

THE NATIONAL DIMENSION OF GLOBAL SECURITY

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Summary

This essay addresses the national security dimension of global security. First, a discussion of the traditional views of national security and national sovereignty and the important role that force has played in maintaining both is presented. Next, the discussion moves to how national leaders grew increasingly alarmed by the threat global war posed to their own interests in a globalized world order. This alarm led to twentieth century efforts to create collective security systems – first the League of Nations which was not successful and then the United Nations that was successful – to protect states and their stakes in globalization. The United Nations, particularly, signaled a shift from strictly unilateralist national security strategies to a collective international security strategy. At the same time, the UN system demonstrates a blending of old-style great power politics with this new international security ethic. Then, the discussion turns to how this understanding of national security as international security has coincided with a slow but clear second shift that begins to recast national security in terms of human security.

1. Introduction

In December 2004, the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change issued a report titled *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*. In one passage, the panel explained why national security requires a system that ensures international security:

No State, no matter how powerful, can by its own efforts alone make itself invulnerable to today's threats. Every State requires the cooperation of other States to make itself secure. It is in every State's interest, accordingly, to cooperate with other States to

address their most pressing threats, because doing so will maximize the chances of reciprocal cooperation to address its own threat priorities.

The Panel asserted that a new collective security ethic required a sense of shared international responsibility to meet the threats of the 21st century because “no State can stand wholly alone.”

In late 2005, a World Summit meeting on the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations considered arguments contained in *A More Secure World* and then rejected the idea “no State can stand wholly alone.” The Outcome Document of the World summit asserted instead that “no State can best protect itself by acting entirely alone,” a qualification reassuring to those states inclined to fall back on traditional unilateralist approaches to national security. This modification is important because it illustrates the tensions that exist between notions of national security and global security. Further, the statement also illustrates why states seeking their own security would assert their sovereign rights *and* depend upon an international security system.

This essay addresses the national security dimension of global security. Doing so first requires a discussion of the traditional views of national security and national sovereignty and the important role that force has played in maintaining both. Next, the discussion turns to how national leaders grew alarmed by the threat global war posed to their own interests in a world order increasingly characterized by globalization. This alarm led to twentieth century efforts to create collective security systems – first the League of Nations which was not successful and then the United Nations that was successful – to protect states and their stakes in a globalized world order. Then, the discussion turns to how this understanding of international security as national security has facilitated a slow but clear second shift by the start of the twenty-first century that begins to establish human security as fundamental to national security.

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Biographical Sketch

Laura Neack received her PhD from the University of Kentucky in 1991. She is Professor of Political Science at Miami University, USA. Her research interests are in foreign policy analysis, international security issues and international peacekeeping. Among her many publications are *The New Foreign Policy: Power Seeking in a Globalized Era* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2nd edition 2008) and *Elusive Security: States First, People Last* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).