THE NATURE OF PEACE AND SECURITY

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Summary

Before the 1970s and the end of the Cold War (1989–1991), security was seen as being about military power and the ability to protect territory and sovereignty. With the increasing interdependence in the 1970s, this traditional conception of security became challenged, as more and more individuals began to focus on the "way of life" of societies and their values. Security became a contested concept in International Relations, and increasingly wideners argued that it needed to embrace economic, and then environmental, security. This lead to a debate about who the opponent was when considering security, whether it was a known physical state or rather whether it could be described as "threats without enemies."

1. The Nature of Power and the Origin of Security

In the 1990s, it became a cliché but nonetheless true, that it is necessary to reevaluate the concept of security, because it was clear that the antagonisms that defined the nature and scope of security for a generation had been significantly assuaged. For example, in November 1990, the member states of NATO and the Warsaw Pact signed a joint declaration "affirming the end of the era of division and confrontation," declaring that "obligation and commitment to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state," and recognizing that "security is indivisible." A year earlier, NATO had declared in London that "security and stability do not lie solely in the military dimension, and we intend to enhance the

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political component of our Alliance." By November 1991, NATO had abandoned the use of "threats" when speaking of the security environment and now used the concept of "risks."

This perception of the possible change in the components of security and in issues attracting priority in government attention was not, however, merely the result of the events in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the ending of the Cold War. In 1975 Henry Kissinger, as US Secretary of State, had spoken of the "progress in dealing with the traditional agenda" as no longer sufficient, since a "new and unprecedented kind of issue has emerged. The problems of energy, resources, environment, population, the issues of space and the seas now rank with the questions of military security, ideology and territorial rivalry which have traditionally made up the diplomatic agenda."

As a consequence, it has become almost routine to echo Joseph Nye's observation that "security problems have become more complicated as threats to state autonomy have shifted from the simply military, in which the threat is defined largely in terms of territorial integrity, to the economic."

The shift has led some to perceive a fundamental shift in the conduct of human relations, such that it may be possible to speak of a nonviolent conflict culture. This is, of course, much like the situation in domestic politics in developed Western societies, where the disagreements that exist have become routinized, institutionalized, and legitimized by agreed upon and well-established mechanisms for resolving conflict. It is crucial to appreciate that the focus of any politics is disagreement or conflict. There is no suggestion here that decisionmakers engaged in politics never agree, or that public disagreement is necessary before politics begin. It is important to remember, however, that conflict lies at the root of politics. In a world of universal agreement, there would be no need for it. Because disagreement or conflict lie at the heart of politics, so does the concept of power, for it is power that is a mechanism for resolving disagreement, and for determining in David Easton's famous phrase, the "allocation of values for a society."

Domestically, this is achieved by the acceptance of some procedure such as (but not necessarily) elections. In some states, it is still true that the procedure is the subject of contention, and there continue to be coups, revolutions, low-intensity wars, and usurpations.

Generally, however, a key feature of the distinction between domestic and international politics is that internationally, there is no government or other legitimate authority backed up by the monopoly of force as the ultimate sanction. In the international arena, there is no world government, no fully articulated and enforceable system of international law, and no underlying consensus among the members of the international systems on acceptable goals or even, on occasion, on how disagreements should be resolved. This has led to the traditional view that in the absence of world government, international politics can be seen as the constant pursuit of self-interest by the actors involved. As Reynolds has noted, from this perspective, international politics is preeminently concerned with "the art of achieving group ends against the opposition of other groups. But the groups are unconstrained in this competition by anything other

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than the limits on their power, and the losses that their controllers think they might suffer from the adoption of particular courses of action."

International politics is therefore based on the recognition of disagreement, and that the capacity to impose one's will "is limited by the will and effective ability of other states to impose theirs. The conduct of international relations must therefore always be the delicate adjustment of power to power."

As Howard goes on to say, the delicate adjustment of power to power leads to "an order which though fully satisfying to nobody, is just tolerable to all." It is order nonetheless. Such a perspective in turn leads to the realization that while disagreement and conflict lie at the heart of international politics, and indeed of politics in general, cooperation and agreements are also to be found in the world, even though violence is lurking in the background. This led historically to two major philosophical disputes about the fundamental nature of international relations: the Hobbesian state of nature versus the Lockeian, and the Realist versus Utopian debate of the first part of the twentieth century. At the turn of the twentieth century to the twenty-first century, as will be seen later, it has led to the wider debate about the nature of security.

2. A Question of Perspectives

For Hobbes, writing in 1651, "during all the time that men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, is as of every man, against every man . . . every man is Enemy to every man . . . men live without other security, other then their own strength."

In Hobbes' view this situation allowed for no industry, culture, building, art, and no society. It almost meant what Hobbes perceived to be the worst of all: continual fear, and danger of violent death. In his famous expression the life of man would be: "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."

While this has never existed per se, "yet in all times, Kings and Persons of Soveraigne authority, because of their Independency, are in continuall jealousies, and in the state and posture of Gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another; that is, their Forts, Garrisons, and Guns upon the Frontiers of their Kingdoms; and continuall Spyes upon their neighbours; which is a posture of War."

This is not, of course an accurate reflection of contemporary international relations, but it still encapsulates the fundamental assumptions of many about the nature of the system and of men for most of the twentieth century. Locke took a more opportunistic view, although he was also writing about a state of nature. He did not assert, as Hobbes had done, that in such a state of nature, antagonism was the supreme force between men. On the contrary, he firmly believed that sociability was the strongest bond between men. Men were equal, sociable, and free; but they were not licentious because they were governed by the laws of nature. He was clear that nature did not arm man against man, and that some degree of society was possible even in this state preceding government per se. Three and a half centuries later, the differing types of perception and assumptions about human nature that influenced Hobbes and Locke were still able to

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divide approaches to the study of the nature of international relations.
Modern International Relations as a academic subject grew out of the belief that war must be prevented and that there must be no more carnage like that of 1914–1918. Between 1918 and 1939 the philosophical debate was renewed, this time between the Utopians/Rationalists and Realists. For Realists, power is the critical ingredient of international life. It cannot be eliminated, and is the primary motivation of states, and the pursuit of power is the primary obligation of states. International politics concerns the survival of states in a hostile environment.

In the post–1945 world these ideas were classically expressed by Hans Morgenthau, who argued that the "world, imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result of forces inherent in human nature." He went on: "The main signpost that helps political realism find its way through the landscape of international politics is the concept of interests defined in terms of power . . . International politics, like all politics, is the struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim.

Given their pessimistic outlook, Realists also see war as a necessary evil, or at least an inherent evil in the system. This is because the basis of order is the delicate adjustment of power to power, or what came to known as the balance of power. States seek to provide for their security by seeking to balance the military power of their possible opponents. Periodically the perceived balance of their possible opponents will be challenged or tested, and those tests and challenges tend to involve military power. While it is too simplistic to see this state as a reflection of fallen man and sin, it is in marked contrast to the Utopian/Rationalist view, originating in the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment view held that man is perfectible or at least capable of improvement, perhaps with the aid of some social engineering. It assumed the inherent goodness of man. With rationality, man can achieve anything, including ways of transforming human behavior, establishing norms and rules of conduct acceptable and apparent to all, and ordering his affairs so as to avoid wars and conflict. It was felt that on this basis, a harmonious international political order could be achieved. This tradition made great play with the role of international institutions, international law, and the peaceful intent of public opinion. War was the result of a failure of rationality and of a failure to follow the will of the people. The debate between these schools became entangled in the events of the 1930s and the arguments about appeasement as against the more traditional views of international politics. Given the outbreak of World War II and the onset of the Cold War, for a generation after World War II, the realists won.

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3. A New Orientation

But as noted earlier, after that generation, a broader view of both the nature of international relations as a whole and of security began to take hold. Increasingly, it came to be assumed that even if survival was the original motivation for the creation of the state, or of the Hobbesian Leviathan that would bring peace and order to the disordered world of a state of nature, it was insufficient motivation once that peace and order appeared to have been secured. Then other needs, such as prosperity, began to be more important, and there is an extensive literature on individual need hierarchies,

which build up from the most basic need of survival or biological continuation of the system. One avenue for such an approach was the development of the complex interdependence theory by Keohane and Nye. Crucially they argued that: "The agenda of interstate relationships consists of multiple issues that are not arranged on a clear or consistent hierarchy. This absence of hierarchy among issues means, among other things, that military security does not consistently dominate the agenda . . . [and] Military force is not used by governments toward other government . . . when complex interdependence prevails."

It is important to note that Keohane and Nye are not arguing that military force is irrelevant, but rather that in some situations, particularly among industrialized, pluralist, democratized states, force is "unimportant as an instrument of policy" in their relations with one another. What is also noteworthy is that interdependence does not mean there is no competition between states, but rather that the competition takes on somewhat different forms and is not limited as to means.

Even before this view was expressed, some had already taken the view that the real creation of international security was when a condition existed "in which states have a justifiably high expectation that there will be not a major war, and that in the peace that prevails their core values will not be under threat . . . . International security will exist when the members of the international society reach common consent about the rules of behavior between them and about the practical implementations of those rules."

In 1950, this was the orientation for the future of Western Europe in the European Coal and Steel Community, which was founded on the belief that "war is not merely unthinkable but materially impossible," and which Community later led to the European Union. Whatever the merits and demerits of the EC, whatever it may or may not do, it has among its members most assuredly fulfilled that original intention. Those who take this view would go on to argue that this shows that it is false to say—or assume—that war is a necessary or inherent feature of the international political system. Karl Deutsch, of course, observed many years ago that "certain areas . . . have, in the past 'permanently' eliminated wars . . . war has been eliminated permanently, for all practical purposes, over large areas."

Deutsch invoked the notion of security-community in which, among a group of people within a territorial area, a 'sense of community' had developed. A concomitant of this was the development of a set of institutions and practices strong enough to assure, for a long period, dependable expectations of peaceful change, expectation of peaceful change being a defining characteristic of community. This conception of community conjures up also Kenneth Boulding's view of peace as other than "the absence of something—the absence of turmoil, tension, conflict, and war." Peace is better to be seen as a "condition of good management, orderly resolution of conflict, harmony associated with mature relationships, gentleness, and love."

For others, this was and will be too high an expectation, incapable of fulfillment. Pessimists argue, following Hobbes, that we are merely witnessing the transformation of systems, that while one form of conflictual relationships in Europe has ended, another is already emerging, with the rise of nationalist/ethnic disputes. They take the

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view that the way of the future is not community and peace but several states being torn apart, with the turmoil in Yugoslavia between 1992 and 2000 as precursors of the future. Thus it is possible to be pessimistic about the future of Europe given the argument that the distribution and character of military power are the root causes of war and peace.

Even more problematical in this debate is the impact of nuclear weapons. Although the destruction of 1939–1945 was awful, the events on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 did herald a new order of destruction. It has been this expansion of force, magnified and exacerbated by nuclear weapons, that has made the debate about analytical perspectives not just an arcane debate among academics but a central issue of our time. It is not just the destructiveness of these weapons that is important, but also the speed of their delivery and their relative ease of delivery and penetration, so that it is no longer necessary to defeat the enemy before destroying them. The Gulf War of 1991 was a demonstration of the contemporary firepower available, its accuracy, and its destructive capability. The bombing of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 also demonstrated that despite the well-known horrors of war, it remains, in some situations, an instrument of policy for both defensive and offensive purposes.

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