

# Global Security: Beyond Gated Communities and Bunker Vision

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*The most profound danger to world peace in the coming years will stem not from the irrational acts of states or individuals but from the legitimate demands of the world's dispossessed.... The only hope for the future lies in cooperative international action, legitimized by democracy. It is time to turn our backs on the unilateral search for security, in which we seek shelter behind walls. Instead we must persist in the quest for unified action to counter both global warming and a weaponized world.... To survive in the world we have transformed we must learn to think in a new way. As never before, the future of each depends on the good of all. — The Next 100 Years, a statement by 110 Nobel Laureates (December 11, 2001).*

**T**HE CONTRIBUTIONS TO “GLOBAL THREATS TO SECURITY” EXPLORE A RANGE OF issues that collectively constitute a challenge to the survival of a world community threatened by what one observer has noted to be an “Age of Extinction.” As reflected against the prehistoric record of profound breaks in evolutionary progress, we are now in the midst of an epoch characterized by a significant assault on all forms of life from an interplay of toxic chemicals, ozone depletion, climate change, and habitat destruction (Lerner, 1998). In the wake of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, the global outlook for harnessing the necessary resources and political will to combat such dread threats to public and environmental health has gone from bad to worse.

Obviating the need for a planetary survival plan, war without limits in time and space is the future held out to all. The “War on Terrorism” has permitted an unbridled and increasingly unilateralist militarism to reign dominant among the American ruling elite. Key components of the armory include the resurrection of

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Reaganite “Star Wars” projects and preparedness programs purportedly offering protection from all manner of weapons of mass destruction — an eerie high-tech sequel to an earlier “duck and cover” era. This upgrade of Fortress/Fallout Shelter America as the penultimate *Gated Community* is symbolic of an ecocidal conception of security that, carried out through force of arms or “structural adjustment” programs, has accelerated the severing of organic human connections with the biosphere. By magnifying the subjugation, desperation, and alienation of the very human resources so critical to offering any hope of reversing present trends, the Bush administration appears hell-bent on undermining any collective ability to muster the necessary resources and energy to place the world on a more sustainable, equitable, and survivable course.

The dangers posed by the right-wing equation of collective security with militarism are demonstrated by Andrew Lichterman and Jacqueline Cabasso in “The End of Disarmament and the Arms Races to Come.” The authors document evolving doctrines and weapons programs, many incubated in the pre-September 11 period, aimed at providing the U.S. with what Cold War architect Paul Nitze once referred to as the advantage of the “utmost level of violence that helps at every lesser level” (Bodenheimer and Gould, 1989).

The Nuclear Posture Review unveiled by the Bush administration in early 2002 explicitly places nuclear weapons at the core of U.S. military strategies, countering any global progress, however limited, made toward nuclear disarmament over the last decades. Former Manhattan Project nuclear bomb scientist and 1995 Nobel Peace Prize winner Sir Joseph Rotblat (2002) has observed that the Nuclear Posture Review “abandons the previous doctrine of nuclear weapons viewed as weapons of last resort, spells out a strategy which incorporates nuclear capability into conventional war planning...[and is] a major and dangerous shift in the whole rationale for nuclear weapons.” Spurning all treaties that might in any way limit U.S. military freedom of action, the U.S. has embarked on a straightforward drive for unquestioned global military supremacy. U.S. plans include the development of new offensive nuclear weapons, coupled with an array of space-based weapons systems; such programs are facilitated by the unilateral renunciation of, and withdrawal from, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty on the part of the United States.

The march toward satisfying U.S. aims of attaining the strategic “high ground in space” represents one end of a continuum of force deployed worldwide against states deemed to be noncompliant with the global order that is being reconfigured under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. In “Economic Sanctions, Humanitarianism, and Conflict After the Cold War,” Richard Garfield examines political and humanitarian problems in approaches to sanctions and war. The article describes how economic sanctions, which as a matter of policy eschew the direct use of deadly force, still cause a disproportionate and deadly impact on the most unfortunate and powerless within targeted societies. Garfield, by comparing and contrasting the

design and effects of sanctions in countries such as Iraq, Cuba, and Haiti, raises questions for the world community to consider when summoned to support alleged “non-lethal” methods of interstate coercion. He describes how sanctions lead to widespread impoverishment of civilians while leaving supposedly targeted leadership groups more firmly in control than before. Garfield raises a central question: When carrying out globally sanctioned methods of coercion short of outright warfare, how can state compliance with norms of international law and behavior, including a respect for human rights, be encouraged? He suggests that sanctions-related damages could be reduced by improving the selection of what to sanction, the ways in which they are implemented, the goals for policy change, and the protections against widespread unintended impacts.

Issues of human rights and international law are further explored in Lama Jamjoun’s contribution, “The Effects of Israeli Violations During the Second Uprising ‘*Intifada*’ on Palestinian Health Conditions.” Jamjoun’s article documents morbidity and mortality within the Palestinian community in the wake of recent Israeli violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including disrespect for the principle of medical neutrality, the use of collective punishment measures against Palestinian civilians, and the use of excessive, disproportionate, and indiscriminate force to combat the Palestinian *intifada*. Israeli violations have resulted in the destruction of the Palestinian health system and the deterioration of health conditions of Palestinians. Yet to date, the Bush administration, prodded by a coalition of pro-Israeli neoconservatives and the Religious Right, has provided virtually unstinted support for aggressive Israeli military activities. U.S. aid for the Israeli government totals three billion dollars annually (Reuters, 2002a) and includes the provision of F-16s to carry out deadly attacks on Palestinian neighborhoods (Sanger, 2002). Besides the direct effects caused by armed force, the continued Israeli invasion has, with its heightened control over any movement of the occupied populace, contributed to the perpetuation of desperate conditions that are exemplified by a significant level of malnutrition among Palestinian children, prejudicing the future of the Palestinians (Radin, 2002).

Although the legitimate concerns of innocent Israeli civilians to be free of indiscriminate violence is not directly addressed within the structure and focus of Jamjoun’s article, implementation of Jamjoun’s call for “respect for international law and the presence of an international protection force to prevent a humanitarian crisis in the region” would provide a framework to protect the human rights of all people in the region. Beginning in July 2002, such a vision was explicitly articulated in the pages of the *New York Times* and elsewhere in an “Open Letter from American Jews to Our Government” (Open Letter, 2002). The statement describes an alternative to endless war in the Middle East — a comprehensive settlement “based on simple but radical principles that Israeli and Palestinian lives are equally precious, that Israeli and Palestinian peoples have equal rights to

national self-determination and to live in peace and security, and that the Israeli and Palestinian peoples have equal rights to a fair share of the land and resources of historic Palestine.” This approach will be increasingly important for guiding a principled and sustainable end to a conflict that has deferred innovative and equitable solutions to difficult human right issues involving land, water, and other basic resource allocations.

Human security is not just threatened by the various levels of ongoing military conflict. The daily violence of a “normally” functioning world economic order arrayed against workers and communities worldwide is documented by Garrett Brown, in “The Global Threats to Workers’ Health and Safety on the Job.” Brown presents a withering review of the recent record of globalization in undermining the fundamental human right of every working person to be able to return home at the end of the workday alive and healthy. As evidenced by the 3,330 workers around the world who die on the job every day, Brown details how the “global race to the bottom” affects developing and developed economies alike as transnational corporations roam the world looking for the lowest wages, the most vulnerable workforces, and the least regulation of environmental and occupational health. Although he paints a grim backdrop of current trends, Brown also provides examples of promising nascent worker and community movements against the destructive effects of unfettered capital mobility, for which there are particularly important supportive roles for U.S. health professionals to play.

The dismal record regarding worker rights illustrated by Brown can only be exacerbated by a war on “terror” that will intensify the threats to working people at home and abroad. Domestically, anti-immigrant measures incorporated in legislation such as the U.S. Patriot Act of 2001 have been reinforced by the recent Supreme Court ruling that established that undocumented workers are not entitled to the normal protections of U.S. labor law if wrongly fired (Associated Press, 2002a).

Another ominous trend for global worker’s movements is the resurgence of unabashed U.S. support for repressive regimes that have been newly recruited for, or reenlisted in the anti-terror crusade, as witnessed in developments in areas ranging from Central Asia through Indonesia and Colombia (Forero, 2002; Associated Press, 2002b; Reuters, 2002b; Schmitt and Dao, 2002; Purnam, 2002). Consistent with reinvigorated U.S. support for governments recognized for their lack of commitment to human rights, the United States recently attempted to scuttle a United Nations pact that strengthened the Convention Against Torture, which the U.S. ratified in 1994. Although the U.S. was rebuffed by the international community in this effort, the Bush administration has been unrelenting in its drive to undermine the power and authority of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is charged with prosecuting individuals for war crimes and genocide when national governments refuse to act. In a recent example, the U.S. used provisions of new anti-terrorism legislation to threaten all nations with the loss of

all American military assistance if they became members of the ICC without pledging to protect Americans serving in their countries from its reach (Reuters, 2002c; Crossette, 2002; Becker, 2002a).

The role of states and their institutions in subordinating worker and community health to the needs of global corporations is dramatically underscored in Satinath Sarangi's "Crimes of Bhopal and the Global Campaign for Justice." From his unique perspective as Managing Trustee of the Bhopal Clinic and Sambhavna Trust, Sarangi reflects on the current toll of the disaster: over 20,000 fatalities; more than 30 survivors die each month; over 120,000 survivors desperately need medical attention for chronic exposure-induced diseases; thousands of families are on the brink of starvation because the breadwinners are dead or too sick to work; and over 20,000 people in the surrounding area must rely on water contaminated by chemicals that have leaked from the abandoned factory.

According to *Corporate Watch*, under the inadequate 1990 settlement of the lawsuit brought by the Indian government against Union Carbide, survivors and the families of victims are allotted a mere seven cents a day for their misery (Sorg, 2002). Sarangi observes that the legal-judicial story of Bhopal illustrates the worldwide inadequacy of codes and structures for holding corporations and their senior officials accountable, as well as the utter lack of international fora for redressing corporate crimes. He describes how, in response, Bhopal survivor organizations have proposed guidelines for redefining corporate crime, and how a unique transnational environmental justice organizing effort has been undertaken to forge cooperative efforts between Indian and American workers and communities linked by the commonalities of their toxic burdens.

To this end, in 2002, hundreds of people worldwide took part in a hunger strike to pressure Dow/Union Carbide to account for the environmental destruction, morbidity, and mortality resulting from its operations — linking Bhopal to Seadrift Texas and to every community that is at the mercy of contaminating industries (*Ibid.*). Such global solidarity may have had a significant impact on the August 2000 decision of an Indian court to decline to reduce charges against Warren Anderson, the former chairman of Union Carbide, while calling for the initiation of extradition proceedings against him (Associated Press, 2002c).

Beyond Bhopal, other grass-roots struggles that spotlight the contradiction between corporate and human rights include the participation of hundreds of women in protests dedicated to forcing community development aid and other concessions from oil multinationals in southern Nigeria, which brought Chevron-Texaco's operations to a halt for a number of weeks in July 2002 (Associated Press, 2002d). In addition, the conduct of Exxon-Mobil's operations in the Indonesian province of Aceh has been challenged by economically and environmentally devastated villagers who were savagely repressed by Indonesian military units hired by the oil company for "security" purposes. Activists have utilized a suit filed by the International Labor Rights Fund against Exxon-Mobil under the provisions

of the Alien Tort Claims Act of 1789. Foreign nationals have used the act to sue corporations in the United States over charges of human rights abuses abroad. Not unexpectedly, the U.S. State Department has urged the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., which is reviewing the suit, to dismiss it, claiming that pursuit of the issue would set back the war on terrorism and bolster competitive Chinese interests in the region (Perlez, 2002a; 2002b).

The ecological and social disruption linked to corporate operations is not limited to the chemical and oil industries. One need look no further than the dinner table. Community health and environmental justice issues are at the heart of “Corporate Swine and Capitalist Pigs: A Decade of Environmental Injustice and Protest in North Carolina,” written by Anthony E. Ladd and Bob Edwards. The authors deal with health and other quality-of-life issues stemming from the recent expansion of corporate hog-raising in North Carolina and examine the history of community organizing and opposition to these moves. The North Carolina situation provides a revealing case study of the large and detrimental impact that “Confined Animal Feeding Operations” (CAFOs) have made on rural America and the extent to which community mobilization against CAFOs is becoming part of the wider protest against the corporate control of agriculture.

Beyond the competitive pressures the new corporate entities pose to small-scale operations, the regional population (largely people of color and the poor) suffer from a range of environmental health complaints that directly derive from modern large-scale operations: unrelenting stench, respiratory hazards, and tremendous water pollution caused by the runoff from fecal waste “lagoons.” Such problems reflect a serious national problem that the Sierra Club documented in its August 2002 “Rap Sheet on Animal Factories,” which covered 630 meat factories in 44 states, including the largest feedlots, which raise millions of chickens, cattle, and hogs. Among the findings, derived from state records from the 1980s and 1990s, was that the millions of gallons of animal feces and urine that seeped from the big feedlots’ manure pits polluted 35,000 miles of rivers (Becker, 2002b). In the North Carolina region, only creative and effective multinational and cross-class community organizing has led to any, albeit limited, controls on the continued spread of such noxious enterprises.

Apart from the critical environmental health and justice issues raised by Ladd and Edwards, the spread of massive CAFOs in all areas of animal rearing for the table has broader public health implications directly related to the organizing principles and practices of these operations. With each animal representing a relatively small potential profit margin, emphasis has been on maximizing growth in the shortest possible time, necessitating the widespread use of pesticide-laden feed, steroids, and antibiotics — all of which recirculate in the biosphere in general, and in human diets in particular. The overuse of antimicrobials in feedlot operations has been implicated in the development of resistance to such agents, with potential direct health effects on the animals. Moreover, it raises the threat of

such antibiotic resistance spreading to organisms that cause human disease. For many organisms today, there may be a few or only one pharmaceutical agent to treat certain diseases. Thus, the persistence and expansion of CAFOs and their associated practices can portend serious global health consequences.

The potential for modern corporate food operations to contribute to an explosive resurgence of human disease directly relates to issues of *biosecurity*. In the concluding contribution, “Security and Public Health,” Victor W. Sidel and Barry Levy, both past-Presidents of the American Public Health Association, offer an alternative vision to the myopic worldview of biosecurity that has been incorporated in unfolding Bush administration proposals regarding “Homeland Security.” Such proposals rest on the assumption that the United States can create a perpetually safe haven within its own borders. Underscoring the fundamental flaws in this supposition are the facts that humans live in an increasingly interconnected world with finite resources, have no “backyard” in which to place an ever-burgeoning toxic wastestream, and have actively ensured the dispersal of the capabilities to institute global violence from a variety of increasingly lethal technologies. Consistent with its potentially fatal assumption, when the U.S. has dealt at all with impending threats facing its own population, such as those from biological agents, it has chosen reactive preparedness strategies that benefit the high-tech edge of the evolving “military-industrial complex,” rather than addressing more fundamental, “primary” forms of prevention that are central to good public health practices.

A good illustration of this is the response to “bioterrorism” that was initiated in the waning days of the second Clinton administration, but which in the wake of the anthrax outbreaks in the U.S. in the fall of 2001 has achieved virtually universal uncritical support among political and public health leaders despite its skewed priorities. For example, although the 40 million individuals in the U.S. who lack health insurance represent a known vulnerability to disease of all sorts, including the intentionally introduced (Wynia and Gostin, 2002), the U.S. government is funneling hundreds of millions of dollars to the pharmaceutical and biotech sectors to develop new drugs and vaccines. Such countermeasures, which are inherently plagued by the lag time between accurate diagnosis and treatment, could at best treat a handful of known potential biowarfare agents and would probably do nothing for genetically modified organisms specifically engineered to resist all defenses. In this context, it should be noted that U.S. biotech and pharmaceutical companies gave critical support to the Bush administration’s decision in 2001 to sabotage the international effort to strengthen the inspection and verification protocols of the Biological Weapons Convention, placing concerns for proprietary rights above bolstering a key tool for *primary prevention* of biological warfare (Gordon, 2001; Allen and Mufson, 2001; Sidel, Gould, and Cohen, 2002; Shadid, 2001).

Sidel and Levy point to the limitations of even appropriate treatment of disease when de-linked from *primary prevention* strategies that address the full range of challenges to *biosecurity*. Disease prevention is inextricably connected to the

promotion of health-protective practices on a global scale. Thus, Sidel and Levy conclude that a comprehensive strategy for biosecurity requires addressing core issues of hunger, poverty, housing, clean water, sanitation, etc.

The view of global security promoted by Sidel and Levy includes two components: “human security” and “international security.” The authors proceed from use of the term “human security” by the United Nations Development Program to include “protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards.” Sidel and Levy couple human security with “international security,” which encompasses the prevention of war and the right of all nations to live in peace.

The need for such an integrated approach was substantiated by reports released just before the convening of the August 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. That meeting was boycotted by President Bush to the applause of his right-wing base, who stated that his “presence would only help to publicize and make more credible...various anti-freedom, anti-people, anti-globalization, and anti-Western agendas” (Associated Press, 2002e). According to the United Nations, 1.1 billion people worldwide live without access to safe drinking water and 2.5 billion lack proper sanitation. In addition, a report issued by the Pacific Institute for Studies in Development, Environment and Security indicated that by the year 2020, as many as 76 million people — mostly children — could die from water-related diseases if appropriate changes aren’t made worldwide (Associated Press, 2002f). This estimate followed on the October 2000 “Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment,” backed by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund, that indicated that bringing water and sanitation to all who lacked it would cost \$10 billion per year. Such expenditures, roughly equivalent to what the U.S. spent annually on counterterrorism programs prior to September 2001, could cut by up to one-third the four billion worldwide diarrhea cases that every year result in 2.2 million deaths (Associated Press, 2000; Smithson, 2001; Smithson and Levy, 2000).

The issues of clean water and sanitation are only a subset of a larger complex of biosecurity issues grappled with at the Johannesburg Summit. These include rapid deforestation, intensification of droughts, rising sea levels, inadequate food production, air pollution, and the massive extinction of species. Nitin Desai, head of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, and chair of the Summit, succinctly summed up that the “real threat that we face now is the insidious global spread of poverty and environmental stress — and that is the real security threat that we need to address...” (*New York Times*, 2002).

In stark contrast to addressing such unmet human needs, the current U.S. approach to security includes a proposed \$48 billion increase — to a total of \$379 billion — in defense spending. This increase alone is six times the \$8 billion required to cover the basic needs of 250 million needy children around the world (Associated Press, 2002g).



The manifold threats to human existence, looming ever-larger within the context of accelerated climate change, call for an enormous restructuring of global priorities, requiring the adequate allocation of resources and harnessing the international political will to carry out the difficult structural transformations necessary to building *global security*. Achieving this, in Sidel and Levy's view, will require an international order based on equity and justice, on human security, and on the development of a "culture of peace." As such, it is critical that the U.S., the superpower *über alles*, be prevailed upon to alter its illusory perspective that Americans can through pure force of arms somehow thrive in a planet that is literally falling apart. This ecocidal vision is graphically illustrated by the Bush administration's rush to construct costly National Missile Defense facilities in Alaska, a state that has witnessed a record increase in temperature over the last 30 years, with massive loss of permafrost and unprecedented destruction of forests from beetle infestation (Reuters, 2002d; Eagan, 2002). What, indeed, is being protected and for whom?

We hope that the contributions to this issue, beyond providing eloquent testimony to some of the many challenges confronting us, will provide impetus to an informed collective response to the profound dangers facing the world. These include, but far surpass, the "external" threats of terrorists wielding the gruesome products of a technologically advanced, but ethically challenged species. It has been observed that "if there is one lesson to be learned from September 11, it is that power does not translate into security" (Davis, 2002). A truly cooperative approach, transcending the dead-end agenda of unilateralist American militarism, will be the only way to avoid a headlong rush to extinction of humankind and the web of life that sustains us all. To reiterate the profound message of the Nobel Laureates: "To survive in the world we have transformed we must learn to think in a new way. As never before, the future of each depends on the good of all."

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