Reinvigorating Global Governance Through "Just Security"

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ABSTRACT

2019, which falls between the centenary of World War One and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the end of World War Two and the birth of the United Nations, is an opportune moment to reflect on the current "anti-multi-lateralist turn" in international politics and the growing array of global problems that can only be managed multilaterally. This policy essay does so conceptually, substantively, institutionally, and strategically. Conceptually, it explains how lasting solutions to global problems must necessarily address underlying justice and security concerns. Substantively, the essay showcases specific reforms that a "just security" approach engenders in the areas of conflict prevention, the hyperconnected global economy, and climate. Institutionally, it highlights systemwide reforms that can help multilateral institutions deliver better outcomes to their many and varied stakeholders. Lastly, the essay outlines a strategy of harnessing "smart coalitions" and using the UN's upcoming major anniversary to make real progress toward a reinvigorated system of global governance.

For the last several years, the authors have been looking for, and laying out, ways to better manage rising global problems. In concluding the most recent phase of our research, we pessimistically observed that humankind

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appears to be running out of planetary bandwidth and is therefore running out of time:

to manage, let alone solve, some burgeoning global problems, from violent conflict, climate change, growing concentrations of wealth, nativist sentiment, and terrorist violence, to cyber insecurity, the continuing growth of human population, and accelerating species loss. Humanity has filled the earth (Genesis 1:28) but not subdued it; damaged it, certainly, undermining its systems and overmining its resources. At least some of humanity is sensing, with some puzzlement and perhaps growing unease, a receding political, economic, and ecological tide, the sort that heralds a gathering political, economic, and ecological tsunami.¹

Yet we are optimistic about humanity's prospects, in part, because after the last economic and political tsunamis—the Great Depression and the Second World War—national leaders found a way back that gave new, collective attention to peaceful management of international disputes, to economic reconstruction, and to fair management of global trade (at least from the point of view of the Global North). The structures of international law that grew up in these areas, and the organizations built to oversee, implement, and debate its meaning helped humankind work through a turbulent era of sometimes violent decolonization, ideological standoff backed by growing arsenals of nuclear weapons, and accelerating social and technological change.

These structures are not sexy and do not work quickly. However, they offer a core of ideas and experience upon which new solutions may be built or against which new solutions can be tested and compared. Many of the problems humanity now faces are relatively new and are becoming more urgent, but the politics of human organization and power have not fundamentally changed in the past few decades. Nation-states remain at the core of the global power structure, and despite seventy-plus years of multilateral diplomacy, the post-war international order has depended, at critical junctures, on the support and leadership of the United States. Now, the principal norms and institutions of the international order face open hostility from the Trump administration.² In other countries, fears of losing control of national identity or being left behind by globalization have led to dwindling trust in multilateral institutions and multilateralism writ large.

At the same time, there are groups of states and other actors that want to preserve and improve the architecture of global governance. A prominent example is the inaugural Paris Peace Forum of November 2018, a "Davos for the people," which was attended by sixty-five heads of state

and government, ten heads of international organizations, and more than 6,000 participants, including two of the authors of this essay.⁴ In addition, France and Germany launched a new "Alliance for Multilateralism" and promoted it at the UN General Assembly in September 2019.⁵

This policy essay reflects on these challenges and on ways forward, including new paradigms to support an overarching reform agenda for global governance as the United Nations nears its seventy-fifth anniversary in 2020. We approach both the problems and their solutions from the perspective of "just security." This means that any solution to a global problem must address both security and justice concerns, without privileging one over the other, in order to have any prospect of lasting success. As we noted in a 2016 article, "[s]ecurity is merely the appearance of order, in a framework of structural violence, unless it is tempered or leavened by concepts of justice that include human rights, human dignity and other normative limits on the use of power," whereas the "pursuit of justice, in turn, is crippled if it is not backed up by the requisite means to maintain order."

In this instance, security means the minimum conditions that allow people to think, plan, and live beyond the requirements of short-term selfpreservation—the ability of the state to defend territory, wield preponderant coercive capacity within it, achieve political legitimacy, and collect

and use tax revenues for legitimate social purposes; social purposes, as well as the continued functioning of essential global systems.⁷ Justice would then be the realization of such fundamental governing principles as equality before the law, fairness, accountability, and democratic participation in governance at all levels, from local to global. Using just security as a partly normative and

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partly operational lens through which to analyse global problems, this article considers all these principles and conditions when developing or evaluating public policies, programs, or institutions.⁸

Just security builds on human security, which is the people-centred approach to development introduced by the UN Development Program's Human Development Report of 1994. That and subsequent human development reports defined human security as "people exercising their human development choices safely and freely," and ensuring "freedom from fear and freedom from want." Just security builds on the human security

approach to improve development and conflict management but extends further to include core principles of justice.

In 2015—before Trump, Brexit, and other developments—the final report of the Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance,¹¹ co-chaired by Madeleine Albright and Ibrahim Gambari, called the current global state-of-affairs the "crisis of global governance." To some, this may still have sounded a bit too gloomy or alarmist. However, "crisis" has since become an increasingly apt description, as global governance in 2019 is in serious trouble, its condition likely to get worse before it gets better.

THE ANTI-MULTILATERALIST TURN: FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY

Rules-based multilateralism is a veneer on the nation-state system, which appeared in the wake of two world wars. For a time, this system functioned quietly, and largely invisibly, through almost a half-century of the Cold War and through rapid political, social, economic, and technological change. The people and paper that once comprised the primary means of moving data when the UN was founded have long since been augmented by increasingly sophisticated and widespread electronics capable not only of instantly informing, but also capable of quietly distorting perceptions of the world beyond their physical reach. The deliberate inculcation of fear, in particular, reinforces the all-too-human instinct to draw in and protect everything familiar. But since walls are neither impervious, nor can they stop the change going on outside of them, the urge to huddle and defend also has been historically linked to the urge to strike out and cleanse. Multilateralism is a tool for moderating both these urges through controlled and frequent interactions among states undertaken within mutually agreed frameworks. Like any other tool, it is only useful in practice if it is well-adapted to the problems at hand. Unfortunately, our multilateral institutions have not evolved as quickly or as thoroughly as their environment, and anti-multilateralism has waxed as key powers' engagement with these institutions has waned.

Yet the most serious global problems are not just beyond the reach of any single nation-state or group of states to resolve. These problems present disincentives to action because the solutions to them tend to be "global public goods," which some actors can enjoy without diminishing their availability to others and that no one can be practically excluded from using, like fresh air or globally optimal levels of greenhouse gases. ¹² Markets underprovide public goods because profits are difficult to capture. Governments underprovide *global* public goods because so much of the

benefit falls outside national borders (and control): other states can "free ride" on the results. To generate such global public goods in efficacious amounts, effective multilateral engagement is essential, so that, on difficult issues, respective participants' actions and obligations can be hammered out along with agreed penalties for defection.¹³

However, while past multilateral efforts to provide global public goods benefitted from the leadership of a "benign hegemon" in the form of the United States, the situation today is much more intractable. UN Secretary-General Guterres has aptly termed this a "paradox." That is, at "a time when multilateral efforts are under pressure from unresolved conflicts, runaway climate change, widening inequalities and other threats [...] global challenges are more connected, but our responses are growing more fragmented."¹⁴ This fragmentation of responses has evolved into a veritable backlash against multilateralism itself. The dominant crisis of multilateralism and global governance was, until recently, a sense of inertia in the of face major crises such as the conflict in Syria and climate change. Inertia has now been replaced in some quarters by open hostility, leading to obstruction, withdrawal from membership, or a preference for institutional dismantling, even on the part of former champions of the multilateral system as we know it today.

The root causes of this hostility lie in divisions between world regions, but also—equally if not more importantly—within societies along lines of race, gender, socioeconomic, and other factors. As noted by the French and German Foreign Ministers in their article announcing the "Alliance for Multilateralism," "rivalry among major powers and growing nationalism have resulted in an increasingly fragmented world order—in political, economic and social terms." This sentiment was echoed by Ambassador María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly, who has noted:

the fraying of the social contract as the gains we have made over the past decades are slowing, even reversing. Moreover, these gains were never shared equally. Despite prolonged periods of growth, wealth has not been equitably shared, let alone trickled down. It is sobering to think that just 26 people own as much as the 3.8 billion who make up the poorer half of humanity—only 26 people.¹⁶

Many people feel "left behind by globalization and automation," ¹⁷ not necessarily because their situation has deteriorated in absolute terms, but because their real wages are stagnating while the wealthiest percentiles of the global population have reaped disproportionate rewards from economic growth during this period, as illustrated by Branko Milanovic's

famous "elephant graph." The feeling of not sufficiently benefitting from globalization can lead to a lack of identification with—and even hostility towards—the institutions associated with this trend, thus rationalizing rejections of rules-based governance. As a result, leaders have come to power

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in a number of countries by feeding on these sentiments, including in the United States and United Kingdom, countries which used to be at the forefront of creating and developing the multilateral order as we now know it. While President Trump decries American obligations to what he calls unfavorable deals and institutions, in the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson advocates a future in which his country is not "being elbowed aside by a supranational body." ¹⁹

While U.S. foreign policy has, in the past, oscillated between more constructive and more hesitant, even minimalist approaches to multilateral security cooperation (see, for example,

the Bush Administration's 2006 National Security Strategy²⁰), the fiery 2016 campaign rhetoric of Donald Trump has gone further by becoming official U.S. policy under the banner of "America First," taking American antimultilateralism to new levels. The Trump Administration has renounced the Paris Climate Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal, withdrawn from the UN Human Rights Council and UNESCO, abandoned the nascent Trans-Pacific Partnership, pulled back from a UN Global Compact on Migration, and cast doubt about the U.S. commitment to collective defence of NATO.²¹ Moreover, the United States also "un-signed" the UN Arms Trade Treaty in April 2019.²²

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has experienced a back-lash from both the United States and non-Western countries alike. Under the administration of George W. Bush, the United States abandoned its previous role in drafting the 1998 Rome Statute of the ICC and adopted an obstructionist approach, enacting legislation such as the 2002 American Service-Members' Protection Act and concluding bilateral immunity agreements with countries to prevent American citizens from being transferred to the ICC.²³ Under the Trump Administration, the United States has

threatened sanctions against the ICC.²⁴ In addition, some African states have accused the Court of being a Western-centric organization focused on prosecutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁵ Since 2016, four of them gave notice of their intent to withdraw from the Court.²⁶ In addition, the universality of the ICC's mission is questioned due to an underrepresentation of Asian countries among state parties to the Rome Statute. China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nepal, Vietnam, and Malaysia, among others, are not parties to the ICC. Faced with these challenges, the ICC remains constrained in its ability to serve as an effective tool for justice and conflict and atrocity prevention through deterrence.

Efforts to undermine the World Trade Organization's dispute settlement system are also ongoing, with the U.S. government blocking the appointment of new members of the WTO's Appellate Body, thereby threatening to soon cripple the organization's dispute settlement architecture.²⁷ In this overtly anti-multilateralist turn, trade agreements to ensure regional stability are characterized as unjust to American workers, while initiatives to redistribute refugee burdens more equitably are presented as threats to national security.

Who might step up to fill the resulting vacuum in global leadership and bring about collective responses? The European Union expressed, in June 2016, unwavering support for "a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core" in a new Global Strategy.²⁸ However, only five days after its adoption, the EU became absorbed by "Brexit" following the United Kingdom's referendum to leave the bloc after four decades of membership. Whether President Macron's Paris Peace Forum and similar initiatives can help the EU change tack and gain favor remains an open question, but across Europe, nativist populist parties have portrayed the EU and international cooperation in general as threats to national sovereignty and democracy. The quest for solidarity and equity in migration governance has also produced a fierce, local political backlash portraying common approaches as attacks on national security and identity. In some EU member states, the rule of law itself has come under fire, including by efforts to undermine judicial independence and press freedom.²⁹ As the EU rallies to respond to these pressures, efforts to stem the crisis-driven surge in migration from the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa through deals with Turkey and North African countries have come under fire from human rights advocates.³⁰

A gloomy picture emerges, where major global crises remain insufficiently addressed and attempted solutions offer seemingly zero-sum trade-offs between security and justice, as well as between global and

local concerns. By building walls and fences and "taking back control" of imperatives of national policy, retreating into the nation-state is portrayed

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by many politicians across the globe as the only way to truly guarantee security and justice. However, nineteenth century approaches to twenty-first century challenges will fail to provide security or justice in a broad or timely fashion. Just as quests for economic autarky invariably lead to loss of prosperity, so will narrow conceptions of security—premised on borders and

barbed wire—fail to cope with transnational issues like climate change, migration, and cybersecurity, or provide the essential elements of justice that make any security regime sustainable.

SOME WAYS FORWARD

Governments, scholars, activists, and others should not deny, but assert up-front, that interdependence is a reality, multilateralism is a necessity, and justice and security are both needed to sustain peace and prosperity. To move from abstract concepts to actual change requires ideas and strategies which chart a route toward reform for reinvigorating global governance over the next five to ten years. Here, we share some of the ideas which seem the most promising in the areas of conflict prevention, climate, and the global economy.

Conflict Prevention

Conflict prevention has been named a priority area by UN Secretary General Guterres in his January 2018 report on "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace." However, in order to become truly effective, justice considerations such as human rights, developmental prospects, and trustworthy institutions need to be better integrated. One innovative way of linking security and justice considerations in the service of building sustainable peace is the introduction of a new "peacebuilding audit" mechanism as proposed by Cedric de Coning and Necla Tschirgi, which would give the UN Peacebuilding Commission an important tool for early warning and early action, comparable to the Human Rights Council's country reporting mechanism—the Universal Periodic Review. In addition, a

"Conflict Prevention sub-Committee of the UN Security Council," with a parallel expert advisory body, as recommended by Eamon Aloyo and Edward Newman,³³ could bring together expertise from across the UN system to promote and support long-term conflict prevention, consistent with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and a broader understanding of conflict and structural violence. Reinforcing the security and conflict aspects of the development debate will generate greater resources and political attention for structural prevention. Both proposals contribute to boosting the resilience of fragile countries, which is also a more sustainable solution to stemming migration flows than naval operations in the Mediterranean or refugee camps in North African countries, which are highly fragile themselves.

Climate & People

Climate change is among the greatest challenges humanity currently faces, as it is rapidly altering critical background conditions for human and all other life on the planet. It is both a governance and a technological challenge. Governance—in terms of new agreements and their implementation—tends to get deadlocked in complex and multifaceted discussions about fairness that reflect real national concerns but also risk accelerating climate change as an existential security threat on human, national, and global levels. Avoiding that requires action to reach "net zero emissions" of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases before 2050, both by reducing energy consumption and by hastening the transition to climate-neutral sources of energy.³⁴

Improvements in technology can help that transition while easing the pressure on governance. A significant obstacle to climate adaptation by vulnerable human populations is access to appropriate technology and the resources to acquire it. One sensible approach to boosting appropriate technology transfer to developing countries, as advocated by Menno van der Veen,³⁵ would be a dedicated "Green Climate Technology Licensing Facility" in the new UN Green Climate Fund. The facility would license proprietary technology on social terms and assist the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. In doing so, it could protect the interests of intellectual property owners, while offering access where technology is most needed. Here, promoting justice and fairness in the context of climate adaptation also makes a contribution to climate security in the longer term.

The Hyperconnected Global Economy

The global financial crisis of 2007/08 demonstrated, arguably more than any other event in recent history, the risks and downsides of a globalized, "hyperconnected" economy. At the same time, its worldwide effects illustrated how questions of economic fairness and equity are also questions of human security. Measures were taken in many countries and the Eurozone to make them more resilient, while internationally, the G20 embraced its role in "shaping an interconnected world" in 2017.³⁶ However, at the same time, some of the reforms at the national level are being undone in the United States as national security is used as an excuse for protectionist measures.³⁷

One way to better embed the "hyperconnected" global economy in effective global governance structures would be to establish a "Global Economic Coordination Council," as suggested by José Antonio Ocampo and Joseph Stiglitz.³⁸ It would bring much needed coordination and coherence to the international system on matters of global economic governance. Meeting at the Heads-of-State level (like the current G20) and enjoying the formal support of a subset of existing UN system entities—such as the UN Secretariat, International Labour Organization, International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank—it would combine the participation of systemically important countries with universal representation. The latter element would be guaranteed by a constituency system similar to the Bretton Woods institutions with economically weighted votes. The "Global Economic Coordination Council" would address gaps in the current system of cooperation and help to better manage the negative externalities of economic globalization. These include the absence of a restructuring mechanism for sovereign debt or of effective instruments of international cooperation in tax matters. It could also identify overlapping areas of responsibility that need high-level political attention (for instance, the environmental effects of trade policies and the social effects of budgetary policies). By boosting justice through greater representativeness, such a new body would make a significant contribution to the economic dimension of human security.

SYSTEM-WIDE REFORMS FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

While efforts towards specific areas are much needed, system-wide reforms are similarly important. As we approach the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the global organization itself needs changes which achieve a mutually reinforcing relationship between security and justice, both in the way it is operated and in the way in which it delivers on them. Three timely and creative proposals for re-envisioning the structure and functioning of the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council, and the International Criminal Court illustrate ways this can be achieved.

First, a United Nations Parliamentary Network, as proposed by Luis Cabrera, would be a pragmatic approach toward strengthening UN-citizen relations, overcoming some of the world body's democratic deficit, and expanding public knowledge of and participation in the work of the UN General Assembly.³⁹ It would bring together parliamentarians elected from their national legislatures to discuss and to advise the General Assembly on issues in UN governance that concern citizens worldwide, from climate governance and poverty to nuclear non-proliferation. It is a pragmatic step forward, as it can be established under Article 22 of the UN Charter as a "subsidiary organ" to the General Assembly, without the need for any Charter amendment. Feeding fresh ideas into the Assembly's debates, a UN Parliamentary Network would complement the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the longer-term efforts of civil society organizations such as the Campaign for a UN Parliamentary Assembly. 40 It would help to develop a transnational democratic culture, showing that the UN is not an abstract, "elitist" body superimposed on democratically elected national governments, as it is portrayed by anti-globalist rhetoric.

Second, although reform of the UN Security Council has been as widely discussed as it has been intractable, 41 as the UN organ with primary responsibility for international security and the only global entity that can legitimately authorize the use of force, the discussion on how to update the Security Council to twenty-first century realities must continue. Questions regarding its membership and functioning are examples par excellence of the entanglement of security and justice. The more it is regarded as unrepresentative, the less legitimacy it will command, thus leading to the creeping erosion of the collective security system—one of the most significant achievements in the post-World War Two international order. As a way forward, Vesselin Popovski has proposed a redistribution of the Security Council's membership according to an "8+8+8" formula.⁴² This means the Council should have three categories of membership: eight permanent seats, eight renewable, and eight non-renewable. By addressing the interests of all regional groups and states (large, medium-sized, and small), his concept is a potential solution to long-standing feuds and paralysis in the Council, including issues of greater representation from Asia, Africa, and

Latin America. In order to give countries confidence in the changes, beginning in 2021, reforms could be phased in over a twenty-four-year period, allowing for the change to become fully operational by the UN's centenary in 2045.

Third, improving the relationship between the ICC and the UN Security Council would strengthen the ICC's ability to overcome the legitimacy challenges it faces and better fulfil its mandate. As proposed by the Albright-Gambari Commission, ⁴³ concrete steps towards such an improved relationship include adopting a protocol or outlining the factors that could guide the Security Council on referring situations to the ICC, or deferring them. Another possible measure is establishing a dialogue to allow the ICC president and prosecutor to brief the Security Council. Lastly, the Security Council could lend support to ICC action against perpetrators, including enforcing arrest warrants through sanctions adopted and monitored by the Council. Through closer coordination and concertation, the UN Security Council and ICC can be more effective in pursuing their respective mandates, i.e. the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and holding those responsible for international crimes accountable, respectively.

SMART COALITIONS AND THE ROAD TO 2020

As German Chancellor Angela Merkel noted in her address at the Paris Peace Forum, "[i]nstitutions can easily be destroyed—but building them up is incredibly difficult." As institutional reform combines the two, the same can be said about reforming institutions in the face of entrenched interests and gridlocked discussions. Hence, without a careful consideration of political dynamics and the strategies required for progressive global change, well-intentioned ideas devised by high-level panels tend to wither on the vine and be forgotten. This is yet more likely in the current political climate and with the current administration in the United States.

With this challenging backdrop, a "smart coalition" of progressive civil society actors and like-minded states would be wise to treat the September 2020 UN 75 Summit in New York as both a "landing pad" for a few timely innovations and "launch pad" for other, more ambitious reforms that may require additional time to mature. 46 The political declaration to be agreed to there can aspire realistically to a few "easy wins." For example, new tools such as the peacebuilding audit for the UN Peacebuilding Commission and a new Green Climate Technology Licensing Facility within the Green Climate Fund could give the UN 75 Summit sufficient momentum to help

garner political support down the road for bolder initiatives like the UN Parliamentary Network or expansion of the Security Council.

In addition, while civil society groups and partner governments should encourage a range of ideas on the future of global governance, the best ideas for consideration should be rooted in rigorous analysis, expert peer review, and publicly defendable consultations. The feasibility and impact of reform measures and objectives should be carefully evaluated through a combination of qualitative and quantitative monitoring tools, using multiple, independent sources of data and analysis.

CONCLUSION

The concept of just security offers a rebalancing of competing visions for tackling current global challenges by underscoring both the interplay and the frequent indivisibility of justice and security concerns. Comprehending the complementarities of the justice and security dimensions inherent in issues of global governance is fundamental as a first step toward formulating and then realizing adequate global policy responses. In

that sense, just security is a key ingredient to any effective antidote to the current anti-multilateralist turn.

Leaders presently lack the institutions, tools, and networks to effectively manage many transnational problems and crises. Publics lack the sense of identity or connectedness, beyond the national level, needed for consistent support of effective global action. A world still organized primarily around the basic principles of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, with institutions designed against the backdrop of the world of 1945, is under-governed and

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Peace of Westphalia, with institutions designed against the backdrop of the world of 1945, is under-governed and ill-equipped to deliver essential global public goods in the twenty-first century.

ill-equipped to deliver essential global public goods in the twenty-first century. But a just security framework, applied within the constraints of the present international system, can be used to design and implement imaginative proposals for renovating and reinvigorating that system.

One hundred years ago, when the "war to end all wars" drew mercifully to a close, the leaders of nations inaugurated the first universal attempt at international organization. The League of Nations was soon hobbled by

diverging national interests and then ended by the cataclysmic horrors of the Second World War. The United Nations was born from the ashes of that war. Fast approaching its seventy-fifth anniversary in 2020, having weathered both the Cold War and countless other global shocks along the way, this second-generation world organization faces many obstacles to keeping pace with twenty-first century trends and struggles. To set the United Nations on a viable course from 2020 towards its centenary in 2045 and beyond, governments and the UN's leadership must lead in transforming it by harnessing and uniting the ideas, power, and capabilities not only of its member states, but of the new, non-traditional actors in global governance. f

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