New Wars and Human Security:
An Interview with Mary Kaldor

Professor Mary Kaldor is Director of the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is a founding member of European Nuclear Disarmament and founder and Co-Chair of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly. A prolific writer, she is author of *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War* (2003), *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era* (1999 and 2006) and edits the annual *Global Civil Society Yearbook*. Her most recent book is *Human Security: Reflections on Globalisation and Intervention* (2007). At the request of Javier Solana, The EU's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, she convened the Study Group on European Security Capabilities, which produced the influential report, *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe*. A follow-on report, *The European Way of Security*, was presented to Javier Solana in Madrid on 8 November, 2007. The interview took place on July 3, 2007.

Personal and Intellectual Background

Alan Johnson: What were the most important familial and intellectual influences on your development?

Mary Kaldor: It is difficult to distinguish between familial and intellectual influences because I come from a very intellectual family. My mother was a democratic socialist and was very committed to the peace movement – I went on my first demonstration against nuclear weapons aged 9 – while my father was Hungarian and my uncle was a dissident who had been in prison from 1948 to 1956. I had to reconcile these two sides of my family. In 1957, my uncle, who had been released from prison just before the Hungarian revolution, visited us after it had been suppressed by the Russians. He said, 'Why didn't you come and save the revolution?' My mother said, 'Because we would all have been killed in a nuclear war.' I think that exchange was formative for me.

My first job was at The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. It was very exciting – I constructed the first statistics on the arms trade, before moving to Sussex University where I worked on the economics of the arms race and the social structure of military technology. In the 1980s I got involved in the new peace movement and was profoundly influenced by E.P. Thompson who introduced me

to the idea of politics from below and history from below. He taught me that we were against the cold war, not just nuclear weapons. Given my family background this was tremendously appealing. I was privileged to be friends with Edward at that moment. He was a really great man.

As a result of these ideas, I became involved with the opposition in Eastern Europe. My uncle, who was then in his eighties, acted as my political adviser – he knew everybody! I had a privileged position because I could travel freely in and out of Hungary, though I did get arrested in Prague and I got stopped from entering East Germany. I was influenced by the tremendously exciting intellectual debates taking place among the opposition at that time. Because they were dissidents they could not demonstrate or get involved in public policy. They sat around, read what they could and talked. The Czechs in particular made a big effort to learn Greek and re-read all the classical authors. I felt they were articulating ideas that expressed what we were trying to do in the peace movement but which we hadn't got the language for – they gave us 'anti-politics,' 'civil society,' and even 'globalisation,' which György Konrád was talking about back in 1982. It was a terrific education for me.

Part 1: The Nature of the 'New Wars'

Johnson: Let's turn to your book *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era.* [1] You identify the background to the emergence of 'new wars' as a crisis in global institutions rooted in a global mismatch between the 'militarised unilateralist character of American power' and the new global socio-economic reality ushered in by the shocks of globalisation and the end of the Cold War. What is the 'global mismatch' – why has it arisen and what are its consequences at domestic and international levels?

Kaldor: Well, I think this is how history moves. For a period of time a particular set of international arrangements gets embedded, usually after wars, and everybody believes in them – they are the dominant paradigm. Then, as reality changes, those ways of thinking about the world become more and more problematic. Today, our thinking is still based on the end of World War Two – the dominance of the US, the notion of a global struggle between good and evil – a way of thinking that was sustained throughout the cold war. We had a brief period in the 1990s when a new paradigm emerged around words like 'humanitarianism,' 'civil society,' and so on. With the arrival of the 'war on terror' we got two competing paradigms. On the one hand, the American notion of cosmic struggle between good (the West) and

evil (Islam) and, on the other hand, an alternative notion based on the project of extending an internal rule of law, respect for human rights and global governance. Although the European Union tends towards the latter approach, it seems to be caught between the two paradigms.

Johnson: So a new type of organised violence – 'new war' – developed in the 1980s and 1990s as 'one aspect of the globalised era.' In what ways do new wars differ from old wars? What are the new wars about?

Kaldor: An 'old war' was a war between states. The war was fought by opposing uniformed armed forces, and the decisive encounters of the war were battles between those forces. Soldiers were clearly distinct from civilians. No war conformed completely to that model, of course, but the model is drawn from the experience of twentieth century wars and from the cold war, which kept that model alive in our imagination.

A 'new war' is fought by combinations of state and non-state actors, and is usually fought not for reasons of state or ideology, but for identity. Battle is rare and most violence is directed against civilians – that is absolutely central to understanding new wars.

Old wars simply became too destructive to be fought. Does that mean there was now nothing to be gained by using violence? Well, there is nothing to be gained by using violence against a similarly armed opponent. But there is definitely something to be gained against an unarmed opponent – and that is a central characteristic of new wars.

The modern European state was really established through fighting old wars. Wars actually strengthened states – at least the winning states – by regularising administration, increasing taxation, and developing a national ideology. The culmination of this process was the enormously powerful states that developed after the end of the Second World War. New wars do the opposite. They are about state disintegration. Whereas old wars fostered a centralising, mobilising autarkic kind of economy, new wars involve open economies, transnational crime, disintegration of the state apparatus, and low taxation (they are not funded out of taxation, which falls even further). At the end of a new war the state is weaker than it was before the war. New wars are wars of state un-building rather than state-building.

Johnson: So the real 'revolution in military affairs' has been a revolution in the social relations of warfare, but we have not matched that revolution with a corresponding intellectual development?

Kaldor: That's exactly right. What Rumsfeld's 'revolution in military affairs' tried to do was to assimilate new information technology into old social relations of warfare.

Johnson: Why are new wars so difficult to contain and so difficult to end?

Kaldor: A number of reasons. For one thing, there are no decisive encounters in new wars – you dare not have battles. Also, new wars create a vested interest in war in all sorts of ways. New wars mobilise people around identity politics – and that sense of identity gets further consolidated in the war itself. There may not have been an idea of what it meant to be a 'Bosnian' before the Bosnian war – people were 'Yugoslavs,' or whatever – but the war enormously strengthened sectarian identities.

Extremists go to war to win power – they could not win power peacefully because nobody supports extremism in peacetime. And they keep going to war to maintain an atmosphere of fear from which they benefit. New wars also create groups of people with an economic interest in the continuation of the war. Funds are acquired through loot and pillage, smuggling or the drugs trade, and war becomes necessary to maintain those sources of income. And if you are no longer able to present the diaspora with an emergency they might start withholding their support. I was in Nagorno-Karabakh after 9/11, and discovered the diaspora had started supporting the victims of 9/11, not the Nagorno-Karabakhians. These are all reasons why it is difficult to end new wars.

Why are they difficult to contain? Well, new wars are both global and local, and they spill over borders. A central characteristic of new wars, and a consequence of the violence against civilians at the heart of those wars, is population displacement. Not only is there a big increase in the ratio of civilian to military deaths in new wars but there is also a huge increase in the number of refugees and displaced people. And as the refugees move to other areas they bring with them the nationalist ideologies. New wars can also spread through transnational criminal networks. You can trace the origins of the conflict in Macedonia to smuggling networks with Kosovo – and the people who were smuggling were also the people in the KLA and the NRA.

Johnson: So a new war can spread like a virus?

Kaldor: Yes, the image of a virus is very good. You can trace circles around a new war and see the ways in which surrounding countries are affected. A group of us did a study for the EU on post-Dayton reconstruction and traced these radiating circles of influence. You also see this in West Africa. The conflict in Darfur is now spreading into Chad. You see it in the Horn of Africa and Central Asia. The war in Afghanistan is now spreading over the borders to Pakistan, and so on.

Johnson: Humanitarian interventions, you say, have been hamstrung by 'myopia about the character of the new warfare.' [2] What do you mean?

Kaldor: In the new edition of *New and Old Wars* (2006), I treat the Iraq War as a clash of old war and new war. The Americans had an old war conception of what they were doing. They thought they could defeat the Iraqi army and that would be the end of the war. But they found themselves instead in the middle of a new war.

The need for new thinking can be seen not just in relation to military intervention. Think about humanitarian assistance – the assumption in old wars was that you remain neutral between the sides and provide aid to the civilians. But in today's new wars you can't distinguish between civilians and combatants so very often the humanitarian aid goes into the pockets of the militias. Second, you can't be both neutral and impartial because usually one side is violating human rights and you end up tolerating those violations. Third, and this is becoming very clear in Iraq, humanitarian space is disappearing. The idea that there is an easily identifiable space between the two warring sides that is free of warfare does not hold when violence is directed against civilians. Humanitarian agencies become targets too.

'Talks' are the site of more old thinking. There is an assumption that the new wars can be solved by 'talks' between the sides but in new wars the two sides are often colluding in an extremist logic. They are not fighting against each other. They are both killing civilians. And 'talks' can legitimise both sides. We tend to think either you go to war and one side is defeated, or you have talks and reach an agreement. Actually, neither of these things is a solution any more. First of all, you can't 'win' a new war. All you do if you go to war is make the war much worse – which is what is happening in Afghanistan and Iraq. Second, talks legitimise the warlords. We have to think of another approach.

Johnson: Why do you think the US has not understood the nature of the new wars? After all, the US has no interest in spectacularly failing to understand the nature of contemporary warfare.

Kaldor: First, generals always begin by fighting the last war and then in the midst of the war discover they have to change. Second, unlike Russia, America didn't have to go through a Perestroika after 1989. It behaved as though it had 'won' the cold war. Even though that was not true, nobody challenged that perception. Therefore, the strategy of the cold war – technology-driven weapons built up over a long period –was seen as a good strategy. Furthermore, the American way of thinking about war is tied to the American Military-Industrial Complex, so it is extremely difficult – not just intellectually but politically – to think outside the dominant framework. People like Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle and all these others, were deeply into this cold war framework. They missed the cold war! They wanted the world to be like their imagination.

Mind you, there are huge changes now going on in American thinking. I think General Petraeus is thinking quite differently. It is a tragedy that he is taking up a lot of new ideas at a time when the US has been discredited. I think it may discredit all those ideas.

Johnson: Although I was not in favour of the invasion, I am opposed to precipitate withdrawal. My submission to the 2007 Iraq Commission (organised by The Foreign Policy Centre and Channel 4) was titled 'Give Petraeus a Chance.' [3] General Petraeus, I think, does understand he is fighting a new war and his partial success is a mark of that understanding. His new strategy is very far from the old war combination of aerial bombardment at a long distance plus rapid offensive manoeuvres.

Kaldor: Petraeus was a PhD student of Richard Falk's. When we wrote the Barcelona Report for Solana we sent a copy to Petraeus and he sent a hand-written note back to us to say he thought it was 'spot on.'

Johnson: So what is your attitude to the 'surge?'

Kaldor: The problem is the US is so discredited that it really can't 'do' human security. The approach depends on a sense of trust and legitimacy that the US just does not have. Something is happening on the ground but it is not paralleled

by a political process. The ideal would be a political process, under international auspices, backed up be international intervention of a similar type, but that is not going to happen because nobody wants to send troops to Iraq. Maybe you are right to say 'give Petraeus a chance.' I think British troops should certainly withdraw.

Part 2: Global Terrorism

Johnson: You wrote, 'It could be argued that if September 11 had not happened, the American military-industrial complex might have had to invent it. Indeed, what happened on September 11 could have come out of what seemed to be the wild fantasies of "asymmetric threats" that were developed by American strategic analysts as they sought a new military role for the United States after the end of the Cold War.' [4] What did you mean by that?

Kaldor: Since the end of the Second World War there have been long development cycles in the military-industrial complex. Costs go down for a while, but then new weapons systems are developed and expenditure is increased to pay for them. If the military-industrial complex was not to be dismantled at the end of the cold war, it needed an excuse to produce the next generation of weapons. During the 1990s lots of people tried to develop new justifications and they invented all these amazing scenarios – that was what I meant. The military-industrial complex is a deep structure, in the UK as well as the US. British Aerospace (BAE) is a huge reason why we are purchasing Trident and are stuck in this difficult relationship with the US. This is not just about economics – it's not a vulgar Marxist point I am making. Why do we feel committed to BAE when we did not feel committed to the steel industry or the coal industry? Why do we feel the defence industry is the one industry we can't allow to be run-down? There you touch not just on economics but on our deepest assumptions about security – assumptions that shape our political and economic structures.

Johnson: Let's talk about the nature of one threat to our security, then. Many commentators view Islamist terror as a new and uniquely dangerous threat. Some, such as Paul Berman, view it as a form of totalitarianism. But in your essay 'Global Terrorism' you refuse to do so. You treat Islamist terrorist groups alongside 'the Christian Right' in the USA, Serb paramilitaries, and Hutu genocidists as various expressions of a 'new kind of violence of our time, the "new global terrorism" of anti-modernist regressive globalisers.' [5] What do you feel is gained in analytical power by this framing of the nature of the threat – in effect, treating Frenki's Boys

in Bosnia, Hutu genocidists in Rwanda, Christian fundamentalists in the USA and the 9/11 hijackers as linked phenomena?

Kaldor: Two things. First, I think totalitarianism is linked to the state. Yes, al-Qaeda may have a totalitarian ideology but it is not linked to the state in the way Nazism and Communism were, and is therefore not the same kind of threat. To present Islamic terrorism as a form of totalitarianism is really a way to legitimise the war on terror. If Islamic terrorism is indeed a uniquely totalitarian threat, then obviously the war on terror is legitimate as a way of dealing with it. I don't want to deny the seriousness of Islamic terrorism, but, I do think we should look again at the threat that we are experiencing. I was in Sarajevo after 9/11 and we had a moment of silence for 9/11. But you could see every Bosnian thinking, 'Why didn't the world have a moment of silence after Srebrenica, where 8,000 men and boys were killed?' And look at the grotesque violence that is going on in places like Rwanda. There is a sense that the special attention paid to Islamic terrorism is because it is a threat to the West. And that is my other objection – we don't take seriously these other terrible things that are happening in other parts of the world.

Johnson: You have argued that terrorists must be treated as criminals and not military enemies. But why? Let me play devil's advocate for a moment. Islamist terrorists are waging a war, have killed 3,000 people on one day by flying jet airliners into buildings, and seek to kill without limit. They issue ideological manifestos, forge political alliances, and act in light of both. They do not act for personal or 'criminal' gain. Why does it help to insist that such a threat is 'criminal?' Ed Husain's *The Islamist* – an insider's account of UK Islamist and Jihadist networks [6] – depicts not criminal gangs but something akin to Leninist groups – an unremitting focus on ideas, recruitment, entryist work, and ceaseless education and propaganda work. If the threat is of this political and ideological character how can it possibly help us to treat it as 'criminal?'

Kaldor: Well, I don't think criminals are only economic criminals. Hitler was a criminal. I think the problem about a 'war on terror' is that 'wars' are legitimate – that is the whole point about wars. And 'enemies' in a 'war' are treated in a certain way – very different from how you treat a criminal. By calling them 'criminals' I don't mean to make them any less important. On the contrary, I am pointing to the fact that they break every law in the book. They violate international humanitarian law, human rights law, and so on. I think al-Qaeda was enormously strengthened by

being treated as an 'enemy' in a 'war on terror.' Osama bin Laden suddenly became an equal to George Bush. We should not give them that legitimacy.

Part 3: The Helsinki Idea and the birth of a new politics

Johnson: Let's talk about the progressive alternative. You were deeply engaged in the debates between the West European peace movement and the East European opposition in the 1980s and these left a deep impression on your political understanding. [7] Can we start with what you call 'the Helsinki idea' – what was it and what was its impact on your thinking?

Kaldor: It was an idea that came together by chance. In 1975, in the Helsinki Agreement, a compromise was reached between the two superpowers. The Russians wanted security guarantees and the borders to be made inviolable in Europe. And the Americans – for tactical reasons, not because they were committed – wanted human rights. So peace and human rights came together in that agreement. It was a path-breaking agreement in that sense. I gave a speech in Helsinki on the 25th anniversary of the agreement and I said that the agreement brought together the two halves of my family. I realised that if you have peace in Europe you can also have debate, whereas the Cold War suppressed freedom. When the Helsinki agreement was signed, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing said, 'Now we can all agree.' Olof Palme said, 'On the contrary, now we can begin to disagree.'

Helsinki stimulated both the opposition in Eastern Europe and the Peace movement in the West. I think in the Peace movement we were less aware of Helsinki, but we had gone through the détente years and when we saw this new generation of nuclear weapons – Cruise and Pershing – it seemed completely unacceptable to go back to the heights of the Cold War. In Eastern Europe, oppositionists saw that their governments had signed these agreements and that Helsinki was an instrument that could be used. So we saw the emergence of the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) in Poland, Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, and so on.

What was new about the Helsinki idea? The conviction that peace was not just something between states and human rights were not just something that went on inside states. This challenged the tension between peace and human rights that was at the heart of the cold war.

Johnson: Can I suggest a way to complicate the story and see what your reaction is? The US Democratic Party Senator, Henry 'Scoop' Jackson, does not figure in your account of the end of the cold war. Yet Jackson was a hero to Natan Sharansky, Andrei Sakharov and other dissidents. Was it not the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment which first challenged détente by linking peace (in the sense of co-operative economic relations) to human rights (in the form of the human right to emigrate from Stalinist countries) at a time when both left and right – German Social Democrats as much as Kissengerian republicans – sought co-existence with Stalinism, and were wary of even acknowledging the dissidents, let alone placing them at the heart of policy. I don't think Jackson was only 'tactically' for human rights, and nor was his staffer, Richard Perle. Is it not possible to see common ground, or subterranean connections, at least in terms of goals, between what became the 'neoconservative' impulse to democracy-promotion and the liberal internationalist impulse? Think of a figure like Bernard Kouchner, now Foreign Minister in Nicolas Sarkozy's government, for instance.

Kaldor: I agree with you completely. I think there is a link. I felt it in my own soul, as it were. All of us who started off as peace movement activists and became passionate about human rights found it hard not to flip over to the other side. The neocons started on the left and felt that the peace movement and the left had been apologetic about Communism, had been fellow travellers, and they had not been taking human rights seriously. And certainly, I accept, in the peace movement everybody would pay lip-service to human rights but thought the threat of nuclear war was the bigger thing. There was only a small minority of us in the peace movement who took human rights seriously. But at the same time I am very glad I have that peace movement and left background. It holds you back when it comes to things like bombing. And this is the real problem. The neocons on the one hand are passionate about human rights but on the other hand they think bombing is legitimate in support of human rights.

Johnson: But it is legitimate to bomb sometimes, isn't it? What about bombing Serb positions to make them stop shelling ordinary Sarajevans as they shop in the market?

Kaldor: I was very unhappy about it at the time, and I am even more so in retrospect. I was in favour of intervention in Kosovo but I was very unhappy with the use of air-strikes. I just think it's unacceptable. I mean, what happened at Nuremberg was victor's justice. We should have also addressed Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The problem with the liberal internationalists and their alliance with the neocons is that they believe in wars for human rights so they have flipped over to the human rights side instead of holding peace and human rights together.

Part 4: The Cosmopolitan Political Project

Johnson: Central to your notion of a progressive foreign policy is the cosmopolitan political project. You have summed up the cosmopolitan alternative in these terms:

> [A] cosmopolitan political project ... would ... reconstruct legitimacy around an inclusive, democratic set of values ... counterposed against the politics of exclusivism ... [W]hat is needed is an alliance between local defenders of civility and transnational institutions which would guide a strategy aimed at controlling violence. Such a strategy would include political, military and economic components. It would operate within a framework of international law. Peacekeeping could be reconceptualised as cosmopolitan law-enforcement [and] a new strategy of reconstruction...should supplant the current dominant approaches of structural adjustment or humanitarianism. (..) The cosmopolitan project has to be a global project even if it is, as it must be, local or regional in application. [8]

Some see the cosmopolitan alternative as utopian. But you argue that not only is cosmopolitanism morally persuasive – in today's world, it is the only realistic policy on offer. What reasons would you offer for thinking cosmopolitanism is the new realism, so to speak?

Kaldor: Well, let's start with why not being cosmopolitan is deeply unrealistic. The Iraq war has made this clear. The use of force in a classical way, and the idea of polarising ideologies between good and evil, has simply exacerbated a new war. You can't resolve new wars that way. The key to solving new wars is the restoration of legitimate authority. And you can't do that except with an inclusive ideology. Any attempt to introduce traditional realpolitik approaches simply exacerbates the problems. And that is what we are seeing in the Middle East, which is terribly dangerous and difficult. Nowadays, political authority depends on consent, so inclusive approaches to governance are the only approaches that work. We don't think that it's utopian to expect states to respect human rights within states so why do we insist that it is utopian in the international area?

Johnson: Central to your vision of a cosmopolitan political alternative is the rise of a global civil society as the centrepiece of global legitimacy speading the values of multi-culturalism and human rights. But after 1989 you discovered that global civil society included new nationalist and fundamentalist groups as well as human rights and peace groups. [9] So, does 'global civil society' describe a socio-political terrain, occupied by Osama bin Laden as surely as the Helsinki Citizens Assembly, or does it describe a delimited political project of the left? These two meanings seem to co-exist and to make the concept a bit slippery.

Kaldor: I think it definitely is both. But I'm not sure I'd call it a political project of 'the left' – maybe of 'liberals.' I've spent the last ten years trying to work out what global civil society is. Basically, before 1989 civil society was constituted within the framework of the state and you could not talk about a civil society without a state. They constitute each other – civil society needs a framework of law, and so on. After 1989 we saw global governance and civil society constituting each other. In a more complex intermeshed globalised world, civil society is not local or national but global. That's the first point.

The second point is that there exist different conceptions of civil society, each with an accompanying normative framework. In my book, Global Civil Society, I distinguish three. First, the neo-liberal conception, which is close to Robert Putnam's notion of 'social capital.' This is the idea that civil society is associationalism. It smoothes the path of capitalism, and is seen as 'what we have in the West.' It's a sort of American idea. The second conception of civil society came out of Eastern Europe – civil society is social movements, activism, and trying to influence the state. A third idea, which I call the postmodern idea, suggests both that 'civil society' is itself a part of a eurocentric narrative starting with the Enlightenment, and carried on by Hegel; and that this excludes other non-Western narratives.

My argument is that civil society is the arena where we debate different models of governance. It is the medium through which a social contract is negotiated. Today, we are in the process of establishing a global civil society alongside international law and global institutions. Yes, in this new arena there are horrible people as well as nice people, but I start from an Enlightenment assumption that if you debate these things with relative openness you are going to come up with better consequences than if you don't debate them. That is how I reconcile the normative and the descriptive.

Part 5: The Human Security Doctrine

Johnson: Let's talk about a viable security doctrine for the new global era. In 2004, you were asked by The High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, to set up a study group on Europe's security capabilities. In the end the team developed a security doctrine for a European security policy – *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe: the Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities* (2004). [10] Can you summarise the human security doctrine for the reader?

Kaldor: Basically, it is the cosmopolitan alternative but the group that I put together with Solana and others thought the term rather intellectual, hence 'human security.' Actually, when we decided to use that term we didn't fully grasp what baggage it had.

In essence, the human security doctrine says Europe is a new kind of institution; it does not need an army in a traditional sense to defend borders, but, rather, needs to contribute to global human security. Human security means the protection of individuals and communities as opposed to states and borders.

'Doctrine' is about how you put that into practice. We call for a human security response force that would involve soldiers, policemen, and civilian experts. And we enunciate a set of principles of human security. Two of those principles are absolutely critical. One is human rights. The other is legitimate political authority. The job of the intervening force is to establish legitimate political authority which, in the end, is the only thing that can guarantee human security.

The human security doctrine says we are for human security everywhere. There is a role for Europe in contributing to UN and international community interventions when states don't provide human security, or are non-existent and so can't provide human security. But the key task is to create institutions that can provide human security, and this has huge implications for the way in which we should use force. Bombing is unacceptable in a human security approach – 'collateral damage' is a violation of human rights. And you can't 'win.' The most you can do is to stabilise the situation so that there can be a political solution to underpin a legitimate authority.

Johnson: Rather like Isaiah Berlin's two concepts of liberty, there seem to be two concepts of human security. The narrow version is 'negative' (i.e. freedom from

fear – security of territory from invasion, security of person from physical attack, security from arbitrary arrest, and so on) while the broad version is 'positive' (i.e. freedom from want – security of rights to health, education, economic prosperity, even socio-economic equality). Some favour the broad approach (as set out in the 1994 UNDP document [11]) while others, such as Norway and Canada, favour a narrower approach, defining human security as the protection of individuals and communities from violence, while handling the questions of economic development and social policy outside the conceptual framework of human security. How does the Barcelona Report engage with this debate?

Kaldor: My version is narrow. Not in the sense of ignoring freedom from want but in the sense of focusing on situations in which human lives are threatened. The difference between 'human development' and 'human security' is really about the level of risk individuals are exposed to. 'Human development' is not just about freedom from want, but includes freedom from fear, too – feeling safe on the streets, being able to vote. The difference is that human security is about moments of extreme peril. Amartya Sen calls it the 'downside risks.' [12] Taylor Owen talks of 'threshold vulnerabilities.' [13] And I believe we are facing extreme peril. Everyone talks about climate change, but nuclear proliferation is also a big risk. And the new wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and Palestine are becoming interconnected and the spectre of a new global conflagration is raised. I feel a narrow human security approach to all this is incredibly important.

Johnson: Let me raise a concern. Would you accept that 'human security' is an essentially contested concept unable to transcend the constitutive divisions of political philosophy about the good life, the role of the state, the question of rights, political responsibility, and so on? What I am getting at is this: is there any danger that a political philosophy and policy mix – global social democracy – will be introduced to Europe dressed as a non-political concept of 'human security,' behind the backs, so to speak, of the citizens, and placed beyond political debate by being framed as a matter of 'human rights?'

Kaldor: Well, I've been lobbying very hard for the EU to adopt a human security doctrine and what I am afraid of is that unless it is taken up in a very public way it will just become another word used to justify whatever it is that governments or the EU does. This, of course, was the critique made by Chomsky of 'humanitarianism.' While I don't agree with Chomsky, I think there is something in it – humanitarianism

became something assimilated into cold war rhetoric. I worry about that – not about us smuggling in global social democracy!

There is also another problem – the problem raised by Carl Schmitt. If you turn enemies into criminals, you don't allow them space to be political opponents. He argued that the political was defined in terms of the friend-enemy distinction and that had to include the real physical possibility of killing. I am dubious about this argument. It is as totalitarian as you hint that human security could be. Within countries, the rule of law does not prevent political debate. On the contrary, it provides the conditions in which such debate can take place.

Johnson: Can I explore some problems that will be faced by a human security doctrine? Let's take agencies and institutions first. Who has the responsibility to protect? Who is to define 'security?' Who is to do the securing?

Kaldor: If the EU could only get things together I think it could be a very important agency – it is neither a classic intergovernmental organisation nor a nation-state. But, nowadays, institutions like the EU only operate within a broader framework of civil society pressure. Without a public sentiment that human security has to be done, nothing will ever happen. I think that is part of the problem with the traditional intellectual framework – it does not take into account the relationship between what the state does and domestic politics.

Johnson: You have developed proposals for force projection that involve new configurations of military and civilian capacity. Is it possible that this is already happening, but on an ad hoc basis and under the control of the military?

Kaldor: I think it is happening, yes, and particularly within the military, but it's not being led by the military. I found it fascinating when writing the Barcelona report that our biggest allies were in the military. We were asked to do a report for the European Space Agency and we had three French generals and they were all incredibly positive about human security. In the British military, the experience in Northern Ireland and Bosnia has been absolutely formative. NATO is also moving in this direction but it has so much ideological baggage that – this struck me at NATO meetings – it is not as developed as the EU when it comes to this kind of thinking.

The EU has undertaken some important missions in the last few years and for the new report for Javier Solana we've done case studies. [14] We found that on the ground the EU missions are acting in new ways. The mission in the Congo was holding meetings in schools and mobilising public sympathy. Defending the rights of the opposition candidate in the election made people realise the mission was not a tool of the President. In Lebanon and Palestine there are very good things happening on the ground, but they are thwarted by the fact that at a political level the EU is in the grip of the 'war on terror' and American policy.

Johnson: What about the problem of thresholds? Liotta and Owen have raised the question of 'how direct a link must be made between vulnerability abroad and EU security' to trigger an intervention. [15] When does a human security doctrine indicate it's the right time to intervene?

Kaldor: We put less emphasis on the 'why' of intervention than the 'how' of intervention – because we felt the 'how' had been neglected. What we did say is that we need a new legal framework to deal with conflicts between humanitarian law and human rights. We need rules of engagement. Of course we need to specify the conditions for intervention – we deliberately did not specify them ourselves.

Johnson: Can I push further on the question of legitimacy. You have written 'the use of military force should be approved through due process – for example the United Nations Security Council.' [16] But – I think I am right in saying this – you supported the war in Kosovo, even though it didn't have UN approval. Isn't there a great danger in granting the authority to confer legitimacy to a body like the UN Security Council, which is made up, in part, of authoritarian states?

Kaldor: I think it is definitely a problem and that is why we need other sets of criteria. In *The Kosovo Report*, we said that the NATO intervention was illegal but legitimate and that it is very dangerous when there is a gap between legality and legitimacy. [17] I think this was prophetic and that the gap may have made Iraq possible. But even if we had a set of criteria for intervention enshrined in law – the 'responsibility to protect,' for example – in the end the intervention has to have public support as well. What has been fascinating about the rise of cosmopolitan law – i.e. international law that applies to individuals – has been the role that global civil society has played. Even though international law consists of treaties between states, and the states remain the responsible powers, it has been an enormous amount of public pressure that has changed the nature of the legal arrangements in

treaties like the Land Mines Convention or the International Criminal Court or in the attitudes to humanitarian intervention. Nevertheless, it remains the case that in the end states sign the treaties and I am not sure that I would want to tamper with that.

Johnson: Are you sympathetic to the proposal made by The Princeton Project to create a 'concert of democracies,' involving Western and non-Western democracies? [18]

Kaldor: I'm not. There have been a series of projects to bring the democracies together and they all fail because they are all statist projects. If you look at the cosmopolitan treaties – Land Mines, International Criminal Court, and so on – what you have is a network of states and civil society. I'm also unhappy with the idea of a 'concert of democracies' because, well, what is to count as a 'democracy?' Democracy is just so varied at the moment. I think formal democratisation has been a method of integrating countries into the global system rather than a method of increasing accountability to citizens. And I fear that is also what a 'concert of democracies' would do.

Part 6: Answering the Critics

Johnson: You have suggested that the contemporary 'anti-war' movement has the potential to pick up where the 1980s Helsinki moment left off. Some of us believe that large parts (not all, of course) of the 'anti-war' movement are better characterised as a form of 'reactionary anti-imperialism'...

Kaldor: I agree!

Johnson: ...We think much of it resembles the fake 'peace movements' and 'peace conferences' of the official East rather than, say END. It is led by Stalinists like Andrew Murray, who sends his greetings to 'socialist North Korea,' apologists for Saddam like George Galloway, Hamas supporters, and a hard left-Islamist alliance which talks not of peace in Iraq but victory for the so-called 'insurgents.' These leaders have attacked the Iraq unions, sung the praises of Hassan Nasrallah, and hosted official apologists for the Iranian regime – while keeping Iranian oppositionists off their platforms. It's a long way from E.P.Thompson's vision of a 'transcontinental movement of citizens' isn't it?

Kaldor: It really depresses me. It's one reason why I simply haven't been active in it, although the protests against Trident in Scotland have been different and I joined the blockade of the Trident base for a day in July.

Johnson: So why has there not been more of a challenge from within the 'anti-war' movement?

Kaldor: Movements come and go. The bulk of the movement are ordinary people and they drift away. Those who stay active and so are the people in a position to organise and lead things next time round are often the hard left. So a big part of the END experience was fighting against the old hardliners in CND. We argued about style, participation, and democracy. But in the 1980s we broke through, maybe because we had Edward, I don't know. This time it has not happened. It seems that these old guys, mostly from 1968, along with the Islamists, have blocked a similar breakthrough. It's very worrying.

Johnson: Some see a dangerous relativism in your arguments. You said in an interview, 'I'm very happy that we have left behind the black-white world of the Cold War. My grand vision is a vision where people debate and where a million visions operate.' [19] Kenan Malik was unpersuaded, finding in this an open door to relativism. 'This vision of a thousand flowers blooming rather than just two is, of course, very appealing. But there's also something a bit too neat about this concept of pluralism-as-grand-vision. A vision cannot be a process. By definition it requires an end goal. As a pragmatist, I might want to say that all visions of the future are equally valid (though even for a pragmatist there have to be limits to such tolerance). As an idealist, I have to believe that my vision is better than yours; that cosmopolitanism, say, is better than imperialism; and that the world would be a better place if it looked like my ideal.' [20] Isn't there just a flat contradiction between cosmopolitan universalism and the blooming of 'a million visions?'

Kaldor: Well, I think cosmopolitanism is about many visions blooming. The reason we talk about cosmopolitanism rather than humanism is precisely because of a respect for human diversity. There are some universals such as not killing each other and not committing genocide, but there are also very different cultural ways in which those things are realised. I used to take the view that there were universal values, European in origin but no less attractive to other countries for that. I now realise that this view is completely and utterly wrong. The more you study Islam, the more you study Sanskrit history, the more you find that these ideas were in all

those cultures. There is a struggle between a black and white world which believes in good and evil and a world which believes in debate and reason. When I started to get involved in all these Islamic debates I realised that so many of the Enlightenment ideas actually came from Classical Islam. So I don't think it is culturally relativist at all, but the binary world doesn't admit of any plurality. I experienced this in the cold war which was a very difficult time for anyone who was against nuclear weapons – you were outside what was the orthodox debate.

Johnson: But let's make this concrete. If we are talking about gay and lesbian rights and someone says, 'Well, my vision tells me these so-called rights are evil, so it is right and proper that I discriminate,' then, to argue against that view, rather than simply shrugging, we would have to go beyond 'plurality.'

Kaldor: Yes, of course, but I do reach beyond plurality. A cosmopolitan is plural about culture but has certain fundamental, universal core beliefs. And of course there is always going to be a problem about the borders of those core beliefs.

Johnson: Don't your views add up to a de facto if not de jure pacifism? You are reluctant to distinguish between the deliberate killing of combatants and the accidental killing of civilians. In your view, as the equality of human beings has become more widely accepted, then the difference between killing in war and other kinds of killing has become harder to sustain. You seem to doubt that killing large numbers of conscripts from the air is morally different to a massacre of civilians. But what about, for example, the allied use of air superiority over Europe in 1944-5 to kill large numbers of defenceless German conscripts whenever they could? That speeded the allied advance across Europe – it confined the movement of German armoured columns to the night for one thing – and so the liberation of the death camps and the end of the war came more quickly. Isn't it important we retain the intellectual tools to make exactly these kinds of agonising discriminations – distinguishing, like Reinhold Niebuhr, between moral man and immoral society? [21] How could one retake a city occupied by people carrying out crimes against humanity, or use force against enemy positions that are part and parcel of that crime, without something like the just war theory distinction between combatants and civilians?

Kaldor: Well, in domestic law you are allowed to kill somebody who is threatening you or a third party. I support that. But in just war theory if the victory is 'proportional' to the number of civilians you kill by accident the war is legitimate.

I reject that. I don't think it's ever justifiable to kill civilians. Sometimes you have to accept that you simply can't defeat insurgents, and that you will either have to negotiate with them or try some other method. If killing insurgents means killing a large number of civilians, it is simply unacceptable.

Am I a pacifist? This is something I have thought about a lot. I always assumed that I wasn't a pacifist and I knew that I would have supported the war against Hitler. I now think about the war against Hitler and do wonder to myself in the light of hindsight. The war was really terrible, and the Holocaust happened *after* the war began not before. I think of how Slobodan Milošević used the NATO intervention to ethnically cleanse the Albanians. Would I still, in hindsight, support World War Two? Should we not have tried to undermine Hitler from below? I definitely think that we should have tried to attack the concentration camps or the trains going to the camps and we should not have bombed Dresden or Tokyo. But I am not a pacifist – I think you can use force to stop genocide. And I do think sometimes you have to go after insurgents. For instance, in Goražde, when General Riley shelled the Serbs for two hours, I think that was a human security operation.

Johnson: What are you working on now?

Kaldor: I am preparing an exhibition on war and peace for the municipality of Barcelona. A castle where many Republicans were executed in the civil war has been given to the municipality by the Spanish state. The municipality decided it wanted a permanent exhibition of war and peace titled 'The Long Journey from War to Human Security,' and asked me to help design it. The first part of the exhibition is 'from war to new forms of violence' tracing the move from the defeat of uniformed enemies in battle to the killing of civilians, and that part of the exhibition starts with Picasso's Guernica. The second part is titled 'From peace to human security.'

We hope to use a Velázquez portrait from the Prado as the symbol of the exhibition. It is of the god Mars. His affair with Venus has been uncovered and we see Mars naked, sitting on a bed, dejected, his weapons on the floor. I discovered it was painted in 1640, about eight years before Westphalia, so at the same time Grotius is writing about international law and facing some of the same dilemmas we are facing today. Has Mars given up his weapons for ever or is he about to get dressed and go back to war?

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Notes

[1] Kaldor 1999a.

[2] Kaldor 1999a, p. 10.

[3] Johnson 2007.

[4] Kaldor 2001.

[5] Kaldor 2003b.

[6] Husain 2007.

[7] Kaldor 2003a. See also Kaldor 1999b.

[8] Kaldor 1999a, pp. 10-11.

[9] Kaldor 2003a.

[10] Kaldor et al 2004.

[11] UNDP 1994.

[12] Sen 2000.

[13] Owen 2004.

[14] Kaldor 2007b.

[15] Liotta and Owen 2006.

[16] Kaldor 2003b, p. 196.

[17] Independent International Commission on Kosovo 2000.

[18] Ikenberry and Slaughter 2006.

[19] Kaldor 2002.

[20] Malik 2002.

[21] Niebuhr 1932.