

GLOBAL INSIGHTS

The John Holmes Memorial Lecture: What Price Security?



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IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE TO BE BACK IN VIENNA, WHERE I SPENT FIVE INTERESTING years as director-general of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV), the third headquarters of the United Nations. It is also a great privilege to be the twenty-second person to give the memorial lecture in honor of that remarkable Canadian diplomat and humanitarian John Wendell Holmes. It would be an honor for anyone, but it is an overwhelming one for me and, especially, to address such an audience of distinguished academics since I have no claims to being one of your number. I did start out on an academic career, but in a completely different field. So I do not speak to you in that capacity today but rather as a practitioner, an operator if you like, in the fields of development, peace-keeping, and peacebuilding.

I should perhaps begin with a few defining words about how I will approach the subject. Security has become the leitmotiv of our daily lives, ranging from major concerns over global terrorism to mundane matters of importance to the individual. It crops up in the most unexpected contexts. Recently, I was astonished to hear on the radio that two distinguished retired US generals had said that one of the greatest threats to US security now was obesity because young people were becoming too fat to enter the armed forces. In another context, the major price that we pay today for security is the restriction of basic human rights, from the surveillance to which we are subjected all day and every day wherever we go, to invasive search procedures at airports and, in the extreme, to the detention of possible suspects without legal process, for instance in Guantánamo Bay. So security today throws up many ethical conundrums. In the UK, recently, there was the case of two Pakistani students accused of planning a major terrorist attack. The evidence against them was apparently overwhelming, but some of it was withheld for security reasons, so they could not be convicted. Instead it was decided that they should be deported to their country of origin. They appealed against that judgment and the Court of Appeal, while recognizing that they constituted a major threat to security in the UK, decreed that they could not be sent back home because their human rights might be abused there. But what about the human rights of the people they might have killed or who might still be in danger? As in so many

other instances, this case demonstrates that none of these subjects are simple to deal with, and certainly not on an ethical basis.

At another level, security is embedded in our lives by the current and ubiquitous obsession with health and safety, often taken to absurd lengths and providing a wealth of material for comedians. For instance, a notice in very peculiar English by an elevator in a Leipzig hotel warned rather unnecessarily “Do not enter the lift backwards,” adding in an intriguing insight into the local nightlife: “and only when lit up”! In England recently, a large notice outside a football field warned, “Beware of flying footballs,” while a municipal council forbade people to swim the backstroke in the local pool because swimmers might bump into one another and cause injury! One of the prices that we seem to be paying for that kind of security is a loss of common sense. Sometimes that also means the loss of the freedom for children to enjoy the adventures that used to be part of a normal childhood.

More generally, the subject I have been asked to talk about is so complex that it is hard to deal with it in the space of one lecture. A reiterated theme during this conference has been the existence of two aspects of security. First, there is security in the traditional, military sense of defense: the protection of the state and its borders against aggression, terrorism, and other tangible risks. Then there is the newer concept of human security, evolved in recent years, which envisages the protection of individuals from a range of threats to their well-being and security from such scourges as hunger, disease, and oppression. There are many critics of this latter concept among academic circles, but it is my preferred definition for two reasons: first, because a world in which more than 1 billion people live in abject poverty can never be secure; and, second, because it conforms to my own experience as an operational person working in developing countries with the United Nations for over four decades.

Accordingly, I decided that I would speak to you today on four areas in which I have been involved personally and try to derive some conclusions from that experience. They are economic and social development, narcotic drugs, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and the role of women. In this context, I will also touch on the more conventional, long-standing aspects of security and attempt to show how the two concepts interact.

Economic and Social Development

I began life in the UN in 1952 as a local staff member in the Philippines. In the fullness of time, I became the first woman to reach the rank of under-secretary-general in the UN, but I am more proud of the fact that I am the only one of either gender who started as a local staff member in a developing country. In those far-off days, development was not yet being discussed or analyzed in the way it is today. Technical assistance itself was a new concept stemming

from President Harry S. Truman's historic inaugural address in 1949, which led to the creation of the Point Four program of aid for poor countries (known as such because it was the fourth foreign policy objective mentioned in his speech) and of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The same year saw the passing of UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 222¹ and General Assembly Resolution 304,² which set up the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) and the Technical Assistance Board (TAB). Those acronyms no longer mean anything to the generations of today, but they were the programs that in 1966 merged with the UN Special Fund to form the UN Development Programme (UNDP). In 1959, I decided that, since I was working in these areas, I had better equip myself with an additional degree in economics. I wanted to specialize in economic development, but there was no course to be found anywhere at that time; the only ones available were in traditional economics. How different it is today!

At the beginning, programs of development assistance were rather small and there were only two major players: the United States and the United Nations. Nowadays, there are many bilateral programs as well as a myriad activities carried out by nongovernmental organizations and other institutions. At the outset, our work was seen as altruistic in nature. The aim was to improve people's lives, spur development, and help them to stand on their own feet. Development had not yet reached today's levels of theoretical sophistication (and dare I say jargon?). Nobody talked about poverty reduction or human security, but that was what we were about.

There was hardly any political bias in the multilateral assistance provided by those early UN programs. As the Cold War intensified, however, so did the politicization of aid, and security concerns began to impinge on the UN. In the 1960s, when I was the head of the UN Mission in Bolivia, some very difficult incidents occurred. At one point, the US embassy tried to stop my presenting a Soviet candidate for a technical assistance post simply because he was a national of the opposite side in the Cold War. They also exerted strong political opposition to our work in helping the government to prepare the first ten-year economic and social development plan for Bolivia on the grounds that this was a dangerous Marxist technique. Even more absurdly, when a dozen Czech ambulances were donated to a rural development program, there was a major political row that hit the headlines in all the papers.

It was a fascinating time to be in Bolivia, which was then in the throes of a major economic and social transformation. That had begun in 1952 with a revolution that had as its principal aim the integration of the majority Indian population into the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country from which they had been excluded for centuries and treated as serfs. In our cooperation with the government, we in the UN became involved at the very center of that transformation process, a heady experience indeed when one was young and idealistic. But all of our dreams were dashed by a military coup

in 1964, in which the United States was involved. Not for the first time the policies of the State Department and the Pentagon were at odds with one another and the Pentagon won. The Pentagon was concerned that the Bolivian government was too far to the left and an incipient threat to US dominance in South America and, therefore, to regional security. As a result, Bolivia suffered under a military dictatorship for eighteen years. The transformation process stagnated. The latter years of the dictatorship saw increasing corruption and the escalation of the production of coca and cocaine trafficking. Today, the consequences can still be seen. Bolivia at last has an indigenous government, led by President Evo Morales, but it is a very anti-American government. Since the return of civilian rule in 1982, democracy has sometimes teetered on a knife edge but has so far been preserved, despite some periods of great civil strife in recent years.

A major reason for this turbulence was the truncated expectations of the 1952 revolution that led to a lot of frustration among the increasingly vociferous indigenous population who felt, rightly, that they had for too long been denied their basic rights, a direct result of the military coup in 1964. A second reason stemmed from the stabilization programs of 1985. This was at the time when the Washington Consensus was in its apogee. When democracy was restored in 1982, President Siles Zuazo asked the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative to help the newly elected government resolve the desperate situation of debt and economic disaster inherited from the last military regime and restore the country's standing in the international community. That role fell to me and continued with successive governments. The situation was so bad in 1982–1983 that neither the World Bank nor the International Monetary Fund (IMF) wanted to be involved. At one point when Siles Zuazo and his cabinet were agonizing as to whether they should go to the IMF, I remember advising the president that, while I myself had reservations about the IMF, in those times Bolivia had no option but to do so. Otherwise, they would get no help at all from the international community and they could not survive without it. What they should really be discussing therefore was not whether to go to the IMF but how to negotiate, how to wring the best conditions possible from that organization.

It was the next government, led by Victor Paz Estenssoro, that finally bit the bullet in 1985 and adopted the swingeing measures demanded by the IMF. They were successful in stabilizing the economy, but gave rise to other problems that were to have a long-standing effect: certain classes of the population benefited greatly from the 1985 measures, but the beneficial effects did not filter down to the lower classes and certainly did not reach the indigenous population. Those two elements—the 1964 coup and the 1985 stabilization program—have largely contributed to the situation we have today.

The year 1964 was a particular watershed. While the democratic framework restored in 1982 has been maintained, two presidents have been thrown

out of office, the country has teetered on the brink of civil war as recently as 2008, and there are now troubling signs of increased authoritarianism. The conclusion I want to draw from this insight into history is that, as a result of misplaced US concerns over security in 1964, Bolivia now has a government that is very anti-American. Thus, concerns over security in 1964 have not improved security today, and the indigenous people paid a heavy price; their development and integration stagnated for several decades and their human security was gravely prejudiced.

Nine years later, I witnessed a similar process in Chile. On 11 September 1973, another September 11 that often gets forgotten, the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende was brutally overthrown by a military coup led by General Augusto Pinochet. It was another classic example of the Pentagon and the State Department having different assessments of the situation and of the Pentagon winning. The Allende government had attempted a radical economic and social transformation similar to the one that had been thwarted in Bolivia a decade before. There had been immense internal opposition on the part of the landed gentry and the middle and upper classes, but there was also external opposition from the United States, which was deeply concerned on security grounds about the prospect of a second Marxist enclave in Latin America in addition to Cuba. Then-US Ambassador to Chile, Nathaniel Davis, in his book *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*, refers to a conversation that President Richard Nixon had with Henry Kissinger in 1970. In the conversation Nixon repeatedly referred to Allende as “that sonofabitch” and vowed to smash “that bastard.”³ He also instructed CIA director Richard Helms to “make the Chilean economy scream.”⁴ And scream it did.

Other factors also came into play, but the end result was a bloody coup of unconscionable dimensions. I had been through other revolutions and upheavals in Latin America, but never one as horrible as that. Many lives were lost, many people tortured, dreadful deeds of cruelty were perpetrated, and the ensuing military dictatorship lasted seventeen years. In that case, the economy did prosper for a variety of reasons, but it did not favor the working classes or the poorest. So again, in Chile in 1973 as in Bolivia in 1964, US-supported interventions, based on misperceived political and military security concerns, exerted a high price in human security and disrupted a process of economic and social transformation and the improvement of the lot of the poorest people.

Narcotic Drugs

Bolivia is now well known as a major producer of the coca plant, used for the manufacture of cocaine. When I was first there in the 1960s, drugs were not a problem: there was only the traditional chewing of the coca leaf, a practice going back to the Incas, and the production of coca for that purpose. When I

returned in 1982 as the special representative of the Secretary-General, I found a very different situation. Coca cultivation and trafficking had rocketed and corruption had become rife. Ironically, the economic stabilization measures in 1985 to which I referred earlier succeeded only because of revenue from coca exports. The IMF delayed nine months before providing a standby agreement in support of the measures it had imposed. In the interim export figures fell by half, but the errors and omissions item in the balance of payments had risen dramatically and made up the other half. No one admitted it, but it was well known that the errors and omissions item referred to illegal coca receipts and it was they that sustained the economy until IMF support was forthcoming.

Predictably, the United States and the other consumer countries in Europe considered drugs as a threat to the security of their societies and clamped down on the producer countries. During one of my visits to Washington on Bolivia's behalf, I was told that there would be no help forthcoming unless coca production was reduced. I pointed out that it was a problem of poverty: the coca growers had no other means of livelihood and had had to come down from the Altiplano to find sustenance. They might be poor farmers, but they were shrewd and realized that as long as there was a demand for cocaine, then there would be a market for them to supply. "This is just 'Reagonomics' in action," I said, citing a favorite Washington slogan to describe the inexorable interconnection between the laws of supply and demand, adopted as the US administration's leitmotiv. The suggestion that they might equally apply to coca farmers in Bolivia, and that there was little hope of progress unless consumption was reduced, did not go down well!

In 1987 when I came to Vienna as director-general of UNOV, I took over the coordination of all narcotic drugs programs worldwide. We held two very important conferences: first, in 1987, the UN International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (ICDAIT); and, in the following year, a second conference that culminated in the signing of the UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988).⁵ These international agreements encompassed far-reaching measures, even extending to control of money laundering and lifting of bank secrecy. Both conferences envisaged greatly tightened criminal sanctions against drugs and drug trafficking and set ambitious interdiction targets but some exceptions were made for traditional coca production, such as in Bolivia.

The onus, however, was still on production countries, which I found very unfair. In 1989 I happened to be in New York when Margaret Thatcher, then prime minister of the UK, was visiting the Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, and he invited me to join the meeting. Thatcher fixed me with that piercing blue gaze of hers and said, "Let's discuss drugs. It's really quite simple. I was trained as a chemist and nowadays there are all these wonderful herbicides so all you have to do is get a few planes and spray all the coca and poppy plantations." She was a formidable person with whom to get entangled

in an argument, and the Secretary-General was a cautious man who did not like confrontation. Nonetheless, I could not let this pass so I took a deep breath and embarked on some of the economic, social, and political factors that made the problem more complex than she had suggested, adding for good measure that market forces, a favorite theme of hers, meant that as long as there was demand there would be supply. As our debate waxed ever more intense, I could see the Secretary-General getting increasingly uncomfortable beside me, until at last the prime minister drew it to a close. "We can't finish this discussion here. Next time you're in London, come and see me and we'll continue." A few weeks later we had a private session, just the two of us, in her private office at 10 Downing Street. To do her justice, if you marshalled strong enough arguments she was ready to change her own views. I said, "There's never been a conference on the reduction of demand and of consumption of drugs; they have all been directed against the producers. In Vienna we have the staff to organize such a meeting, but not the money. Don't you think it would be a very good thing for the UK to take the lead in this, while my office provides the technical support?" She agreed and in 1990 the first, and I regret to say so far only, Global Summit on Reduction of Consumption of Drugs took place in London. It was immensely successful, with the emphasis firmly on practical measures to tackle a scourge recognized as a threat to the security of societies everywhere. Sadly, however, there was no follow-up by governments, an all too familiar UN experience.

Meanwhile the problem in Colombia was escalating. The Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), which began as a rebel political movement aiming to change the economic and social systems and structures of the country, turned to drug production and trafficking to finance their campaign. The United States became understandably alarmed by the threat to stability and security posed by FARC and the increased flow of drugs into their own territory. Drugs became conceptualized as a security threat, almost on a par with terrorism. Programs denominated as Alternative Development had been started by both by the UN and the United States. They were meant to wean people away from producing drug crops, but were only partially successful because it became almost impossible to find any product that would bring the same economic returns as coca. Development and economic assistance proved unable to prevent the drug trade from becoming a potent source of employment and wealth. So the war on terror became mirrored in a parallel war on drugs and the distinction between the two became increasingly blurred, especially in Colombia where the United States adopted an increasingly militarized approach that culminated in Plan Colombia.

There were various consequences. One was that the authority of the military was strengthened to the detriment of democratic processes, leading in turn to the consolidation of authoritarian political tendencies. There were also negative effects on the military, which became not only distracted from normal de-

fense and national security duties, but exposed to corruption through drug money. In addition, the skewing of external financial bilateral and multilateral aid toward security sector reform meant that demand and development issues were relegated to second place. These draconian measures might have been justified if they had reduced the levels of drug production and trafficking, but the contrary is the case. Militarized responses have accelerated fragmentation and displacement in the illicit sector: reducing production and cultivation in countries such as Thailand and Colombia simply spurred the increase of drug-related activities in neighboring countries. In Latin America, Bolivia and Ecuador are examples. Displaced Colombian drug traffickers moved down to Santa Cruz in the Bolivian lowlands. Now, the Colombians have moved farther afield to West Africa. Solving the problem in one place without tackling the root causes means that it just flares up somewhere else.

Militarized antidrug strategies also exacerbated existing problems of social and political violence, popular alienation, and state illegitimacy, increasing the liability of innocent citizens to suffer death and injury and the systematic violation of human rights. In Bolivia, the coca issue was a key factor in the events that caused two democratically elected governments to fall earlier in this decade. President Morales started his political career in the Chapare, the main coca growing area where he became the powerful secretary-general of the coca growers' trade union, a post he still retains as head of state. Recently, Bolivia began negotiations to reduce its commitments under the Convention Against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances that it signed in Vienna in 1988, and the areas of coca production in the country are expanding at an alarming rate. In the presidential elections in 2002, Morales came astonishingly close to the front-runner candidate largely because, on the eve of the election, the US ambassador made a public statement saying, "If anybody wins this election who is not agreeable to the elimination of coca production, all US aid will stop on the morrow." The immediate effect was to swing large numbers of people to vote for Morales who would never normally have done so, but who felt moved to do so because they considered that their whole nation had been insulted. In subsequent elections, Morales has won overwhelmingly.

Many benefited from the militarization of drug enforcement, especially the suppliers of controlled drugs and agencies upholding this policy. A great deal of employment was generated in the police, the customs, the prisons, and in military legal and intelligence services, particularly in the 1980s in the wake of the tighter measures induced by the Vienna conventions. In the US justice system 1.27 million people were employed in 1982 and, by 2001, their numbers had increased to 2.2 million. The federal prison budget, which in 1988 was \$220 million, rose to \$3.19 billion in 1997—a 1,350 percent increase in a few years. The private sector also benefited: lucrative contracts were awarded for helicopters and crop-spraying planes. As a result, vested interests increasingly supported the drug control model and spending on enforcement rose to

the detriment of funding for projects like Alternative Development that could have changed the supply dynamics of the source countries.⁶ The general lesson to be drawn from this experience is that militarized action to enhance security and control drugs has been counterproductive and, in some places, has caused major damage to human security.

Peace and Security

My final official assignment with the UN took me back to Africa and a field closely associated with security in the conventional sense. In 1992, I was appointed special representative of the Secretary-General in Angola and head of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission, the peacekeeping mission known as UNAVEM II. Undermandated and underresourced, it was doomed from the start. Conflict between the different parties fighting against their Portuguese colonial masters had begun even before their goal of independence was finally won in 1975. The conflict was further exacerbated at the height of the Cold War, during which Angola became a pawn between the superpowers in their quest for control of southern Africa and for ensuring the security of their interests there. Accordingly, the United States and the Soviet Union competed with one another in supplying arms and other support to the two main opposing sides of the conflict. But once the Cold War ended, those same powers wanted a “quick fix,” which was why our mission was so undermandated and so underfunded. Angola became “a forgotten tragedy” as I later dubbed it. From that came the title for the book that I eventually wrote about the experience: *Orphan of the Cold War*.⁷

When I was asked by the Secretary-General on very short notice to leave Vienna and go to Angola, the only instruction he gave me was that “the Security Council wants a small and manageable operation.” My first code cable pointed out that Angola was hardly small, being as big as France, Spain, and Germany combined, and that the conflict did not look to me particularly manageable without a stronger mandate and more resources. I got rapped over the knuckles for my pains and was told to get on with the job: it was impossible to go back to the Security Council and question their wisdom. Against all the odds we managed to carry out free and fair multiparty elections for the first time ever in Angola, but it was a tragic, classic case of the operation succeeding but the patient dying: Jonas Savimbi, the man favored by Washington but who lost the election, went straight back to war.

For months afterward, I was engaged in negotiations to restore peace that culminated in a marathon mediation process in the Côte d’Ivoire in Abidjan in April and May 1993. There we very nearly achieved a new peace accord and a far stronger mandate for the UN. Final agreement hinged on a demand from Savimbi and his União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) that they would only act on a key element of the agreement—the withdrawal of their troops from the cities they had occupied when the war es-

calated after the elections—if I could make a firm commitment that I would immediately bring a symbolic force of 1,000 armed Blue Helmets to monitor the process. My force commander and I both knew that there was a qualified battalion available in Ghana but, when I called New York, I was told that the Security Council insisted that no more troops could be authorized until after I had arranged a cease-fire. In vain, I pleaded that this was a chicken-and-egg situation since I could not get agreement on a cease-fire without promising the provision of the Blue Helmets. I recognized that UNITA might be bluffing but, if so, I wanted to call that bluff; their demand might also be genuine and many thousands of lives could depend on the outcome. What followed was even more chilling. I was told that, even if I did manage to obtain a cease-fire, I must warn both sides that, because of the UN's commitments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, no troops could be provided to monitor the new peace agreement for six to nine months. That is when I gave up. A mediator cannot function without being able to exert some leverage and I had been left with nothing.

As a result, internecine war continued in Angola for another nine years. No one knows how many people died during those years, but it was at least half a million. It was a tragedy just as great as Rwanda, both the result of crass international indifference, but no one ever speaks of it. In Angola's case, security priorities changed with the end of the Cold War and a European conflict was considered a much greater security threat than one in Africa. In my view, that was a mistaken strategy because a peaceful and prosperous Angola is still as essential to regional security as during the Cold War. The Angolans paid with their lives and the irony is that, although The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine had not yet been adopted, it could legitimately have been applied to Angola because a mandate from the Security Council was already in place.

Peace was finally restored in 2002 by military rather than political means when Savimbi was killed by government troops. The international community remained indifferent to Angola's plight, rejecting its request for a global donor conference to help put the country together after decades of devastation unless there was a prior agreement with the IMF. They argued that Angola was a rich country and did not need help, failing to recognize that it was not money that was required. Rather, a government that had heretofore governed only part of the country, and that on a war footing, desperately needed technical support. The government required assistance to spread the state administration to the whole territory, develop democratic practices, and promote social and economic development in order to give work to people. These people had been fighting all their lives; someone had to persuade them that there was a peace dividend and an alternative to war. In short, what was needed was support for the essential process of peacebuilding. A great opportunity was lost. Rising oil prices and a Chinese loan made it possible for

Angola to avoid an IMF agreement, and China became a major international partner.

Angola, rich beyond the dreams of Croesus, is now doing very well in gross domestic product (GDP) and growth terms, but the wealth has not trickled down to the poorer folk. Amazingly, Angola figures near the bottom of UNDP's Human Development Index in terms of access to the welfare services that form the basis of human security. That is a worry for the longer term because the causes of the conflict—poverty, marginalization, exclusion from access to the country's rich resources, and any say in the corridors of power—have not been properly addressed. This could all too easily mean that the conditions for sustainable peace over the long haul have not been established. This is another instance where human security has paid a heavy price because of mistaken military and political security priorities.

The Role of Women

Women's issues have always held particular interest to me: first, because I am a woman and, second, because I was the first female UNDP resident representative and later the first assistant secretary-general, under-secretary-general, and finally the first woman special representative of the Secretary-General to head a military peacekeeping mission. I confess to a certain degree of pride that I was never assigned to deal directly with women's issues. So many organizations claim to be doing very well on women's issues because they have appointed a woman to a senior post specifically to look after women and gender concerns. Such appointments are welcome, but there is also a need to entrust many more women with jobs previously considered to be outside their domain.

Throughout my career, I always took women's interests into account and was involved in all of the UN World Conferences on Women. But it was only when I came to Vienna in 1987 that I became directly responsible for women's issues, among other things, since the Department for the Advancement of Women and the servicing of the Commission on the Status of Women were part of my remit. The key importance of women in peace and security came home to me most sharply a few years later in Angola, where women were the major victims of the conflict, and sometimes themselves fighters, yet they had no role in peace negotiations and only a minimal one in the elections. (There was one female candidate for president, but she did not have a chance.) During the long months of trying to restore peace when the war resumed after the elections, I found myself (the chairman and mediator) to be the only woman at the negotiating table. In the early hours of one morning in Addis Ababa in January 1993, after a particularly frustrating debate during which I was painfully conscious that ferocious fighting was continuing in Angola and many people were dying as the two sides quibbled about minutiae, I called in

the male heads of the two delegations and tried to make them see sense. Unsuccessful, I finally said in distress, "If either of you had a woman on your delegation, we might get somewhere."

There were women in both camps, but they had been regimented in support of the cause. In UNITA, they were camp followers and cheerleaders who seized every opportunity to sing and dance in fulsome praise of their great leader. On the government side, on Women's Day, 7 March 1993, when I was in New York briefing the Security Council, the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) organized a march of 2,000 women who congregated outside the UNDP office in Luanda to bay for my blood and calling me a "bandit" because, with 350 unarmed military observers, I had failed to stop the war that had broken out again between 200,000 troops on both sides. They even carried a coffin with my name on it. When I went back seven years later, women had achieved a more independent voice of their own and the organizers of that earlier event apologized to me, explaining that they had been acting under duress.

As Rigoberta Menchu Tum, the Nobel Prize winner has so aptly said, "Women are not just victims of war, they are also protagonists of history and makers of the peace."⁸ Those principles are enshrined in Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security, adopted in October 2000. I have a certain pride of parenthood about that resolution, which originated at a cocktail party in Namibia in Windhoek in May 2000. I was chairing a meeting on gender and peacekeeping for what was then called the Lessons Learned Unit at UN headquarters, the aim of which was to produce a training booklet. During the party, it occurred to me that our message would have more impact if we enshrined it in a Declaration of Windhoek, and a Namibia Plan of Action. In discussing this with our hostess, the minister for women's affairs who had been a junior minister in the Namibian Foreign Ministry, I suddenly recalled that Namibia was a member of the Security Council. I reminded her that, when it came to Namibia's turn to preside over the Council, they could have a day's debate on a subject of their choosing and suggested that it would be a great coup for Namibia if she could persuade her foreign minister to use this opportunity to spearhead a high-level debate about this issue. She did, and that was how Security Council Resolution 1325 was born a few months later.⁹

It is a milestone resolution, the first ever to address the impact of war on women. It covers every aspect of the subject, from women victims and women fighters to the need to involve women at the highest level in peace negotiations, and it marks a historic breakthrough. It is a resolution that everybody quotes, but the implementation has been very poor—more words than deeds. A main recommendation was to urge the Secretary-General to appoint more women as his special representatives to head peacekeeping missions. Yet nineteen years after I became the first woman special representative, and a decade since Resolution 1325 was passed, the total so far appointed has still not

reached even double figures. Women complain with reason that they are still largely excluded from negotiating tables and that peacemaking, a fundamental part of security in both military and human connotations, continues to be treated as simply about appeasing men with arms. The resolution was primarily directed at women in armed conflict, but I could not fail to be struck by the total exclusion of women from the negotiations to resolve the potential political conflict after the general elections in the United Kingdom in the summer of 2010. Could it possibly be that the UK was in breach of a resolution it has so strongly sponsored?

Why has Resolution 1325 been so poorly followed up? One reason may well be that soon after its adoption the tragedy of September 11 occurred, the invasion of Iraq, and the war on terror, events that fueled a strategy based on the purely military concept of security. These developments swept aside women as peacemaking mediators and peacebuilders, and unleashed other forces of violence against women. There was also a lack of resources and ineffective monitoring and accountability mechanisms as well as bureaucratic inertia in a male-dominated UN. As so often, however, the main cause of inaction was the lack of political will on the part of states. Women have no champions with teeth in the corridors of power, either inside or outside the UN system, and Iran's recent election to the Commission on the Status of Women can only elicit despair. All of this reflects the overall status of women in all parts of the world. There are no national constituencies to fight for women's rights on the international scene. In the struggle against racism, the cause could be taken up by sovereign countries with a vote at the UN, but there is no sovereign country that is just made up of women and can have a voice at the UN. Women have paid, and continue to pay, a very high price for so-called security, to the detriment of their human security.

Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from all these personal experiences? Can the different threads be woven into a coherent pattern? I think they can. At the beginning, I distinguished between two kinds of security: (1) the narrow, military and defense context; and (2) the broader, some say too encompassing, concept of human security. The examples that I have cited show that they are often in conflict with one another. The price of military security has all too often meant the loss of human security. But if you take the longer view, neglect of human security can endanger security in the narrower conventional sense and exact a high price in human lives and constant conflict. It is self-evident that every conflict is different, but there are common themes. If you dig deep enough, you almost always find that strife has its roots in poverty, in marginalization, and in exclusion from access to national resources or to the levers of power and government. Conflict is often a rebellion of people who

feel that they have no say in their destiny. The corrosive effect of these factors is exacerbated in the modern world by the vast coverage and rapidity of modern communications. All but the most remote and isolated people can learn how the other half lives, if not through TV, then certainly by radio and word of mouth as people's mobility increases in search of work and a better life.

Human security is a new idea. Concerns about military and defense security are as old as the hills. Today, there seems to be a standoff between "development first" and "security first." I hope to have shown that the two are not incompatible, but rather must go hand in hand if we are ever to have genuine security and sustainable peace in our dysfunctional world. At present the emphasis seems to be on security first, with September 11, the Iraq War, Afghanistan, and a global recession. The past decade has seen an increasing predominance of military responses and expenditures to the detriment of human security. The authors of *UN Ideas That Changed the World*,¹⁰ the culminating book of the series published by the UN Intellectual History Project, point out that in 2007 world military spending was over \$1.3 trillion, the highest level since World War II.¹¹ For that same year of 2007, a report by a UN Inter-Agency Task Force, which came out in 2009, indicated that overseas development aid (ODA) dropped 8.4 percent, following a 4.7 percent drop in 2006.¹² It is nothing less than a scandal that the 0.7 percent of GDP target for aid recommended over forty years ago by the Pearson Commission, and reiterated by governments many times since (most recently at the Gleneagles summit in 2005), has still not yet been achieved except by a small handful of countries.¹³ The Gleneagles summit also pledged to mobilize \$25 billion for Africa but, according to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Gap Task Force in 2008, only \$4 billion had by then been delivered.¹⁴ In 2010, it was still only \$11 billion. It is no wonder that the world is falling so far short of reaching the MDGs for which the deadline is fast approaching. In 2008, the UN spent around \$5 billion on peace operations. That is less than 0.5 percent of world military spending and less than a conservative estimate of US expenditures for one month in Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁵

These huge imbalances must be corrected if worse is not to follow. Do we really want to have what D. John Shaw described as "a civilisation able to live with the shame of knowing many live in hunger and poverty, while knowledge, resources and repeated commitment to end this scourge exist and obesity (obesity again!) is a major killer?"¹⁶ It is sobering to compare the aspirations for a world of relative equity and nonviolence that must have inspired John Holmes, as they did the creators of the United Nations, with today's reality of growing militarization and military tensions while income gaps both within and between countries continue to constitute growing threats to global security.

What are the obstacles to resolving this apocalyptic situation? What needs to be done? We need to overcome the mistaken belief, still prevalent in many

quarters, that military might and supremacy are infallible and complete answers to conflict. We have seen some progress in thinking after the disastrous lessons of Iraq, which has resulted in a new strategy in Afghanistan. But is that too little too late? In the UN, the evolution of thinking on peacekeeping to include peacebuilding is a positive step, but it is much more difficult to get funds for peacebuilding. There is also a crying need for faster progress on trade negotiations and for more development aid.

All of this posits a need for much more closely integrated, multidimensional programs. The themes of which I have spoken are interrelated and have an impact on one another: economic and social development, drugs, peace and security, the role of women, and many others besides. But multidimensional programs are exceedingly difficult to devise and to execute effectively. The UN is the obvious multilateral organization to take the lead, but it is weak and demoralized and its procedures are cumbersome. In our increasingly globalized world of rapid financial transactions and instantaneous communications, no individual government can control its own economic and monetary systems, and frontiers and sovereignty decline in practical importance. Yet an outdated concept of sovereignty, often based on mistaken concepts of the national interests of the very countries that lay claim to it, frequently obstructs sensible collective action for the benefit of all mankind. There have been some inroads into it recently. The R2P—the right to intervene to protect populations abused by their governments—is one example, but the experience with Darfur demonstrates the political limitations on its application in practice as, in another context, does the US refusal to recognize the International Criminal Court.

Thomas Weiss, in his admirable book *The United Nations and How to Fix It*, wrote that “treating traditional sovereignty as a cornerstone for the United Nations is a fundamental structural weakness in urgent need of replacement.”¹⁷ The concept is enshrined in the Treaty of Westphalia of 1646, and is 364 years old. Weiss goes on to say, “This venerable institution . . . is a chronic ailment of the United Nations and perhaps a lethal one for the planet.”¹⁸ I wholeheartedly agree. There can be no doubt that genuine global security cannot be assured without some relinquishment of sovereignty. Surely that is not too high a price to pay? But the history of our evolution from feudal kingdoms to today’s nation-states shows all too clearly that this metamorphosis is likely to take a long time. The question is, how can we achieve it and can we wait that long? 🌐

Notes

Margaret Joan Anstee served the United Nations for over four decades, rising to the rank of under-secretary-general in 1987, the first woman to do so. She has lived and worked in all of the developing regions across the world, directing programs of economic and social development. As director general of the UN office at Vienna (1987–1992), she was responsible for all UN programs relating to narcotic drugs and for those

in the field of social development. From 1992 to 1993, she was the Secretary-General's special representative in Angola, the first woman to head a military peacekeeping mission. She has written a number of books about her experiences, including *Orphan of the Cold War: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process 1992–3* and an autobiography, *Never Learn to Type: A Woman at the United Nations*, and she continues to write and lecture widely.

1. ECOSOC Resolution 222(IX), 15 August 1949.
2. A/Res/304 (IV), 16 November 1949.
3. Nathaniel Davis, US ambassador to Chile (1971–1973), *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende* (Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 6.
4. Davis, *The Last Two Years of Salvador Allende*, p. 8.
5. The Convention Against Illicit Traffic of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was adopted at the Conference of the same name (of which the author was Secretary-General), held at Vienna, 25 November–20 December 1988. It entered into force on 11 November 1990.
6. Julia Buxton, *The Political Economy of Narcotics* (Fernwood Publishing and Zed Books, 2006), pp. 117–118.
7. Margaret Joan Anstee, *Orphan of the Cold War: The Inside Story of the Collapse of the Angolan Peace Process 1992–3* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996). See also chapter 21 of Margaret Joan Anstee, *Never Learn to Type: A Woman at the United Nations* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: John Wiley, 2003).
8. Cited by Charles Abugre in "Reviewing the Implementation of UN Security Resolutions 1325 and 1820: What Will It Take?" *Development Dialogue*, no. 53 (November 2009): 136.
9. S/Res 1325 on Women and Peace and Security was adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on 31 October 2000.
10. Richard Jolly, Louis Emmerij, and Thomas G. Weiss, *UN Ideas That Changed the World*, UN Intellectual History Project Series (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009).
11. Jolly, Emmerij, and Weiss, *UN Ideas That Changed the World*, p. 170.
12. Jolly, Emmerij, and Weiss, *UN Ideas That Changed the World*, p. 107.
13. G8 Summit chaired by the United Kingdom and held at Gleneagles, Scotland, July 2005.
14. Jolly, Emmerij, and Weiss, *UN Ideas That Changed the World*, p. 107.
15. Jolly, Emmerij, and Weiss, *UN Ideas That Changed the World*, p. 170.
16. D. John Shaw, *World Food Security: A History Since 1945* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 461, cited by Olav Stokke in *The UN and Development—From Aid to Development*, UN Intellectual History Project Series (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), p. 675, note 35.
17. Thomas G. Weiss, *What's Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It* (Polity Press, 2009), p. 32.
18. Weiss, *What's Wrong with the United Nations*, p. 48.