Christopher Cushing
Director, Principal Research Fellow,
Centre for International Co-operation and Security (CICS),
Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.
Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1DP, United Kingdom.
Office: +44 01274 235 135   **Email:** C.J.Cushing@Bradford.ac.uk

Achieving 'Sustainable Security':

For the last six years, Western leaders have focused on international terrorism as the greatest threat to world security despite the fact that the evidence does not support this claim. Important research shows that the long-term fundamental threats come from four inter-connected global trends:

(1) Climate Change:
Displacement of peoples, severe natural disasters and food shortages, leading to much higher levels of migration, increased human suffering and greater social unrest.

(2) Competition over Resources:
Competition for increasingly scarce resources, especially from unstable parts of the world – such as oil from the Persian Gulf.

(3) Marginalisation and Exclusion:
Increasing political and socio-economic divisions and the marginalisation and exclusion of the vast majority of the world's population.

(4) Global Militarisation
The increased use of military force and the further spread of military technologies including weapons of WMD.

These factors are the trends that are likely to lead to substantial global and regional instability and large-scale loss of life of a magnitude unmatched by other potential threats.

Current responses to these threats can be characterised as a 'control paradigm' – an attempt to maintain the status quo through military means and control insecurity without addressing the root causes. As such, current security policies are self-defeating in the long-term. A new approach is needed.

This new approach is what many are calling 'sustainable security'. The main difference between this and the 'control paradigm' is that this approach does not attempt to unilaterally control threats through the use of force ('attack the symptoms'), but rather it aims to cooperatively resolve the root causes of those threats using the most effective means available ('cure the disease'). This approach provides the best chance of averting global disaster, as well as addressing some of the root causes of terrorism.