

But the one person that stuck in my mind, really hauntingly so, was a young 13 year old girl who voyaged all the way from Northern Uganda to attend a conference in Winnipeg last fall, in September, on war affected children. She was part of a group of young people from various war affected countries, who we invited to the conference, which was mainly made up of NGOs and foreign ministers and others. But, during the course of those meetings, she asked if she could meet with me. I agreed, and we sat together along with some people from one of the NGOs sponsoring her visit. The story is important, because it taught us so much about what is changing in the nature of security today.

Emma had been kidnapped when she was 9 years old by a group called the Lord's Resistance Army, a rebel group working out of the Sudan which would cross the border of Northern Uganda. They would steal young children and, in this case, turn them into sex slaves. She was violated on a repeated basis by the leaders of this band. She was pregnant with child by the age of 11. Then the story gets even more absurd and more violent, because she then made, according to her, a decision to try to break out of this pattern of abuse and asked if she could also become a warrior and join the rest of them. The leaders agreed on the grounds that she would prove her courage. To do that she had to go back to her own village in the Northern part of Uganda, and kill one of her villagers, which she did, a member of her family, her uncle. That was her proof of her mettle, her willingness to become part of the group.

She escaped about a year ago and was relocated to a refugee camp. And, if some of you think that was a rescue or a new revelation, one has to look at a report that was recently commissioned by the Canadian International Development Agency on what happens to the refugees in that area. There are about 400,000 almost squeezed into about one square km; AIDS and HIV viruses are as rampant as you can imagine; violence continues; there is often a shortage of food and other basic necessities. And, the irony is that when the fighting ceases, and this goes back and forth in certain cycles, the villagers and the refugees, as you might expect, make an effort to go back home; but, in so doing, they cross over fields that are heavily mined by the Lord's Resistance Army and therefore suffer the penalty of death and injury, as is so often the case where mine fields have been heavily strewn. It really is living between Scylla and Charibdis, just to use the old Greek term. There isn't much of a choice.

The reason I felt Emma's story was important to tell is because so much of what is happening in the world is really encompassed in almost a micro-way by that kind of experience. It's a world that is not so unique. There are children in Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Colombia and Sierra Leone who are daily faced with the same kinds of experiences. Just last week, the New York Times had a headline about a young 12 year-old, named Juan Fernandez who had joined the FARC, one of the rebel groups. He was boasting that he had killed 8 people in a firefight as part of his admission into the group. And so, it is a commonplace experience; and, I don't think we are foreign or strangers to it. We see it visited nightly on television screens and in our newspapers.

And, it's also our world, too. That's the leap of judgment and observation that we have to make. That while it may seem far off and sometimes irrelevant, especially as we sit here in these comfortable chairs in this wonderful embassy in downtown Tokyo, it is part of the global reality, the dark side, the underside. And, it carries an impact for us and our children. And you say, "Why? Why should we be involved; why should we care; why should this be a security issue?" Emma's world is far away and, to paraphrase a comment that is too often heard in various circles and in national capitals in particular which are shrouded by the tenants and principles of realpolitik, "there is not much national interest to protect in Northern Uganda. No trade opportunities there."

But, it does go back to that great mystery; the question that I think has eternally plagued human kind ever since we acquired judgment of why the fate and future of one group or individual should be somehow the concern of another group or another individual? It