

VISION 2050

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WHAT IS SECURITY?

At the very deepest level 'security' is harmony between the energies of yin and yang. Harmony being defined as a gentle sustained evolution and yin and yang being the two basic energies of stillness and movement underlying our environment and ourselves. Too much yin leads to rotting stagnation or petrification, too much yang leads to violent disintegration or overheating. What we strive for is harmonious balancing of the two energies, balancing between the extremes of freezing and exploding, permitting a gentle evolution and transformation of ourselves and our environment.

Foundations

Human security is integrally coupled with the security of our environment. As such it rests on four foundations. The deepest foundation is spiritual and not material. As such it is internal to each human and belongs to the domain of positive liberty. That is to say that it focusses on harmonising our attitude to our environment and events around us, rather than modifying our environment.

1. Spiritual. The spiritual relationship of sentient beings to their environment is the most fundamental, pervasive and important of all four security dimensions, but will not be dealt with here for three reasons. Firstly because epistemologically it does not lend itself to the essentially material negative liberty challenges we are concerned with here. Secondly because it does not lend itself to a purely analytical approach of the kind available to the written medium. Thirdly because at any given time only a small selection of sentient beings appear to be receptive to this dimension. Nevertheless it underlies all and is the key to all other approaches.

The following three security foundations are external, material conditions and belong to the domain of negative liberty. That is to say they focus on modifying the physical environment and events around us.

2. Ecological. The ecological foundation provides two key factors for our security. Firstly a liveable habitat and secondly a sustainable supply of natural resources need to sustain life.

3. Functional. The functional foundation consists of two key elements. Firstly science and technology, which are the tools we need to manage our environment and provide our means of sustenance. Secondly our economic system, which multiplies the way we apply our scientific and technological power. The main objective in this dimension is to reduce our fear of material hardship.

4. Social. The social foundation consists of one key element: establishing harmonious relations with other sentient beings, both within a social group and between social groups. The objective being to provide enjoyable and creative interaction and reduce the fear of antagonistic violence.

Each foundation is driven by distinct energies and can only be understood on its own terms, on the basis of its own logic. The ecological is like meteorology, the complex interaction of systems of systems, whose individual parts are linear and causal, but whose collective interaction becomes so unpredictable that it transcends causality. The functional is like chess, in essence a mechanical linear world, based on a clear causality, though the functional economic is a mix of causal and social. The social is like poker, based on a mix of causal calculation and emotional constitution. As such they constitute distinct dimensions which need to be understood and treated on their own terms. Thus for instance trying to deal with the social dimension in functional terms is doomed to fail. Thus the materialist engineering approach can only support political objectives, but are no solution in themselves. The confusion between these two was one of the key tragedies of the industrial age

The three dimensions also interact, adding massively to the inherent complexity in each dimension. This interaction has increased enormously during the modern industrial age due to the multiplication of human material power.

VITAL INTERESTS

The above generic components translate into three basic vital interests and three distinct sources of threat.

Our **most immediate and constant vital interest is our functional security** - ie the critical life systems of the globalised society depend. These are the transnational economic, technological and social flows on which we depend for our daily existence. They are the centre of gravity of the globalising world. If they collapse then the current world order would collapse almost instantly. This could in extremis lead to deep material deprivation, violent chaos and a significant decline in world population. From an ecological perspective the latter could be desirable, but rather not in this way.

Our **second vital interest is the political order** on which the functional life systems of the globalising world depend. These hit the headlines first but are essentially a secondary danger. This is because the political system is no longer the centre of gravity but a buffer for the new functional centre. Secondly because the globalisers political order has more resilience and capacity to manage challenge than our functional life systems. The political order can be stretched and battered far more than our functional base and we can still survive and work towards solutions.

Our **third and deepest vital interest is the harmonious functioning of the global and regional ecosystems** on which we as humans depend and on which our functional and political foundations depend. This is placed third because the dangers to this dimension are emerging most slowly, but it could also be placed first, since this challenge is the most profound and basic. If this fails then everything else fails. Safeguarding the global ecosystem is our deepest vital interest.

THE WAY AHEAD

How to achieve the above is the most difficult task we face. On the deepest level two approaches can be identified. The first is a material approach, using science and technology to reduce the negative impact on the environment from human activity. The focus being on developing technology and social organisations that require less raw materials and pollute less. The second approach is on the spirit, attempting to reduce the appetite and carelessness which drives much of the damage we inflict on the environment. This is also essential, but given the material hardship and desperation among some 60% of the worlds population that drives much of the damage to the environment it will be extremely difficult. Nevertheless a combined positive - negative liberty approach will be necessary if we are to turn the current trends.