Statement by Paul Heinbecker,

ADM for International Security Affairs

Human Security,

Conference on Foreign Policy,

Chateau Laurier Hotel,

October 1998

Introduction

I welcome the opportunity to speak to this distinguished audience. [It is a bit daunting, though; I count nine current and former bosses among the speakers – and several more in the audience. And, with a little luck, at my advancing age, possibly one or two future bosses, too.] I also welcome sharing this platform with Casimir Yost and Kim Nossal. Professor Yost brings a wealth of experience to our discussions. Professor Nossal has written extensively on Canadian foreign policy, not least for the CIIA quarterly and the Citizen!

This Conference lets us all indulge our passion for foreign policy. A wag once said that, contrary to conventional wisdom, Canadians are very interested in foreign policy – the only problem is that it is American foreign policy that they are interested in.

[This lets Canadians enjoy super-power status vicariously – and to play Monday-morning quarterback tax-free.]

Our media seems particularly interested in U.S. foreign policy. Two nights ago, CBC did a Kosovo Special – they called on no Canadian experts – just an American I had never heard of and a long-since retired Brit, who had the grace to admit she was not well-informed on what was happening but did allow that she was worried.

We are, fundamentally, both new world, immigrant-built, democratic societies. It would be surprising if we did not see alike more often than not. But, as Yogi Berra could have said, it isn't the similarities that can really make a difference. The United States deals in power and exceptionalism – Canada in influence and commonality. The U.S. often sees the web of international institutions as an obstacle; we usually see it as an opportunity. Multilateralism is in our genetic code. [We only wish the U.N. had those black helicopters.]

As the conference theme statement aptly observes, these differences in capacity and in outlook go a long way to explaining some of the different orientations in our respective approaches to the world.

The world is a big subject, even for foreign policy wonks used to big-thinking, and so I will narrow my focus to a new theme emerging in Canadian foreign policy – Human Security. [For those of you who heard Foreign Minister Axworthy yesterday, now would be a good time to go and check out of the hotel – I will cover some of the same ground he did but in a bit more detail – and for the sake of those who stay to listen – some other ground as well. Afterwards there will be a pop quiz in which you will be asked to compare and contrast the messages!]

In Canada, we have been spending a good deal of effort in the past year or so giving some meaning and operational content to the concept of Human Security. In order to illustrate what we are doing, I will (Socrates-like) pose, and answer, a few basic questions – as they might be asked by a curious skeptic, of which I am sure there are a few present – about what this whole concept means, and why Canada is pursuing it now.

HUMAN SECURITY: WHAT IS IT?

In our view, Human Security:

a) takes individual human beings and their communities, rather than states, as its point of reference;

b) uses the safety and well-being of individuals and their communities as the measure of security;

c) recognizes that the security of the states is essential, but not sufficient, to fully ensure individual safety and well-being;

d) considers threats from both military and non-military sources (e.g., intra-state war, small arms proliferation, human rights violations, crime and drugs);

e) regards the safety and well-being of individuals as integral to achieving global peace and security; and

f) conceptually is, admittedly, a work in progress.

WHAT IS NEW ABOUT ALL THIS?

The issue of human security is not new. Nor are the threats. Victimization and impunity are as old as time. Infectious diseases are old as the plague. Civil wars are as old as the Treaty of Westphalia, at least. With Wilson's 14 Points, principle had begun to take its place beside power already nearly a century ago. Terrorism, crime and

environmental despoliation are more recent problems, but even they have been with us for more than thirty years. And those here old enough to remember the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in the Seventies will recognize in human security the content of Baskets II and III of those negotiations.

Human security is a shift in the angle of vision: a new way of seeing things and doing things. What is new is that we are trying to take a holistic approach and make holistic prescriptions to the issue of security.

The first current uses of the term appeared in the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report, authored by the late Dr. Mahbubul-Haq.

More particularily, the concept of Human Security is new in several ways.

- First: in this era of globalization, human security threats are much more evident and exigent, e.g., the reports of Christiane Amanpur of CNN had more impact on Western action in Bosnia than all the cautious advice of NATO General Staffs.
- Second: the concept established a new standard for judging the success or failure of international security policies – namely, the ability to protect people, not just safeguard states.
- Third: it considers both military and non-military threats to safety and well-being; and it points to human rights, democracy and human development as key building blocks of building security.
- Fourth: it acknowledges that civil society contributes direct to human security. NGOs are no longer simply pressure groups on government or "consciences of society" – they are effective, sometimes extraordinarily effective actors in their own right.

- Fifth: human security adds new techniques and new technologies to our repertory to achieve our goals – e.g., Internet communications, global media campaigns, and alliances between governments, NGOs, ICBL (Galihan) and INGOs (ICRC).
- Sixth: no country is immune and none is able alone to meet the challenges globalization presents.

DOES CANADA SEE HUMAN SECURITY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO STATE OR NATIONAL SECURITY?

AS FOREIGN POLICY ON THE CHEAP?

The short answer to both questions is no.

We are not arguing that states are passé; states have proved more resilient than some pundits thought. To paraphrase Robert Keohane and Joe Nye, in the most recent edition of Foreign Affairs, even in the emerging cyber world, order requires rules, rules require authority and authority is exercised on behalf of people by states. Furthermore, until such time as civilization is universal, states will remain essential to defence [inter much alia].

Nor would we be so naïve – or just plain blind – to suggest that the risk of inter-state conflict is going to disappear anytime soon – consider the situation in South Asia, or the Korean Peninsula or the South China Sea or Iraq or the Balkans or the Caucuses or Central Africa. Clearly, as is the case in the former Yugoslavia, diplomacy is most effective when backed up by military capability. That goes for Canada as much as for anyone else – but do bear in mind that coalitions of the willing – Kosovo is a case in point – do not tend to demand enormous inputs of military materiel.

In any case, the legal framework we have erected since 1945 to reduce the risk of inter-state conflict and to promote peace – the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its Protocols, the International Court of Justice, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation regime – is the bedrock of international order. And the alliances we have joined to ensure our own security – NORAD and NATO – remain the cornerstones of Canada's own defense a security policy.

What we are arguing is that this framework of treaties and institutions is necessary, but not sufficient to ensure others, and ultimately, our own security. National Security and Human Security are opposite sides of the same coin.

WHY CANADA?

WHY IS CANADA PUSHING THIS CONCEPT?

First, the human security concept is relevant to Canadians – sooner or later, direct or indirect, others' insecurity becomes our problem and, in some cases, our insecurity. Thanks in large part to having only the United States for a neighbour, Canada has always been, and continues to be, one of the most secure countries in the world- in terms of flows of goods, people, ideas and capital. That openness creates prosperity and vulnerabilities, both. Drug trafficking, organized crime, environmental pollution and terrorism are among the principal threats to Canadians' human security these days. Protection from these threats is a legitimate expectation by Canadians of their foreign policy.

To this 'negative' human security agenda has to be added a 'positive' human security agenda, which addresses the root causes of conflicts that pose indirect threats to Canadians' security, as a minimum, and direct challenges to our values as well.

Obviously, humanitarian assistance is one, very large aspect of this positive agenda. We provide as much development assistance as we feel our fiscal circumstances permit. But Human Security is more than a question of poverty alleviation. Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, to name three recent examples, are not among the poorest places on earth. Nor were conflicts there triggered by poverty – or, even, by economics. This century's greatest conflicts were between its richest people.

Reform of the international financial system is obviously important and will do more for human security than Official Development Assistance and much else. But even financial reforms are not the whole story.

Political approaches are also necessary. One such approach is to address ourselves direct to the weapons issue, to try to reduce the manufacture, spread and lethality of the weapons that do the most harm to civilians. That is the rationale for Canada's leadership in the Ottawa process to ban anti-personnel landmines.

That also explains our current interest, along with that of several other governments, in curtailing the export of military small arms and light weapons. We would like to see a ban on trade in these military weapons to non-state entities – to keep these weapons out of the hands of gangs and twelve-year-olds.

Another political dimension of the positive agenda is to try and establish new human rights standards – e.g., through the forthcoming ILO Convention on the most exploitative forms of child labor; and through the Optional Protocol the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on recruitment into armed forces. Another political approach is to increase the capacity of the security forces and peacekeepers we deploy into areas of conflict to rebuild security. That is the rationale for our emphasis on the role of civilian

police in peace operations, on better training for peacekeepers to deal with demobilization and re-integration of ex-combatants, and on mitigating the impacts of conflict on women and children.

A final aspect of the political agenda is to try to strengthen the capacity of societies to manage conflict without resorting, or resorting again, to violence, by training legislators, jurists, public servants, military officers and journalists. These are some of the goals of the Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative, which has been in operation for two years.

It is also worth bearing in mind that 'classical' Canadian security policy has not, for many years, been based on the idea of 'perimeter defense'. It has long been premised on forward-based defense and outward-oriented alliances. The same logic applies to our human security agenda, albeit in a context of other kinds of threats and other kinds of responses.

This leads me to the second reason why Canada is advancing the Human Security concept. This concept draws upon long-standing Canadian values of tolerance, democracy and respect for human rights.

A short digression on soft power versus hard power may be helpful at this point. In his widely-read and highly-regarded essay in Foreign Policy in the Fall of 1990, Joe Nye, then as now again of Harvard University, defined soft power as effectively getting other countries to want what you want. Co-optive power in contrast to command power. In Nye's analysis, ideals matter; so does success. Nye quoted the European scholar Rolf Dahrendof's observation that it is relevant that millions of people around the world would

like to live in the United States. Dahrendorf's observation is similarly true for Canada; millions of people would come here in a heartbeat if we could accommodate them.

Though we Canadians rarely allow ourselves to believe it, others admire and respect what Canadians have been able to achieve, both at home and abroad. No one believes we are perfect, least of all we self-deprecating Canadians. It is a rare Canadian, for example who is not ashamed of the way we have mishandled the interests of aboriginal Canadians for decades, even centuries.

If we cannot – and do not – claim perfection, we can legitimately claim that we have built a society that both encourages and benefits from diversity. We have embraced two languages, accommodated multiple cultures and tolerated literally uncounted religions. Even the most fundamental matter of statehood – the separatist issue in Quebec – we handle with exemplary democratic instincts – with the Supreme Court setting out fair ground rules, an accomplishment that is, I think, unprecedented. In addition, all usual Canadian real and false modesty aside, and whatever you think of the method of calculation, it is a fact that for five of the last six years, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has put Canada at the top of its human development index. It is this respect by others that underwrites our 'soft power'.

Maintaining our appeal to others is important; remaining true to ourselves is no less essential. Canadians, like Americans, are moved by humanitarian impulse, not by cold-blooded calculations of realpolitik. Principle is as important to Canadians as power – and we have more of it! [By the way, there is no truth to the rumor that, since Sweden joined the EU, Canada will take Sweden's place as the world's mother-in-law.]

Perhaps equally important, the Human Security agenda plays to our comparative advantages. If you want to promote the values of tolerance and reconciliation, it helps to be a democratic, bilingual, multicultural country. If you want to co-opt other governments to your 'norm-setting humanitarian agenda', it helps to have a solid record of commitment to multilateralism. If you want to devote the time, money and attention to promoting the human security abroad, it helps to have the money to do so and to live in a relatively secure corner of the world, next to the most benign powerful neighbor on earth.

WHERE DOES CANADA GO FROM HERE?

Canada's resources and capacity to improve human security abroad are distinctly limited. So we are currently testing out a couple of strategies. The first is to establish close working partnerships with a few other countries that share our outlook so that we can leverage our agenda. The first such partnership is the Lysoen Declaration for a Human Security Partnership, which Minister Axworthy signed with his Norwegian counterpart Knut Vollebaek in May. It is not surprising that Norway and Canada reached such an agreement. We share many of the same comparative advantages that I listed above (minus the benign neighbor) – and many of the same values.

A second strategy is to focus on some practicable goals. That's why we met in New York last month with Norway and other countries – the H8 – to begin defining an agenda on small arms, on children in armed conflict, on strengthening humanitarian law, on conflict prevention and on peace building more generally. We are confident that by mobilizing allies and, by focusing our common efforts on realizable objectives, we can make a difference and add value on these issues.

There is no doubt that the validity of a human security agenda and the effectiveness of a government-NGO coalition both gained a huge figurative shot in the arm from the success of the Ottawa process to ban anti-personnel landmines. They gained another such shot from the successful negotiations of the Treaty in Rome this summer to create an International Criminal Court. In these instances, we showed ourselves, and others, that we could achieve worthwhile goals, even where larger countries, regrettably, opposed us.

CONCLUSION

What I have been discussing, of course, is only one facet, albeit one extremely active facet, of Canadian foreign policy. There is, of course, much more to it – from promoting hemispheric-wide – or deep – free trade, to restoring the Euro-Atlantic partnership, to contributing ideas to the reform of the international financial system, to responding to the economic and social costs of the Asian and Russian meltdowns, to preserving the nuclear non-proliferation system. Canada really does have global interests. Our Human Security agenda is part and parcel of a comprehensive foreign policy that serves those interests.

The conference 'theme paper' posed the questions whether the United States remained the world's policeman and Canada the world's boy scout. I will leave it up to those of you who have sat through this conference and my presentation to make that judgment. I will acknowledge that we have put a lot of short pants and knee-sox back into Canadian foreign policy. But I will also observe that boy, and girl, scouts add a lot of value to their communities. As do policemen. Each influences its world in different ways.