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“Do Failed and Fragile States Threaten Canada’s National Security?”

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You know the story; the link between 9-11 and Afghanistan, the oppression Afghans endured under the Taliban, and the risk of terrorism coming here if we don’t confront it there.

-- Speech by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, May 11, 2007.

We have a collective problem: Forty to sixty states, home to nearly two billion people, are either sliding backward and teetering on the brink of implosion or have already collapsed.... Within these countries, vicious networks of criminality, violence and drugs feed on disenfranchised populations and uncontrolled territory.

-- Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart (2008: 3) “Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World.”

INTRODUCTION

In our “new” world order approximately 40-60 out of some 195 states have been labeled by western security policy makers and International Relations scholars as “failed” or “fragile” states.¹ Thus, nearly one-third of all political regimes existing today are defined by their

¹ A non-exhaustive list of recent scholarly treatments on the failed and fragile states includes: R.E. Brooks (2005). “Failed States, or the State as Failure?”, *University of Chicago Law Review* 72 (4): 1159-1196; Chester A. Crocker (2003). “Engaging Failing States,” *Foreign Affairs* 82 (5): 32-44; Eizenstat, Stuart E., Porter, John Edward, Weinstein, Jeremy M. (2005). “Rebuilding Weak States,” *Foreign Affairs* 84(1); Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart (2008). *Fixing Failed States: A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Monika Francois and Inder Sud (2006). “Promoting Stability and Development in Fragile and Failed States,” *Development Policy Review*, 24 (2): 141-160; Alex Gourevitch. “The Myth of the Failed State: Intervention and Third World Sovereignty”; Thomas D. Grant, “Partition of Failed States: Impediments and Impulses,” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 11.2 (2004) 51-82; Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascual (2005). “Addressing State Failure,” *Foreign Affairs* 84 (4): 153-163; Stewart Patrick (2006). “Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction,” *The Washington Quarterly* 29 (2): 27-53; Robert I. Rothberg (2002). “The New Nature of Nation-State Failure,” *The Washington Quarterly* 25 (3): 85-96; Susan E. Rice (2003). “The New National Security Strategy: Focus on Failed States,” Brookings Policy Brief , No. 116; Liana Sun Wyler (2007). *Weak and Failing States: Evolving Security Threats and US Policy*. CRS Report for Congress. Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur (eds.) (2005), *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Governance*. Tokyo: United Nations University. Weinstein, Jeremy M., Porter, John Edward and Eizenstat, Stuart E. (2004). “On the Brink: Weak States and US National Security: A Report of the Commission for Weak States and US National Security.” Washington, DC: Center for Global Development. Available online

qualities of being poor and weakly governed (at least by western Liberal democratic standards). Whereas in the immediate post-Cold War years of the 1990s these FFS were framed by Human Security discourses of development aid and humanitarian intervention, the *securitization* of the FFS as global security threat represents a rather sudden discursive shift occurring primarily in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States (hereafter 9/11). Since then, these newly securitized FFS have been identified as one of the major obstacles to the West's efforts at attaining global security, stability and peace.

Do the failed and fragile states pose a security threat to Canada and its NATO allies? This driving research question of this paper yields two possible answers. The short answer – “yes, of course” – is the most prominent and enjoys a pervasive consensus in international security policy and the scholarly literature in International Relations and Security Studies. The second and longer answer – “yes, but...” -- is the more critical and nuanced answer, and is the one supplied in this paper.

The affirmative answer, holding that the large category of FFS represents one of the most grievous threats to global security and stability, finds support in a robust consensus that has emerged in the past few years. Conventional wisdom in both theory and security policy discussing the FFS is now clear: these “ungoverned spaces”² in the developing world, often afflicted by violent conflict, pose global security risks primarily because deficiencies in their governance capacity prevent them from controlling transborder “spillover” hazards. Six spillovers identified by the US *National Security Statement* (2002) take up much of the attention in the literature: transnational terrorism, weapons proliferation, organized crime linked with drugs and human trafficking, epidemic disease and health issues, energy security, and regional conflicts or instability. Canada's *National Security Policy* (2004: 7) emphasizes that the FFS are “one of the most disturbing recent security developments”, while the country's most recent foreign and defence policy review, the *International Policy Statement* (2005), places the goal of “stabilizing” the “25 to 30” FFS as one of three major policy priorities for this decade. The other two priorities-- addressing global terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction— are also commonly associated with the FFS. Canada's NATO (North-Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom have articulated in security policy documents and official pronouncements the need to address the security challenges to the West emanating from the Global South. NATO itself has demonstrated the importance of addressing the FFS security threat, most recently in its Afghanistan engagement.³

at: http://www.cgdev.org/doc/books/weakstates/Full_Report.pdf. World Bank (2005). "Fragile States: The Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS) Initiative." Available online at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20127382~menuPK:2480~pagePK:34370~theSitePK:4607,00.html>; World Bank (2004). “The Role of the World Bank in Conflict and Development: Evolving Agenda.” Washington, DC: World Bank.

² National Defense Strategy of the United States of America (March 2005). Available online at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nds1.pdf>. Accessed: October 7, 2008.

³ At the London Conference (January 31- February 1, 2006), where the Afghan government and the international community committed to the “Afghanistan Compact,” NATO members were included in the 64 countries and 11 international development organizations that pledged some US \$10.5 billion for state-rebuilding. Canada's contribution was among the top with \$125 million. The Conservative government of

The existence of this influential consensus on the global risks to insecurity and instability caused by the many FFS is a special case of experts in theory and in security policy finding concordance. Perhaps because of today's fearsome security environment scholars identifying with the rationalist Realist school in International Relations are allied with their usual adversaries in the critical or idealist schools such as Liberal Internationalism (Gelb and Rosenthal 2003). In Canada, Michael Ignatieff (2005) suggests that the emergence of the 25-30 FFS is on par with past crises of world order, such as the collapse of the Soviet empire in 1989-1991. Oxford scholar of Canadian foreign policy, Jennifer Welsh (2006), argues in support of Canada's role in the invasion of Afghanistan because as a failed state it is in need of reconstruction to prevent it from becoming a further cause of international instability. In the US, Francis Fukuyama articulates what is a common notion that "[s]ince the end of the Cold War, weak and failing states have arguably become the single-most important problem for international order."⁴

From the policy perspective, politicians and policy makers arranged along the centre-left and right (even as far right as the US "neo-conservatives") of the ideological spectrum are in agreement on the securitization of the FFS and the need for state-building to resolve the problem. In the US, for instance, the Republicans (or "neo-conservatives") under the administration of President Bush (2000-2008) have not diverged from, but rather expanded, the earlier Democratic notions of using armies to forcibly bring democracy and peace to developing countries through the solution of "engagement" and efforts to spread of democracy, rule of law, and market economy in the Middle East and elsewhere.⁵ US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently opined that states incapable of exercising "responsible sovereignty" have a "spillover effect" in the form of terrorism, weapons proliferation, and other dangers.⁶ Generally speaking, the security –foreign, defence, development – policies of Canada's NATO allies, the US and the UK, are in complete agreement on the FFS security threat and its solution of state-building (i.e. project western values on these FFS).⁷

Stephen Harper has promised a total allocation of \$1 billion in development assistance to Afghanistan for 2001-11, and \$23 million of this has been dedicated to constructing democracy and the rule of law in Afghanistan. For a detailed list of the contributions of all donors at the London Conference, see: "Financial Outcomes of the London Conference on Afghanistan, International Community Pledging Outcomes," Available online at: www.fco.gov.uk.

⁴ Francis Fukuyama (2004). *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press,, p. 92.

⁵ This neo-Wilsonianism discourse by the Republicans is far removed from the disdain directed at similar democracy and human rights talk associated with the Carter and Clinton administration, according to Deush (2007).

⁶ Adam Garfinkle (2005). "A Conversation With Condoleezza Rice," *American Interest* 1 (1): 47–50. See also, Condoleezza Rice (2005). "The Promise of Democratic Peace: Why Promoting Freedom is the Only Realistic Path to Security," *Washington Post*, 11 December 2005.

⁷ For the United States, see for instance: Berger S.R. (2004). "Foreign Policy for a Democratic President," *Foreign Affairs* 83 (3): 47; US *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (March 2005), Available online at: www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050318nds1.pdf. ; Bradley Graham, "Pentagon Strategy Aims to Block Internal Threats to Foreign Forces," *Washington Post*, March 19, 2005, p. A2; Jim Garamone, "Rumsfeld Describes Changing Face of War," *Armed Forces Press Service*, May 25, 2005; George Tenet, "The World Wide Threat in 2003: Evolving Dangers in a Complex World," testimony before the Senate

The involvement of the International Relations Realists in this consensus opinion on the FFS is not a little perplexing. Rather than adhering to their sober traditional view that challenges to national security interests and to the world order are based on shifts in the balance of power amongst major states, Realists have become a driving force behind this new notion that the impoverished non-strategic countries of the Global South do pose a national and global security risk. A few Realist voices do attempt to argue, along the lines of Preble and Logan (2006), that of the ten or so humanitarian missions undertaken by the US in recent years in the FFS “—from Djibouti to Liberia to Kosovo—are far removed from America’s national security interests..”⁸ But, these voices recede into the powerful waves of the current consensus that the impoverished FFS are significant threats to global insecurity and instability.

Given this expansive and highly persuasive consensus position, it becomes a rather daunting task to propose a critical evaluation of the securitization of the FFS qua global security threats. Despite the challenge, I will frame my answer to the core research question – Do the FFS pose a security threat to Canada and its NATO allies ? – around the second option: “yes, but...” The starting point of this essay’s proposed critical and nuanced assessment of the FFS securitization qua security referent is a two-fold set of obstacles. First, any critical assessment must acknowledge the robust consensus view, and second, the imprecise and nature of this powerful consensus means that a critical evaluation of the FFS securitization cannot be grounded upon pointing out its methodological and empirical failings.

Let me briefly elaborate on this latter point. I posit (in this and other works) that the received wisdom holding that the FFS do pose a threat to global – as opposed to internal and regional – security, stability and peace is founded upon a discursive and normative consensus view. It is not a consensus based on empirics, theory-testing hypotheses, or valid methodological claims. It is as an unproblematized discursive truism, and the normative claim that democracies and strong states are “good” (and failed and fragile states are “bad”, “dangerous,” “unstable,” “evil,” “corrupt”) that the FFS “logic” prevails. We know this because the FFS scholarly literature, upon which policy is based, is fraught with innumerable conceptual, methodological and theoretical weaknesses. Only a few will be observed here.

Select Committee on Intelligence, February 12, 2003; and State Failure Task Force (2000). “State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings” McLean, VA: Science Applications International Corporation. **For the United Kingdom**, see for instance: Tony Blair (2007). “A Battle for Global Values,” *Foreign Affairs*, 86; Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit (PMSU) (Feb. 2005). *Investing in Prevention: An International Strategy to Manage Risks of Instability and Improve Crisis Response*. London: PMSU.

⁸ Justin Logan and Christopher Preble (2006). “Failed States and Flawed Logic: The Case Against a Standing Nation-Building Office,” *Policy Analysis*, no. 560 (Feb. 11), Available online at: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa560.pdf>. For similar criticisms, see John Mearshimer (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton; Gary T. Dempsey (2002), “Old Folly in a New Disguise: Nation Building to Combat Terrorism,” *Policy Analysis*, no. 429 (March 21) Available online at: <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa429.pdf>; . Reuters (2005). “Lots of Fanfare, Billions of Dollars and Not Much to Show.” 4 April, 2005.

First and foremost, no one is absolutely clear on what is a failed, failing or fragile state beyond articulating that they are “weakly governed,” or “ungoverned spaces”⁹ that are replete with “governance gaps” (Eizenstat et al., 2005) or a “sovereignty gap” (Ghani and Lockhart 2008: 5) by virtue of not being able to provide security, rule of law, and basic needs to their own citizens. Beyond this general notion, a confusing conceptual nebulosity of the FFS label suffuses the current discourse.

No precise agreement exists on either the total number of FFS, or on specifics such as which country should be labeled and listed as a “failed” or “failing” or “fragile” state. The number of FFS ranges from as low as 20 (CIA’s US State Failure Task Force, 2000) to as high as the “40 to 60” noted by Ghani and Lockhart (2008: 3).¹⁰ Although, today there is an agreement on many of the top-ranked FFS, frequently listing Afghanistan, Haiti, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Zimbabwe. The Appendix at the end of this paper provides a few lists of the FFS, including CIDA’s (Canadian International Development Agency) list of 25 “development partners” (which notably excludes Afghanistan), and the World Bank’s list of LICUS (low-income countries under stress), which are statistically prone to conflict according to the World Bank (2003, 2005). Not only is the total number of FFS uncertain, but so too at the micro level, disagreement arises on whether or a country constitutes a “failed”, “failing” or “fragile” state.¹¹ Generally speaking, theory building rests upon clearly articulated, if contested, concepts.

Second, on a methodological front the FFS securitization thesis highlights the severe shortcomings and imprecision of the affirmative consensus view. In academic scholarship, development scholars frequently take great issue with the “root causes” argument and the negligible link existing between poverty and terrorism.¹² And yet, while the FFS securitization threat proponents do pay lip service to the fallacy of the “root causes” argument, it is precisely this assumption that grounds the fears that impoverished nation-states could (somehow) mount a security challenge against the West, say, by arriving in boatloads of poor, disease-ridden refugees seeking refuge. In one of the few efforts at critical appraisal of whether or not the

⁹ National Defense Strategy of the United States of America (March 2005), op. cit., p. 4

¹⁰ Canada’s International Policy Statement and CIDA have identified 25 to 30 FFS; US National Security Strategy (2002) estimates that there are between 50 and 60, and Britain’s Department for International Development classifies 46 states with 870 million inhabitants as “fragile.”

¹¹ In Rubin Barnett’s (2007) *Foreign Affairs* article, “Afghanistan and Threats to Human Security,” he defines the country as a “failed state” because of its situation where a “battleground [exists] between warring factions sponsored by competing foreign interests whose disregard for reconstruction and the development of proper institutions.” By most accounts Afghanistan is treated as a “fragile” state because it has sufficient functioning to stave off the rare, and worse, status as a completely “failed” or “collapsed” state, which William Zartman (1997: 4) defines as occurring when “the basic functions of the state are no longer performed.”

¹² Another highly questionable causal linkage that goes unchallenged in today’s FFS security thinking is that between democracy and stability or the Liberal Peace (i.e. holding that Liberal Democracies do not fight each other). In development scholarship, democracy has long been conceived as a messy process that leads to instability, not to stability, peace and cozy state-society relations. This has serious policy implications for the proponents of the state-building project in the FFS, under which it is expected that building “good” – democratic, Liberal, rule of law -- states will engender domestic and global security. It will not; it never has. On the false hopes pinned on the democracy-stability nexus see, most recently, Deepak Lal (2003). “Is Democracy Necessary for Development?” in Sunder Ramaswamy and Jeffrey W. Cason (eds.), *Development and Democracy: New Perspectives on an Old Debate*. Hanover, NH: Middlebury College Press.

FFS do pose a global security threat, authors Logan and Preble (2006) opine that the FFS scare has been illogically exaggerated by being based on a single case of a dangerous FFS: Afghanistan. Theory building simply cannot be built on a single case. A few other scholars have remonstrated against the methodological limitations involved in treating the FFS as security threats, but no systematic or noticeable attack on sloppy or absent causal linkages between the impoverished FFS and the global security challenges such as terrorism has yet been levied. In security policy circles, Canada's own former Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier, has gone on record saying that there is little reason to believe that Afghanistan, or any other impoverished weakly governed nation-state, has the will or ability to produce another mass terrorist outrage on North American soil.¹³ He noted in his conference remarks that not only are western security experts watching terrorist groups much more closely nowadays, but also the terrorist threat is more likely to be home-grown (e.g. London, Madrid, Bali, and the Toronto 18).

In sum, the strong consensus view that the FFS pose a grave global security challenge to Canada and the West is an empirically imprecise one, whose discursive power has been inflated by a concomitant dearth of dissent and disagreement in the theoretical and policy literature on security. As a Social Scientist, I cannot refrain from observing that such imprecision of basic variables and causal linkages would not pass muster if the normal standards of proof for theory building were applied. Under most circumstances a theoretical notion that cannot even clearly define the "dependent variable" under study would not garner nearly as much respect as the FFS securitization hypothesis. For my purposes in this essay, these foregoing points reveal that mounting a critical assessment of the FFS securitization thesis will not be successful if it merely highlights the methodological failings: These do not matter much. Hence, another approach must be found in order to successfully contribute a much-needed critical appraisal of the core research question: Do the FFS pose a security threat to Canadian (western) security interests?

ARGUMENT AND APPROACH

The paper aims to provide an exploratory and critical assessment of the securitization of the FFS qua global security threats to Canada, Canadians and other western allied states and citizens under NATO. The foregoing discussion on the discursive power (as opposed to empirical persuasiveness) upholding the received wisdom that affirms the securitization of the FFS suggests that a different tack is needed. Highlighting methodological shortcomings is rejected because this approach accomplishes little when confronted with a discursively and normatively powerful consensus found in western security policy and security studies. Pointing to the quantitatively low probability that a transborder spillover threat – terrorisms or epidemic disease, or mass refugee exodus – will affect Canada any time soon pales against the mere plausibility of these spillover threats. Furthermore, the massive causally impact of any spillover danger offsets the fact that they are unlikely to occur.

¹³ Citation source unknown at this time.

Without denying that the FFS could potentially harm Canada and its NATO allies, my approach to the research question is to probe *why* western security policy experts and International Relations scholars have come to perceive the FFS as global security threats. The question of why can be answered by adapting key elements from the “world risk society” outlined by German sociologist Ulrich Beck. In order to shed light on the securitization of the FFS I propose the consideration of two constitutive elements of his WRS grand theory: (i) the nature of security risks perceived in the WRS; (ii) the context WRS provides to the securitization processes with a focus on risk management.

Through an exploration of these two elements, the paper will be able to elicit some preliminary findings on the applicability of the WRS to the international security studies, and more specifically to shed light on the particular case of the FFS securitization. Puzzling about the FFS securitization is why the typically careful Realists are now abiding the view that the FFS in the Global South have the collective power to alter strategic national interests of the western powers, and the more theoretical puzzle concerning the rather rapid securitization of the FFS, who only in the 1990s were discursively framed and acted upon as recipients in need of development and humanitarian assistance. The paper draws upon other efforts to explore the utility of the WRS to International Relations issues,¹⁴ as well as the growing study of risk in various Social Sciences disciplines.¹⁵

The paper is organized as follows. First, the world risk society concept is introduced, followed by the two core elements of the WRS that are argued to be usefully adapted to the case study of the FFS securitization. These elements are the nature of risks, the context of securitization processes. The conclusion follows with a reiteration of why the WRS approach is useful way to understand why it is that the FFS are so pervasively conceived as being global security threats in the absence of persuasive evidence.

Introducing the World Risk Society

Ulrich Beck’s (1999) “world risk society” (WRS) thesis, an extension of his 1992 “risk society” thesis, presents an ontological vision of an emerging global society that is becoming increasingly aware of the plethora of risks abounding in modern society.¹⁶ In his own words,

¹⁴ See, for instance, Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (2001). “Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 30 (2): 285-309; Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (2006). *The Risk Society at War. Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-first Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Keith Spence (2005) “World Risk Society and War against Terror,” *Political Studies*, 53 (6): 284-302. Christopher Coker (2002) “Globalisation and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the Management of Risk,” Adelphi Paper 345. Oxford: Oxford University Press for The International Institute for Strategic Studies; and Shlomo Griner (2002). “Living in a World Risk Society: A Reply to Mikkel V. Rasmussen,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 31 (1): 149-160.

¹⁵ For excellent general reviews on the treatment of “risk” in the Social Sciences, see Taylor-Gooby, P. and Zinn, J. (eds.) (2006). *Risk in Social Science* Oxford University Press; and Mythen, G. and Walklate, S. (eds.) (2006). *Beyond the Risk Society: Critical Reflections on Risk and Human Security*. Open University Press.

¹⁶ Ulrich Beck (1999) *World Risk Society* (Cambridge: Polity) and Ulrich Beck (1992) *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage). For more on Beck’s concepts see Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society, Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1992); *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); *What is Globalization?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000); ‘The Fight for a Cosmopolitan Future: Necessary Transformations of the Nation-State’, *The New Statesman*, 5

Beck (1999: 72) describes the concept of WRS as “a phase of development of a “reflexive” modern society in which the social, political, ecological and individual risks created by the momentum of innovation increasingly elude the control and protective institutions of industrial society.” The emerging awareness or “reflexivity” on risk by experts, policy makers and ordinary people is a defining feature of the WRS. Reflexivity refers not only the increased cognizance of abundant global modernization risks to health and life, but also refers to a growing realization that these risks are being *produced* by wealthy industrial societies as well as socially *constructed* by people. Environmental pollution, nuclear weaponry and nuclear waste are consummate examples of global modernization risk adduced by Beck that are produced by our own hands. Risks are constructed in the minds of “communities of danger” that collectively perceive, believe in and act upon these risks. In this paper I treat the social constructions and securitization of security risks and threats as both materially and ideationally real, and thereby disregard the confusion on where Beck rests on this issue. Many critical theorists in the Copenhagen School who investigate the securitization of various objects also agree that security concerns or risks are both ideationally and materially grounded in very real actions and responses through policy, strategy and the creation of institutions.¹⁷ By these measures of material reality, the FFS security threat is very real as it has resulted in significant changes in strategic orientations in Canada, the United States, NATO and in global governance institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank (e.g. see Patrick 2006).¹⁸

Acknowledging that the WRS is merely a contested and contradictory thesis, or a futuristic scenario of an emergent type of global society preoccupied with risk,¹⁹ I contend that elements of Beck’s grand theory of a “reflexive” modernity (replacing industrial modernity) provide useful insights into the somewhat puzzling securitization of the FFS. These elements,

November 2001, 33-35; ‘Redefining Power in the Global Age: Eight Theses’, *Dissent* 48, no. 4 (2001): 83-89, and ‘The Cosmopolitan Perspective: Sociology of the Second Age of Modernity’, *British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1 (2000): 79-105; and Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in Modern Social Order* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994).

¹⁷ The Copenhagen School, around Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde was launched in 1993. Originally and to this day the concept of “security” was/is examined by many members of this school as a social and intersubjective construction – a “speech act” – which treated security threats as a topic of political choice. Some of the major works in the Copenhagen School comprise: Barry Buzan (1991) *People, States and Fear*; Ole Wæver et al.’s (1993) *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*; Ole Wæver (1995). “Securitization and Desecuritization,” in Ronnie Lipschutz (Ed.), *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press; Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde’s (1998) *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*; and, Buzan & Wæver’s (2003) *Regions and Powers*.

¹⁸ Patrick reviews the recent policies, strategies and institutions in western governments and global governance institutions toward the FFS as global security challenges. Interestingly, he suggests that the US should follow a more complex approach to the FFS, by melding defence, development, and diplomacy approaches to post-conflict reconstruction, redolent of Canada’s own “3D” approach to the FFS and human security issues introduced in the *International Policy Statement* of April 2005.

¹⁹ Party due to the lack of clarity and constituency in Ulrich Beck’s own formulation(s) of the world risk society concept a number of other authors have elicited rather different interpretations of the concept and its evolution. For instance, see: Jim McGuigan (2006) “Culture and Risk,” in Sandra Waltlake and Gabe Mythen (eds.) (1998). *Beyond the Risk Society*. Buckingham: Open University Press; Anthony Giddens (1998) “Risk Society: The Context of British Politics,” in Jane Franklin (ed.) *The Politics of the Risk Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

discussed in the subsequent sections, look at the changing nature of contemporary risk in the WRS, and the context the WRS provides to the processes of securitization of the FFS. These two elements enable a different, critical/social theory perspective on the framing of the FFS as dangerous threats to the West.

WRS Element One: The Nature of Risk in the World Risk Society

Omnipresent, new, expanded and global risks are the defining features of Ulrich Beck's WRS. Beck (1992: 21) defines "risk" as "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself." Beck's definition differs from a common conception of risk as a harmful event, often probabilistically calculated, but it does closely parallel the trenchant concept of "security" in International Relations. "Security" refers to "essentially contested" conceptions of particular dangers to the peace, order and stability, and is often expressed as threats to physical or psychological well-being. Students of the expanded notion of human security tend to accept the rather ambiguous conception of security as the "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want."²⁰ Following convention in International Relations, I will refer to the technically differentiated concepts of risk, security and threat as virtually synonymous, for instance in the rendering "security risks and threats."

Understandings of risk in the WRS go a long way toward explaining why the 40-60 FFS of the Global South were hastily defined as security threats in recent years in line with the marginalization of Human Security discourses. Two aspects related to the nature of risk in the WRS deserve attention: the increasing reflexivity (awareness) of ubiquitous risk, and the specific characteristics of risk as new, global, highly dangerous, and incalculable.

Reflexivity of Socially Constructed Risk

Key to understanding the WRS is the centrality of risk in people's lives. Risk, in particular global risks of contemporary modernity, are a major daily preoccupation of people and policy makers living within Beck's WRS. In the purportedly more "reflexive" type of post-industrial modernity described by Beck, risk is something of an obsession as a result of people's awareness of its ubiquity.

On its own, this insight seems to fit well with the general inquiry into international security with its focus on identifying and responding to notions of security that have been expanding since the late 1980s. If risk is becoming the operative concept of Western security policy, following the WRS, then this would provide a different, and still missing, rationale for the securitization of the FFS in the post-911 period. While 911 was an extremely important event, it did not alter the states system in a way that would induce security policy makers and theorists of rationalist predilections to re-interpret the level of security or stability of the world order. Heightened awareness of new risks, as per the WRS, inciting a possible "culture of fear"

²⁰ Advocates of an expanded human security approach also tend to agree the 1994 UNDP definition of the seven central categories of security issues: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political. United Nations Development Programme in its 1994 *Human Development Report.*, pp. 24- 25.

appear to shed some light on the new rules for security needed for drive forward the securitization of the FFS.²¹

Even so, reflexivity conceived as an awareness of the risk's omnipresence is not a significant notion in the approach FFS in the disciplines of International Relations and Security Study. This could be the result of ontological and epistemological intransigence in the mainstream rationalist and positivist approaches. Risk reflexivity entails a recognition that security risks and threats are socially and/or politically constructed by powerful, rule-making actors, which in today's states system primarily includes western governments and NATO. Critical theorists and social theorists who do study the social construction or the securitization (in the Copenhagen School) of security objects (referents) by influential actors do provide a rich and growing corpus of literature, to be sure. The predominance of security policy and theory, however, remain wedded to the notion that security threats are objective, exogenously sourced phenomena to which western powers must respond. Securitizing the FFS as major obstacles to global security and stability epitomizes this lacking conception that this is a social construct, introduced by a re-interpreted of the security environment by powerful states in the wake of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the US.

Evidence of the lack of reflexivity on socially/politically constructed risk in the case of the FFS is revealed also by the extreme sanguinity with which the western powers, including Canada, express their ability to "fix" or to "save" the FFS through the project of state-building. This general, long-term project has different names. Canadian foreign policy makers call this project the "projection of Canadian values," namely, democracy, rule of law, market economy. But, the project remains a major plank of the West's consensus view on the need to "stabilize" the FFS by bolstering their governance abilities as a precondition to attaining global and western security. For a true sense of reflexivity to prevail, western security policy makers would need to recognize not only their own complicity in the social construction of risk, to acknowledge that structural obstacles (e.g. global capitalism) are fundamental proximate causes of the underdevelopment in the FFS, and finally, to accept Beck's notion that in the WRS risk is no longer a matter of "us" and "them" as the distinction between the victim of risk and the perpetrator of risk blurs by virtue of its social construction. Such realizations have not stirred in the minds of western security policy makers, as the case of the FFS securitization makes clear. Instead the FFS policy and strategy remains guided by the traditional perspectives that these "Other" dangerous and different states are objective security threats that the West and its security policy expertise can "fix" or "save" through a massive, long-term, and costly state-building project leading, ultimately, toward the Democratic Peace.

Understanding the nature of risk perceived and acted upon by people inhabiting the WRS can also be enhanced by describing certain specific characteristics highlighted by Beck, and others. Beck describes risks that are newly emergent, global, highly dangerous, incalculable and

²¹ Examining the emergence of a "culture of fear" in the United Kingdom and the US, Frank Furedi (2006: xi) observes that "terms like 'risk' or 'at risk' are used in association with just about any routine event" reflecting "our unprecedented preoccupation with risk." See Frank Furedi (2006) *Culture of Fear Revisited*. London: Continuum.

uncontrollable. Such qualities apply, in large measure, to the nature of security challenges levied by the FFS and their transborder “spillover” dangers (e.g. terrorism, epidemic disease, drug and human trafficking, WMD proliferation, regional conflicts, refugee exodus). A few comments are made on each of these characteristics of security risk. Another significant quality of risk in the WRS, the inability to control or to eliminate it, is discussed in the next section addressing risk management processes.

Newly Emergent: The social construction of a rising number of risks in the WRS are a result of globalization, the dispersing power of political discourses, and the advances in technology and science attained in the “first” industrial period of modernity. New risks are global modernization risks, for Beck, which *inter alia* include the unprecedented pace and scale of population growth, global environmental change, resource depletion, terrorism, and proliferation of weapons. Parallel efforts to investigate new conceptions of security have been occurring in International Relations and Security Studies since the end of the 1980s, started with the ideas of Ullman and Matthews and others.²² Human Security’s focus on threats to individuals and communities in the 1990s, and the dawning of the securitization of the FFS continue this tradition of security expansion. Exemplifying this are the students of the “new wars” – intrastate ethnic, racial, religious and political conflicts-- also known in United Nations speak as “complex political emergencies,” fought variously in recent years in Africa, the Balkans, and Central Asia.²³

On its own, this trend toward expanding perceptions of new security challenges to states and to humans mirrors what one would expect to find in the context of a WRS. One of the most interesting shifts in recent years, noted in the introduction, is the enveloping of International Relations Realists and policy (neo)conservatives into the consensus view that the FFS represent a global threat to world security and order. An answer to this puzzle could be that these Realists are confronted by, or instrumentally using, the increasing mass consciousness about global risks, among which are the FFS.

Globality: Ulrich Beck (1999: 5) characterizes globalization as a new order of “manufactured uncertainties.” Increasing globality, complexity and danger in risk is associated with the technological advances of humanity’s current advanced stage of development. Beck’s focus tends to focus be on three types of global threats as examples for his WRS thesis: wealth-driven ecological destruction and technological-industrial dangers (e.g., climate change and those risks related to genetic manipulation); poverty-related ecological destruction (e.g., the

²² The project to expand the notion of state-centred “security” was initiated by, among others, Lester Brown (1977). “Redefining Security,” *Worldwatch Paper*, no. 14. Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute; Richard H. Ullman, “Redefining Security,” *International Security*, 8:1 (Summer 1983), pp. 129-153; World Commission on Environment and Development (1987). *Our Common Future*. New York: Oxford University Press; and, Jessica Tuchman Mathews (1989). “Redefining Security,” *Foreign Affairs*, 68:2.

²³ Mark Duffield (2001). *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. Zed Books, London; Mark Duffield (2007). *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples*. Polity, London; Mary Kaldor (1999). *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Polity, Cambridge; and Frank Furedi (2007). *Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown*. Continuum, London.

endangerment of the rainforests); and weapons of mass destruction. These hazards might become entwined, either as the causes or the outcomes of wars, suggests Beck. Kaldor (1999) similarly points to the inextricably intertwined nature of global risks emanating from the FFS engaged in the “new wars,” (i.e. civil, ethnic intrastate wars). She suggests that the new wars constitute one set of global risk factors attached to other global risks, namely, the spread of disease, vulnerability to natural disasters, poverty and homelessness” (Kaldor 1999: 10).

Discussing these types of security threats to states and to humans renders Beck’s WRS germane for students and policy makers addressing issues of international security, world order and peace, but only to a point. Beck’s (1999) WRS shifts focus from his earlier work on the domestic “risk society” (1992) from external military risks to peacetime technological risks. In so doing, he is downplaying at best, or obfuscating at worst, the military potential obtaining in the usage of WMD -- nuclear, chemical, biological (genetic) warfare technologies. One must look elsewhere to find a more realistic and Realist discussion of the dangers generated by increasingly efficacious biological weapons (e.g. anthrax, smallpox, cholera and Ebola), which have been described as major global threats of the 21st century (Rifkin 1998; Suzuki and Knudtson 1990; Wright 1990).

Another important distinction exists between the WRS and the International Relations and Security Studies approaches, which again relates to the topic of reflexivity of risk. Whilst Beck is cautiously optimistic that the global nature of dangers (e.g. ecological crises, global financial crises and transnational terrorist networks) will lead to increasing popular demand for cosmopolitan and democratic political solutions from a society that identifies as a “global one,” in International Relations there remains a rather entrenched, and distinctly unreflexive “West versus the rest” mentality that divides “we” the western victim and “they” the dangerous “Other” in the Global South’s “ungoverned spaces.” Some scholars of the FFS, such as Kaldor (1999), agree along the lines of Beck that security in the face of the “new wars” in the Global South can only be resolved through cosmopolitan efforts that transcend the purported “decline of the nation-state” under the forces of globalization. The return of state-centric security discourses with the securitization of the FFS, however, dampen her thesis. The increased perception of global risks occurs in the WRS and in the securitization of the FFS, but only in the former does perception of global risk lead to Beckian “global collective consciousness” that we are all in this together.

Western security policy has not become much more democratically cosmopolitan as risk awareness has increased. This suggests, perhaps, that rather than Beck’s WRS, it is Michel Foucault’s notion of “governmentality” that might better apply to such issues as the securitization of new security objects like the FFS. Governmentality essentially refers to governance through governments’ generation, maintenance and management of risk perceptions to ensure discipline of fearful people, might be the anti-democratic reality for western security policy and its captive audience in the ongoing global “war on terror.”²⁴

²⁴ For a discussion on this ideas, see Gabe Mythen and Sandra Walklate (2006) ‘Criminology and Terrorism: Which Thesis? Risk Society or Governmentality?’ *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 379-398; Aradau and van Munster (2007) ‘Governing Terrorism Through Risk’; Ulrich Beck (2003) ‘The Silence of Words: On Terror and War,’ *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 255-267, p. 257; Keith. Spence (2005)

Highly Dangerous:

Under the WRS, risks are characterized as being highly dangerous, a conception that agrees in spirit if not in letter to the securitization of the FFS in International Relations. High-magnitude, high-casualty risks for Beck, such as the production, use and storage of nuclear weapons and waste, are predicated on humanity's augmenting technological and scientific knowledge. This evidently does not apply to the FFS as highly dangerous security challenges, whose use of asymmetric terrorist attacks, or insurgents' usage of dirty bombs and IEDs (improvised explosive devices) are anathema to high-tech military warfare. Two points related to the high-magnitude hazards to life and safety are noteworthy.

First, for Beck and for students of the FFS, the security risks that are capable of causing extensive damage and devastation in the global sphere are also low-probability events. Notwithstanding, the mass scale of death and damage offsets the realization that, say, another terrorist attack on par with 911 is unlikely. Secondly, the rationality of vulnerability that permeates the WRS, predicated in large part on the vast devastating consequences of a successful spillover threat from the FFS reaching western shores, is the guiding mindset despite grasp of the fact that the collective risk of terrorism is negligible. Vulnerability felt by those in the West's wealthy consumer society, does not need to be grounded in past experience of risk or insecurity as it did in the past. On the issue of vulnerability, it should be noted that for students of Human Security and development the vulnerable people are those living in the Global South.

Incalculable:

Global modernization risks, Beck believes, are characterized by an inherent incalculability of risk.²⁵ Risk discourses in the WRS have moved beyond a framework of probability statements that have long been associated with risk assessment in Economics.²⁶ A key point for Beck is that the global, complex nature of risk has liberated risk prognoses from experts and their probability calculations regarding known and unknown risks. This democratization of risk assessment is not shared by other risk scholars who point to the isolating and fear-inducing consequences of people who realize that even the experts cannot predict, verify, control or even conceive of risk in the WRS.

This notion of incalculability of risk has not rubbed off on the students of international security nor to the specific case of the securitization of the FFS as global security risks. Canada's and NATO's engagement in Afghanistan, for instance, is measured by public and media discourses in terms of soldiers' deaths (and notably less attention to civilian casualties). Also, the

"World Risk Society and War against Terror," op. cit., pp. 284-302; Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (2006) *The Risk Society at War. Terror, Technology and Strategy in the Twenty-first Century*, op. cit., ; and Christopher Coker (2002) *Globalisation and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the Management of Risk*, op. cit.,

²⁵ The implication of incalculability, for Beck, has both upsides and downsides in the realm of domestic politics. On the good side, the difficulty in precision about risks enables citizens and non-experts to challenge the risk assessments of experts. The downside with this is the inability to agree on the 'real' risks, which "throws the door open to a feudalization of scientific knowledge through economic and political interests and 'new dogmas.'" Beck (1992) *Risk Society*, p.156-157.

²⁶ See also Beck (1992) *Risk Society*, p. 29.

conventional approach to risk in calculating the statistical frequency and magnitude of a particular danger, such as terrorism, for a given time period remains a core part of western security policy²⁷ Under the context of the WRS, however, this kind of statistical risk assessment is not possible.

One implication of the move away from statistically based policy in the WRS is a move toward incorporating “symbolic” policy and strategy in response to risks. To demonstrate the contrast between statistical and symbolic Beck observes that in response to the “mad cow” (BSE) scare in Europe, a perfect example of man-made risk with unintended consequences, government’s statistics on the low risk to health did not reassure the public as much as did the symbolic, and unnecessary, slaughter of thousands of cows.²⁸ Analogously, if it is the case that western security policy experts cannot subject the security threats or risks emanating from the poorly governed and impoverished FFS to statistical probability measures, then this would signify that current FFS security policy and strategy are a matter of “symbolic” politics.

There are several features of risk and societal risk perception that invoke the incalculability of security risks and threats. First, the previously noted features of risks being newly emergent, global and therefore complex, and highly dangerous all have an impact on the ability to deduce the probabilities, let alone the precise essence of these risks. At first blush this WRS understanding does not seem to apply to the seemingly known security threats posed by the FFS. The six identified “spillover” threats documented by the US *National Security Statement* (2002) – i.e.. terrorism, proliferation, crime, health, energy, and regional instability – appear to be well-defined, known risks. Problematically, however, if the WRS thesis applies to securitization of the FFS western security policy makers will continue to look for and successfully discover, new contingencies from the inhabitants and states of the Global South. Accompanying the western “civilization’s” rationality of vulnerability to global risks is a counterpart rationality of risk minimization. In the WRS, risk minimization aspirations of policy experts and ordinary people lean toward zero risk tolerance. Thus, even if the FFS spillover threats are known (for now), the emphasis of security policy makers and their citizenry would be to continuously supply (government) or demand (citizens) the minimization of risk. Of course, zero risk does not exist. Consequently, the result of shifting risk assessment away from a probability calculus on the incidence and impact of known dangers toward risk minimization of unknown and yet-to-be conceived risks will keep western security policy makers busy for years to come.

A second reason for the incalculability of risk is that many dangerous hazards are unknown, or what some risk analysts awkwardly call the “unknown-unknowns.”

Perhaps most famously, US former Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, stated:

²⁷ For example, the US State Department measures the national and global risk of terrorism in terms of the number of attacks and casualties per country each year. See U.S. Department of State (2003) *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2003*. Available online at: <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/pgtrpt/2003/c12153.htm>.

²⁸ See Martin Woollacott (1998). “Risky Business, Safety,” in Jane Franklin (ed.) *The Politics of Risk Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 47, cited in Rasmussen op. cit. (2001:291).

Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns -- the ones we don't know we don't know." ²⁹

Technically for most risk analysts, an “unknown” risk or threat (e.g. terrorism), is a danger amenable to a probability calculus on their impact, imminence or frequency based on past experience. What is unknown about these future hazards are the key questions of when, where exactly what consequences will occur. The category of “unknown-unknown” risks constitute incalculable future dangers because previous experience with these hazards is lacking (e.g. new chemical or biological weapons or the development of new strategies of destruction by transnational terrorists.).³⁰ Frank Furedi (2006: xi) states that the unknown-unknown risks are speculative, future risks that are “not so much the theoretical exploration of the unknown, as an exercise of the imagination.”

In a nutshell, Beck suggests the set of global modernization risks tend to be incalculable, not simply on the basis of our current knowledge about them, but also because the pervasive fears about hazards and a lower tolerance for any risk. The result of these WRS factors is that any available expert calculations of low-probability events do not successfully diminish the sense of insecurity.

A third and final quality that makes risk incalculable is its futurity. Under the rubric of unknown or unknown-unknowns, future risks figure in the considerations of security experts who are continuously seeking new security contingencies to handle in order to make citizens feel safer and more secure. In so doing, policy makers will make use of future scenarios as a tool for understanding and addressing the constructed security risk. According to Beck, this refers to a reflexive notion of the “presence of the future” to guide policy makers facing by a proliferation of complex risks in the WRS. Beck argues that “[t]he concept of risk reverses the relationship of past, present and future” (Beck 1999: , 137) and that “future events that have not yet occurred become the object of current action” (Beck 1999: 52).

Whether futuristic scenarios are utilized in the discourses in the securitization of the FFS or in the related Human Security paradigm needs to be subject to further study. The best example of finding the “presence of the future” currently are the scenarios, often based on scientific extrapolations, of the security threat from global warming and environmental degradation. These threats are sometimes associated with the FFS where exploding populations are outstripping scarce resources. The future is implicated in the securitization of the FFS indirectly in that the risk factors ascribed to these countries are divorced from past experience, which used to be the way risk was assessed. On this, Afghanistan’s harbouring of the 911 perpetrators is the single case by which the rest of the FFS appear to have been securitized.

²⁹ US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, Department of Defense news briefing at the Pentagon, February 2, 2002.

³⁰ See this discussion in Aradau et al. (2008). “Security, Technologies of Risk, and the Political: Guest Editors’ Introduction,” pp. 148-9; and, Adam Burgess (2004). *Cellular Phones, Public Fears and a Culture of Precaution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Making policy in the present based on possible risks occurring in the future not only breaches the temporal divide between the past, the present, and the future, but also reconfigures positivist conceptions of causality (dating back to David Hume in the 17th century) holding that an effect is preceded on short order by an antecedent cause. If risk perceptions are based on scenarios anticipating possible future risks, creating thereby what Beck (1999: 136) calls a “real virtuality,” then causality is circumvented. Applying this point to understanding the securitization of the FFS is helpful, because it explains how it is that these 40-60 states and their inhabitants can garner so much attention in western security thinking without being fully theorized. If I were to make a critique of the FFS securitization it would be based on the impoverished methodology of unclear concepts and variables that cannot clearly show causal mechanisms linking many of the poor survival-mode FFS with the execution of transborder, transoceanic security threats such as terrorism, epidemic diseases, or refugee exodus. Under the WRS conception, such methodological critique is invalidated.

Uncontrollable Risks:

In the WRS we have plunged into the inconceivability of risk and also into the uncontrollability. A final defining characteristic of risk in Beck’s WRS is its uncontrollable nature. The newly emerging global modernization risks of this modern setting have increased humanity’s capacity to act collectively upon the world, but only by ways in which the consequences of its actions in constructing risk have escaped the capacity to control these risks, foresee them, or even to conceive of them. Humankind, even the experts within it, are not able to use technology or science to control that which they cannot see or even fathom. The result for risk management exercises is that the control and/or elimination of risk that was possible in the previous industrial era of modernity is now an unattainable, utopian dream. In identifying the lack of control over advanced technological and scientific risks, Beck follows numerous other leading scholars, including Anthony Giddens, Jurgen Habermas, and Jacques Ellul, in describing the paradoxical uncoupling of our advancements in knowledge and our ability or knowledge to control the outputs of this knowledge.³¹ Notably, the main criticism one finds directed at this scholarship is the fallacy of technological determinism.

The notion of uncontrollable types of security risks and threats leads to the next element of the WRS that could be usefully applied to the inquiry on the FFS securitization processes. Specifically, the core element from the WRS are the processes of risk management. Applied to the FFS, the argument advanced is that their attendant transborder spillover threats can only be managed, and never controlled or eliminated. Thus, the FFS will pose a security risk to Canada and its NATO allies now until eternity, suggesting that securitization leads to incessant insecurity.³²

³¹ Jacques Ellul (1980). *The Technological System*. New York: Continuum; Anthony Giddens (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Jurgen Habermas (1971). *Towards a Rational Society: Student Protest, Science and Politics*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press; and see also J. Van Loon (2000) ‘Virtual Risks in an Age of Cybernetic Reproduction’, in B. Adam, U. Beck and J. van Loon (eds.) *The Risk Society and Beyond: Critical Issues for Social Theory*. London: Sage.

³² Similar ideas are noted by Mark Duffield (2007). *Development, Security and Unending War: Governing the World of Peoples*. Polity, London.

WRS Element Two: A Context for Understanding the FFS Securitization Processes

The *securitization* of the failed and fragile states (FFS) refers to treatment of this vast category of up to 60 states as an object or referent of security. Securitization is a core concept derived from the Copenhagen School, whose key scholars include Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde. These authors have dramatically redirected the theorization of security in International Relations. They define security issues as being “staged as existential threats to referent objects by a securitizing actor who thereby generates endorsement of emergency measures beyond rules that would otherwise bind.”³³ Moreover, they set up certain criteria to ascertain whether the process of securitization of an object or event has been successful. Basically, successful securitization requires a securitizing actor (or for some, a mere “speech act” stipulating the threat), an emergency action to respond to the threat, and an audience that readily accepts, and possibly institutionalized, the threat. Said otherwise, students of securitization ask and answer the questions: Which object of security is securitized? By whom? and, Why or for what purpose?

In this exploratory essay I will not undertake a complete investigation into the processes by which the 40-60 failed and fragile states (FFS) have become securitized. Such a study would be a useful for future research, particularly since the problematization of the FFS of the Global South as global security risks is still in its infancy, seemingly a product of the post-911 era. The evolution of the FFS securitization process would likely be traced to Robert Kaplan’s (1994) influential article, entitled “The Coming Anarchy,” which first warned western governments of the impending threats to global security from the “regressive” developments in much of the developing world, and particularly West Africa, and make reference to Robert Jackson’s (1990) “quasi-states” and to William Zartman’s (1995) study on “collapsed states.”

Instead, I will propose that these processes of securitization set out by the Copenhagen School can be improved upon by setting them within the wider context of the world risk society (WRS). This context, where risk is omnipresent, can be used to shed some illuminating light on the puzzling aspects of the FFS securitization. Again, the puzzling aspects relate, first, to the very rapid securitization conversion, namely, a discursive shift from the FFS as development and humanitarian issue in the 1990s to their post-911 securitization, and second, to the fact that the altered perception of the global security environment was not associated with a shift in the balance of power, as was the case in the post-Cold War period. Surprisingly, the Realists are not only on board but apparently helming the ship in the construction of the FFS as security threats. Traditionally, Realists have conceived of the developing countries of the Global South as peripheral to questions of world order and western strategic concerns.

Contextualizing this rapid and unprecedented securitization of the FFS within the WRS provides some insights where rationalist theories do not. One of the key insights has been discussed earlier in the paper. The nature of risks – newly emergent, global, dangerous, incalculable and uncontrollable – in the WRS suggests why it is that the FFS, inhering similar qualities according to the related theory and policy literature, have been securitized. In what

³³ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde (1998). *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, Colo.; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 5.

follows, a second element of the deeply complex WRS— risk management -- is briefly delineated.³⁴

Risk Management

Once identified, or socially constructed, or securitized by powerful actors in the system of states, a security risk – such as the transborder spillover risks presumed to emanate from the FFS – must then be *managed*. Management in Beck’s WRS is a term used in contradistinction with the control or elimination of risk. The nature of risk, as described in detail the previous section, means that there is no end to risk. Even successful efforts to mitigate a hazard cannot bring the WRS to its desired level of zero risk, and for “for every attempt to remove a risk, new risks will proliferate” (Rasmussen 2001: 293). Accordingly, risk management is a new form of governance in western governments and NATO where leaders and policy makers continuously devise new ways to manage newly emergent risks and contingencies. Managing risk is a steadfast and prolonged government activity because of the breakdown between means and ends, or cause and effect. That is, because risk is omniscient, proliferating, and innovating governments can only manage the processes, or the means, to sustain the status quo and they cannot master the unattainable ends: security or zero risk.

The idea that the role of western governments, or the role of global governance institutions, or the role of politics writ large, is about risk management processes in the WRS seems to fit with the processes of securitization of the FFS. Continuous risk management entails the engagement of political actors in certain projects (Rasmussen 2001: 294), and the state-building project of the West in the Global South concords precisely with this idea.

The problematization of the FFS as security threats is no better apprehended than as a long-term project of (ceaseless) risk management. Although the sanguinity expressed by western security community and scholars about their ability to “fix” and “stabilize” through state-building the FFS suggests that they do not realize that they are embarking on risk management, as opposed to risk diminution. The project of the West – inclusive of western governments, NATO, and global governance institutions such as the United Nations and the World Bank – is to “stabilize” the FFS through “state-building.” The state-building project is a major second prong of the robust global consensus on the FFS. Whereas the first plank of the consensus is the view that the FFS as a collective represent one of the world’s gravest threats to global security and stability, the second plank is that the solution to this security challenge is to build new states that are capable of filling the missing “governance gaps” (Eizenstat et al., 2005) or “sovereignty gaps” (Ghani and Lockhart 2008: 7), inclusive of the provision of security, basic needs, democracy, rule of law and human rights.³⁵ Numerous scholars in

³⁴ Rasmussen examines Ulrich Beck’s concept of “management” in his examination of NATO’s posited “reflexive security” approach in post-Cold War era. See Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (2001) “Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society.” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 30 (2): 285-309.

³⁵ Beyond the idea of the need to fill the weak states’ “governance gap” (Eizenstat et al., 2005), there is little agreement on precisely which aspects of the state require “fixing” through western financial and technical assistance. Francois and Sud (2006) list two main state functions of furnishing security of territory and basic services, while Ghani and Lockhart (2008) posit that the ten functions of a successful state are needed. These are, most crucially: providing the rule of law; exhibiting a Weberian monopoly on the legitimate means of violence, or use of force; administrative control in a bureaucratic system of accountable professionals; adhering

International Relations have argued that that the state-building project is doomed to failure, based on the fact that there have as yet been no successful cases. Afghanistan is the first main test case for state-building in the FFS, and progress to date suggests that this will be an exemplar case of ongoing risk management for NATO allies.

Applying the WRS notion of risk management, versus risk control or elimination, to the securitization of the FFS requires further research. Some of the WRS ideas, though, do have parallels in the work done by International Relations scholar Mark Duffield (2001, 2005). In examining the “security-development nexus,” Duffield’s *Development, Security and Unending War* (2005) argues that the West’s approach to humanitarian intervention, development aid, and societal transformation are new post-colonial ways to govern the people of the South that will guarantee the continuation of the “unending wars” – civil, ethnic, religious, political – that have plagued the weak states of the South for decades. “Unending wars” resonates with the notion of WRS management processes. Moreover, on the “project” of state-building, or what Duffield calls the project of the “Liberal peace”, one can again see similar insights. Duffield stresses in his *Global Governance and the New Wars* (2001: 34) that:

The ultimate goal of liberal peace is stability.... Liberal peace is different; it is a non-territorial, mutable and networked relation of governance... ideally liberal power is based on the management and regulation of economic, political and social processes.

Combined, the ideas from the WRS on the nature of risk and its amenability to endless management along with Duffield’s arguments that the West’s project of delivering the Liberal peace through state-building in the FFS, indicate that the management of the securitized FFS will keep the western security community busy labouring under conditions of ceaseless global insecurity.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Do the failed and fragile states (FFS) pose a security threat to Canada and its western allies? A robust, globe-spanning consensus found in the relevant International Relations and Security Studies literature and in Canadian and western security policy formulations suggests that the answer is a definitive “yes.” Six identified transborder spillover threats are potentially able to emanate from these FFS in the Global South toward North America and Europe: transnational terrorism, mass destruction weapons proliferation, organized crime, epidemic diseases, energy, and regional conflict and instability. At least two puzzles arise from the recent, post-September 11, 2001, securitization of the FFS. One puzzle addresses the issue of how the consensus view on the global security threats posed by the FFS can rest upon such a shaky conceptual, methodological and theoretical foundation. The second puzzle concerns the surprising involvement in the FFS securitization by Realists in theory and policy circles (i.e. the “neo-cons”). Realists are leading the rallying cries for the western security community to “stabilize”

to sound management of public finances, in particular taxation and redistribution; invests in human capital through education and health care; creates citizenship rights, empowerment and equal opportunity through social policy; provides infrastructure services (basic services) such as transportation, power, water, communications; supports the creation of an open, private-sector-led market economy and ; manages public assets, including property rights to natural resources; ensures effective public borrowing and avoids excessive debt burdens.

the dangerous FFS through state-building projects. In early October 2008, the US Pentagon unveiled a new military doctrine declaring that “nation-building” missions will be emphasized in years to come, possibly more than conventional warfare.³⁶ Until recently maintained a much more sober view of the Global South’s ability to upset world order in the system of powerful states.

In an effort to inject a much needed critical perspective on the received wisdom, this paper sought to take a step back to probe why the vastly numbered 40-60 FFS have been securitized as a newly emergent risk to global security, stability and peace. The critical approach set out to explore the applicability and utility of German sociologist Ulrich Beck’s (1999) world risk society thesis (WRS). Two elements of the WRS were examined: the nature risk characterized as ubiquitous, global, dangerous and incalculable, and secondly, the processes of risk management that prevail in the context of the WRS. Generally, the WRS answer to the question – Do the FFS pose a security threat to Canada or other western societies – would be a “yes, but...”

Without denying that the FFS might in future be the source of a hazardous, high-casualty security crisis in Canada or elsewhere, Beck’s WRS thesis suggests that a gap can exist between the social construction or perception of a security risk and its materiality. For instance, the fact that global risks are highly dangerous, such as nuclear weapons proliferation, can cancel out their low-probability of occurrence. Also, policy makers concerns and peoples’ fears of risky events far-off in the future or of risk that have not even been conceived of, are the basis of policy actions. If these notions on the nature of risk are applied to the securitization of the FFS, then this recent socially constructed risk is exaggerated from reality and past experience. But at the same time the FFS security challenge is no less real.

The second element of the WRS applied to the case of the FFS securitization regards the WRS as a context. One of the most important processes by which decision makers securitize certain objects as security risks is the management of these risks. Risk management in the WRS is notable by what it does not entail: the control or elimination of the security challenges that have been produced or constructed. Here, the WRS seems to aptly depict the western security community’s continuous risk management in the FFS, which features a massive, long-term project of state-building, and nation-building of these manifold weak states, toward the end of a Liberal Peace. However, the WRS illuminates that the desired ends of risk management, namely, security, stability and peace, are elusive. Risk management projects keep governments on a treadmill of maintaining and managing omniscient risk, and never mastering the ends.

The security threat posed to Canada and the West by the 60 or so FFS, covering nearly one half of the planet’s states and over 80 percent of its inhabitants, befits the term the “world risk society” as posited by Ulrich Beck and others. The implications of this label, inclusive of ontological, epistemological, policy and normative implications, must now be discerned by the security policy community writ large.

³⁶ Peter Goodspeed, “U.S. Pushes Nation-Building,” National Post Newspaper, October 7, 2008, p. A9.

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APPENDIX : Labeling Fragile States by Alternative Definitions

COUNTRY	Stagnant Economies	World Bank's LICUS	DFID (UK)	CIDA (Canada)
Total FFS	30	26	46	25
1 Afghanistan	X	X	X	
2 Angola	X	X	X	
3 Azerbaijan			X	
4 Bangladesh				X
5 Bolivia				X
6 Benin				X
7 Burundi	X	X	X	
8 Burkino Faso				X
9 Cambodia	X	X	X	
10 Cameroon	X		X	X
11 Central African Rep.	X	X	X	
12 Chad			X	
13 Comoros	X	X	X	
14 Congo, Dem. Rep.	X	X	X	
15 Congo, Rep.	X	X	X	
16 Côte d'Ivoire	X		X	
17 Djibouti			X	
18 Dominica			X	
19 Eritrea			X	
20 Ethiopia			X	X
21 Gambia	X	X	X	
22 Georgia			X	
23 Ghana				X
24 Guinea		X	X	
25 Guinea-Bissau	X	X	X	
26 Guyana			X	X
27 Haiti	X	X	X	
28 Honduras				X
29 Indonesia			X	X
30 Kenya	X		X	X
31 Kiribati			X	
32 Kyrgyz Republic	X			X
33 Lao PDR		X	X	
34 Liberia	X	X	X	
35 Madagascar	X			
36 Mali			X	X
37 Malawi				X
38 Moldova	X			
39 Mongolia	X			
40 Mozambique			X	
41 Myanmar		X	X	
42 Nepal				X
43 Nicaragua	X			X
44 Niger	X		X	
45 Nigeria	X	X	X	
46 Papua New Guinea		X	X	

47 Pakistan					X
48 Rwanda	X				X
49 São Tomé and Príncipe	X	X		X	
50 Senegal					X
51 Sierra Leone	X			X	
52 Solomon Islands	X	X		X	
53 Somalia	X	X		X	
54 Sri Lanka					X
55 Sudan		X		X	
56 Tajikistan	X	X		X	
57 Tanzania					X
58 Timor-Leste	X	X		X	
59 Togo	X	X		X	
60 Tonga				X	
61 Ukraine					X
62 Uzbekistan	X	X		X	
63 Vanuatu				X	
64 Vietnam					X
65 Yemen, Rep. of				X	
67 Zambia	X			X	X
68 Zimbabwe	X	X		X	

Sources: Adapted from Monika Francois and Inder Sud (2006). "Promoting Stability and Development in Fragile and Failed States," *Development Policy Review* 24 (2): 159-160. Sources are: (a) World Bank (2005) 'Fragile States: The Low Income Countries Under Stress (LICUS). Available online at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20127382~menuPK:34480~pagePK:34370~theSitePK:4607,00.html>; (b) United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) (2005). *Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States*. London: DFID; and (c) Marcus Pistor (2005). "Canadian International Development Agency's 25 Development Partners," Government of Canada. Library of Parliament. Available online at: <http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/PRB-e/PRB0504-e.pdf>.