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An Uncertain Trinity:

Ethics, Interests, and Human Security

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What's Up with Human Security?

- Human Security provides an attractive foreign policy mandate for "middle power" governments—yet proves far less popular for so-called major powers.
- The effort to promote human security in the arena of "high politics" on the part of the Canadian and Norwegian governments in the 1990s is well known.
- At the same time, human security, for many researchers, presents a troubling ambiguity that does not advance serious academic or theoretical debate. Yet the problem is not with "human security" per se.
- It remains unclear whether an ethical and collective policy to support human security will be the focus of most states in the future.

1994 UNDP
Human Development Report

- The concept of security has for too long been interpreted . . . as security of territory . . . or protection of national interests in foreign policy.

- It has been related to nation-states more than people . . . For many, security is protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime [or terrorism], social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards.

In 2003, the **UN Commission on Human Security** expanded this concept to include

- protection for **peoples suffering through violent conflict**,
- for **those who are on the move** whether out of migration or in refugee status,
- for those in **post-conflict situations**,
- and for protecting and **improving** conditions of **poverty, health, and knowledge**.

Doctrine of the International Community?

First, are we sure of our case? War is an imperfect instrument for righting humanitarian distress . . . Second, have we exhausted all diplomatic options?

Third, on the basis of a practical assessment of the situation, are there military operations we can sensibly and prudently undertake? Fourth, are we prepared for the long term? . . . having made a commitment we cannot simply walk away once the fight is over.

Former Czech president Václav Havel, speech to the Canadian Senate and House of Commons in Ottawa, 29 April 1999

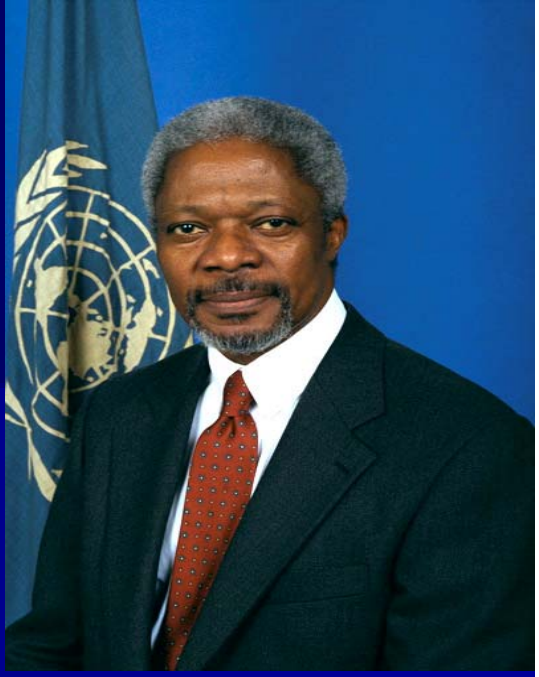
Kosovo [unlike Kuwait] has no oil fields to be coveted; no member nation in the alliance has any territorial demands; Milošević does not threaten the territorial integrity of any member of the alliance. And yet the alliance is at war. It is fighting out of concern for the fate of others. It is fighting because no decent person can stand by and watch the systematic, state-directed murder of other people. It cannot tolerate such a thing. It cannot fail to provide assistance if it is within its power to do so. . . . This war places human rights above the rights of state.

Criteria for Intervention

1. Intervention means *more* than the use of force. Indeed, one of the primary lessons of recent military intervention is that preemptive action could have dealt more effectively and at less severe levels of impact through the simple practice of preventive diplomacy. The UN, nonetheless, has often proven slow to authorize actions and itself must change. "Humanity," according to Annan, "is indivisible."
2. Traditional notions of sovereignty are *not* the sole obstacles to effective action in humanitarian crises. How states define and defend their national interests are, in some ways, as much an impediment as the traditional understanding of sovereignty. The national interest in the post–Cold War world must change to reflect an interest that moves beyond the self-interest of the state. The *collective* interest is the national interest.
3. The Security Council itself must be able to rise to the challenge of authorizing force. If the examples of Rwanda and Kosovo illustrate anything, perhaps the first contradiction ought to lie in how the UN often fails "to find common ground in upholding the principles of itsw basic charter, and [act] in defense of our common humanity."
4. When the fighting stops, the *true* international commitment must begin. The commitment to fight for peace must predominate over the intent to wage war. If the tragedy of Balkan disintegration is an accurate portrait of future interventions, there appears to be far greater willingness to force formerly warring parties to terminate conflict than an ability to orchestrate the means to achieve long-term human security ends. Further, the cost of waging war in the March–June 1999 intervention in Kosovo exceeded the total cost of rebuilding the shattered infrastructure of Bosnia. Long-term, significant societal and human assistance, it should be obvious, will cost more than the amounts invested to date in the Balkans. In the future, international norms ought to focus more on means to secure such lasting peace rather than simply on how to authorize the use of force.

Source: Kofi A. Annan, "Two Concepts of Sovereignty," *Economist* (September 18, 1999) (www.un.org/Overview/SG/kaecon.htm).

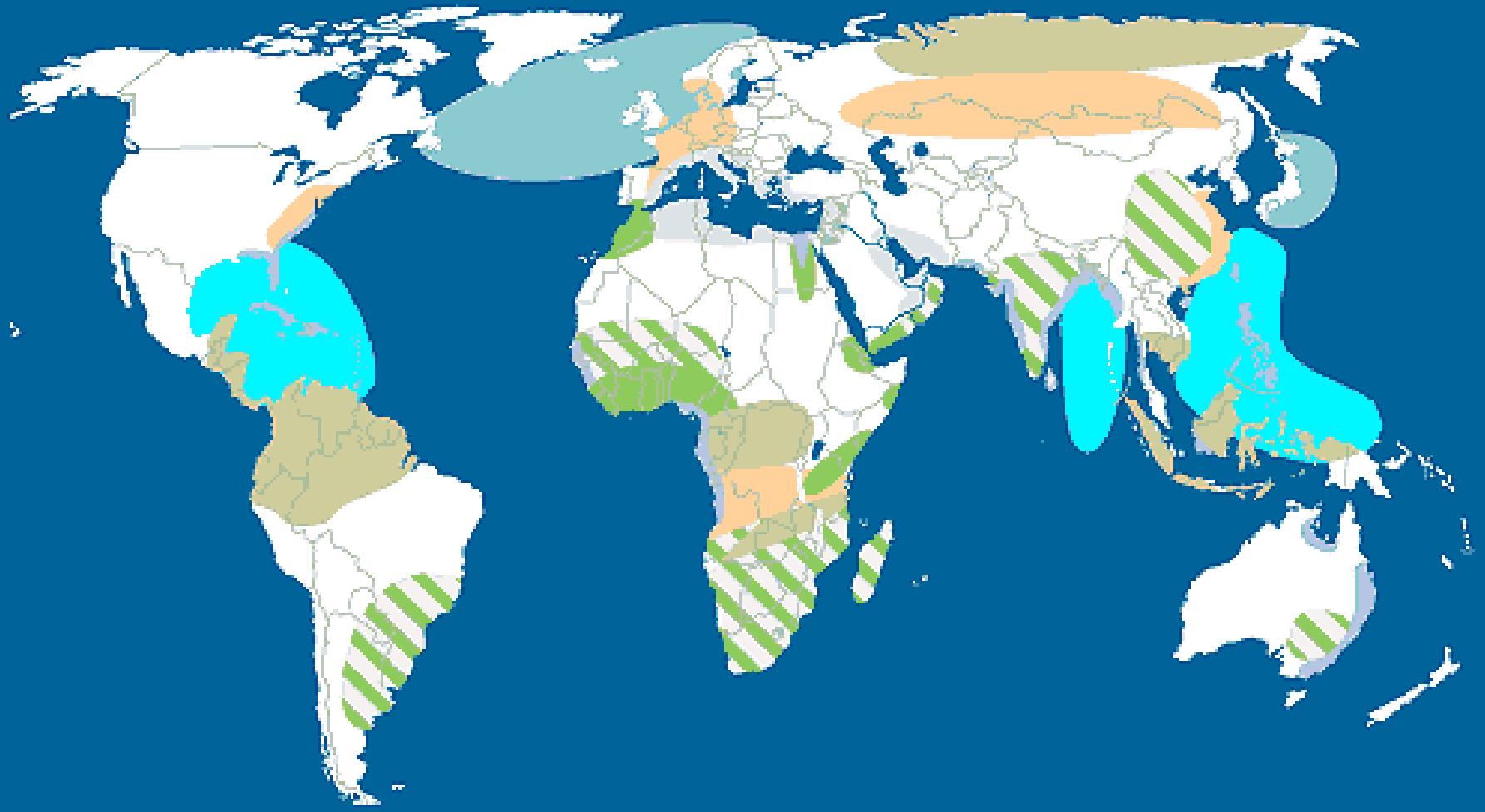
Two Concepts of Sovereignty: Individual and State?

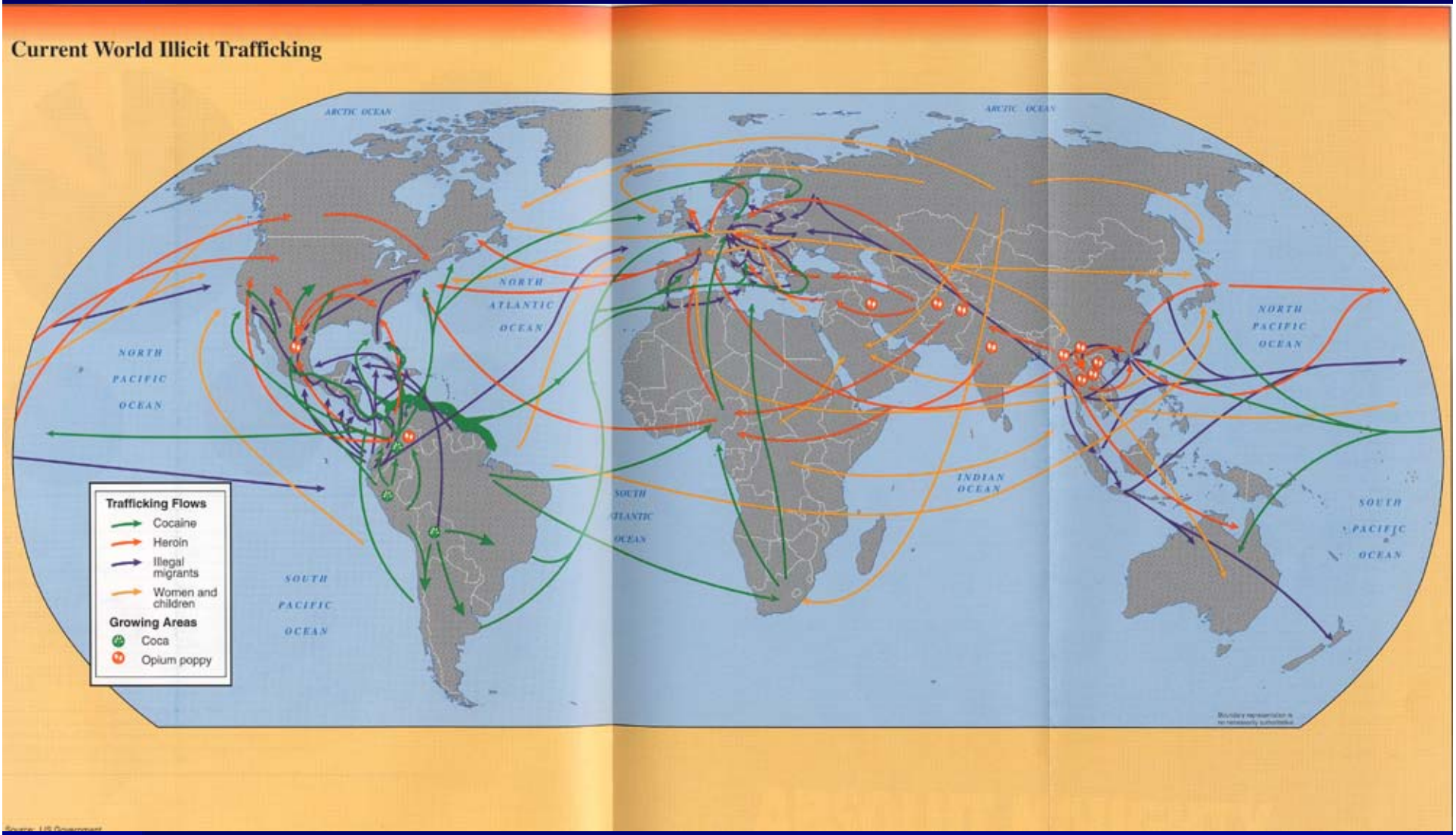


"We must start from the understanding that peace belongs not only to states or peoples, but to each and every member of those communities."

Nobel Lecture, Oslo
10 December 2001

The world in the 2050s Assuming 'business as usual'





The Dark Side of Globalization?

Does the Responsibility to Protect

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty has termed the "responsibility to protect": the responsibility of some agency or state to enforce the principle of security that sovereign states owe to their citizens.

Always Mean the Right to Intervene?

The "responsibility to protect" means the "right to intervene." Yet the creation of a sense of urgency to act—on some issues that may not have impact decades to come—is perhaps the only appropriate first response.

We need both new geography and new geopolitics.

The Real Deal

A real debate ought to be taking place today. Rather than dismiss human security outright, a larger examination of what forms of security are relevant and right among communities, states, regions, and which even might apply to a global rule-set—and what types of security are *not* relevant—seems appropriate and necessary. If this occurs, a truly remarkable tectonic shift might take place in the conduct of international relations and human affairs.