Notions of Security

Workstream Report (17 February 2021)
The **Design & Public Policy Studio (DPPS)** develops approaches necessary for professionals of all disciplines to flourish in environments where uncertainty and complexity challenge the status quo. For the DPPS on Notions of Security, we assembled a team of nine experts working across domains of design and security.

Design studios provide a platform for open, guided inquiry into problems for which there are no simple or totalizing answers. Studios are a venue for research, experimentation, insight generation, and creativity; they accommodate the mess that comes with navigating uncertainty and embracing complexity.

Our starting point: "*The goal of our studio is to come to grips with the challenges and dilemmas facing anyone interested in human safety and security in a world with or without nuclear weapons. We are trying to enrich our shared understanding of what the future of security can and should be.*"

The studio met twice in **December 2020** and twice in **February 2021**, with an extended independent work period over the holidays.
Session 2 Dates 04 & 05 February 2021

Facilitators Tom Weis, Irina Wang, Tim Maly, Justin Cook, Morgan Matthews

Participants Shaz Bhola, Isabelle Williams, Leo Blanken, Laicie Heeley, Sylvia Mishra, August Cole, Danielle McLaughlin, Pupul Bisht, Simone Williams

Guest Critics Rives Matson, Megan Valanidas, Victoria Phillips, Scott Sell, Khipra Nichols, Emily Rothschild, Maria Alexia Platia, Rebecca Nolan, Toban Shadlyn, Harry Jones, Charlie Cannon
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Institutional

We build institutions to enshrine principles, coordinate actors, and ensure that decisions endure forward through time. What kinds of institutions would we need to create for a better security architecture? What principles should they enshrine? What powers should they hold? Can current institutions be retrofit or do we need to establish something new?

Emergent / Local

This is the “bottom up” lens. We are interested in new ways of doing security that don’t emerge from elites or institutions but instead from approaches assembled by people on the ground. How might structures that work to secure communities replicate or scale? Can they function in a way that makes the world more secure?

Private Sector / For Profit

The current regime of security is expensive to maintain, which means that it is profitable for those that service it. At the same time, business — especially global business — benefits tremendously from stability. War destroys financial empires. What role does private/for profit activity play in a better security architecture? Which parts of the private sector should we be looking to for leadership in this realm?

New Narratives & Incentives

Stories about what matters, what’s true, and what’s worth doing, shape decision making, large and small. What stories and what incentives will bend actors towards a better security architecture? What kind of roles should incentives and stories play? What stories or incentives do we need to give up?
Institutions for Collective Action

How can security truly “go global”? Is there a realistic vision that prioritizes cooperation and shared transnational responsibilities in service of collective security?

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<th>Truly Global Security</th>
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<td>Shaz Bhola</td>
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<td>Isabelle Williams</td>
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**Problem**

A fundamental reimagination of the security architecture is necessary if we intend to exist in a safer and livable world. The language of security creates an us-vs-them narrative, and institutional problem-solving tools are far too reactive and inflexible. Power in the global security space is held very tightly by very few, and an overhaul of the architecture would require the participation of the very folks that benefit from an unjust system skewed in their favor.

**Vision**

We need institutions that seek to prevent global threats to humanity through *collective response* to an independent set of existential threats that require *collective action* (such as climate change, pandemics, WMD proliferation).

These institutions must galvanize or reflect states’ shift from defining security as *protection, defense, and preservation of my nation* to the notion that *all states are insecure until they can achieve transnational cooperation*. Cooperation becomes about a state’s self-interest and not self-sacrifice.

Changing norms is difficult at the national level. But an institution steeped in a power-sharing, prototyping, and partnership mindset can shift security norms by influencing language, culture, and process from the ground up.
**What are the characteristics of such an institution?**

While there is a lot of thinking around the challenges facing existing organizations, there is no clear vision of what should replace them.

**Supply and demand is key.** To have an effective security institution, there needs to be a demand for its services. The incentive for political and social actors to participate is still self-interest: solving and securing the issues that affect me and require cooperation from my neighbors. In this sense, political will is less of an issue as long as there is demand for solutions that mitigate different insecurities.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative partnerships</th>
<th>solutions-oriented approaches</th>
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<tr>
<td>assess the knowledge &amp; needs of the communities of focus</td>
<td>invite a diverse hub of expertise to the global table</td>
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<tr>
<td>CREATING DEMAND FOR solutions that mitigate insecurities</td>
<td>cultivate multi-sector partnerships with international organizations and NGOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>prototype new approaches to problem-solving</td>
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▷ **While the UN will play an important role, it cannot be adjusted to take on this new role as it is a product of a different time and different way of thinking.**

▷ **No single institute will likely be able to solve all our problems. Multi-sector partnerships will be critical.**

▷ **It requires knowledge of the security needs at various levels, from nation-state down to communities.**

▷ **It will need to serve as a diverse hub of expertise to find solutions to security challenges, moving away from what serves singular national interests.**
Articulating philosophical shifts precedes answering logistical/operational questions. The nine shifts below represent the core values of an institution that believes in global cooperation to solve global threats.

**PARTICIPATION**
Partnership between public, private and civil society stakeholders. Regional/local/communities, different sectors. Engages states only as and when necessary. Works closely with existing institutions (not undermines)

**TRUST**
Trust of participants to adequately protect any sensitive information and work for the best for all

**LEGITIMACY**
Buy-in and support across participants, partners, and publics reaching into community level

**TRANSPARENCY**
Open dialogue, information-sharing and burden-sharing between all stakeholders

**GLOBAL GOVERNANCE**
Favours flexibility over rigidity and gives rise to new initiatives, ideas, and voluntary (legally binding?) measures to rules

**DECISION-MAKING**
Fair collective decision making simplified when possible to only involve specific participants

⇒ There’s a human-centered focus on participation, diverse partnerships, and the need for trust and legitimacy across a whole range of stakeholders.

⇒ On the process side, there is a need for fair decision-making, strong transparency, and how the governance of the institution would work.

**POWER CULTURE**
The architecture of this institution should be steeped in these shifts—not simply representation but thoughtful participation.

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<th>power hoarding</th>
<th>power sharing</th>
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<td>independence</td>
<td>interdependence</td>
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<td>equality</td>
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**SECURITY VERNACULAR**
Inclusive language reduces harmful speech and violent action by establishing unity.

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<tr>
<th>us/them</th>
<th>we</th>
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<td>national interest</td>
<td>collective benefit</td>
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<tr>
<td>national defense</td>
<td>cooperative action</td>
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**DIPLOMACY APPROACH**
Problem-solving requires contextual thinking; the problem-solving approach must be flexible and iterative.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>escalation</th>
<th>exploration</th>
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<tr>
<td>short-term reactive</td>
<td>long-term possibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>finite solutions</td>
<td>prototyping mindset</td>
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polarity management
A FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

Diplomacy is an ongoing process—not one of final solutions. In order to offer an alternative to short-term, reactive decision making processes, we’re invoking Polarity Mapping, a framework developed by Barry Johnson that examines the relationship between two seemingly opposing approaches, or interdependent pairs, and guides the two polarities toward initial steps in service of a shared ambitions.

The process has been popularized for organization management (firm mergers, for example, who may face competing interests), but can be applied personally and diplomatically. Polarity mapping shifts win/lose thinking to both/and thinking in which all parties thrive.

↳ Polarity mapping can be a useful decision-making tool, taking positions that are seemingly opposed and finding simple next steps that benefit all parties.

↳ It’s a well-studied and well-practiced model used for org development, but can be applied more broadly in the security world.

Next big questions to ask...

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DECISION MAKING</th>
<th>LEGITIMACY</th>
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<tr>
<td>How would collective decision be made - consensus, veto, etc. Are there any successful models?</td>
<td>How ensure legitimacy of decisions - do sufficient countries need to participate?</td>
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<tr>
<th>FUNDING</th>
<th>ENFORCEMENT</th>
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<td>How would any new institution be funded? Key challenge that those countries providing more funding feel more ownership which puts richer nations at an advantage.</td>
<td>We can create a prototype of an ideal institution but we can’t always assume ideal behavior of states. Would participants respect and uphold the rules they agree to? Would any form of enforcement be necessary? If so, what would that look like?</td>
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<tr>
<th>FLEXIBILITY</th>
<th>LEGALLY BINDING ACTIONS</th>
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<tr>
<td>How does a global institution not get weighed down in bureaucracy but maintain flexibility to keep pace with growth in the complexity and dangers of global challenges?</td>
<td>Can some problems only be solved through the hard power of legislation? Would states / participants be willing to be legally bound to global rules?</td>
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Discussion & Insight

→ Practical next steps are innumerable! Interviews would help to understand the struggles within existing institutions so that we’re not starting from scratch. There’s no clear phased approach because the goal is for the process to encourage flexible evolution.

→ Alternatively, prototype an institution and see what happens. If you create a group that demonstrates these principles, it can live as an alternative model even if it isn’t able to interface fluently with the existing system.

→ Consider how to introduce effective prototyping at the scale of a large risk-averse institution that isn’t set up to consider “failure” productive. It may not involve using the phrase “prototype” at all; fundamentally it’s the idea of starting small, testing often, and gaining momentum. Make it fun, fail on the small scale, and learn quickly. Low-stakes ways to test things out can trigger valuable insights and expand appetite internally.

→ For a truly global institution, the differences between world cultures and languages will affect the way “prototyping” is understood, adopted, resisted, and implemented. This should be carefully considered, built into the institutional flexibility and adaptability early on.

→ The age/lifetime of institutions is not necessarily a metric for how authoritative and stable they seem now. For instance, the UN is younger than RISD — but doesn’t have the sensitivity to culture shift and was established with a certain operating model that has been slow to change.
Rebalancing US Grand Strategy

How might we begin to incentivize the US away from the driving factors of the military-industrial-congressional complex, wherein money flows from industry to congress via campaigns and then through congress and government back into industry around the building of weaponry?

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**Presentation Title**
Getting Our House in Order

**Framework**
Private Sector / For Profit

**Team**
Leo Blanken
Laicie Heeley
Sylvia Mishra
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>We need to upend the inclination to tie American exceptionalism to military strength. US foreign policy and grand strategy is too heavily weighted towards the valuation of military power.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>A balanced grand strategy will be better equipped to address the global security issues relevant today, constituting a framework of resilience against health crises, climate shocks, and cyberattacks. Shifting the country's incentives away from the military-industrial complex will require a redirection of money, a strategic transition of jobs, and a compelling new narrative about what characterizes America as a successful global leader.</td>
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US grand strategy, historically

“Grand strategy” is the synchronization of all elements of a nation state’s power to pursue some national interest. This includes both “hard” components of a state’s power (e.g. military policy, economic policy) and “soft” components (e.g. diplomacy, narrative, construction). A healthily functioning grand strategy should balance all aspects of national power for some strategic purpose. A state leader uses it to navigate through the sometimes dangerous and always uncertain waters of the international anarchic system.

US grand strategy is imbalanced; it is too heavily weighted towards large expensive military platforms, most of which are legacy platforms left over from the Cold War. During the Cold War, the US did something it had never done before in its history — it maintained a large peacetime military, a garrison state. But even as the Cold War ended, the US maintained its military instead of downsizing it in proportion to the reduction of threat.

⇒ The 1990s phrase “full spectrum dominance” reflected the belief that the US needed to maintain global power projection and capacity to dominate in all arenas of military competition.

⇒ At “The Last Supper,” the secretary of defense recommended the huge number of US defense firms consolidate in order to survive after the Cold War; we now have five massive firms that exert outsized control over the size and shape of the US military.
In the near future, the world will continue to experience disruptive events such as health crises, climate shocks, cyberattacks, and economic competition. These sources of threat are not battles that need to be won but challenges that need to be weathered. Incorporating a framework of resilience would ensure that the US addresses the forces that undermine the country from within.

Internal resilience can include a reassessment of US geoeconomic strategy to focus on multiplying job security and financial resiliency, improving the education system, addressing women’s STEM education, ensuring smooth functioning of global supply chains, lowering healthcare costs, and taking a lead on issues like climate change.
AWAY FROM:
The military-industrial-congressional complex

1. Money has to be redirected in some way. Jobs supporting the defense industrial base must be strategically transitioned. These two are closely related; we can invest the money in something we need more than military weaponry (such as ventilators or green jobs related to future threats) while addressing the jobs-related grievances that come with systems change.

2. We need to change the competition narrative about what makes the US exceptional. The US, especially the government, doesn’t have a robust machine for telling that story nowadays — most of that infrastructure has atrophied while our weapon systems have grown.

↓ We haven’t always been this way; before WWII, we were very actively telling a different story about who we are and what we hold dear.
Discussion & Insight

→ Instead of “winning” a “competition” we can frame the narrative around leading. There are a variety of ways to frame it that would have better 2nd-/3rd-order effects, leading globally in a way that’s winning for everyone.

→ Look at how other countries construct their national pride without being the world’s #1 military power.

→ Potential to piggyback on the American competitiveness movement in national security — reinforcing resilience through education, infrastructure, and tech investment. 20th century is Guns vs Butter, so 21st is....

→ Nation-wide narrative requires constructing an identity that is understandable to everyone. How do we visualize and experience these new frameworks and stories? Who is telling the stories? Where and how they are shared? What are stories that are not top-down? For instance, what would the factory workers rather be making?

→ In A Splendid Exchange, William Bernstein suggests that humans face a decision when they encounter other groups to raid, protect, or trade. Trade has often won out. But escaping zero-sum bias is a hard thing for humans to do.

→ There is low-hanging fruit within progressivist agendas (environment, education), and we need to find the equivalent for conservatives (veteran support?) to make this a bipartisan effort. It could start with common ground like highway systems, land-grant universities. Libertarians in the foreign policy sphere are arguing for restraint! The shrinking center is driven by jobs in their district and money in their pockets — keeping them happy solves half the problem.

→ There are ways to “keep the base warm” and shift towards dual-use capabilities while retaining jobs/expertise and building things that have more positive externalities for the economy and society.

→ Shifting that narrative and redistributing money doesn’t mean throwing everything out. It’s 750 billion dollars. Shaving off just a small portion of that would make massive differences in other sectors.
New Language for Agency & Proximity

Who gets a seat at the table? How can we give individuals and communities more meaningful ability to contribute to their own security?

**Presentation Title**  Language as Agency & Proximity

**Framework**  Emergent / Local

**Team**  Danielle McLaughlin
Simone Williams
**Problem**

Language has been used to ringfence most people out of the discussion around nuclear threat, thereby restricting proximity to the issue and agency to act. The language of “the nuclear priesthood” sustains a core elite group that makes decisions about weapons that are pointing at us all.

**Vision**

Used in the right way, language can also be a connector, providing agency and proximity for individuals to be meaningfully involved and included; shared language is a building block of any grassroots effort. In order to have a truly democratic discussion around nuclear security issues, we need to redesign the language that we are using.
Community action

Through a bottom-up lens, there are many language-use precedents in multifaceted campaigns, use of social media, grassroots organizations, and global institutions with local engines.

Community action often occurs because, people feel proximity to the issue or the object of their efforts: clean highways, safe schools. But not all of these communities were geographic; proximity around issues can transcend geography, particularly, given the modalities of the internet and social media.

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<tr>
<th>GRASSROOTS ORGS</th>
<th>USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA</th>
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<td>Black Lives Matter</td>
<td>Tik Tok</td>
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<td>MADD</td>
<td>Community FB groups</td>
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<td>Girl Scouts</td>
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<td>Everytown for Gun Safety</td>
<td>GoFundMe</td>
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<td>PTAs in schools</td>
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<td>Adopt-a-Highway</td>
<td>Ideological boycotts</td>
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<th>MULTIFACETED CAMPAIGNS</th>
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<td>Local Press</td>
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<td>Civil Rights</td>
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<td>Marriage equality</td>
<td>Indian microfinance</td>
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<td>Voter access</td>
<td>“Chonaikai”</td>
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The power of language

Language has embedded bias and the power to exclude.

Language has been used across history as a gatekeeper, restricting access to only the elites. Alchemy. South African official vs mother language. First year of law school. Defense Department titles.

Language has the power to broaden the tent and foster access, agency, and proximity. Reframing “same sex marriage” as “marriage equality” created proximity in people that might not have otherwise related to the issue otherwise. It also created the legal hook because of the requirements and guarantees of equality and the 5th and 14th Amendment.

Language can be made more powerful with slogans and simplification. Conservatives in America have found great success in weaponizing slogans, utilizing tools from propaganda where a simple half truth is more digestible than the complex truth. Slogans like “small government” and “individual liberty” ignore the complexities of the commons in healthcare and the environment and the truth that in fact sometimes larger government makes us more free. The power of a slogan like “stop the steal” belies the complexity of the truth behind the general election. These words created enough agency and proximity that they actually got people to act.
Language is measurable and trackable.
We have an ecosystem at the ready.

There is some work already in the nuclear space regarding language, but there is still white space where work can be done. Are we trying to design language as a rebuttal to the existing vernacular, or imagining a completely new language? The project is yet to be defined, but there is a good “business case.” We already know it’s possible to track language as a metric, and the change over time is something that can be shown to funders. Within the non-proliferation and nuclear threat reduction field, we have activists, organizations, governments, and NGOs ready to spread a new vernacular.

Consider “strategic stability” – what is it? I don’t know. If I don’t understand it, how do I act on it? How do I feel about it? Do I have any power over it? Now consider Black Lives Matter. You see it. You know what it means. It is indelible.
Discussion & Insight

→ A CEO needs to understand it, and their mother does too. One way to write relatably with expertise is to do it through character.

→ Journalistic tools are inadequate for current systemic crises; it’s easy to say things like “stop the steal” and it takes an enormous amount of skill and effort to apply those techniques to nuanced positions.

→ Interesting subversion opportunity — harnessing the language used against your position while advancing your own. FOX has created a cottage industry around this.

→ “Defund the police” is a terrible slogan because it means something different to everyone, so it ends up dividing and confusing rather than unifying and rallying.

→ It’s more complicated than changing nuclear vocabulary to plainspeak, or at least it will depend on the context. Often it’s necessary to code-switch depending on the audience; sometimes you use jargon and complicated language to win over a certain group with credibility. When engaging in change-making, you do have to be strategic. It’s a fine balance playing that game.

→ Consider expanding language beyond words; design is language itself, including visual language and non-verbal communication. But it’s worth noting that verbal language is particularly democratic and human in nature.

→ Language can also be ontology, carving up the world into concepts. The military has a habit of creating doctrinal language that actually creates the world rather than reflecting reality. Jeffrey Michaels’ The Discourse Trap in US Military details how the phrase “global war on terror” created by Rumsfeld took on an ontological life of its own. He regretted it because it started restraining him as well.
Revealing Root Myths & Fostering Cooperative Narrative

How can we create greater cooperation through narrative? What new narratives can help people regain a sense of collective consequences for their actions and their responsibility for one another beyond societal barriers?

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<th>Presentation Title</th>
<th>Narratives of Extreme Consequence: What are alternative myths around security?</th>
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<td>Framework</td>
<td>New Narratives &amp; Incentives</td>
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<td>August Cole</td>
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Problem

Ideas of deterrence have been foundational in the nuclear community and reinforced through popular culture, showing stakes of what the world was playing for at the peak of the Cold War. We now need to reconsider this framework for the era of the next 25 years where there will be new weapons and capabilities, some of which will have dual-use and be potentially catastrophic in the way that we considered nuclear weapons to be in the 20th century.

This is happening at a time where our human experience and perception of reality is shifting, augmented by everything from the phones in our pockets to the way governments and institutions shape our environment with collected data.

Vision

We need to understand the current threat landscape with a new category/family of threats: Weapons of Extreme Consequence (WEC). Out of this new understanding, we can create aspirational participatory deterrence narratives for WEC in 2045, when data is more determinative than experience in shaping individual and collective reality.

We need to invest in the creation and facilitation of spaces where radical imagination becomes feasible, possible, but also attractive — where people can come together and engage in creating new root myths around what the future can and should be.
Peeling back the layers

In what ways does the problem of nuclear insecurity become known or visible and identified in a world, at a surface level? It’s the image of the leader with a finger on the mythical button.

Once you start peeling the layers back (the causal layered analysis framework is often used in foresight), you find what lies below the visible surface of this insecurity.

What are the systems that sustain this situation? One is the military-industrial complex, of course...

What culture supports these policy assumptions? One that sees the nation-state as the protagonist of the story of the world. This is a culture that believes wartime leads to peacetime.

This is all guided by root myth: the clash of civilizations. If we focus at the systemic level only — without questioning worldview or myth level — we’re feeding the beast that created the problem in the first place. The layers that we focus on becomes a vignette that shapes our thinking.
Emergent myths taking root

What is a new emerging myth that can be mobilized? It’s no longer the leader with the finger on the button, it’s anyone with a smart device. The nation state is not the protagonist anymore, but rather it’s the individual within bubbles and ideological silos, supported by the systemic layer.

If that’s the case, then traditional definitions of security don’t hold up anymore. Traditionally, security is concerned with international factors but increasingly the threat is emerging from domestic factors. And if our entire security solution hinges on diplomatic dialogue, what happens in a future where people aren’t talking to each other?

All this is happening at a time of great upheaval. There will be moments of great progress and horrible change. We are now at billions of fingers on billions of buttons. This is a different kind of proliferation and lack of control. AI is optimizing for bubbles, which makes it part of the problem and potentially part of the solution, while groups exploit it as we speak. People are paying to insulate their intellectual experiences.
Planet as protagonist

So what happens if we replace the techno-utopian clash of civilizations with a story of transformative change? The nation-state is no longer the protagonist of the story; the planet is. When the narrative is planet-centric, then it calls for systems and policies that focus on regeneration, justice, and restoration. The new language can then begin to emerge.

A lot of this is “slow work,” but the first step is making visible the subjectivity of the existing dominant myth. All of us take that dominant story for granted because we’ve not seen a world beyond it. So first you make it subjective; you accept that it is not neutral. It privileges certain futures and therefore marginalizes others. Once it’s visible, you can start challenging those assumptions.

The leader(s) with a finger on the button

- What systems sustain this situation?
  - Military-industrial complex
  - Nation states with individual head-of-security etc
  - Multilateralism as the primary mechanism

- What culture supports these policy assumptions?
  - Nation-state as protagonist
  - War leads to peace, Good vs Evil
  - Ethnocentric

- What guiding myths, deep stories shape this worldview?
  - TECHNO-UTOPIA
    - Clash of the Civilizations

New dimensions/ vocab to define security

- What systemic enablers are needed?
  - New policies that create systems and processes of regeneration, justice and restoration

- What culture emerges from this new story/myth?
  - Planet centric

- What might be a new root myth?
  - TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE
    - United humanity coming together to care for the planet

Possible Futures

Narratives of Extreme Consequence | Birt & Coie | Security Studio February 2021
Discussion & Insight

When creating a sense of collective consequence, how do you deal with different countries at different scales of technological innovation? Domestic concerns are also different everywhere, many context-dependent. What is the starting point on that spectrum of shared vulnerability? The countries that have most to gain also have the most to lose.

One way to work towards future myths is imagining future outcomes (through stories or artefacts that create proximity), then constructing the bridge of assumptions and intellectual apparati that would get you to that future with actionable steps.

Mainstream scholars tend to exaggerate the influence of canonical academic sources and ignore the potentially great influence of popular culture on mass and elite audiences.

Is there a deeper question about the waxing and waning of deep myths? How does one myth win out over the other? If we are to beat the clash of civilizations myth, we need to know why it won out. It might go back to hunter-gatherer roots. Competition is a necessary part of survival, creating a binary where there is only one winner. Tribal cohesion relies on us-versus-them. The nation-state idea is the same thing, translated and scaled in modern society. That myth is no longer feasible, and we’re bumping against the limits of our planet.

The appetite for plurality is different from community to community. At the surface level, it feels like all ways of living and religions are talking about universal brotherhood and stewardship and so on, but it plays out differently in reality — even in different sects. There’s tons of variety in “walking the talk” beyond a values level.

Consider the counterfactual: that the Westphalian system is working well. With 7.5 billion people on the planet and tons of latent destructive capability, the vast majority of people are at peace most of the time and war is relatively rare. But for whom is that system working well? Considering security beyond nuclear, there is a lot of violence happening on a day-to-day basis, and changing the root myth is also about that tension. Do we keep striving for something more inclusive, something gentler on the planet? You must also consider how quickly that stasis can change. The mechanisms to take us out of that stasis are proliferating. The people willing to destabilize the current system (even ones benefiting from the system) speaks to a stasis we can’t count on.

Can we look at the way those myths trickle into our daily lives, not just the wider implications for policymaking? What would it look like to model those changes on a personal basis? We can begin to manifest and relate to these concepts in a character- and experience-driven way.
Next Steps

Artefact Design

The topics and insights of these four security research projects will be socialized with a group of designers at Altimeter Design Group. Out of this research, designers will create charismatic artefacts that reflect, build upon, and manifest these alternative notions of security.

Intervention Insight

The research frameworks provided to each research team are directly related to the stated outcomes of Horizon 2045. In applying their varied expertise and personal interests to the given frameworks, the studio participants have generated valuable ideas about where systems-shifting leverage might be applied — and how. This work can be translated into interventions that will eventually constitute the H2045 portfolio.
Appendix

Insights from Security Studio Session 1
Session 1 Dates  16 & 18 December 2020

Facilitators    Tom Weis, Tim Maly, Ollie Rosario, Irina Wang, Justin Cook
Participants   Leo Blanken, Pupul Bisht, Shaz Bholia, Sylvia Mishra, Simone Williams, Laicie Heeley, Danielle McLaughlin, Isabelle Williams, August Cole, Morgan Matthews
Security at the Local Level

What must you know about your local community?
What can remain tacit? What can be made explicit?
What is inherited knowledge? What is publicly declared?

Security at the local level requires...
...knowledge concerning “the basics” and bare minimum for survival.

Weather, food and housing access, jobs and income, crime and environmental safety, utilities, police. Maslow’s hierarchy.

...knowledge inherited from family and cultural tradition.

Knowledge tied to native community and home learned “through osmosis.” Can show up as superstition, intuition, indigenous ways of knowing.

...knowledge gleaned from spatial observation and navigation.

Exploring and moving through new spaces. Knowing implied boundaries, noting signage and landmarks. “Can I walk or drive there?” Participating in a physical neighborhood (churches, restaurants, schools, cafes, laundromats). “What’s the schedule of daily life like?” Increase in spatial knowledge leads to confident navigation without map/direction. Comfort tied to familiar neighborhoods.

...knowledge constructed upon social experience and relationships.

Getting to know and trust the neighbors, making friends, security net of support. Local review apps, Yelp, anonymous Citizen app, word of mouth: “Surf spots!” “Where can I get good coffee and when’s the earliest I can get it?” Paying attention to things that are “in the air” and “over time.”

...knowledge from a mix of local and national news.

Urban areas tend to follow and value international/national news instead of local news; transient demographics have less sense of identity tied to regional. “Not my local.” Ways to access and process news changes with technology, social media, newsletters, TV channels, podcasts...

← Lacking these things is most easily considered a source of “insecurity.” Consider an inverted triangle representing non-western ways of knowing / prioritizing.

← Sometimes “competes” with science and shared/acceptable truth claims Tends to apply less or have less influence and critical mass in metropolitan city centers.

← Shared language is a crucial anchor and grants access to spatial and social indicators. Design of the built environment may limit physical access. Sense of safety and belonging can shift when moving between demographic clusters.

← Attention is considered a commodity and can be directed and shaped in different ways by tech. Can be a powerful feedback loop between social knowledge and spatial knowledge, widening gaps in worldview.

← Partisanship and polarization become tied to media sources/genres, creating separate spheres of fact and truth. Depth and direction of reporting shaped by trends outside of community. National politics can trickle down as tribal dynamics, bypassing face-to-face forging of trust.
Security at the Personal Level

Take a photo of what security looks like in your space. How is security operative in this image? Is “security” the best term to describe this operation?
Stockpiles, tools, food
agency
options
independence
self-reliance
competence
weatherproof
preparation

Weapons, guns
deterrence
competence

“personal security, given failure of societal security”
Family, friends, neighbours, pets, social forums

emotional security
support system
psychological safety
connectivity
shared experience
common interests
mutual care
checking in
rootedness
part of a greater whole
social ties
gestures of trust
quality of life
transactional trust
geographic proximity
blood ties & identity

“someone to go to”
“people are looking out for you”
“shared responsibility”
“banding together”
Location, plants, eco resources

healthy environment
safe havens
reliable natural resources
renewable stocks
geographic isolation

“trusting your surroundings”

“more worried about wildlife than people”

Mouse trap, waste disposal

zero-sum
offensive security
hygiene

maintenance of comfort
downstream effects
contamination
Locks, signage, alerts, cameras, sanitation,

ward against intruders
hackers, bots, privacy
protect against surveillance
deter by surveilling others
security theatre / perception
trade-offs at scale
imposing accountability

“layers of deterrence and thresholds”
“functionality bundled with insecurity”

Hard drives, cloud storage

loss prevention
insurance
backup
information ownership
personal data
memories, archives

“peace of mind”
“responsibility placed with somebody else”
**Books, school, citizen science**

- Knowledge
- Learned skills
- Historical trends
- Forecasting
- Community data

“Navigating the future according to the past”

“Less trade-offs made with incomplete understanding”

**Credit cards, retirement fund**

- Fiscal independence
- Long-term planning
- Predictability
- Stability
- Continuity

“Creating value, compounding value”

“Proactive investment for expected returns”

**Passport, pin device, vehicle**

- Mobility across borders
- Verification
- Approval
- Allowance
- Agency

“Accessibility and ease of travel or escape”

“International options”
Where and in what situations do we begin to defer our security to other actors?

Is it possible to expand from a local understanding to a broader global understanding?

What should be questioned when our security lies in other hands? What are the options?
**Public Health**

healthcare providers, vaccine development and distribution, sanitation of public transit, contact tracing infrastructure, trusting others to social distance and wear masks, doctors and scientists...

**Environmental**

material supply chain, pollution, wildfires, water filtration, waste disposal and management, food production and agriculture, secondhand smoke, plowed streets, groomed trails, taxpayer roads, engineering of the built environment, driverless cars, mass transit, automated speed and traffic cameras, nature conservations, proximity to military bases...

**Regulations**

airplanes, amusement parks, contracts, laws governing banks, FDA, regulation of the commons, market failure, watchdogs, managing negative externalities, product safety, background checks...

**Global Economy**

FDIC, IMF, banks, economies of scale, complementaries, global supply chain...

**Social Structures**

Mutual aid networks, community leaders’ agendas, letting someone else drive, experts, word of mouth, retirement homes, daycare centers, soup kitchens...

**Mass Information**

Libraries, Wikipedia, shared knowledge archives, culturally specific knowledge, traditions, journalists in the 4th estate, school curricula, school ratings, journalistic standards, access/censorship...

**Technology**

R&D funding, wifi and connectivity, online security, reliable backups of data, password apps, Uber, tech companies keeping data secure, encryption in personal comms, facial recognition software...

**National Security**

Congress, Senate, Executive branches, governmental structures, homeland security, terrorism prevention and response, military sovereignty, the state’s monopoly on use of force, travelling through TSA and border agents, electoral process, National police forces (Gendarmerie, Carabinieri), Title 10, USCIS access to personal information, immigration process enabling stability...

**Private Security**

Mall cops, site protection, passive robotic ground and aerial security forces, community policing against theft of property, safeguards against school shootings...

**Mechanisms (Who/what provides?)**

State allocation, collective action, political process, community coordination, purchase power...

**Distribution (Who/what gets priority?)**

Shareholders vs. stakeholders, those at the table, in order of need, who can afford, who has inherited...
Prerequisites for granting trust and relinquishing agency:

+ **Understanding motive and considering trade-offs**

  “Why should I trust recommendations that profit from my sense of security?”
  “What do they get in return?”
  “Is systemic security relevant to me?”

+ **Temporary circumstances and defining your own terms**

  “In an emergency” “What’s the weather like?”
  “Disposability as a strength/imperviousness”
  “Reduce what you can lose; raise risk tolerance”

+ **If longterm, how permanent or reversible?**

  “Can I opt in and out? If so, what are the means?”
  “What are the feedback loops like?”
  “If I don’t agree with the provider’s norms and tactics, do I have power to get rid of them?”

+ **Acknowledge systems complexity and limits to personal expertise**

  “What qualifies someone to address certain needs?”
  “When does the reliance on others’ labor represent a redirection of insecurity?”

+ **Learned/earned social trust**

  “What signals do I need in order to feel comfortable reaching out for help?”
  “When do you trust something informal vs. formal?”
  “When I’m comfortable, I defer my security.”

↪ **Trust vs. Need / Taught vs. Forced**

↪ **Tension between poles of insecurity and security**

↪ **Context-driven models and malleability of threat perception**

↩ **In order to decide whether something is negotiable or non-negotiable, you have to know what the stakes are and how they compare to the thresholds in question. At some point, you assume that enough knowledge provides sound judgment.**

↩ **Shifting priorities and bottom lines allows us to adjust the pros/cons of a trade-off. Could shape quality of life and personal choices around risk mitigation.**

↩ **Even if there is a possibility of backing out or retroactively amending trade-offs, the cost may cancel out the reversibility.**

↩ **Knowing big systems are beyond individual negotiation makes one more likely to trust experts with domain-specific knowledge and a birds-eye view to update frameworks, coordinate interoperability, and reduce unintended downstream consequences of an action.**

↩ **Consciously/voluntarily letting guard down. Applies to informal relationships but can trickle up to orgs, brands, figureheads.**
Security at the Global Scale

What are the major categories of information shaping security at a macro/global scale?

Simplify to statements of 7 words or less.
Group 1

- Consequences of technology accelerating faster than institutions
- Epistemic crisis is undermining democratic institutions
- Systemic power shift cycle fuels hegemonic instability
- Changing social structures and growing inequality
- Global order is in flux
- Local, national, and global social fabric unravelling
- Climate change impacting social structures

Group 2

- Widening gap between environmental realities & decision-making
- Information above threshold of ability to process
- Everyone wants their truth; who has it?
- Urgent knowledge that institutions can’t integrate
- Injustice/asymmetry between system agents and actants
- Stories and narratives shape understood/actual security
- Leveraging intimate, local knowledge for global impact
- Current state of the climate and ecosystem

Common themes

Truth in flux with accelerating tech, dire polarization, and epistemic crisis

“Fear that things are changing out of control”

Change is happening faster and in more complex ways than we can respond

“Lacking objective truths and telling our own stories”

Many current ways of knowing are not sufficient for necessary responses to climate and inequality

“Sensemaking tools are outdated”

Instability of institutional structures and shifts in the flow of power

“The question of whether our feelings of safety match reality of safety”

“More grassroots thinking, starting local and moving outwards”
Cooperative Societies/Species

What are examples of a cooperative society or species? How does this inform our understanding of security? Are principles evident?
Common themes

- community
- tradition
- mutual aid
- domestication
- interspecies collab
- negotiation / bargain
- keystone species
- enduring systems
- conflict resolution

“Unspoken understanding”

“Decentralized authorship, and ownership”

“More accomplished, collectively vs individually”

“Enduring systems, naturalized mechanisms”
Age of Divorce

“This is an age of divorce. Things that belong together have been taken apart. And you can’t put it all back together again. What you can do, is the only thing that you can do. You take two things that ought to be together and you put them together. Two things! Not all things.”
– Wendell Berry

Take two things that ought to be together and put them back together.
Economic structures + Planetary value

“If we had economic systems in touch with reality/systems that optimize real things of value like a clean and safe environment, biodiversity, health, human connection, kindness, etc. Our current system is optimizing the extinction of our species (and many others).”

Social contract + National security

“There are too many situations where people can accrue benefits in the short term without taking on the long term risks that they are intensifying.”

Economics + National security

“Hyper-compartmentalization of policy authorities has gravely compromised security (supply chain, critical infrastructure, intellectual property, etc).”

Individual incentives + Systemic risks

“There are too many situations where people can accrue benefits in the short term without taking on the long term risks that they are intensifying.”

“Economics + National security

“This is happening at the board/exec level with clawback policies for stock, bonuses. Yet the risk is still spread due to the market’s nature while upside is tightly held.”

“By mobilizing the reserves, it would force a much wider swath of the American public to have ‘skin in the game,’ thereby checking executive power to start wars willy-nilly.”
Empowerment of women + New social identities for men

“Economic empowerment of women ... does nothing to acknowledge the cultural/social aspects. Needs to be coupled with measures that enable men and boys to be able to explore/create new alternate social identities.”

“About mens roles at home ... the continued existence of societal shame around the idea of paternity leave, despite its unquestionable benefits for not just dad and baby, but also and perhaps primarily, mom.”

Agency + Shared experience

“Is it possible to scale up the sense of agency to the community level (or larger) to create or address shared experiences that we can feel collectively proud of?”

Design + Justice

“Systems/process design seems based on desired outcomes rather than a realistic understanding of human motivations and challenges.”

Education + Online hygiene

“Our world is becoming more connected and online and rather than assuming/inheriting how to interact online we can officially learn it.”