To: The Future of Humanity Institute, University of Oxford

Dear Scholarship Committee,

I am pleased to submit my application for your DPhil scholarship. I am currently an Israeli diplomat deeply interested in the labrynthine intersections of technology, public policy, health, law, economics, and international relations.

During the nearly 20 years I have dedicated to Israeli public service, I have been observing, critically analyzing, and shaping national and multilateral decision-making processes. My drive to uncover methodologically rigorous solutions for pressing macro dilemmas, and potentially assist international organizations and key players, including the Israeli government, in the quest for peace and stability, crystallized my aspiration to pursue a DPhil in Public Policy at The Blavatnik School of Government.

The COVID-19 era reaffirms the Gordian Knot of health, peace, and economy. The pandemic’s multiple global implications attest to the profound impact this delicate tripartite balance may have on the future of humanity.

In my research proposal, I seek to identify which factors contribute to or undermine the effectiveness of raising public health arguments (not necessarily pandemic related) in peace negotiations. In essence, the research asks whether the subject of health, particularly public health, can be harnassed to promote peace, and, if so, how? The intent is that the research's practical and empirical conclusions will serve as a source of effectual policy tools and mechanisms for practitioners and policymakers. Optimistically, the results of this research could be adjusted and calibrated to apply to diverse disputes and geographic regions. Possibly, this research’s approach and results could also have relevance for a broad range of advanced global health subjects, including biotechnology and biosecurity.

The research design aims to tackle two concerns that could potentially impede this research’s objectives. First, using a case-study methodology widens the research’s applicability and facilitates extending its results from the theoretical sphere to that of practical implementation of the suggested model in the international arena. Second, testing the study’s preliminary results through policy experiments in real-life contexts could help generate a concise calibration of the results and a more informed phrasing of concrete conclusions, thereby increasing the level of implementation and acceptance by relevant players.

In all likelihood, in an arena saturated with sophisticated players, multifaceted interests, and opposing forces, convincing the international community to adopt the research findings would be a continuous process, perhaps even a lifetime project.

Notwithstanding its potential positive contribution to the future of diplomacy and global stability, the research, if improperly planned and applied, could indeed produce undesirable outcomes. For example, its focus on health factors could obscure other consequential non-health-related issues that should be considered, thereby unsettling the intrinsically fragile prioritizing process of peace negotiations and other international dialogues. There is also the danger that certain stakeholders could manipulate the research’s findings to gain an unfair advantage during negotiations, resulting in distortions, negative incentives, and, ultimately, an unbalanced process. Carefully taking into account the contextual aspects of the research is crucial to ensure its successful implementation.

The Future of Humanity Institute’s innovative vision, multidisciplinary approach, and outstanding intellectual community can serve as an invaluable source of knowledge as well as a catalyst in preparing me to affect change on a larger scale.

This submission includes my curriculum vitae and the research proposal submitted as a part of my DPhil application. Thank you for your kind attention and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Bareket Knafo