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Global Governance Challenges in a Post-COVID World

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A B S T R A C T S	**A R T I C L E I N F O**
Global governance in the post-COVID-19 operating environment faces unprecedented NTS challenges to a broad range of referent objects from the global biosphere, down through systemic security at the international and regional level, through national security, down to vulnerable individuals and groups. These challenges cannot be addressed successfully through the old state-centric mechanisms of international and national governance agendas and policy platforms. The purpose of this study is to assesses the future of global governance challenges in a world ravaged by COVID-19, and the hope offered by new actors in addressing these challenges. Therefore, the rise of new challenges has also brought new actors to the fore, including middle powers, IOs, NGOs, and other civil society organizations and entities. It is the very interconnectedness of the new challenges which empowers the new actors to contribute substantially to global governance in theory and practice.	

1. INTRODUCTION

We expect those who govern to do so in the interests of the governed, usefully providing services that can best or perhaps only be achieved through collective action. "Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs" (CGG, 1995, p.2). It is an ongoing and evolutionary process which looks to reconcile conflicting interests in order to protect the weak, through the rule of law, from unjust exploitation, and introduce security for all. Governance is also a process through which collective good and goods are generated so that all are better off than they would be acting individually. Thus, governance implies a concern by those who govern with both the security and development of those who are governed (Howe, 2012, p.346).

Domestically, governance is carried out primarily by instruments of the state, including the institutions of government, legislation, and enforcement. Internationally, governance implies not only global attempts to govern in the absence of world government, dealing with international conflicts of interests and those issues which transcend national boundaries, but also a concern with what can be done by international actors when domestic governance fails to provide safe havens. Thus, international organisation can be seen as a transitional process from the international anarchic conditions which generate conflict, towards the aspiration of global governance, whereby states are actively brought together to solve common problems, reconcile conflicting interests, and generate collective good, including a more peaceful and secure operating environment.

International organisations (IOs) are representative aspects of the phase of that process which has been reached at a given time (Claude, 1963, p.4). These institutions form a key plank of the liberal international order, but remain controversial, and are increasingly coming under attack for their dualistic nature. On the one hand IOs are creations of the states (especially the most powerful) that make up their membership and which they serve so as to make the sovereign interstate system function better. On the other hand, IOs require a degree of alienation or transference of state sovereignty. In the current strategic operating environment, the liberal international order faces the challenges of United States (US) abdication of leadership and increasing contestation between the US and the other great powers, China and Russia. Furthermore, COVID-19 and environmental concerns, pose major challenges for the traditional state-centric models upon which much strategic decision-making is based (Howe 2020, p.18).

Peace and security have long constituted the central objectives of global governance and form an essential dimension of human well-being. Indeed, the maintenance of international peace and security is listed as the first purpose of the United Nations (UN), the major manifestation of the global governance mission, and related aspirations feature heavily in the preamble to the *UN Charter*. Yet the global governance agenda has evolved to include consideration of peace within states rather than exclusively focusing on the generation of peace

between them. In doing so there has been movement from championing the interests and rights of states, towards championing those of vulnerable individuals and groups. Consequently, the new human-centred concerns of good global governance place the paradigm as much within the contemporary development agenda, as it was formerly within the peace and political stability agenda.

Furthermore, in contemporary discourse and increasingly in practice, security is an essentially contested concept in terms of referent object, the scope of issues covered (the degree of securitization), and indeed within specific issues. New thinking on security has come to the fore, with input from academics, and from practitioners in IOs and middle-power states. The rise of non-traditional security (NTS) perspectives and 'new security challenges' have seen the broadening of the scope of enquiry along the x-axis of issues from a strict focus on national survival in a hostile operating environment and questions related to war and peace, to include some or all of the following: a focus on non-military rather than military threats, transnational rather than national threats, and multilateral or collective rather than self-help security solutions (Acharya, 2002). Within both security and peacebuilding discourses, there have also been increasing emphases on individual human beings and the planet or global biosphere, corresponding to a bi-directional expansion along the y-axis of referent objects.

This keynote, therefore, assesses the future of global governance challenges in a world ravaged by COVID-19, and the hope offered by new actors in addressing these challenges.

2. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND THE UN SYSTEM

International organisation is fundamentally, even though not exclusively, a reaction to the problem of war (Claud, 1963, p.219). Safeguarding international peace and security was the primary reason for the establishment of the UN in 1945. The aspiration "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" appears in the opening lines of the UN Charter. Maintaining peace and security appears first in the Charter's statement of purposes and principles. Even the roles and non-military functions of IOs dealing with other aspects of global governance are often justified by the contributions they can make to international peace and security. The institutionalisation of multilateral security cooperation at the global level, under first the League of Nations (albeit a false dawn), and more recently and successfully, the UN system, has contributed significantly to the resolution of existing conflicts and the generation of a more peaceful international society.

The global governance aspiration represented here is for a system of collective conflict management (CCM). This has been defined as a pattern of group action, usually but not necessarily sanctioned by a global or regional body, in anticipation of, or in response to the outbreak of intra- or interstate armed conflict, including any systemic effort to prevent, suppress, or reverse breaches of the peace where states are acting beyond the scope of specific alliances (Lepgold and Weiss, 1998, p.5). Implicit in this description is the concept of automatic response to breaches of the peace, which is the foundation of the principle of collective security underpinning both the League of Nations and the UN.

Under such systemic security conditions, peace is seen as being indivisible, and an attack on one is regarded as an attack on all. If all acknowledge and commit to a duty to come to the aid of any victim of aggression, and punish the aggressor, regardless of the identity of either, peace ensues from the rational impossibility of any one state winning a war against all others. Furthermore, rule utilitarian evaluation of the benefits of a peaceful operating environment versus the costs of a Hobbesian war of all-against-all, makes it rational for all to sign up to such a regime, even if, at times, based on simple utility, defection would seem to be the dominant strategy.

Yet many contemporary threats to national and international systemic security do not lend themselves to the machinations of state-centric rational payoffs, revolving as they do around trans-state or sub-state issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, pandemics (including COVID-19), refugee flows and forced migration, poverty and distributive injustices, and natural and, given the role of human agency, nature-induced disasters. These new security challenges and NTS issues threaten national and international/systemic security, but they also threaten the security of vulnerable human beings and groups, individually and collectively (Freedman and Murphy, 2018, pp.1-5). Hence it is important to go beyond simple security analysis when looking at global governance challenges, but also international governance responses.

The UN system was, in fact, founded on three governance pillars: security, development, and human rights (as shown in Figure 1), and the new human-centered governance agendas, which have dramatically come to the fore in the post-Cold War operating environment can be found at their intersection.
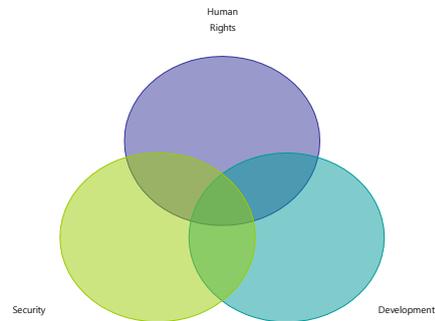

Fig. 1. The Three Pillars of UN Governance

Chiefly, at the level of academic discourse, as well as increasingly in the policy sphere, this humanising of measurements of governance success reflects what has come to be known as 'human security,' wherein the referent object which governance actors are trying to protect from existential threat shifts from the state and/or interstate system to providing vulnerable individuals and groups with safe havens free from fear and want. Policy prescriptions made under the dictates of this paradigm reflect both normative concerns (that governing in the interests of the most vulnerable is fundamentally the 'right' thing to do) and those of efficacy (that other governance objectives are more achievable if individuals and groups are taken into account).

Human security is a multi-disciplinary paradigm for understanding global vulnerabilities at the level of individual human beings. It incorporates methodologies and analysis from a number of research fields including strategic and security studies,

development studies, human rights, international relations, and the study of international organisations. It exists at the point where these disciplines converge on the concept of protection. The IOs of the UN system have been at the forefront of the development and propagation of the paradigm. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s "Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security" is seen as the prime foundational document for the global governance mission with regard to human security. The report noted that the objective of security has changed from states to human beings, with a need for a more human-centric approach to security, and a recognition that freedom from want and freedom from fear constitute important perspectives on poverty and development (UNDP, 1994). Indeed, there is a close relationship between human security envisioned as the protection of persons, and human development as the provision of basic human needs.

Human security and human development are both people-centred (Peou, 2014). They challenge the orthodox approach to security and development (i.e., state security and liberal economic growth respectively). Both perspectives are multidimensional, and address people's dignity as well as their material and physical concerns. Both impose duties on the wider global community. They can be seen as mutually reinforcing. A peaceful environment frees individuals and governments to move from a focus on mere survival to a position where they can consider improvement of their situations. Likewise, as a society develops, it is able to afford more doctors, hospitals, welfare networks, internal

security operations, schools, and de-mining operations. Conversely, as observed by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, "we will not enjoy security without development, development without security, and neither without respect for human rights. Unless all these causes are advanced, none will succeed" (Annan, 2005, p.6). Conflict retards development, and underdevelopment can lead to conflict.

Figure 2 below models the evolution of global governance perspectives on security and development to take into account the demands of vulnerable individuals and groups.

Fig. 2. The evolution of global governance perspectives

3. CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

The two most pressing contemporary global governance challenges are both related to NTS perspectives, as they are impervious to state-centric rationales and policy prescriptions, and they pose an existential threat to all.

First, environmental security is a policy area in which all the classes of political actor interact; both affected by and able to affect significant elements of the paradigm. It is of growing importance in

absolute terms (the biosphere is increasingly endangered by human activity), relative terms (when compared with other security conceptualizations), and academic terms. Policy options and implications are increasingly cross-border or global and are not amenable to rational actor model (RAM) pressures such as defense, deterrence, appeasements, inducements, or collective security. Rather than the tit-for-tat nature of traditional security interactions, environmental security is best modeled by the game theoretical model of a 'tragedy of the commons,' whereby if each actor pursues their narrow selfish interests it will result in catastrophe for all.

From a global governance perspective, the UN has launched multiple initiatives, but remains challenged in its aspirations by the legacies of traditional national security and national interest considerations. These include the 1972 UN Conference on the Human environment in Stockholm which contributed publicity, a declaration on principles, an action plan of recommendations, and a resolution on institutional and financial arrangements. The Stockholm declaration established limitations to sovereignty, noted duties incumbent on state actors, as well as the common heritage of mankind's resources. It also established monitoring networks, created the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to serve as a propagation and organizational framework, and stimulated NGOs and individual governments to act.

This was followed by the Brundtland Commission which introduced the concept of sustainable development; the

1987 Montreal Protocol addressing ozone depletion; the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio which launched the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC); the 1997 Kyoto Protocol which extended the UNFCCC with more stringent measures; and the 2015 Paris Agreement, which was an agreement within the UNFCCC, dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance.

The environmental security paradigm has created lots of awareness, some government, IO and non-governmental organization (NGO) action, but not enough enforcement or binding mechanisms. It has substantially been challenged by the unilateral policy prescriptions and rejection of obligations by the dominant states in the system, with the US, China, Russia, as well as second-tier great powers India and Brazil, all ranking as major contributors to climate change. Furthermore, the world hegemonic leader, the US, has actively obstructed the evolution of the governance paradigm by withdrawing from the above-mentioned international instruments (albeit that the incoming administration of President-Elect Biden has indicated it will rejoin).

Meanwhile, in trying to coordinate a global response to COVID-19 (and other pandemics), the World Health Organization (WHO) finds itself at the centre of the dualistic paradox of international organization. The responses of the three great powers (the US, China, and Russia) to the COVID-19 crisis, as well as those of some second-tier powers such as the United Kingdom (UK), Brazil, and India, also leave much to be desired in terms of both international and

domestic leadership. Indeed, policies in these countries contribute overall to the challenges faced by the WHO, rather than providing adequate support for the organization to carry out its global governance and systemic health security mission (Howe 2020, p.18).

Lack of transparency and freedom of information and speech in China allowed pandemics to spread, and critically endangered vulnerable individuals and groups in the country, the region, and across the globe. When the Chinese government has acted, it has been unilaterally, and in an authoritarian manner rather than openness, imposing comprehensive lockdowns which exacerbated socio-economic vulnerabilities. By contrast, agents of governance in the US during the current COVID-19 pandemic were slow to respond to the pandemic initially out of concern for the impact restrictions would have upon civil liberties and individual freedoms, and later, due to concerns for the economic impacts. These have also provided the pressures for premature lifting of restrictions. As a result, the US is now the most severely impacted country in the world. Internationally, China and the US have focused on blaming each other for the impact of COVID-19, resorting to national interest security promotion rather than collective action, and showing inconsistent support for the mission of the WHO, and even outright hostility.

The problems faced by the organization in carrying out its global health governance mission resulting from great power obstruction were initially highlighted by the 2002-2004 SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) outbreak. SARS-CoV first infected humans in the Guangdong province of southern China

in 2002, rapidly turned into a pandemic which affected 26 countries and resulted in more than 8000 cases in 2003, before dying out with only a small number of cases in 2004 (WHO, 2020a). The Chinese authorities were initially unwilling to cooperate with the WHO due to considerations of national interest and state sovereignty. As was also the case with the Hong Kong authorities where the disease soon spread, lack of epidemiological information about the disease hampered the prompt application of effective control measures, and because of inadequate communication, "panic developed in the community and weakened cooperation and support from the public" (Hung, 2003, p.376).

During the current crisis, the WHO once again must face an uncooperative great power, but this time it is the hegemon working against the global governance mission. On May 29, 2020, President Donald Trump said he would make good on his threat to withdraw from the WHO, "an unprecedented move that could undermine the global coronavirus response and make it more difficult to stamp out other disease threats" (Ehley & Ollstein, 2020). The US gave $893 million to WHO from 2018-2019, of which $237 million were assessed contributions, but still owes approximately $392 million through various multiyear cooperative agreements (Liberman, 2020).

By far the largest state donor to the organization, US conflict with the WHO could have a devastating impact on the latter's global health governance mission (albeit again with the caveat that a new administration in Washington may bring new policies).

4. COMPLEXITIES, INTERDEPENDENCIES, INTERRELATIONS

Despite remaining distinct in terms of focus and referent objects, there is a close relationship between traditional and NTS approaches, and considerable spillover between them. The negative consequences of conflictual operating environments and relationships can spill over both downwards from international and national insecurities to human vulnerabilities, and in the opposite direction. National insecurity can divert resources from human development, distort budgetary allocations, leaving little for human-centered development and resilience building, and exacerbate both distributive injustice and environmental degradation. On the other hand, human insecurity can lead a group of victims to take refuge in a neighboring country, impacting upon the latter's security conditions. Furthermore, those refugees may regroup and undermine the security of those who forced them to flee. Lack of food or energy can undermine national cohesion and weaken national strength, increasing national insecurity, or likewise lead to trans-border migration.

Environmental degradation can also pose national security challenges through the intervening variables of human insecurity and climate refugees. Health crises impact the socio-economically most vulnerable populations with the greatest severity, as has been seen during the COVID-19 pandemic mortality rates. Thus, poverty serves as a health insecurity multiplier. At the same time, COVID-19, and government responses to it, have served as a poverty multiplier, thrusting many more into conditions of human insecurity in terms of lack of freedom from want.

Despite clearer skies and waterways as a result of the lockdown, potentially leading to fewer deaths as a result of environmental health issues, researchers are now uncovering a link between pollution and the severity of the impact of the disease. Furthermore, concerns are emerging over the huge amount of non-biodegradable waste being produced, used, and discarded, in terms of masks and PPE. Finally, the poor are most vulnerable to the consequences of environmental degradation, poverty often precludes sustainable development practices, and natural disasters are exacerbated by environmental degradation. Thus, vicious cycles of insecurity exist beyond the reach of state-centric security models and policymaking. Table 1 reviews the different types of security addressed by global governance in terms of referent objects and the growing number of security issues

Table 1. Levels of security/insecurity and existential threats

Type of security	Main actors	Existential threats from	Referent objects	Issues
Traditional	States	States	States	Defense, deterrence, balance of power

Type of security	Main actors	Existential threats from	Referent objects	Issues
Comprehensive/ New security	Inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), states	Non-state actors, environment	States and communities	Water, food, environmental hazards, "natural" disasters, energy, terrorism, international crime
Environmental	States, IGOs, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Biosphere	States, multinational corporations (MNCs), communities, development	Ecospheres, biosphere, localized ecosystems	Climate change, global warming, sustainability, the Anthropocene, biodiversity, the global commons, pollution, consumption, pandemics, legal personality.
Human security	IGOs, states, NGOs, international community	Environment, states and non-state actors	Individuals and vulnerable communities	Explosive remnants of war (ERW), responsibility to protect (R2P), peacekeeping operations (PKOs), humanitarian intervention shelter, food, water, stability, sustainability, "nature-induced" disasters, conflict transformation

5. SOURCES OF HOPE

First, there is a growing recognition of the interdependencies between these levels and issues of security, and the challenges they pose to all who govern, as well as the global nature of their existential threats. In order to break these vicious cycles of insecurity spillover, resilient communities must be constructed, and they must be built from the bottom up in harmony with local values and nature and in a spirit of international cooperation and global management of the commons, rather than the top down and imposed through national security and development policy platforms, which focus on the domination of nature. In other words, a focus on how to bring people constructively together to build a whole greater than the sum of the parts, rather than on how to keep them apart in order to mitigate against the worst manifestations of conflicts of interests.

Second, even the great powers seem to be increasingly willing to play by the rules of global governance, with a Biden Administration in the US showing a willingness to rejoin the instruments of global governance, and China showing greater responsibility and a willingness to cooperate on pandemic management while also aiming for carbon neutrality by 2060. There has been a gradual recognition that doing the normatively right thing can also be in the strategic national interest of powerful international actors.

Third, middle powers and civil society organizations are increasingly taking the initiative in human-centric global governance. Middle powers lack 'compulsory power;' the military

resources to dominate other countries or the economic resources to bribe them. Yet they differ from the small or 'system ineffectual' states which have little or no influence, being, potentially, 'system affecting states' with significant impact within a narrower policy area, or in conjunction with others (Vom Hau, Scott, and Hulme, 2012, pp.187-8). To maximize their relevance and impact, a degree of selectivity on the part of these middle powers is required. This means the pursuit of 'niche diplomacy,' which involves concentrating resources in specific areas best able to generate returns worth having, rather than trying to cover the field, allowing them, therefore, to 'punch above their weight' (Henrikson, 2005, 67). Increasingly, middle powers have found their 'niches' in the promotion of cooperative governance networks of NTS and human-centered policy-making.

Middle powers and their civil societies, in particular those in the Asia-Pacific region, including the Republic of Korea (ROK), Taiwan, Vietnam, and New Zealand, have received glowing evaluations for their responses, and also for their support of multilateral health governance efforts and the WHO. While the US may be the largest donor, the top ten is rounded out by three middle powers in the UK, Germany, and Japan; four civil society organizations--the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the GAVI Alliance, Rotary International, and the National Philanthropic Trust; and two IOs in the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), and the European Commission (WHO, 2020b).

In terms of Core Voluntary Contributions (CVC), which are fully unconditional (flexible), meaning the WHO has full discretion on how these funds should be used to fund the programmatic work of the Organization, the dominance of small and medium-ranked powers, as well as civil society organizations, is even more stark. In order of support, we find the UK, Sweden, Norway, Australia, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland, Luxembourg, France, the Estate of Mrs. Edith Christina Ferguson, Spain, the Estate of the Late Marjory Miller Thompson, Monaco, and Miscellaneous (ibid.).

At the same time, the ROK has been at the forefront of 'green growth' initiatives. President Lee Myung-bak founded the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) in 2010, and this was later converted into an international treaty-based organization in 2012 at the Rio+20 Summit. In January of the same year, the GGGI, the OECD, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank signed an MOU to formally launch the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP) to enhance and expand efforts to identify and address major knowledge gaps in green growth theory and practice, and to help countries design and implement policies to move towards a green economy. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) and their evolution through successive international fora, represent further opportunities for Korea to continue its previously successful niche diplomacy and agenda setting in these fields.

6. CONCLUSION

Global governance in the post-COVID-19 operating environment faces unprecedented NTS challenges to a broad range of referent objects from the global biosphere, down through systemic security at the international and regional level, through national security, down to vulnerable individuals and groups. These challenges cannot be addressed successfully through the old state-centric mechanisms of international and national governance agendas and policy platforms. Furthermore, NTS and traditional security conceptualizations interact in a complex web of causality.

Nevertheless, the rise of new challenges has also brought new actors to the fore, including middle powers, IOs, NGOs, and other civil society organizations and entities. It is the very interconnectedness of the new challenges which empowers the new actors to contribute substantially to global governance in theory and practice.

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