

Provoking a New Agenda for Global Human Security

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The evolution of security from traditional defense-oriented issues toward human needs, both communal and individual, is approaching a time of turbulence and uncertainty in 2013. The driving factors that led to U.S. presidential initiatives on HIV/AIDS, malaria, and global health will face the backdrop of sustained turbulence in the political and financial realms.

Amid Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's laudable call for a worldwide "AIDS-free generation", the forces and factors needed to mount such a campaign confront the core necessities of political attention and tangible resources. As urgent and important as it is to sustain progress against diseases and disparities, to argue for money and political capital for global health and human security is to compete alongside mainstream demands of jobs, trade and the economy. Furthermore, the "hard power" issues of armed conflicts, superpower relations, and defense postures are consuming the attention of leaderships. In the U.S., domestic budget stresses, such as the "fiscal cliff" and Hurricane Sandy relief, further crowd the political ecology.

Yet amid the turmoil, the agenda to extend human security along new realms remains a task for advocacy. That agenda entails identifying those national interests which entwine with human security, illuminating the baseline causes of instability, and rallying new tools and solutions. Once these dynamics become understood, the case must be made to secure the portfolio of capital needed for implementation: economic, political, technological, and political. Goal-setting with clear outcomes becomes an imperative for leaders to articulate to the stakeholder community.

In 2013, leadership will be a decisive factor in advancing the human security agenda. The second term of the Obama Administration will test whether or not domestic financial stresses will inhibit funding for US global health and development programs. Led by new President Jim Kim, the World Bank will move increasingly towards community-based results that complement the Bank's traditional, broader macro-economic goals. Mark Dybul, the new Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and

Malaria brings a results-based expectation needed to prove its business model and to sustain its fundraising imperative.

As the new captains of development take their reins, the horizons of opportunity and of challenge in human security continue to expand. Some issues which have been integrated into the policy mainstream, such as climate change, are intensely elaborated and debated. Others, such as proposals to encourage conversion of military drone technology for humanitarian purposes, remain to be defined.

Traditional instruments of state power, what Harvard University's Joseph Nye famously labeled "hard power" are aimed at exerting force or coercion, such as military and intelligence. Less coercive forms of power, so-called "soft power", entails cooperation and collaboration typically involving issues of environment, health and culture. With the proliferation of capabilities that bolster both forms of power but also facing constraints in financial and political capital, practitioners of statecraft must make increasingly tougher choices among these forms of hard and soft power.

To tilt the balance towards human security, the challenge remains how to illuminate the strategic landscape of issues and how to "harden soft power" in a way that persuades national leaders to deploy scarce resources towards tangible goals and objectives. With the selection of fresh viewpoints presented in the following articles, this issue catalyzes that pathway forward.

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