"Pull Together for Sustainable Common Security", 'How to Save the World in a Hurry', University of Toronto, May 30, 2018

Why are we here? Well, we share concerns over a number of issues and, yes, we recognize the need to share a more comprehensive approach.

But so far, it appears we also share a problem -- we lack an organizing principle to pull people, civil society causes and progressive parties together.

We hear that there's an interest in intersectional campaigns – in building bridges between those who care about disarmament, the environment, development, inequality and militarism. We see the links between our struggles and theirs and know or should know we can't do much alone. We all need help and we'd have a better chance if we pulled together.

My talk today is about sustainable common security as a means to pull together.

And, I'll start with three leading questions:

First, might the umbrella concept of sustainable common security help as a unifying step toward a one world perspective, a global culture of peace and a **movement of movements?** Possibly.

Second, does this umbrella cover most of our efforts to deal with critical global challenges and, would it **encourage the key shifts** necessary? Probably.

Third, might this concept also help to **challenge the national security narrative** underpinning nuclear deterrence, constant preparation for war and our expensive war system? Yes.

Why bother with another concept?

As this is relatively new, I'll share my sense of the problem:

1. We appear to be in a race against time, with overlapping crises and challenges. Too many of our dominant systems – capitalism, climate, democracy, sovereign states, even the international security system – are stressed, if not dysfunctional. Understandably, people feel deep insecurity.

2. National security approaches are proving counter-productive. More war is expected, even if it entails absurd costs and risks. Experts as diverse as Paul Rogers and Jean-Marie Guehénno have called for radical new thinking and priorities, but our national security institutions show little interest.
3. We don't have a peace movement comparable to the 1980s; we're smaller and aging so we need to build bridges, network and organize with others. We need help.
4. To date, there is no unifying idea, no organizing principle, no shared vision;
5. Radical shifts appear likely, even inevitable, but these may arise from tragic shocks rather than carefully laid plans.

Sustainable common security **might help with each**. It's premised on the higher ideal of **enduring, shared security;** one that may also provide a unifying 'bridge' between social movements and progressive parties, which also need wider support and solidarity.

To date, concepts of cooperative security – whether 'collective', 'comprehensive', 'common' or 'human' security – have been helpful but insufficient. The emancipatory potential of each was evident early on, just not agreeable to the most powerful. As a result, our key systems and institutions did not shift as hoped. Within a few years it was **back** to national security, preparing for war and business as usual. Despite a rapidly globalizing world, transformational change continues to be resisted in all the state-centric institutions. This raises a fundamental question: how do we break from this pattern to do better?

Well, people are now mobilizing world-wide and many recognize the need for a **new approach to security**, particularly one that is attuned to costs and consequences over the long-term. In "A world in need: the case for sustainable security", Paul Rogers writes that, "the gap between perilous reality and this urgent aspiration remains formidable."

Like it or not, our diverse global systems and challenges tend to be 'linked-in' and interdependent. We know they're unlikely to be solved or fixed by isolated efforts. *Now, no one nation or one movement will suffice.* Progress in nuclear abolition may depend on progress in conflict prevention and cooperation with others.

So what's with this merger of old and new security ideas?

Sustainable security shifts the emphasis toward the long-term impact and consequences of our policies, as well as the underlying causes of insecurity, desperation and conflict. The central premise is that the consequences of insecurity are beyond control and fighting the symptoms will not work sufficiently; the focus must shift to resolving the deeper causes.

Common security provided a blueprint for survival that helped to stem the last Cold War, stopped provocative deployments, calmed tensions and cut both conventional and nuclear weapons, largely by stressing our interdependence and mutual vulnerability. It's premised on a basic understanding that applies to Russia and America, India and Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, to people everywhere – we may share security, but we can no longer fight to win it. The competitive pursuit of national security at the expense of others now incurs unacceptable costs and risks. A common security approach relies on deeper cooperation, empathy and mutual respect for the golden rule: treat others as you would wish to be treated.

Now, a **synthesis** of sustainable and common security could be widely appealing and sufficiently broad as an 'umbrella'. Sustainable common security is also considered synonymous with positive peace. Both are more comprehensive than the narrower notions of national and international security or the conception of negative peace. Both have meaning across systems, beliefs and borders. Both

make the connection between direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence and, both help in efforts to curtail each. Combined, they represent a higher ideal.

Equally important, I think we need sustainable common security to challenge and change the narrative of national security and nuclear deterrence. Rather than have great powers set the agenda for their financial and military elites, isn't it time 'we the people' charted a sustainable, secure course?

What is the **counter-narrative** on offer here? Our global interdependence in the face of numerous common challenges necessitates a radical shift to a more just, more secure, sustainable future. This must be a shared, common effort.

Clearly, numerous leaps are needed to transform dysfunctional approaches into smart systems for addressing climate change, nuclear disarmament, inequality and poverty, peace and global governance. So, sustainable common security must be open to encouraging wider system shifts, even those currently deemed radical.

No, we don't have to do it all or develop expertise or programs in each area. We simply have to be more open to cooperate in broader coalitions, within wider networks, hopefully within a much-needed movement of movements.

A *concept is only a start.* Obviously, there is no one conceptual cure-all. But just ask yourself, might this ideal appeal widely and build a wider bridge to cooperation and solidarity among progressive social movements; one that expands our base and potential to help with what's ahead?

Sustainable common security might simply help us pull together on what matters.

Thank you!