prevent the examination of factors that are endogenous to Arab societies and that allow foreign powers and interests to take roots in our societies and to play with our destinies'.[9] Both internal and external factors need to be taken into consideration, but it is not possible to review all of them. Discussion will therefore be limited to three factors considered to have a decisive impact on human security: natural factors such as endowment in natural resources and geographical location; patterns of conflict and cooperation in the region; and prevailing concepts of political culture, particularly definitions of nationalism and political allegiance.

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8   An early and particularly comprehensive treatment of the question is provided by Fouad Haidar (1990).
9   *Ibid.*, p. 48.

1 Impact of geography

We do not choose where we are born, nor do we define the natural features of our place of birth. Yet geographical location, geology, weather and other natural conditions all have a decisive impact on human life. In the case of MENA, two features that are not man-made have had a particularly important impact on the region: oil resources and scarcity of arable lands.

Oil: a poisoned gift?

MENA contains some of the world's most important oil and gas proved reserves (Tables 2 and 3). This has had positive as well as negative effects on human security in the region. The most obvious benefit is material well-being. As may be seen from Table 4, Arab countries with the highest per capita income are those that produce and export oil (with the notable exception of Algeria). However, this wealth is also at the origin of many of the region's problems. Given the strategic value of oil, consuming countries have always been keen to have access to it in an unhampered manner and at 'reasonable prices'.

Table 2: Greatest natural gas reserves by country (2003)

2002 rank	Country	2003 proved reserves (trillion cu ft)
1	Russian Federation	1 700.0
2	**Qatar**	**916.0**
3	Iran, Islamic Republic of	913.6
4	Other former USSR	332.1
5	**Saudi Arabia**	**234.6**
6	**United Arab Emirates**	**204.1**
7	United States	186.9
8	Nigeria	178.5
9	**Algeria**	**170.0**
10	Venezuela	149.2

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Table 3: Greatest oil reserves by country (2003)

2002 rank	Country	2003 proved reserves (billion barrels)
1	**Saudi Arabia**	**261.7**
2	**Iraq**	**115.0**
3	Iran, Islamic Republic of	100.1
4	**Kuwait**	**98.9**
5	**United Arab Emirates**	**63.0**
6	Russian Federation	58.8
7	Venezuela	53.1
8	Nigeria	32.0
9	**Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**	**30.0**
10	China	23.7

Note: Figures in Tables 2 and 3 are proved reserves recoverable with present technology and prices.
Source: World Oil (2003). IEA (2004), reproduced from *International Energy Annual 2002* (2004)

Table 4: Social and economic indicators

	Population (millions) 2000	GDP (US$ billions) 2000	Oil exports (million barrels per day) 2001	GDP per capita (PPP US$) 2000	HDI value 2000	HDI rank 2000
Bahrain	0.6	8.0		15 084	0.831	39
Kuwait	1.9	37.8	1.80	15 799	0.813	45
UA Emirates	2.6	46.5	2.09	17 935	0.812	46
Qatar	0.6	14.5		–	0.803	51
Libyan AJ	5.3	–	1.24	–	0.773	64
Saudi Arabia	20.3	173.3	7.38	11 367	0.759	71
Lebanon	3.5	16.5		4 308	0.755	75
Oman	2.5	15.0		–	0.751	78
Tunisia	9.5	19.5		6 363	0.722	97
Jordan	4.9	8.3		3 966	0.717	99
Algeria	*30.3*	*53.3*	*1.24*	*5 308*	*0.697*	*106*
Syrian AR	16.2	17.0		3 556	0.691	108
Egypt	67.9	98.7		3 635	0.642	115
Morocco	29.9	33.3		3 546	0.602	123
Sudan	31.1	11.5		1 797	0.499	139
Yemen	18.3	8.5		893	0.479	144
Mauritania	2.7	0.9		1 677	0.438	152
Arab States	**246**	**603.5**		**4 793**	**0.652**	–

Note: HDI = UN Human Development Index, PPP = purchasing power parity.
Source: UNDP (2002a).

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In order to achieve that objective, each country used strategies that varied according to the prevailing circumstances, but their common feature was – and continues to be – to ensure that political authority in oil-supplying countries does not fall into 'unfriendly hands'. This was all the more important as members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) continue to depend on imports to meet their energy needs. On average, the OECD dependence ratio declined from about 80 per cent in the 1970s to around 60 per cent in the last decade, but increased in the case of the US from 35 per cent in 1990 to over 50 per cent in 2002 (Figures 3 and 4 in Graphics at the end of document). The share of the Gulf region in total oil imports is currently around 70 per cent for Japan, 30 per cent for Western Europe (and declining), and 20 per cent for the US (and increasing; see Figures 6 and 7 in Graphics at the end of document). This dependence is likely to have a major impact on the way the West defines its security priorities and the actions it is willing to take should this vital interest be threatened. Of course, no nation would openly admit that it would use force for any purpose except as a last resort, but a realist should be aware that few nations would be willing to put themselves at risk for the sake of prudence.

In any event, even if we discount the possibility that oil would attract foreign military intervention in the region, there are other threats to human security that are connected to oil wealth. It is a well-known fact that *lack of diversification* is a major source of economic problems. Nations that depend on one sector or one product for their income will generally have weak and vulnerable economies. The problem is further aggravated when the product in question is a non-renewable natural resource such as oil. This is the situation confronting most Arab countries that draw their revenues more or less exclusively from the energy sector. So far, measures taken to alleviate the problem have been insufficient and/or inadequate.

Food security

Arab countries are further faced with another form of vulnerability: their inability to guarantee their *food security*. By and large, they have to obtain more or less important portions of their food supplies from the outside world. In most cases, this is due to natural conditions that have little to do with the availability of oil. The region is predominately covered by desert where droughts are frequent and long-lasting, and water is scarce. But some areas, especially the Mediterranean shores and parts of Sudan, used to be quite fertile until human action spoiled them. In North Africa, for example, agriculture was deliberately abandoned in favour of industry, the latter being considered more appropriate for modernization and development. In other cases, production was switched from food staples to cash crops for export, the rationale being that cash crops bring the hard currency needed for industrialization. Over the years, such decisions led to the current problems of dependency on foreign markets for agricultural exports and food imports, inefficiency and low productivity of the agricultural sector, ecological and environmental problems arising from inappropriate use of irrigation, mechanization, and chemical products. More often than not, oil income was considered as an adequate security against insufficient local food production, and so far there has been little reason to reject the validity of this proposition. In fact, people do not die of hunger, not even in countries that have no oil. But the fact remains that food does have a strategic value that should not be allowed to be used against Arab security. At least one country has decided to use parts of its oil income to 'make the desert bloom'. The resulting agricultural production may not be economical, but its strategic importance is undeniable. Other countries should pursue the same objective, although less costly results are likely to be obtained if those endowed with land and those with financial resources were to cooperate in achieving collective food security.[10]

10   For a more detailed discussion of this point see Chourou (2003).

2   Arab unity: myth or destiny?

Unification, just like matrimony, depends more on human will than on the satisfaction of certain prerequisites, although the existence of commonalities may increase the probability of success. A marriage between cousins is more likely to last than a marriage between two persons coming from different cultures, but this is not a steadfast rule. Similarly, a homogeneous population is more likely to create a peaceful and harmonious polity than a heterogeneous one, but again the reverse is quite possible. Thus, human will can transform old enemies into allies or turn brothers against each other.

One can suppose that Arab people do not oppose unity, although only a scientific survey can determine how committed they are to what form of unification.[11] Leaders, on the other hand, have always proclaimed their belief in, and their desire for unity. A few attempts have even been made to bring it about, even though such attempts have aborted after a few months or a few days.[12] Nevertheless, Arab states have shown that they are capable of achieving a high degree of cooperation and unity of purpose when they wish to do so. But by and large, unity has been mostly an ideal and a propaganda tool rather than a political objective to be implemented through a coherent and planned process.

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11   Claims are made that some Arabs feel deep animosity towards other Arabs for political, ideological, economic or religious reasons, and that such feelings constitute a major obstacle to unification or even cooperation.
12   The United Arab Republic (UAR), formed by Egypt and Syria, and the United Arab States, formed by the UAR and North Yemen, lasted from 1958 to 1961. Most other attempts at unification were initiated by Libya. The Federation of Arab States (FAR), formed by Libya, Egypt and Syria, formally came into existence on 1 January 1972 but was never implemented. Plans to achieve full political union between Libya and Egypt collapsed after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the signing of a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in 1978. A merger between Libya and Tunisia was announced in early 1974 only to be denounced by the Tunisian President two days later. The treaty of Oujda signed between Libya and Morocco in 1984 united the two countries, but the project collapsed in 1986. Syria is, in theory but not in practice, united with Libya to this day as a result of an agreement signed in 1980, and it had envisioned mergers with Jordan and Iraq.

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Total harmony does not have to be a precondition for creating strong bonds between people, nor is it a necessary consequence of creating such bonds, or an essential prerequisite for maintaining them. Germany and France had been enemies for generations, but that did not prevent them from joining other European countries to launch an ambitious project of integration. Once afoot, the project did not totally erase all ill feeling among its participants, nor was the continuation of the project dependent upon a full and permanent agreement on all issues between all members. Therefore, even if there were obstacles that stand in the way of Arab integration and unity, they cannot – should not – be considered as insurmountable. But we need a Jean Monet or a Robert Schumann to put across such an argument in the Arab world or, more accurately, we need to allow such visionaries (who are already in our midst) to freely expound their views and militate for their concretization.

3   Tribes, states and umma

A number of analysts and practitioners argue that one of the most vexing problems in the Arab world is the continued predominance of what anthropologists and sociologists call 'tribalism'. Traditionally, the basic unit of social organization is the tribe, called in Arabic *qabila* (قبيلة) or *achira* (عشيرة), i.e. the descendants of the same father, each *qabila* being headed by an *aarch* (عرش). By extension, people of the same ancestry or descendants of the same forefathers constituted a *qawm* (قوم) or a nation. As Arabs were nomadic people, territory was not a major element in their social identity. Thus, the term *watan* (وطن), which nowadays refers to the homeland and connotes the affective or emotional feeling of patriotism, originally meant simply the place of residence. It is interesting to note that the term *umma*, usually translated as 'nation' and used to refer to Arabs or Muslims, means in Arabic simply a group of people or people of the same generation, and is used as a synonym of *watan*.

For most Arabs, then, the tribe was their main social reference; it commanded their total loyalty and they lived and died for it. In fact, early ethnologists and Orientalists described the region as lands inhabited by tribes roaming the desert. When Europeans came to the area, they had to deal with the leaders of these tribes. At one point or another, it became necessary for administrative purposes to draw boundaries that identified territories inside which political authority was to be exercised. When these territories, many of which had been created by colonial powers, achieved independence, the new states not only kept the inherited frontiers, but they rejected any attempt to tamper with them. In fact many conflicts in the region are directly related to claims and counterclaims made by states concerning historical configurations of territories.

One of the priorities of leaders of the newly independent states had been to create nations out of the conglomerate of tribes that had come under their authority, although nationalism was expounded more intensely by revolutionary, secular leaders than conservative, traditionalist ones. In most cases, people did begin to identify with the nation-state to which they happened to belong and to attach an importance to the nationality that official documents (passports, identity cards, birth certificates) bestowed on them. But this did not eliminate or even reduce their attachment to a given tribe, region or religious sect.

This has been a major source of problems in the Arab world. In some countries, tribes enjoy a great deal of autonomy and apply their own laws and practices rather than the law of the land. For example, tribal rules govern practices such as blood feud and peacemaking (*sulha*), including blood money (*diyyeh*), despite official government prohibitions against murder. The same applies to 'honour' crimes, including the murder of women to protect family honour (*'ird*). Indeed, in some countries men murdering their female relatives for reasons of 'protecting the family honour' are routinely acquitted in state courts, and sometimes are not even brought to justice.

Furthermore, tribalism raises the problem of divided or conflicting loyalties. For example, in Iraq the Rafa'yyin are part of the Hadithiyyin, who are themselves members of the Tikritis, all of them being Sunnis. How does a Rafa'y view other Sunnis or a Shia (Shiite) or a Kurd, and to what extent does he consider himself an Iraqi or a member of the Arab or Islamic *umma*?

In a modern polity a person may simultaneously identify with several groups on the basis of ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic, professional or political criteria. This may not be the case in the Arab world at the present time, but we have to realize that we have done very little to change existing negative attitudes. In many countries power, wealth, privileges, access to services and other advantages are allocated on the basis of membership of a given tribe. Therefore, those who enjoy ascendance will try to keep it, and those locked out will try to gain power; and when they do they will restart the entire cycle.

Two essential changes need to be adopted. First, political power has to be gained on the basis of the freely expressed consent of the population, with firm guarantees that the minority will not be denied some basic rights, including the right to have a periodic opportunity to participate in efforts to change the leadership. Second, rules have to be adopted to guarantee that no group or coalition would control power indefinitely. Of course, these two reforms may not necessarily lead in practice to the desired goal of equal access to power. In Iraq, for example, the Shia constitute a majority of the population; therefore, democratic elections are likely to give them control over elective offices systematically. But there is nothing unusual about this. Everyone knows that democracy is based on the law of numbers. But it is also known that democracy provides guarantees to protect minorities against the tyranny of the majority. Some forms of guarantees are better than others. Reserved offices and predetermined quotas should be avoided because they perpetuate divisions and preclude efforts to distribute power on the basis of different criteria. A better approach would be to have a bill of

rights or a set of constitutional rights that all citizens must enjoy and a firm collective commitment for their respect. But the best solution would be to bring citizens to adopt new ways of *social differentiation* whereby one defines oneself and others not exclusively on the basis of innate traits such as sex, race or religion but on the basis of characteristics acquired through one's own choice, effort and interest, such as education, employment, talent or intellectual predisposition.

IV

Local barriers to human security

Apart from threats and risks to human security that are common to the entire region, there are others that are not present in all countries or are present at different levels of gravity. Two broad categories of problems are discussed: demographic trends and access to social services.

1   Demographic trends

According to UN figures, population in the Arab world should stand at a little over 323 million by the end of 2005, to reach 355 million in 2010 and 455 million in 2025. The average growth rate for the region was 2.7 per cent between 1975 and 2000, and is expected to decrease to 2 per cent by 2015 (Table 5 and Figure 2). Some countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco will have brought their growth rate to 1.5 per cent or less, whereas others such as Yemen, Oman and Saudi Arabia are expected to continue having relatively high growth rates.

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Table 5: Demographic trends

Human Development Index rank		Total population (millions)			Annual population growth rate (%)		Urban population (% of total)			Population under age 15 (% of total)	
		1975	2000	2015	1975– 2000	2000– 2015	1975	2000	2015	2000	2015
45	Kuwait	1.0	1.9	2.8	2.6	2.5	83.8	96.0	96.9	31.3	25.9
46	UA Emirates	0.5	2.6	3.2	6.6	1.4	65.4	86.7	91.6	26.0	21.1
51	Qatar	0.2	0.6	0.7	4.8	1.4	82.9	92.7	95.0	26.7	22.7
64	Libyan AJ	2.4	5.3	7.1	3.1	1.9	60.9	87.6	90.3	33.9	30.4
71	Saudi Arabia	7.3	20.3	31.7	4.1	3.0	58.4	86.2	91.0	42.9	38.6
75	Lebanon	2.8	3.5	4.2	0.9	1.3	67.0	89.7	92.6	31.1	23.8
78	Oman	0.9	2.5	4.1	4.2	3.2	19.6	76.0	82.6	44.1	41.5
97	Tunisia	5.7	9.5	11.3	2.0	1.2	49.8	65.5	73.5	29.7	24.8
99	Jordan	1.9	4.9	7.2	3.7	2.5	57.8	78.7	81.1	40.0	36.4
106	Algeria	16.0	30.3	38.0	2.5	1.5	40.3	57.1	65.2	34.8	26.8
108	Syrian AR	7.4	16.2	23.2	3.1	2.4	45.1	51.4	57.9	40.8	34.3
115	Egypt	38.8	67.9	84.4	2.2	1.5	43.5	42.7	45.8	35.4	26.9
123	Morocco	17.3	29.9	37.7	2.2	1.5	37.8	55.5	64.4	34.7	28.1
139	Sudan	16.7	31.1	42.4	2.5	2.1	18.9	36.1	48.7	40.1	35.4
144	Yemen	7.0	18.3	33.1	3.9	3.9	16.6	24.7	31.2	50.1	48.9
	Arab States	**126**	**246**	**333**	**2.7**	**2.0**	**40.3**	**52.8**	**59.0**	**37.6**	**32.2**

Source: UNDP (2002*a*).

Figure 2: Demographic growth rates (2010-25)
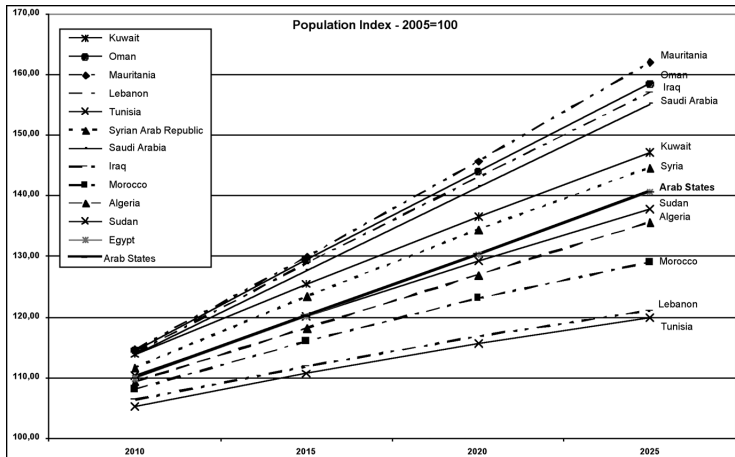
A striking characteristic of the population in the region is its youth. Nearly 40 per cent are under 15, and the ratio is not expected to change substantially in the coming years. Furthermore, the population is highly urbanized. With the exception of Egypt, Sudan and Yemen, urbanization rates are over 50 per cent and in some cases are over 90 per cent. By 2015, almost 60 per cent of the Arab population will be living in cities.

These figures have important economic and social implications. As the population increases, national income has to keep up with it if standards of living are to remain stable. However, this has not been the case so far. In fact, in the 1990s per capita income adjusted for inflation has decreased for many countries, and stagnated elsewhere.

Living standards are also affected by the large size of the inactive population. With a high proportion of youth, and the lack of participation of women in the modern economic sector, adult males are left with the task of earning a sufficient income to meet the needs of the remaining population. This task is further complicated by the fact that national economies are unable to supply sufficient jobs to meet the demand. Thus, unemployment rates hover around 15-25 per cent according to official figures, the actual figures being probably higher in many cases, especially if disguised unemployment is taken into account.

If these trends are not reversed many Arab countries, especially those without oil resources, will be faced with serious problems. The core human security objective of 'freedom from want' is likely to remain out of reach.

The problem will be further complicated by increased urbanization. Already, many Arab cities are unmanageable. Their inhabitants have to deal with a number of problems such as insufficient and substandard housing, deteriorating municipal services, all forms of pollution, lack of public transportation and growing criminality. As a result, cities where such problems are most severe have become tinderboxes that can go up in flames at

any time, and they are an ideal recruiting ground for extremist movements looking for foot soldiers and suicide bombers.

2 Access to health and education

Table 6: Social expenditures

	Public expenditure on education (% of GDP)		Public expenditure on health (% of GDP)		Military expenditure (% of GDP)		Total debt service (% of GDP)	
	1985–87	1995–97	1990	1998	1990	2000	1990	2000
Bahrain	5.2	4.4	–	2.6	5.1	4.0	–	–
Kuwait	4.8	5.0	4.0	–	48.5	8.2	–	–
United Arab Emirates	2.1	1.7	0.8	0.8	–	–	–	–
Qatar	4.7	3.4	–	–	–	–	–	–
Saudi Arabia	7.4	7.5	–	–	12.8	11.6	–	–
Lebanon	–	2.5	–	2.2	5.0	3.6	3.5	11.0
Oman	4.1	4.5	2.0	2.9	18.3	9.7	7.0	7.7
Tunisia	6.2	7.7	3.0	2.2	2.0	1.7	11.6	9.8
Jordan	6.8	7.9	3.6	3.6	11.1	9.5	15.5	8.0
Algeria	9.8	5.1	3.0	2.6	1.5	3.5	14.2	8.4
Egypt	4.5	4.8	1.8	–	3.5	2.3	7.1	1.8
Morocco	6.2	5.3	0.9	1.2	4.1	4.2	6.9	10.0
Sudan	–	1.4	0.7	–	3.6	3.0	0.4	0.5
Yemen	–	7.0	1.1	–	8.5	5.2	3.5	2.6
Mauritania	–	5.1	–	1.4	3.8	–	14.3	10.7

Source: UNDP (2002*a*).

Although there are no major health problems in the Arab world, and in the absence of reliable figures concerning health conditions of various segments of the population, it would appear that insufficient resources are spent on health. Available data (Table 6) suggest that most Arab countries in the 1990s spent less than 3 per cent of their respective GDP on health (compared with 5-8 per cent in developed countries). With the exception of North Africa, major efforts need to be made in this area, but one can say that the health situation in the region is not catastrophic.

Education, on the other hand, is in a more critical state. The second *Arab Human Development Report* (UNDP, 2003*a*) being entirely devoted to this question, there is no need to describe the situation in detail. Suffice it to say that illiteracy is still widespread, especially among women, that universal primary education remains a distant goal for many countries, and that higher education is still a luxury accessible only to a minority of the population. Furthermore, there is a dearth of scientific research and production, which is one of the main reasons why the Arab world will remain on the margin of the ongoing scientific and technological revolution. Not only are we not participating in the production of knowledge, we are often unable to use knowledge produced by others. How can people use the internet if they cannot read or write, not to mention lacking the means to buy a computer? Human security is unattainable without minimal health and educational standards.

There is, however, one issue of particular concern. Whatever the degree of severity of social problems in the region, the victims of such problems are more likely to be female than male. Too many Arab women do not have access to adequate prenatal and postnatal health care, are not attended by skilled medical staff when they give birth, and die while giving birth (the maternal mortality ratio reported for the period 1985-99 varied from 3 per 100,000 live births in the United Arab Emirates to 550 in Sudan).

With respect to education, illiteracy is far more prevalent among women than men. School attendance and enrolment are lower among girls than boys at all levels of education, and there are more girls than boys who drop out of school or repeat grades.

These are only two aspects of the more general problem of discrimination against women that is besetting the Arab States, and which is a major obstacle to the realization of human security for all citizens. No society can expect to make progress in any domain if it excludes half of its members from participating in the common efforts tending towards that objective.

Part Two

Human security in the Arab world: present status and future prospects

Components of Human Security

When a human security index is devised, it will probably show that Arabs as a group enjoy greater security than other communities. Nevertheless, they face now and will continue to face in the future a variety of threats. Some of the threats are immediate and their victims have already turned into nameless statistics. Others are more distant but their effects are just as certain and just as severe. Following Taylor Owen's suggestion, we will discuss four components of human security: protecting the physical integrity of human beings; providing access to goods and services needed to satisfy material and non-material needs; enabling individuals to cope with contingencies and emergencies that threaten survival; and ensuring participation in processes used to delineate, revise, achieve and advance individual and collective welfare.

I

Protecting physical integrity

In the Arab world, threats to life emanate from a variety of sources. A person may die because of lack of food, medical care, or other goods and services without which life cannot be sustained. This category of threat is discussed in the next section. A person may also die as a result of violent acts perpetrated by others for different reasons and acting in different capacities. Forms of violence include international wars, civil wars, uprisings and murder. But some acts can affect the mind as well as the body

without leading to 'extreme prejudice', i.e. to biological destruction. Hence, torture, arbitrary arrest, invasion of privacy, harassment and surveillance, as well as burglary, trafficking, extortion and bribery, are other forms of violence to be considered as threats to human security. Each of these forms of violence is examined below.

1   External threats to human security

Geopolitics at the beginning of the twenty-first century is not what it was twenty or thirty years ago. Arabs have to examine the layout of the international scene with great care and even greater lucidity, and make a realistic determination of who may be counted on as a partner in the search for security, and who is likely to be a threat. At present, Israel can be perceived as one threat and the United States as another. However, this status must not be accepted as permanent. On the contrary, no effort should be spared to put an end to conflicts and animosity with these or any other country. This should be a matter of principle. On the other hand, friendship should not be confused with submission. But most of all, the existence or persistence of these threats must not deflect attention from other sources of insecurity which are not directly linked to Israel or the US.

2   Internal threats to human security

In its traditional definition, security referred to the security of the state and meant protection against threats emanating from outside the borders of the state, such as foreign attacks or invasions. Human security, on the other hand, includes both external and internal threats, and the referent is not the state but human beings. Also traditionally, the state was considered as the main provider of security against external threats. In the context of human security, the state continues to play that role, and rightly so. After all, people cannot feel secure if foreign

powers threaten or use force against them. But while they are carrying out this duty to protect, states may also become a threat to the security of their own citizens. Those wielding political power and exercising control over the legitimate use of force may abuse those capabilities and use them for illegitimate purposes. In democratic systems, citizens have the tools and the opportunity to check and defeat such designs.

This is not, however, the case in the Arab region. More often than not, national security is equated with regime security, and disagreements or dislikes between leaders are transformed into animosity and conflicts between peoples. Denigration campaigns, boycotting of international meetings, acts of incivility, closing of borders, expelling of visitors, mobilization of troops, armament and actual warfare: such occurrences have become commonplace in the Arab world. Periodically, Arabs are told which other Arabs are to be considered as enemies, which Arab countries they are not allowed to visit, and which Arabic newspapers or television stations are waging a hate campaign against them. The motives and the validity of such decisions are rarely submitted to public debate.

Similarly, rulers designate, arrest, try and otherwise dispose of 'internal enemies', individuals and groups accused of plotting against national security, attempting to seize power illegally, conniving with foreign enemies, betraying the nation and other crimes, when in fact the only charge that may be levelled at such individuals and groups is that of speaking their minds or demanding greater respect for their civil and human rights.

Outside observers have been aware of insufficient respect for human rights in the Arab region. When several Arab states participated in the 1995 Barcelona conference initiated by the EU, which launched the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), they signed the concluding Declaration that stated that democracy and respect of human rights were 'essential elements' of the partnership. Since that time the EU has been calling for an

effective implementation of the commitment taken by the Arab partners. However, the calls remained largely unheeded and as a result, the political dialogue within the EMP practically broke down, and the so-called Barcelona Process came to a halt. After September 11, Arab reluctance to adopt political reforms stiffened even further, many states arguing that liberalization would only open the way to radical regimes to gain power.

At first the EU accepted that argument, but its recently announced European Neighbourhood Policy has put, with greater insistence, the issue of political reform back on the agenda of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Almost simultaneously, the United States, for its part, has unveiled its Middle East Partnership Initiative with the aim of encouraging the Arab States to introduce political reforms.

By that time, our poor record in the area of human rights had become so notorious that not even official circles could deny it. At present, expressions such as 'political reform' and 'respect for human rights' are part of the official discourse of the Arab League and of many of its member states. Yet, many declarations proclaiming intentions to move towards reforms contain caveats that can only raise concern. For example, it is said that reforms must proceed gradually and at a slow pace, that they must be 'culture specific', and that they must not be initiated under external pressure.

Such points are certainly open to debate. We have to come to grips with the fact that concepts such as sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and cultural specificity are no longer defined as they used to be only a few years ago and, more importantly, they can no longer be used as tools for preventing the international community from taking an interest in what goes on anywhere in the world. As Arabs and Muslims we do have the right to protect values and ideas that define our identity, and to stay away from principles and practices that we deem offensive. However, this does not mean that we withdraw in our shell and refuse any possibility of adaptation to other viewpoints.

If there is going to be a reform process, it is best that it be launched at our own initiative and that we claim ownership of the process from the outset. The alternative would be that the EU and/or the US would seek other interlocutors with whom to explore possibilities of starting reforms. Although the official European and American position is that they do not wish to impose change, they do seem eager to see that change takes place. An indication of what might happen came recently in the form of recommendations issued by Working Group I of EuroMeSCo (a network of Mediterranean research institutes) which include approaching 'moderate Islamic groups' in the Arab world, such groups being described as the most likely to implement reforms in the region (EuroMeSCo, 2004). It is immaterial whether such advice is sound or not, and whether the EU would follow it or not. The main point is that there is a risk that we lose the initiative, with the consequence that whatever policy is adopted is not likely to reflect an Arab consensus.

At the risk of belabouring an idea stated earlier, Arabs must put their house in order. Some governments have taken initiatives designed to correct past abuses and prevent their repetition. Other governments must follow suit. There can be no justification for Arab citizens fearing their own leaders, institutions or fellow citizens, or for leaders thinking that they do not need the advice and consent of citizens, or for institutions to be at the service of private interests, or for citizens to accept living under any authority other than that of the law. In a word, Arabs are entitled to enjoy freedom from fear.

II

Meeting basic needs

Table 7: Human Development Indicators

	Life expectancy at birth (years) 2000	Adult literacy rate (% age 15 and above) 2000	Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (%) 1999	GDP per capita (PPP US$) 2000	Life expectancy index	Education index	GDP index	(HDI) value 2000
Developing countries	64.7	73.7	61	3 783	**0.66**	**0.69**	**0.61**	0.654
Least-developed countries	51.9	52.8	38	1 216	**0.45**	**0.48**	**0.41**	0.445
Arab States	**66.8**	**62.0**	**62**	**4 793**	**0.70**	**0.62**	**0.64**	**0.653**
East Asia and the Pacific	69.5	85.9	71	4 290	**0.74**	**0.81**	**0.63**	0.726
Latin America and the Caribbean	70.0	88.3	74	7 234	**0.75**	**0.84**	**0.72**	0.767
South Asia	62.9	55.6	53	2 404	**0.63**	**0.55**	**0.53**	0.570
Sub-Saharan Africa	48.7	61.5	42	1 690	**0.40**	**0.55**	**0.47**	0.471

Note: HDI = UN Human Development Index, PPP = purchasing power parity
Source: UNDP (2004*b*).

Humanity requires food and water to live. At present, hunger and thirst are not major problems in the Arab world. However, given the scarcity of arable land and rainfall, agricultural production is not sufficient to meet all the region's needs, and most countries have to import more or less sizeable quantities of foodstuffs to feed their populations. Naturally, self-sufficiency is not required to guarantee security as long as suppliers and money are available. Nevertheless, the strategic value of food is such that reliance on outside suppliers must always be considered as a potential threat to human security. From this point of view, the region's perspectives are not bright (Chourou, 2003). Desertification is reducing the size and productivity of arable land in many areas. The quality and quantities of freshwater supplies are dwindling as a result of pollution, increasing demand and wasteful practices.

The effects of these problems on human security are well known, and their future evolution has already been forecast by scientists. For example, there are numerous institutes in the Arab world that study arid zones and at least one regional organization specializing in combating desertification. With respect to freshwater scarcity, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been studying this problem for some time and has even designated 2003 as International Year of Freshwater.[13] The international community and the Arab world are then well aware of these environmental problems. What is needed is the urgent implementation of corrective measures to stop the degradation and waste of land and water resources, and preventive measures to ensure that future generations can produce, if not all the food they need, at least as much of it as possible.

Life may be interrupted not only by hunger and thirst, but also by disease. Human security therefore means that every person can aspire to have a long and healthy life. In this respect,

13   For more details see Chourou (2004).

the Arab world has registered notable achievements. According to the 2004 *Human Development Report* (UNDP, 2004b), life expectancy at birth in the Arab world increased from an average of 51.9 years in the 1970-75 period to 65.9 years in 1995-2000 (Table 7 indicates that life expectancy at birth in the Arab region stood at 68.8 years in 2000, which is the third highest figure in the developing world). The probability at birth of surviving to age 65 stood in 1995-2000 at 71.1 per cent for women and 64.9 per cent for men. As for the number of physicians per 100,000 inhabitants, the average during the 1990-99 period varied from 210 in Lebanon and 202 in Egypt to 76 in Tunisia and 46 in Morocco (compared with 554 in Italy but 164 in the United Kingdom). On the other hand, health expenditures as a percentage of GDP have not varied much between 1990 and 1998 (the two years for which the report gives figures) and ranged from 1 to 3 per cent. It is difficult to interpret this information, but generally speaking it does not appear that the Arab world is suffering from, or is threatened by, any particular health problems.

However, and as AHDR underlines, 'human well-being is not limited to material dimensions but extends to the individual's moral participation in society and to all aspects of a decent life, such as beauty, human dignity and self-fulfilment' (UNDP, 2002a, p. 15). It is those non-material dimensions of human security that are most wanting in the Arab world. It may well be true that average Arabs feels lucky that their survival is not under immediate threat, yet are still not totally happy with life. There are not many scientific studies that evaluate on a regular basis the state of mind or the outlook on life of Arab men and women, but informal observations and impressionistic reports indicate that a general feeling of *malaise* seems to pervade Arab societies. An attentive observer may in fact detect a number of indicators that would confirm that feeling. In short, the crucial problem that confronts most Arabs at present is the fact that the state has become the dominant threat to human security. A large number

of Arabs are among the millions of 'ordinary people, [who are] at risk of their lives, because their states are unwilling or unable to protect them' (ICISS, 2001, p. 11). Few Arabs - with the notable exception of Palestinians and Iraqis - are exposed to naked threats to their physical safety or to dire economic or social problems, but most see their dignity, their worth as human beings, their human rights and their fundamental freedoms trampled upon on a daily basis by institutions and individuals, including 'security' forces, who act on behalf of, and on orders from, national political authorities.

Numerous reports, books, articles and testimonies have given detailed descriptions of the suffering endured by Arabs for decades. In some countries, the existence of such practices has been acknowledged, and measures to put an end to them have been promised. It is therefore not necessary to enumerate or describe the practices themselves. It is more important to focus on what needs to be done to ensure that all Arabs enjoy all aspects of human security - those pertaining to their physical well-being as well as those to their mental, psychological or emotional state.

Much has been said about the fundamentalists, their actions and their ideas. Recently, there has been a debate about the extent to which Islamist movements are representative of Muslims in general. But this does not change the fact that Islamist/fundamentalist movements enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, a wide support among grass-roots Arabs, notwithstanding claims to the contrary made by authorities in Arab governments, especially after September 11. Also in opposition to official proclamations, the main reason for this support is not the conservative or obscurantist tendencies of the populace, but the fact that public opinion considers that the Islamists have been among the earliest and most consistent critics of regimes, and their movement one of the rare ones not to be 'bought' by those regimes. In a few cases, Islamist movements have been able to wrestle political reforms from their national governments, and they became the main beneficiaries of these reforms. Algeria is a

case in point. It is now admitted that the Islamist vote was mostly a protest vote, and that voters were grateful that they had an opportunity to cast a meaningful ballot.

It is highly probable that other Arabs have similar feelings. For nearly three decades there have been clear signs that people are dissatisfied with their rulers. However, the only way open to them to express their dissatisfaction was to take to the streets. In most cases, regimes reacted not by allowing greater participation in the political process, but by increasing oppression. This set off a cycle of violence and counter-violence, violation of human rights and resistance, resort to terrorist tactics and further repression. The result was that those who were branded as terrorists became heroes and martyrs, and those who prosecuted or persecuted them confirmed their image of tyrants.

According to some analysts, dissatisfaction with authoritarian rule emerges mostly as a result of economic hardship, and poverty is the ideal breeding ground for extremism. However, such causal relationships are not always valid. In fact, it has been demonstrated that a large number of fundamentalists come from the universities, the armed forces, the middle class and other social strata that are not part of the proletariat. Furthermore, sociologists and political scientists have argued that the poor spend so much time trying to find a meal and to survive that they have neither the time nor the inclination to demand democracy, whereas those whose basic needs are satisfied, who have received some education, and who have the capacity and the opportunity to develop immaterial needs – those people will expect greater respect of political rights and freedoms. In any case, there are some basic human rights that people want to enjoy regardless of their social, racial, ethnic or religious status. All men and women dislike having things forced upon them, being treated with disrespect, being insulted, or being the victim of discrimination. Any social system that disregards this fundamental ethical rule is bound to break down sooner or later.

In the Arab world, people have been growing increasingly impatient with regimes that treat them as irresponsible minors incapable of deciding what is good and what is bad for them, of making decisions for themselves, of evaluating policies and policy-makers. They no longer wish – if they ever did – to be treated as the children or even the brothers of their rulers, much less as their servants. They want things to be put back the right side up: that the rulers consider themselves as the servants of the sovereign people. They no longer accept to be victims of arbitrary rule exercised by everyone who enjoys any amount of authority as a result of his/her function or social status, whether policeman, judge, parliamentarian or bureaucrat. They want accountability, the right to ask anyone the question that has become part of popular culture: 'Where did you get that from?'(هذا؟ لَك أين من). In a word, they want *demos kratia*, rule by the people.

Such feelings have been present in the Arab world long before the United States or Europe started calling for political reforms to be instituted in the region. But the fact that such calls are being made should be allowed to play a role in the intra-Arab debate over how the reform process should be launched. Reforming the political system must be considered as a moral imperative not just by the people, but by the elites as well. The elites, including political leaders, have the further moral duty of considering themselves as citizens that have the same rights and obligations as other citizens.

The transition from what exists at present to what is required by ethics, moral duty and social responsibility is not easy to make. Yet it must be made, and it will be made. The only question is whether it will be made peacefully, in an orderly manner, and with the cooperation and goodwill of all the parties concerned, or whether it will require animosity, violence and foreign intervention.

III

Coping with contingencies and emergencies

Many cultures believe that it is better to teach a man how to fish than to give him a fish. In black Africa, rites of passage to adulthood include sending adolescents into a hostile environment where they attempt to survive on their own for a few days. For most people, self-reliance is not only a necessity for survival, it is also a sign that individuals can be responsible for their welfare and will not be a burden to the community; it is therefore a personal and a social virtue. Of course, it does not negate social cohesiveness or solidarity, as the community remains available to give support when individuals are unable to pull their own weight.

However, modernization created new needs and made social life more complex. Cities offered opportunities, amenities and services that were not available in rural areas. People discovered that urban centres offered greater possibilities for a better life: higher income, better housing, health care and educational facilities, etc. However, urbanization required major changes in the way people lived. They were surrounded by strangers who spoke differently, behaved differently, had different customs and traditions. New methods had to be followed for resolving conflicts, raising and educating children, using and sharing objects and goods. Social and economic relations were organized according to unfamiliar rules. Self-reliance was no longer feasible or allowed for obtaining certain goods or services: in the city one cannot grow one's food, raise one's chickens or cows, educate one's children, or avenge one's honour as in the village or tribal land.

When Arab and African countries were under colonial rule, only a minority of the local population had access to the few social services available. After independence, governments sought to add new services and extend the availability of existing ones. Particular emphasis was placed on education and health care, but public authorities intervened in many other areas, from employment to economic production to cultural activities. Initially, this extensive interventionism was justified by the need to ensure equal access of all citizens to public services, but eventually it had some undesirable consequences. For one thing, the beneficiaries ended up becoming dependent on the state for many services, and slowly the state came to consider the supply of such services as a favour for which it expected some form of return in the form of gratitude, allegiance and praise. At the same time, people started losing the spirit of entrepreneurship, initiative and personal drive. They began getting used to the notion that one can get a 'free ride' or obtain things without effort or sacrifice. This attitude spread quickly within societies as it became apparent that better and faster results are obtained through 'connections' or obedience than through merit or hard work.

State interventionism in most aspects of life has come to be accepted in most developing countries, including within MENA, as long as the state was able to meet most people's needs. And states were able to play the role of providers without collecting taxes as long as they had a source of wealth that could expand in parallel with expanding needs. Beginning in the late 1980s, a number of factors started to put pressure on state revenues, forcing those states to adopt IMF-inspired structural adjustment plans designed to reduce budget deficits through such measures as phasing out subsidies and social expenditures. The welfare state or *l'état providence* was on its way out. Public employment, free education and medical care, subsidized food and transport could no longer be considered as acquired rights. People were told to fend for themselves. This required a serious

psychological adjustment, but it was not always easy to make. It also required fair and transparent institutions and regulations, but they were not always available. As a result, people felt disorientated, frustrated and hopeless – they felt insecure.

Threats to survival are likely to elicit a variety of reactions. In the Arab world, insecurity has led to behaviours that an outside observer may find counterproductive, self-defeating and even irrational. A rather disquieting phenomenon that one observes in the region is the spreading of despair, especially among young people, who in many Arab countries feel that their future is bleak. In parts of North Africa the feeling is so extreme that young men risk their lives to enter Europe illegally in the hope of making a living.

Another phenomenon is the trend to turn to the supernatural, to superstition and to religiosity as solutions to one's predicaments. Saints, magicians and astrologists are more than ever in fashion. Lotteries, betting and TV games with money prizes are becoming social addictions. Mosque attendance has increased to such an extent that some have dubbed the phenomenon as 'God's revenge'.

This is not to say that spirituality is a new trait of Arab societies, but it would seem that the increased attendance at mosques is part of the pattern observed by sociologists in many other societies whereby religious practice is stronger among the poor and increases in times of hardship. It is as if people try to find solace and comfort in religion or in the supernatural when other avenues seem closed. In any event, fundamentalist movements took advantage of this situation to transform mosques into political arenas where they could transmit their political message. The tactic was all the more successful in that the issues they raised related to the daily lives of their audience: unemployment, bad housing, deteriorating public services, injustice and lack of freedom. Furthermore, the criticisms they made and the solutions they proposed were not based on foreign ideologies such as socialism or communism or liberalism, but on

values and principles that are drawn directly from Islam and that people knew and held as sacred.

On the other hand, people may opt for a calm, peaceful and rational approach and ask for a dialogue with political authorities to identify and implement ways and means not only for allowing individuals to cope with contingencies and emergencies that threaten survival, but also for ensuring participation in processes used to delineate, revise, achieve and advance individual and collective welfare.

IV

Participation in public life

Another threat to human security is the persistence of the so-called *democratic deficit*. It is now commonly held that the Arab world is practically the only region not to be affected by the various 'waves of democratization' that have hit different areas of the developing world since the late 1980s. At present, few Arab countries can claim to have a genuinely democratic political system, i.e. a system where authority is held by institutions represented by individuals who are accountable to the citizens. This situation has persisted since the Arab countries achieved independence. Whenever possible, upon leaving the colonial powers sought to put into power rulers who would be friendly and well-disposed towards them. With one or two exceptions, the new rulers were pro-Western and remained so for long periods. The Cold War gave the West further motivation to prevent countries from defecting to the enemy (as Nasser's Egypt did), and to lure back those that did switch sides.

A symbiotic relationship was thus established between regimes and Western governments, particularly those of France and the United States. The latter could advance their economic interests (access to oil, sales of technological and industrial goods, recycling of oil revenues ...), and the former could count on diplomatic, logistical and material support for staying in power.

It may be said parenthetically that some leaders in their early period in power did help their respective countries to make major achievements, whether national unity, provision of social services such as education and health, launching an administration and public service, and building the foundations of a modern state. In the process, they could have chosen to lay

the ground for a democratic polity.[14] But none of them made such a choice. In fact, they remained in power until they died or were forcefully removed by competitors who, more often than not, brought little change in the method of governing.

At one point or another, discontent began to build up in various countries as a result of ill-advised policies, and opposition began to organize. Typically, demands were for greater democracy, respect for human rights, freedom of expression and assembly, etc. Sometimes, opposition movements resorted to violence, either at their own initiative or in retaliation against violence triggered by the authorities. One notable tactic that was used to quell demands for political reforms was to resort to Islam: religious groups were created or encouraged to organize with the objective of countering the heathen communist 'troublemakers' - this being the label attached to all political protesters. It is those same groups that later became fundamentalist parties and movements and turned against their patrons, transforming them from allies into enemies of the regimes.

While this was taking place, Western governments failed to denounce or condemn the repression that was taking place in various parts of the Arab world, arguing that political change would bring 'instability' to the region. In effect, what they feared was the transfer of power to parties or movements that they did not control and that would jeopardize their interests in the region, including access to oil. The same fear continues to exist today, even though Europe and the US are now openly calling for political reforms and greater democracy in the Arab world. Public opinion is sceptical about its sincerity and dubious about its motives, especially in view of Western reaction to the cancellation of the democratic process in Algeria in 1991, and of the methods currently being used in Iraq to institute democracy.

If popular demand for democratic rule has been kept under control for decades, it is as a result of a tacit 'contract'

14   Further discussion may be found in Chourou (2002).

between rulers and citizens, whereby the former would provide for the material needs of the people and the people would not delve into politics. The quid pro quo did work for as long as governments had the resources to carry out their promises, but in the process people developed an 'assisted mentality' and government what may be called a 'rentier mentality'. Economists use the concept of rentier economy to refer to an economy where income is derived not from productive activities but from the rente yielded by assets (which are usually finite and non-renewable). Thus, just as an individual may inherit a large collection of jewels and sell a piece every time he wants to satisfy a need, a community may have an asset (oil field, gold mine ...) from which it draws income. For decades, oil fields in the Middle East provided such a rente to the rulers on whose territories the fields were located, the rente being in the form of royalties paid by foreign corporations which were in effect the de facto owners of the fields. Eventually, oil resources were nationalized, although ownership did not revert to the nation or the community, but to the families or groups that exercised political authority. Part of the income accruing from the sale of oil has then been used to grant goods, services and sinecures to the population, the size of the grant being, as a rule of thumb, proportional to the degree of allegiance or relatedness to the benefactor.

This 'social contract' has led to an erosion of the work ethic and the development of a mentality of living on unearned income. When the state itself is a rentier, it does not need to levy taxes and therefore does not feel accountable to the citizens. On the contrary, it will find it immoral that the beneficiaries of state largeness and generosity should expect to participate in the management of public affairs, be they financial, social or political. However, when the state becomes unable to fulfil its part of the deal, then the public will no longer feel bound by the duty of acquiescence.

In short, the appropriation by rulers of public resources (whether oil, land or taxes) has led to the emergence of an

unhealthy attitude towards the acquisition and exercise of authority, towards duty and obligation, fairness and equity, work and effort, responsibility and freedom. The public servant becomes a master, and the citizen becomes a slave. This is not to say that oil per se is responsible for moral decay, or that morality requires poverty. The real danger is that a society comes to feel that it has sufficient resources to afford setting aside some fundamental ethical principles. People will care only about the material aspects of security. If they have food on the table, a car in the garage, and a guaranteed income to lead a comfortable life, then they will not care much about who is at the helm or how the ship is being navigated. It is this mentality that needs to be changed, and change will occur only if ethical and normative standards are revived and respected.

An Arab leader declared, upon arriving in power, that the citizens of his country had achieved a sufficient degree of maturity to deserve a democratic system of government. In fact, many Arabs feel that even if it were possible to demonstrate that democracy requires a certain level of maturity or the fulfilment of any other conditions, and if any tools had been used to measure whether Arabs met these conditions, the inescapable conclusion would have been that democracy should have been instituted years ago in the region. Arabs do not believe that they are less fit for democracy than other societies that have adopted it in the recent or less recent past.

There is little need for a lengthy discussion of the meaning or the theories of democracy. It is sufficient to recall that citizenship does not require any specific level of education or wealth, or conformity with specifications related to sex, colour, religion or social status. At the same time, the status of citizenship does entail a number of obligations and rights. Obligations include, among other things, obeying commonly agreed rules for community life, respecting differences of opinion, accepting being in the minority while actively exercising the right to join others to form a majority, and using

institutionalized methods to challenge and eventually change laws and regulations and those who make and execute those laws and regulations.

As for rights, they can be subsumed in one fundamental category: freedom of speech and assembly. This is the most crucial condition for advancing human security. Obviously, not all views and opinions will have the same value or usefulness, but they should all be given an opportunity to be heard. Therefore, every Arab country should have its own Hyde Park with a Speaker's Corner where a citizen can stand on a soapbox to make a speech. As a corollary, anyone should have the right to listen to all speakers and to associate with speakers and listeners with similar opinions. Finally, those wishing to see their ideas transformed into public policy must have the right to seek or to grant a mandate to do so.

Arabs should renounce the notion that an individual can have a monopoly of wisdom, morality, knowledge or authority on the basis of innate or acquired reasons. It is true that some skills or professions are transmitted from one generation to another within a family, and that some groups are associated with a particular activity, but this cannot be a basis for preventing others from attempting to join a profession or group. In the specific case of politics, the premise must be that citizens know best what is good for them. In practice, this rule has not always proved beneficial. There are many instances where people made choices that led to disastrous consequences for themselves and for others. It is then clear that the majority is not always right, and it is equally clear that it can be tyrannical. However, this is one of the risks of democracy, although it can be mitigated by the possibility that an enlightened and courageous leader would 'undemocratically' impose unpopular policies. But in either case, all choices are temporary and will eventually need to be confirmed or changed.

At present, the major challenge that confronts Arabs is to ensure that all citizens have an equal opportunity to participate

in defining their security and in devising methods for achieving and sustaining that security. Whatever approach is used to meet that challenge must be defined, initiated and implemented by Arabs. From the preceding discussion, it should be apparent that threats to human security emanate from outside as well as from within the region; that some of them are related to natural conditions whereas others are caused by human behaviour; that some threats are more immediate and severe than others but all require immediate action to alleviate or eliminate them; and that some threats are common to all Arabs while others are specific to some segments or strata of the population. It has further been suggested that human security cannot be achieved without seeking both freedom from want and freedom from fear. The following section proposes a general framework and some recommendations for achieving human security in the Arab world.

V

General framework for achieving human security in the Arab world

Human development, human rights and human security are closely linked. It is therefore essential to develop a framework based on a revised definition of each of these elements, starting with the concept of development which should be expanded beyond its purely economic aspects. Assuredly, efforts should be pursued and even intensified to increase the supply of goods and services and to improve economic efficiency, but this should not be done at the expense of human security. The evaluation of every economic policy must include estimates of its social and environmental impact: will it create unemployment, exacerbate social disparities, or pollute the environment? The old approach of devising 'safety nets' once the detrimental effects of a measure have become evident should be abandoned.

Similarly, human rights should no longer be used as a tool for political protest or defined as a threat to stability and national security. The full respect for human rights should be neither a gift to be granted nor a prize to be won, but an ordinary aspect of citizenship and an integral part of human security. Any strategy to promote or advance participatory democracy is bound to fail if every citizen does not integrate the scrupulous respect for human rights in his value system and daily practice. In the last few years and especially after September 11, numerous initiatives have been taken to institute a dialogue between religions, cultures and civilizations. This is a welcome development, but what efforts have been made to launch a similar dialogue within our societies? What forums, podiums or spaces have we set up to allow members of civil society to expound their ideas, submit

them to public debate, propose them for adoption as public policy – all with a view to fight clichés, stereotypes, prejudice and indoctrination?

Lastly, human security must become an innate right of every citizen. This implies that societies have to come to an agreement concerning the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. A distinction has to be made between reigning and governing. The sovereign can fulfil important functions: he embodies the state, he can be the unifying symbol of the nation (however it is defined), he can exercise moral authority, and he can be the arbiter of conflicts. In this capacity certain rights and privileges can be enjoyed. On the other hand, governing or ruling is a political function which, in a democratic system, is carried out under certain conditions. In particular, the ruler is accountable to the ruled and can be revoked by them, and holds office by the consent of the ruled for a specified and limited period of time. In a constitutional monarchy, the sovereign reigns but does not rule. If he chooses to do both, the political system will be undemocratic and unstable because there will be difficulties in accepting the limitations that democracy imposes on political authority.

However, it is possible, during a transitional period, to have a quasi-constitutional monarchy based on an exchange of concessions between the sovereign and the citizens. For example, human security would be transformed from a regal award into an inalienable right, and royal oversight will not be exercised over the judiciary, maintained symbolically over the legislative branch, and exercised indirectly over the executive branch. This quid pro quo can work in de jure or de facto monarchies, but its success depends largely on the capacity of the rulers to convince citizens that the reforms are not mere window dressing, that the process is irreversible, and that the transitional period will not last forever.

Once the issue of the exercise of political authority has been resolved, a second aspect of citizenship needs to be

examined: the definition of the state. Of what entity are we citizens? What form of authority is to be exercised within what territorial boundaries? At present, there is no Arab nationality, and no entity has jurisdiction across international borders. Arabs need a critical weight if they want to avoid marginalization, have an influence in international affairs, protect themselves against undue interference in their affairs, transform dependency into partnership, and ultimately improve their capacities for enhancing human security.

Ideally, there should be an Arab state. This need not be and cannot be an immediate objective, but neither should it be nor can it be treated as a ridiculous or impossible one. Between the present division and the desired unity, there is plenty of room to achieve a degree of integration sufficiently deep to guarantee human security in the Arab world. Existing institutions, instruments and arrangements that purport to represent Arab integration need to be upgraded and/or replaced. For example, the Charter of the League of Arab States should be amended, procedures for adopting decisions need revision, members' duties and obligations have to be redefined, particularly with respect to the implementation and enforcement of decisions. Similarly, the Council of Arab Economic Unity may be given greater authority and structured along the lines of the European Commission.

A crucial and urgent step towards integration is the creation of a supranational structure with extensive powers to speak and act on behalf of all the Arab States in designated areas such as trade, finance, investment or economic policy. Existing Arab organizations need not be duplicated if their legal authority is upgraded. These supranational structures would give greater weight and credibility to the Arab world when dealing with foreign and international partners, give greater efficiency and rationality to the use of scarce resources and, most importantly, they would become the concrete manifestation of our solidarity and our belief that we share a common destiny.

The obstacle that has prevented such institutions from emerging, and that needs to be eliminated, is the unwillingness of Arab states to give up any portion of their sovereignty. If any justification had ever existed for this narrow conception of sovereignty, it is probably not applicable any longer. We are living in an era of giants, and blocs are emerging in all parts of the world. We have no hope of surviving in such a world if we remain midgets.

Achieving integration requires that we all start behaving as members of the same nation, the same *umma*. We have paid lip service to common Arab action (العمل العربي المشترك) and to Arab unity for long enough; now is the time to act. The popular will is there, the conditions for success are there: all that is missing is the political will.

Once this legal and institutional framework is set up, work can begin to achieve the several components of human security. Starting with the *environment*, immediate attention should be turned to the problems of desertification, water scarcity and marine pollution. Human and financial resources can be pooled to stop the advancing desert, rehabilitate agricultural land and improve the productivity of arable land. Information and experiences can be exchanged relating to water conservation, treatment and recycling of wastewater, desalinization, use of water in industry, agriculture and urban areas, and the provision of drinking water in rural and isolated areas. Pollution of the Mediterranean, the Gulf and Arab rivers needs urgent attention. Common standards should be adopted for emission of various gases from vehicles, factories and other sources so that people can breathe cleaner air.

Turning to the broad area of freedom from want, several actions should be undertaken to ensure a decent standard of living for all Arabs. One measure that should raise no difficulties but give high returns is the creation of purchasing groups. There are many goods and services that practically all Arab countries purchase from foreign suppliers. If such purchases were to be

made collectively, substantial savings could be made and better conditions (credit terms, transportation cost, insurance, special specifications ...) obtained. It may even be possible to convince suppliers to set up shop in the region to produce those goods locally.

This leads to the broader question of *economic diversification*. In most Arab countries production is concentrated in a limited number of products or sectors. This is a major weakness. In addition, production is structured on similar patterns, with the result that there is little complementarity among countries. Another handicap is the small size of most national markets, which constitutes a major obstacle to large-scale production and its attendant economies of scale. With *integration*, there would be a market with a sufficient size to justify practically any type of industrial production. However, care must be taken to avoid the mistake of trusting the 'invisible hand of the market'. The creation of new economic activities must be decided after careful evaluation of criteria related not only to profitability but also to social, environmental and, yes, ethical considerations. For example, technology-based efficiency may be sacrificed for the sake of job creation. Similarly, equity may justify giving a favourable treatment to disadvantaged areas where social and economic conditions are lower.

Admittedly, this viewpoint is not in keeping with the prevailing orthodoxy of state disengagement from economic affairs, and may be reminiscent of what some consider as discredited leftist ideologies, but the fact of the matter is that state interventionism, protectionism, subsidizing and other 'inefficient' and 'distorting' practices have not been abandoned by those who most oppose them. Therefore, we should have no qualms in entrusting public authorities with the task of participating – with the private sector and foreign interests when and if necessary – in the process of choosing the nature, location, type of ownership and other characteristics of business ventures slated for the region.

Another point related to integration needs to be emphasized. Integration is not likely to have much of an impact on welfare if it is horizontally limited and vertically shallow, i.e. if it involves few participants and applies to few activities. Thus, integration among ten countries with substantial economies applicable to the movement of all factors of production would be more successful than integration limited to trade among three or four countries. Consequently, projects such as the Arab Maghreb Union, whose members are Algeria, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia; or the Mediterranean Arab Free Trade Area, whose members are Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia, have not produced, and are not likely to produce, major benefits for their members. The reason is that they are limited in geographical scope and functional coverage. In both cases, the initial aim is to progressively dismantle tariffs on selected goods. This will yield no sizeable benefits, especially if we consider that trade between members (and between Arab States in general) is insignificant. Therefore, it is more advisable to envisage from the start an integration project that involves or is open to all Arab countries and that seeks to create as quickly as possible a single Arab market.

Arab common action is further needed in the social field. Health, social security, culture and education come to mind. Specialized agencies are already active in many of these fields, but they need to move from producing research papers and organizing seminars to effective fieldwork. In the case of *education*, there are specific needs that should be met. A system should be set up for mutual recognition of degrees awarded by Arab universities in order to facilitate the exchange of students and professors between institutions of higher learning. There should be an Arab university with local branches in different parts of the Arab world. Existing national universities could be restructured to become local campuses of the mother institution or specialized faculties for the entire region. For example, existing engineering schools could merge into a single school with two or

three campuses, as could medical and law schools, and faculties of social sciences and humanities.

At the secondary level, efforts should concentrate on harmonizing and unifying curricula and programmes. Apart from the practical benefits that such a measure would have, it would strengthen the bonds among present and future generations. The values of tolerance, openness, equality, justice, self-reliance, compassion, abnegation, responsibility and democracy can become the common denominator and the shared foundation of our education system.

Pages can be filled with proposals and recommendations for institutions, programmes and activities, but it would be difficult to come up with something new or original. Over the years politicians, scholars, experts, journalists and even ordinary citizens have been writing books, articles and proposals, drafting by-laws, and organizing advocacy campaigns, seminars and workshops to identify problems, designate risks and threats, sound alarms, suggest solutions and action plans. Yet, the process keeps repeating itself ad nauseam. When one reads the *Arab Human Development Report*, one has a feeling of déjà vu. If anything, had the report been written twenty or thirty years ago it might have shown the situation to be less alarming. More to the point, when people read it twenty years from now will they find that it understates prevailing Arab predicaments? Perhaps. But one reflection may be made with some confidence: the Arab world needs many things, but probably not another diagnosis, another prescription, another solemn declaration of good intentions, or another resolution of goodwill.

In an article published in 2002 on human security in Latin America, Francisco Rojas Aravena, Director of FLASCO-Chile, considers that '[o]ne of the substantial deficiencies of our region is not being able to speak with one voice. ... Without increased coordination, there will be no possibility of influencing the design of global rules.' (Rojas Aravena, 2002, p. 11). He further argues that the lack of concerted action will make it more

difficult for Latin America to achieve satisfactory levels of human security.

The same argument applies to the Arab world. The various forms of human security – economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community or political security – may be achieved to one degree or another in some parts of the region, but that security will remain precarious as long as it does not extend to all Arabs, just as the security of a rich country will remain precarious if it remains an island surrounded by the insecurity of the wretched of the earth. The UN has developed a framework to achieve global human security. It is based on a number of universal principals summed up in the right of every individual to live free from want and free from fear. Our Muslim ethics and our Arab values are not much different from those of other cultures and civilizations. We believe in the sanctity of life, in generosity, altruism, dialogue, equality and tolerance. The framework is already there. We do not need to reinvent it: we only need to put it into practice. But to do so we need to fill three deficits.

One, an ownership deficit: we need to claim the emerging global framework for human security as our own rather than reject it simply because it has been proposed by others. If there are parts of the model that we do not like, we should participate in a dialogue to introduce modifications. Lack of ownership can only mean lack of conviction about the value of the enterprise and, hence, the assured failure of achieving human security.

Two, an opportunity deficit: if we do not take an active part in the global efforts that are under way to operationalize the concept of human security and to mobilize the resources required for its universal implementation, the cost to the Arab world is likely to be marginalization, if not outright rejection by the international community. Whatever views we may have about human security are likely to be 'crowded out' or even drowned by those who will have chosen to participate in the process, however modestly. An even greater danger of an erroneous calculation of

our opportunity cost is that others would achieve their security at our expense.

Three: a knowledge deficit: for too long knowledge in the Arab region was more akin to propaganda, and education has been little more than brainwashing. We only knew what power holders wanted us to know, and we learned what self-appointed teachers decided to teach us. Anything that does not conform to official orthodoxy is considered as heresy. As a result, innovation, originality, independent thinking, initiative, doubt, scepticism – all essential elements of the quest for truth – have practically vanished. We urgently need to resuscitate them. This is a task that requires no feasibility study, elaborate planning or extensive funding. What it requires is far more precious and scarce: political will. When people are empowered to participate in processes that have a direct impact on their lives on the basis of credible and reliable information, they will be halfway to achieving their security.

International organizations such as UNESCO can contribute to the reduction of any or all of these deficits. They can organize activities to raise awareness of some of the issues raised in this study. They can provide resources for creating the basic wherewithal to secure education, training or health care. They can engage a dialogue with their member states to show the practical benefits of achieving human security. They can even use their moral authority to encourage states to take the first step towards making their citizens' lives more secure. But the bulk of the task can be carried out only by the people themselves, hopefully with the help rather than against the opposition of their leaders.

Conclusion

The Arab Strategy Forum organized an international symposium on 'The Arab World in 2020', on 13-15 December 2004 in Dubai, with the objective of making projections concerning the Arab world in 2020[15]. One of the participants, Mr Abdul-rahman al-Rashid, Director of the satellite television station Al-Arabia (United Arab Emirates), felt that there was little reason to feel optimistic about the future of the Arab world. According to him, there will be 100 million additional people living in the region, and many of them will have no access to employment, health care, education or housing. The insecurity will lead to popular dissatisfaction and to conflicts between citizens and ruling minorities. The latter will be caught between the impossibility of ignoring popular discontent and the unwillingness to adopt reforms that will necessarily jeopardize their hold on power. In the absence of any realistic threat of being forcefully dislodged from power, rulers will make minor changes, tactical concessions, and/or make-believe reforms to circumscribe any unrest, but will adopt no measure that would be tantamount to a suicidal act. The speaker further suggested that this scenario is all the more likely as the severity of problems will increase gradually, giving rulers time to make adjustments as they go along. In other words, only a crisis can bring genuine reform.

Another participant, HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal Al Saud, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the United Kingdom, suggested that the world in 2020 would be multipolar, but the Arab world would have no political role in it, although it would become a significant economic actor. Furthermore, he

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15   The programme and summaries of speeches and interventions can be found at http://www.dubaistrategy.com/program04_day1.htm.

predicted that US bases will be present in Iraq, that the Iraqi economy will be tied to the US, and that the Israeli-Palestinian problem will have come no closer to a solution.

One last participant that may be cited, His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jaber Al Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Qatar, indicated that the Arab world suffers from many problems that have little to do with external factors, including human rights abuses, poverty, disease, environmental threats and cross-border crime and terrorism, and that the existence of external threats does not excuse the Arab world from 'devising strategies and reaching mutual agreements to tackle its problems, promote reform and enhance stability.'

Other observers expressing themselves on other occasions see signs of hope. They point out that in various countries the head of state designates a commission to hear victims of human rights violations committed by a predecessor, or frees some political prisoners, or allows some form of organized opposition, or invites exiled opponents to return home in all safety if they promise to avoid politics. They consider such measures as steps in the right direction, an encouraging proof that things can change and a sure sign that reforms are under way.

At the same time, international non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations multiply appeals to Arab governments to launch reforms. They see their efforts as alternatives to attempts or threats to impose democracy on reluctant rulers. They argue that reforms have to be voluntary, adopted progressively, and reflect objective realities. Consequently, their appeals are based on ethics, morality, conscience, goodness, legality and other principles. Here, the deterrent is not the cannon of the West; it is reprobation for disregarding the canons of ethics, it is the risk of incurring the wrath of Allah.

Ethics and morality *are* important and *should* guide human behaviour. But people must believe in this principle if

they are going to live by it. They – or at least the adults among them – cannot be forced, and much less bribed, to accept it. In the Arab world, some people (a minority? the majority?) do not appear to believe in democratic values or in ethical principles. Education may change that, but only if the lessons received are reinforced by exemplary behaviour on the part of those at the forefront of society. Would a young boy accept the idea of gender equality that his father wants to inculcate in him if the father mistreats his daughter and wife? Would a student persist on being honest when he sees that cheaters get better grades? This is the dilemma that we must solve. We cannot have justice, compassion or tolerance if our elite, those whom we look up to, those who serve as role models in our societies, are not fair, compassionate and tolerant. Of course, there is always the possibility of punishing those who violate certain moral rules, but this approach may itself become immoral if another moral principle, that no one is above the law, is not respected.

In short, what we Arabs need is to revive our individual and collective consciences. To be genuine and perennial the revival must be rooted in our conviction, fed by our free will, and kept alive by daily practice. Writing about problems has become a minor industry, and a tactic to postpone the time when we have to start resolving them. And while we sit discussing our reports, our land is turning into a dust bowl, our resources are depleting, our children are in despair, our best brains in exile, our women in seclusion, and our intellectuals in reclusion. Today, we face many problems but many of them can be solved; tomorrow, there will be more problems and most of them will have become intractable. Our intellect tells us this, and if our conscience does not spark us into action, what will?

Recommendations

International Conference on Human Security in the Arab States, Amman (Jordan), 14-15 March 2005

The International Conference on Human Security in the Arab States held in Amman (Jordan), on 14 and 15 March 2005, was jointly organized by the Regional Human Security Centre at the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy and UNESCO.

The conference is part of a series of consultations on human security, undertaken by UNESCO in various regions of the world, including Latin America, East Asia, and Africa, and consistent with the plans, projects and programmes of the Regional Human Security Centre towards promoting the concept of human security in the Arab region.

The participants discussed a study on 'The Ethical, Normative and Educational Frameworks for the Promotion of Human Security in the Arab States', prepared by Professor Bechir Chourou (University of Tunis, Tunisia), as well as presentations on the human security situation in various Arab states.

Main conclusions

There is as yet no universal definition of human security, and no specific indicator to measure it scientifically. Nevertheless, a useful starting point would be to consider it as a framework for ensuring that people are free from fear, free from want and free to participate in social, economic and political processes that have many impacts on their daily lives.

Traditional security focuses on states, whereas human security focuses on individuals and communities. This does not mean that state security is irrelevant, or that the state has no role to play in social life. On the contrary, weak or failed states may become a serious threat to the survival of citizens. At the same time, states that are preoccupied exclusively with their own survival and neglect the security of their citizens will always be precarious. Therefore, state security and human security are interdependent: one cannot be achieved without the other.

The interdependence and mutual support between a state and its citizens must be based on a clearly defined and commonly agreed set of principles and rules. The state has the duty to protect citizens against foreign aggression, and to provide appropriate conditions that allow citizens to fulfil their aspirations. In return, citizens will give the state the support it needs to carry out its mandate, and will cooperate in the implementation of policies defined to achieve the common good.

In this era of globalization, it is often argued that frontiers and boundaries are irrelevant inasmuch as human interactions and natural phenomena transcend such frontiers. But the fact remains that every human being lives in a specific spot on earth, with an emotional attachment to that particular spot. More importantly, all human beings have the right to a territory that they can call their own and where they and members of their community can determine their destiny.

In this respect, the human security of Palestinians requires that their legitimate right to have an independent state be fulfilled in conformity with Security Council Resolution No. 1397 (2002), and occupation must be ended.

In order for freedom from fear to prevail, there must be a strict adherence to the rule of law. This fundamental principle applies to relations between states as well as relations between a state and its citizens. At international level, laws have not been applied in a consistent manner. In some cases, swift actions are taken against states that disregard international law, but in other

cases disregard for the same law is left unchecked. Such inconsistencies can only decrease the role of international law in the promotion and enhancement of universal human security.

At national level, the rule of law is a fundamental condition for achieving human security for the following reasons:

• The law defines the principles on which social life is based, and the rules that govern social interactions.

• The law defines methods by which disagreements or conflicts over the interpretation or the implementation of rules and regulations are to be resolved.

• The law defines the measures that are taken against citizens who wilfully disobey prevailing rules and regulations.

In the Arab region these principles are either non-existent or insufficiently respected. The legislative, executive and judiciary powers are often concentrated in one single office or person; or if they appear to be structurally separate their autonomy and independence is largely ignored in practice.

Citizens have many obligations but few rights, if any, and when such rights are provided for, they are often presented as favours granted by the rulers rather than inalienable rights to which all citizens are entitled.

Citizens are not all equal before the law. In many countries, women do not enjoy the same rights as men, and many forms of this gender discrimination are an integral part of national laws, rather than just part of traditions. Also, minorities are rarely mentioned. It would appear that there is a fear that any mention of such minorities would create them and, hence, would threaten social cohesion. But the fact is that no society can be totally homogeneous. Therefore, the best way to achieve national integration is to recognize the existence of minorities and to grant them the same rights as members of other social groups. As for women, who are not a minority, every effort must be made to mobilize and implicate them in the common efforts aiming at achieving human security for all.

Recommendations

On the basis of the foregoing themes, the following recommendations may be proposed.

Measures should be adopted to ensure the effective participation of all citizens in the processes used to identify, implement and follow up decisions and measures having a direct impact on their lives. There are several methods through which such participation can be achieved, and each society should be free to choose those that best meet its needs.

Citizens cannot exercise their right to participate in social life if they lack the means for their empowerment. At a minimum, every citizen should enjoy:

• Access to education. All citizens must be guaranteed a sufficient amount of education that would allow them to be aware of their history and culture, to be aware of their environment - including other cultures, civilizations and religions, to meet their basic needs, ensure their welfare and contribute to the welfare of their community.

• Access to health services. Obviously, every human being aspires to be in good health, and recognizes that sickness is a major threat to security and survival. Particular attention must be paid to the specific needs of women, and special provisions must be made for their role as mothers.

• Access to income-generating activities. In order to meet their vital needs (food, shelter, etc.), people need an income, and to generate that income they need to undertake a productive activity. Proper conditions should be created (infrastructure, rules and regulations, training) so that every person – male and female – has an opportunity to undertake a gainful activity.

• Citizens who are unable to meet their basic needs through their own efforts should have public support. In particular, vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, the disabled, the chronically ill, people in isolated or remote areas, should be given particular attention. If states are unable to

provide assistance, the international community should participate in the provision of such assistance.

The concept of human security and its underlying values of solidarity, tolerance, openness, dialogue, transparency, accountability, justice and equity should be widely disseminated in societies. To that effect, human security should be incorporated at all levels of education. The media, particularly radio and television, should be mobilized to organize awareness-raising campaigns, and to encourage people to explore ways and means by which they can enhance their own security and that of members of their communities.

The media have another function to fulfil towards achieving human security, that of providing forums where ideas, policies and programmes are debated. Citizens are not likely to accept or implement decisions that are imposed from above. Therefore, they should be given opportunities to hear, propose and debate alternative approaches to achieving the common good. Citizen involvement in public life can be efficient and productive only if it is based on freedom of speech and expression; otherwise, public opinion will only serve as a sterile echo chamber for decision-makers.

Civil society should be mobilized to participate in the promotion of human security. Special efforts should be made to mobilize women's associations, academics, professional organizations and the private sector to take advantage of their resources, skills and proximity to ensure ownership of the concept of human security by local stakeholders, and a wide dissemination of the culture of human security.

Civil society can only carry out this task if freedom of association is fully recognized. Both freedom of speech and freedom of association have to be considered as integral parts of human rights, and any restrictions that may be contemplated to limit their potential abuse should be entrusted to appropriate independent judicial organs.

Members of civil society should be encouraged to create intra-national and intra-regional networks with a view to sharing experiences and lessons learned.

Many aspects of human security are deeply rooted in the Arab culture and Islam. Therefore, there should be no difficulty in adopting or implementing them in the region. In this respect, arguments should be rejected that human security or some of its components are foreign constructs that are imposed upon us, especially if they are used as an excuse for not implementing human security in the region.

States should not place themselves in a position where they would be viewed as opponents of human security or as obstacles to its achievement. If public opinion perceives that the state is more concerned about its security than about people's security, this would not only create instability but would pose a direct and immediate threat to human security.

The most appropriate level at which human security can effectively be achieved is the local or community level. However, sufficient resources are not always available at that level. Therefore, the state has a role to play in mobilizing resources and allocating them among those who need them. In this respect, Arab states should be encouraged to offer and receive moral, human and material assistance from other Arab states and the international community.

UNESCO can make a contribution to the achievement of human security in the Arab region. Its major asset is its expertise in the fields of education, culture and science. In this respect, UNESCO can work in conjunction with the National Commissions for UNESCO to identify specific tools to promote human security. One such tool could be the development of curricula for inculcating the knowledge and practice of human rights and attendant values such as tolerance, civic duties and obligations, and rejection of extremism and xenophobia.

Any reforms that Arabs may deem necessary must spring from a conviction that the search for human security is an ethical

enterprise - and not just a political palliative. They further need to stem from the free will of Arab societies and be initiated and overseen by them. If reforms are adopted as a result of external pressure, or if they are defined by outside actors, or if their follow up is entrusted to third parties, then they are not likely to be sustainable. On the other hand, outside calls for reforms should not be used as an excuse for rejecting such reforms. After all, we are dealing with *human* security and as such, it is the concern of all humanity.

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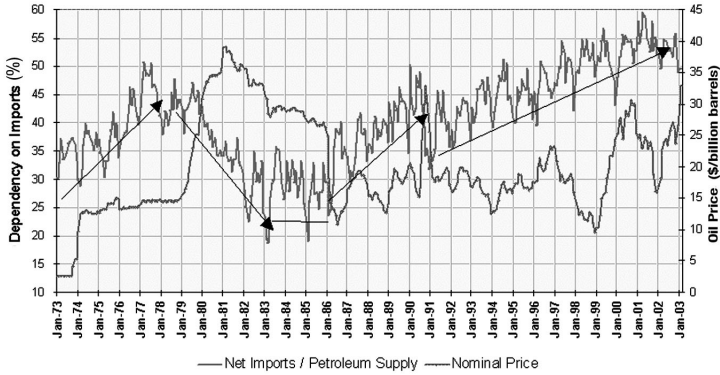WALT, S. M. 1991. The renaissance of security studies. *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 211-39.

Graphics

Figure 3: OECD petroleum imports (% of consumption)

Figure 4: US petroleum import dependency
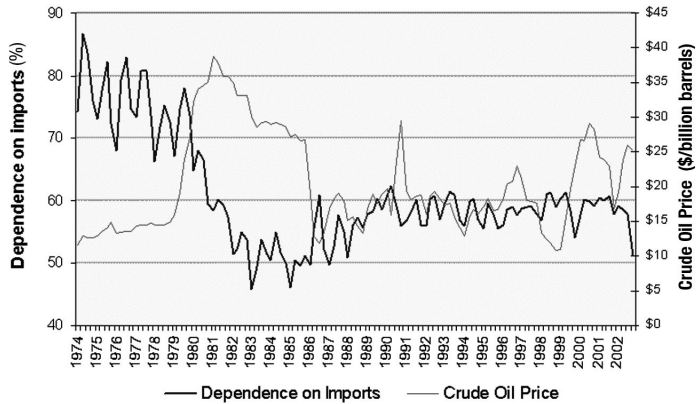
Copyright 2003 A.F. Alhajji & J.L. Williams www.wtrg.com

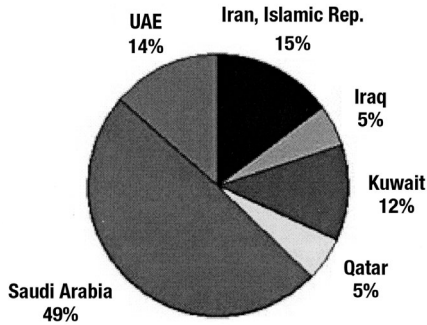## Figure 5: Persian Gulf exports by country (2003)

110

**Figure 6: US gross oil imports by source
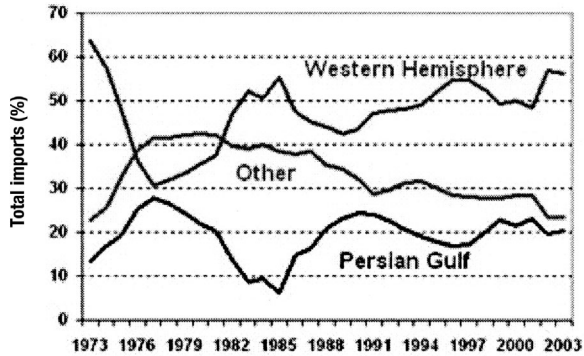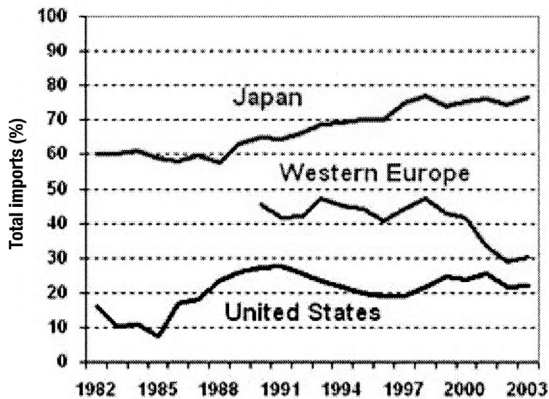(1973-2003) (% of total imports)**

**Figure 7: Net oil imports from the Persian Gulf – Japan, EU, US
(1982-2003) (% of total net imports)**

Appendices

Mr Bechir Chourou's brief biography

Bechir Chourou received his Ph.D. in political science from Northwestern University (United States) in 1976 and is currently teaching international relations at the University of Tunis. In addition to human security, his research interests include Euro-Mediterranean relations (Barcelona Process), the process of democratization in the Arab world and Africa, as well as specific aspects of human security, particularly food security, water scarcity (and other components of environmental security) and income-generating activities. He has participated in numerous international seminars, conferences and workshops dealing with these issues, and has published articles and book chapters on these topics. His most recent publications include:

Water resources in the Mediterranean: shortage, access management, potential risks or security issues. In: Jean Dufourcq and Laure Gorgomano-Loup (eds), 2004, *Gestion des resources naturelles et questions de sécurité en Méditerranée.* Rome, NATO Defense College, pp. 69-96.

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Final Recommendations

First International Meeting of Directors
of Peace Research and Training Institutions

on the theme

*What Agenda for Human Security
in the Twenty-first Century?**

    1. Human security can be considered today as a *paradigm in the making*, for ensuring both a *better knowledge* of the rapidly evolving large-scale risks and threats that can have a major impact on individuals and populations, and a strengthened *mobilization* of the wide array of actors actually involved in participative policy formulation in the various fields it encompasses today.

    As such, it is an adequate framework for:

    • accelerating the transition from past restrictive notions of security, tending to identify it solely with defence issues, to a much more comprehensive multidimensional concept of security, based on the respect for all human rights and democratic principles;

    • contributing to sustainable development and especially to the eradication of extreme poverty, which is a denial of all human rights;

    • reinforcing the prevention at the root of the different forms of violence, discrimination, conflict and internal strife that are taking a heavy toll on mainly civilian populations in all regions of the world without exception;

• providing a unifying theme for multilateral action to the benefit of the populations most affected by partial and interrelated insecurities. The importance should be underlined of the multilateral initiatives taken in this respect by Canada and Japan as well as by other countries.

2. The ongoing globalization process offers new opportunities for the *strengthening of large coalitions working to further human security, at the multilateral and national levels, and in particular at local level involving all actors of society*. This in turn requires a much stronger participation of peace research and training institutions, institutes for security studies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other bodies dedicated to the promotion of peace and human security, with a view to enhancing the involvement of civil society in all aspects of policy formulation and implementation of actions aimed at enhancing human security at the local, national, regional and international levels.

3. The promotion of human security today therefore requires an *enhanced exchange of best experiences, practices and initiatives* in the fields of research, training, mobilization and policy formulation, in which UNESCO can play a major role as a facilitator, forum and amplifier of proactive human security initiatives, in particular in the framework of the UNESCO SecuriPax Forum website launched in September 2000 for that purpose (http://www.unesco.org/securipax).

4. *The strengthening of the action of the United Nations and, in particular, of UNESCO in favour of human security is essential today*, taking into account the objectives set out in the UN Millennium Summit Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, and the Declaration and Plan for an International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010), proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, as well as on the measures

being taken to reach internationally agreed development targets, in particular in the fields of poverty eradication; education for all; the preservation of the environment and notably of water resources; and the struggle against AIDS.

5. The compounded impact of a growing number of threats to the security of populations requires the establishment of *innovative interdisciplinary approaches geared to the requirements of inducing participative preventive action, involving all social actors*. The intimate links that should exist between research projects and policy formulation in the field of prevention must also be stressed from the outset, taking into account the fact that current research on various dimensions of security is still largely dissociated from the existing policy formulation mechanisms, particularly at the national and subregional levels. On the basis of a common agenda for action, the peace research and training institutions, institutes for security studies and the NGOs working in related fields can play an essential role in creating these links, building bridges between the academic world and the policy formulation mechanisms, contributing to the establishment of such mechanisms wherever necessary, identifying priority fields to be tackled and the populations that merit particular and urgent attention.

6. *Regional and subregional approaches* should be elaborated for the promotion of human security in order to more precisely identify the nature, scope and impact of the risks and threats that can affect populations in the medium and long term. UNESCO should contribute to the elaboration of these regional and subregional approaches, in cooperation with national and regional organizations and institutions and on the basis of the regional round tables (on Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean) held during the First International Meeting of Directors of Peace Research and Training Institutions. Urgent attention should be paid to the reinforcement of the struggle against AIDS, especially in sub-

Saharan Africa, which is a real threat to peace and security, as stated by the United Nations Security Council.

7. Special attention should be paid to the *most highly populated countries*, given the fact that in these countries the interrelationship between population growth, diminishing natural resources, environmental degradation and the overall impact of ongoing globalization processes is of great complexity and must consequently be dealt with, in particular in terms of designing local approaches focusing on specific population groups.

8. *The development of human resources is a key factor, if not the most important, for ensuring human security.* Basic education for all and the building of capacities at the national level must therefore be placed high on the human security agenda. Institutes for peace and human security can play an important role in national capacity building in fields such as the setting up of early-warning mechanisms related to major risks and threats to human security; and high-level training for the elaboration of regional and subregional long-term approaches for ensuring human security and the formulation of preventive action policies.

9. Critical post-conflict issues such as *reconciliation processes and mechanisms and the often harsh impact of sanctions on populations* merit more in-depth analysis in terms of human security, in the framework of an enhanced respect for international instruments, in particular of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Concerning reconciliation processes and mechanisms, due attention should be paid to the adequate dissemination of best experiences and practices and to the comparative analysis of these experiences and practices, especially of the work of the various truth and justice commissions set up in last two decades in various countries. Concerning the impact of sanctions on populations, note should be taken of ongoing initiatives within the United Nations in order to review

the modalities of the imposition of such sanctions and the action of UN Specialized Agencies to alleviate their impact on civilian populations.

10. The impact on human security of *migrations* and of movements of *populations displaced due to conflict* should be highlighted. Concerning migrations, attention should be paid to countering practices in host countries that discriminate against legal immigrants, and in the case of populations displaced due to conflict, the efforts of the international community should be reinforced, especially when the displacements take on a semi-permanent character.

11. Due attention should be paid to countering the impact of *negative paradigms* (such as 'clash of civilizations', 'African anarchy', etc.), based on stereotypes and simplistic analyses of the interactions between cultures, societies and civilizations and which aim at fostering new divisions and fractures at the international and regional levels. The principles underlying the notions of cultural diversity, cultural pluralism, tolerance and non-discrimination should be stressed and due attention should be paid to the follow-up to the Plan of Action of the World Conference against Racism and Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban, South Africa, 2001).

12. *The role of the state* in the promotion of human security must be addressed on the basis of an exhaustive analysis of challenges in matters relating to human security, both from within to ensure sustainable development, and from the rapidly evolving international processes linked to economic and financial globalization. States should be encouraged to establish ways of enlarging their cooperation with civil society, in particular with those NGOs and institutions that can contribute effectively to policy formulation and collaborative action in the field.

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