

What Threats to Human Security do Domestic Military Forces Face in Central Illinois?

A VISUALIZATION OF MILITARY SECURITY

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Introduction

- The importance of studying the human security threats that domestic military forces often face is constantly increasing, especially as tensions within countries become unstable. Soldiers are trained to face a magnitude of different threats.

The Human Security Paradigm attempts to reframe international security discussions around the individual as the most important level of analysis while attempting to lessen the role of national security as the key emphasis in the crafting of policy decisions. This includes the protection of individuals and groups from threats including hunger, disease, crime, and violence.



“Fighting the Flames”

Soldiers are required to be able to properly respond to a myriad of emergencies and dangerous situations, especially fires. The US Air Force must train its soldiers to handle fires caused by jet fuel leakages, which are much more dangerous than normal house fires.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usairforce/8904240230/>



“Flood Preparations”

The Illinois National Guard plays a crucial role when it comes to natural disaster management and preparedness. Near Winchester, Illinois, civilians can face the brute force of floods and tornadoes, with soldiers standing by to help on the front lines.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/thenationalguard/47993480853/>



“Winter Warriors”

No matter the weather conditions, the National Guard responds to all types of emergency calls. Soldiers brave the extreme weather of the earth and remain vigilant to assist any stranded motorists in hazardous driving conditions that occur in the cold winters of Illinois.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/illinoisnationalguard/5410273076/>

Methodology

- Photos were sourced from online news articles and posts on the Illinois National Guard web page linked to the photography sharing website “Flickr”
- These photographs are meant to grant an in-depth look into the risks and uncertainty towards safety these soldiers often face.
- The images I selected are meant to invoke a feeling of shock and curiosity from the viewer, displaying several scenes of disaster preparedness.
- My presentation used the process of arts-based research (ABR), which I used as a method to properly convey human insecurity among domestic soldiers enlisted in the National Guard in Illinois.

Literature Review

- Military forces are meant to defend a country’s sovereignty and protect its citizens from any threats. The increasing threat of terrorism is something that countries of any scale do not take lightly. Placing soldiers directly in harm’s way is the last resort taken against the growing number of terrorist organizations around the globe, and counterterrorism incorporates practice, techniques, strategy, and the military tactics governments adopt to prevent or combat terrorism (Nyadera, Bincof, 2019).
- The theories surrounding human security consistently mention the protection of every citizen and noncitizen located in a country, regardless of limiting characteristics such as country of origin or group affiliation. The role of the international community is to complement and provide the necessary support to governments, upon their request, to strengthen their capacity to respond to current and emerging threats (UN, 2016).
- The liberation of human beings from intensive, extensive, prolonged and comprehensive threats to which their lives and freedom are vulnerable is the aim of the Human Security Paradigm. The object of threat in the case of human security is individuals’ lives, freedom, or both (UN, 2009).



“Up in Smoke”

Soldiers must place themselves in dangerous situations to be adequately prepared for the dangers associated with rescuing civilians. Training exercises that test the limits of what soldiers can handle seems to be the most widely used tactic for breeding the warriors that we will send into harm’s way.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usairforce/28710224916/>

Background Information

- The National Guard of the United States has about 450,000 soldiers total, with the Illinois branch consisting of about 12,000 soldiers within its border.
- The Illinois National Guard operates out of 46 bases spread across the state (Illinois National Guard, 2020).

Source Information

Human Development Report. United Nations Development Programme, Nov. 2009.

Human Security Handbook. United Nations, Jan. 2016.

“Illinois National Guard Organizations.” *IL NG Organizations*, 2020.
www.il.ngb.army.mil/Organizations/.

Nyadera, Israel Nyaburi, and Mohamed Omar Bincof. *Human Security, Terrorism, and Counterterrorism: Boko Haram and the Taliban.* International Journal on World Peace, Mar. 2019.



“Grounded Birds”

The National Guard base located in Peoria, Illinois is no stranger to snow. If conditions become too dangerous for the pilots to safely maneuver these massive C-130 support planes, then they are grounded until further notice, much like the procedure at a standard airport.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/134160831@N07/24202297185/>

Conclusion

- Portraying the dangers that these overlooked soldiers constantly face is not a simple task. In any branch of the military, there are many other threats to human security that can rarely be captured in photographs. For example, many soldiers are faced with little to no communication with their loved ones as they are deployed to their duties. Through future research and technological improvements available to soldiers, some threats towards their human security can be managed.
- To civilians as well as many of those serving in the National Guard, this study is of great importance. The Illinois branch of the National Guard constantly works to respond to emergencies, but they are extremely effective at preventing potential civilian casualties, which has not been given enough attention from studies on military forces. We do not perceive our immediate surroundings as being inherently dangerous, so we attribute our domestic military forces unofficially as our last line of defense against threats. In reality, the soldiers addressed in this study are the first line of defense against all threats to human security.