INTERNATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES AFTER THE COLD WAR: AN AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

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Introduction*

The field of international security studies has always examined important public policy problems, and its scholars and analysts often have been drawn to prominent current issues. At the dawn of the atomic age, scholars tried to understand the implications of "the absolute weapon" for the United States and the world. In the 1950s, the thermonuclear revolution led to an explosion of work on deterrence theory and the conundrum of how to make the hydrogen bomb militarily and politically useful. In the 1970s, the Vietnam War and U.S.-Soviet détente reduced interest in military questions. Later in that decade strategic parity prompted increased attention to problems of conventional deterrence and defense. In the 1980s, renewed U.S.-Soviet antagonism was accompanied by a revival of interest in military questions.

If the past is any guide, the end of the Cold War and the apparent transformation of the international system in 1989-90 will have important consequences for the field of international security studies. The Soviet threat to Western Europe and the United States has diminished, perhaps even evaporated; the risk of nuclear war appears to have fallen; the decline of the Soviet Union (and perhaps of the United States) has made the world unipolar (or multipolar); Saddam Hussein has reminded us of the continuing potential for violent conflict in the Third World; and the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe are experiencing problems ranging from virulent national and ethnic strife to economic malaise.

How will the end of the Cold War affect security studies? Should the field adopt a new agenda? Does it have the analytical tools to understand the changing security environment? The ongoing transformation of the postwar international system has already inspired a spate of discussions of the future of international security studies.¹ This paper attempts to contribute to this debate by (1) defining the scope of international security studies; (2) reviewing the evolution of the field; (3) assessing the state of the field; (4) examining how security studies will be affected by the changes in the international system; and (5) discussing a potential agenda for the field.

I argue that the end of the Cold War has not undermined the need for security studies. Recent remarkable political changes and upheaval in the Soviet Union, as well as the resulting developments in U.S.-Soviet relations, have changed the threats to international security, but the field of security studies still has a full agenda of practical and intellectual problems. The changes in the international system will probably make this agenda even richer and more varied, much as the post-1945 changes in the international system stimulated thinking about strategy after World War II. The field of international security studies should not abandon its traditional approaches or divert its attention wholly to emerging global problems such as environmental degradation, but it should broaden its focus to include more analysis of the political causes of conflict (particularly nationalism), the conditions for peace and cooperation, linkages between economics and security, and the security problems of the developing world.

The paper begins with a discussion of the definition of security studies and the boundaries of the field. The second section briefly reviews the evolution of the field.² The third examines the state of the field and rebuts some mistaken recent criticisms of security studies. Finally, I offer some suggestions for a future research agenda in international security studies.
I. Defining "International Security Studies"

A. The Scope of the Field

The subject matter of international security studies includes general theoretical issues such as the causes of war and alliances, as well as more policy-oriented research on problems of military policy confronting particular countries. The questions that form the central focus of the field are all concerned with international violence and external threats to the security of states. I see two main themes in the field: (1) the causes and prevention of war; and (2) strategy -- how military force is used for political purposes. A third theme, the effects of war, has received less attention and to some extent has been integrated into the others, but is important in regard to state-building, for example, because many nation-states have been shaped in the crucible of armed conflict. These themes arise from contradictory impulses. Some scholars are more concerned about the danger of war, while others look for ways to use force for national purposes. But often the same analysts explore both themes, and it is probably healthy to have them intellectually linked.

The core issues of international security studies include the causes of conflict and war in the international system, the grand strategies of states, nuclear strategy, arms control, and deterrence, conventional deterrence and conventional strategy, military doctrine, the determinants of the defense policies of states, military organizations and civil-military relations, and military history.

The field addresses general theoretical questions such as the causes of war and alliances, as well as problems of military policy confronting particular countries. Although some analyses may have been skewed by being too close to current policy debates, the net effect of policy relevance has been to benefit the field. Scholars in security studies often do not -- and should not -- hesitate to apply insights drawn from their research to vital policy issues.

Several names have been applied to the field. The term "strategic studies" is often used synonymously with security studies in the United States, but in other countries it usually connotes a narrower enterprise that focuses on military and technical questions. Although there is probably no agreement on the precise meanings of the terms, "national security" generally implies a focus on defending a particular state against external threats, "international security" suggests that security interdependence renders the unilateral pursuit of security impossible, and "global security" implies an emerging emphasis on building institutions to deal with ecological, economic, military and other threats to the global community or even the survival of the planet.

I prefer to call the field "international security studies" because it makes clear that contemporary security problems are international in scope and broader than narrow military and technical issues, and because the label is widely used. I will use "security studies" synonymously with international security studies. As many writers have pointed out, "security" is an ambiguous concept. Although calling the field "security studies" may introduce some of this ambiguity into the enterprise ("War and Peace Studies," for example, would describe much of the subject matter of the field accurately), the label has gained wide usage and is generally understood.
International security studies has been regarded as distinct from peace studies, which has emphasized the alternatives to war, even though the two fields examine many of the same subjects. During the Cold War peace studies was essentially marginalized by the policymaking community -- particularly by government officials and defense consultants in the United States -- as either naive or irrelevant. The end of the Cold War allows for the integration of peace studies and security studies. The political divisions among researchers should become less important, allowing for a more open, competitive dialogue between schools of thought. The convergence of peace research and security studies need not lead to a formal merger -- of the ISA International Security Studies and Peace Studies Sections, for example -- but the diminution of the Soviet threat and the emergence of a new generation unaffected by old disputes should lead to the gradual integration of the two fields, which study the same issues and ask many of the same questions.

B. How Broad Should the Field Be?

It is difficult to delimit precisely the scope and boundaries of international security studies. This problem is not unique to security studies. Most academic fields have difficulty drawing clear lines between their subjects and others. Where, for example, does history end and economic history begin? Does economic history belong in the discipline of economics or in history? The problems are compounded in security studies, however, because the field incorporates a multidisciplinary range of approaches, including those of political science, history, sociology, economics, and the physical sciences, among others. Moreover, international security studies is a subfield of international relations and the boundary between the two is often blurred.

Some observers have argued that the security studies field should be broader than a narrow focus on military questions. Many scholars and analysts in the field, however, have always addressed a broad range of issues. The field does not and should not focus exclusively on war. Economic threats to a state's industrial base, for example, may ultimately affect that state's military capabilities as well as the well-being of its citizens. Assessing security policies may also require an examination of non-military alternatives. In the 1990-91 Gulf Crisis and war, for example, examinations of the likely effectiveness of economic sanctions on Iraq were part of the discussion of security policy. Similar trade-offs will emerge in future crises, requiring the field to continue to consider broader questions of diplomacy and statecraft. If the field embraces the study of the causes and prevention of war and anchors itself in the broader field of international relations, it should be able to remain broad enough to address important security questions without losing analytical coherence, even if the dividing line between the core of international security studies and other areas is sometimes unclear.

C. New Dimensions of Security Studies?

In recent years, several writers have called for broadening security studies so that it embraces many new global issues, including environmental threats, economic welfare, and population growth. They have argued, for example, that the threat to the earth posed by global warming, ozone depletion, and other potential environmental catastrophes is at least as grave as the dangers of potential wars.
These new global problems are obviously important. If the most pessimistic scenarios about the threat of large-scale global warming are realized, the resultant loss of life, economic damage, and social disruption may be orders of magnitude greater than the threat posed by most wars. But these issues, however important, should not be incorporated wholly into the domain of international security studies, except when they are linked to problems of international conflict and the potential use of force.

Although environmental, demographic, and economic problems can be said to threaten "security" if that term is used in a broad sense, the type of threat, the most useful analytical approach, and the strategy to respond differs markedly from the problems that have formed the central focus of security studies. These differences are revealed by looking at the contrast between environmental issues and security issues.

There are three reasons why threats to the global environment should be considered separately from security studies. First, there are few analytical links between these topics and the problems of war and peace. The causes of environmental degradation -- failure to control emissions, excessive population growth, the "tragedy of the commons" -- are different from the causes of international or civil war. Security studies is largely concerned with deliberate or perceived threats of conflict arising from political decisions by states and other actors. Most environmental problems are the unintended results of economic activity. There are some areas of overlap, such as the environmental consequences of war and the possibility that conflicts over resources could cause conflict, but analysts who have studied war and strategy will not necessarily have the intellectual tools to contribute to the analysis of most environmental problems.

Second, calls for broadening the agenda for security studies often deprive the field of any intellectual coherence by equating a security threat with anything that is bad. By this logic, environmental degradation, public health, and natural disasters should all be legitimate subjects for security studies, because they would fit definitions that claim "a threat to national security is an action or sequence of events that ... threatens drastically and over a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state." Scholarly communities need boundaries, however imprecise, because delimiting an area of inquiry fosters productive intellectual cross-fertilization. In modern societies, for example, individual well-being may be threatened by both economic poverty and mental depression, but this does not mean that the disciplines of economics and psychology should be merged.

Third, it may be counterproductive to regard threats to the environment as security threats. Applying a national security framework to mobilize people to protect the environment may create a sense of urgency that cannot be sustained. It is also dangerous to introduce worst-case scenarios and zero-sum thinking into the environment field. These techniques, often identified with the analysis of security issues, may not work when applied to problems that required sustained international cooperation, not management of a crisis in relations with a hostile power. Moreover, organizations that have focused on security for so many years will have difficulty making the adjustment to studying the environment. One analyst has noted that “if the Pentagon had been put in charge of negotiating an ozone layer protocol, we might still be stockpiling chlorofluorocarbons as a bargaining chip.”

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There are a few limited cases in which environmental problems should be considered as part of security studies. First, environmental degradation, as well as other new global problems, may be a cause of conflict. Security studies should examine the entire range of factors that may cause wars. Second, intentional environmental degradation may be used as a weapon of war, as Saddam Hussein demonstrated when Iraqi forces pumped oil into the Gulf and ignited Kuwaiti oil wells during the 1991 Gulf War. Finally, environmental damage may be an effect of war, even if it is not deliberately employed as a weapon.

II. The Evolution of the Field

The definitive intellectual history of the international security studies has yet to be written. As Colin Gray has suggested, "a field of ambiguous scholarly status is not often interested in tracing its own intellectual history." Nevertheless, there is general agreement that the field emerged in the aftermath of World War II, enjoyed a "Golden Age" from 1954-1966, waned during the Vietnam War and its immediate aftermath, and then revived during the late 1970s and 1980s. The following overview of the field is not meant to fill this gap or to provide a comprehensive bibliographical survey of the field, but is a brief summary of some of the important developments in international security studies.

The impetus for the development of international security studies came from the twin revolutions in American foreign policy and in military technology caused by the emergence of the Cold War and the development of atomic weapons. The unprecedented nature of the security problems confronting the United States attracted civilians to consideration of issues hitherto the province solely of the uniformed military. Scientists involved in wartime atomic research remained involved in the continuing debates over the implications of their discoveries. At the same time, American thinking about international politics was transformed by the almost universal acceptance of the realist paradigm, which held that the idealism and isolation of the interwar period must be replaced by a rigorous appreciation of power politics and the importance of the national interest.

The realist school provided the political and intellectual context for the elaboration of concepts of nuclear strategy and deterrence. Although there was not always a direct connection between realism and deterrence theory, both bodies of thought emphasized the centrality of states, military force, maintaining a balance of power, and the use of threats.

After the initial wave of reaction to the atomic bomb, there was a lull in American thinking on nuclear weapons until the development of the hydrogen bomb and the "Massive Retaliation" policy of the Eisenhower administration engendered a search for more "rational" means of making nuclear weapons serve U.S. foreign policy. Civilian strategists entered the field and concepts such as counterforce, first and second strike capabilities, strategic force vulnerability, competitive risk-taking, escalation, damage limitation, flexible response, and limited nuclear war were elaborated in this period. Many of the resulting works of the 1954-1966 period remain classics in the field. This wave of theorizing also led to consideration of how arms control, as opposed to disarmament, could contribute to the stability of the nuclear balance.
The initial conceptual innovations of the "Golden Age" of theorizing about security seemed to hit a dead end after the mid-1960s; some concepts in deterrence theory were seen as problematic and fewer new ideas were generated. The Vietnam War then discredited much thinking about military affairs. In the early 1970s the emergence of U.S.-Soviet détente and the apparent reduction in the danger of nuclear war led to a dramatic decline in public interest in nuclear weapons issues, despite the continued increase in U.S. and Soviet nuclear arsenals. During the hiatus in thinking about nuclear strategy, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the elaboration of the bureaucratic politics paradigm, which seemed particularly applicable to decision-making in security affairs and with regard to the development of particular weapons systems. Important works during this period developed concepts for analyzing decision-making processes in complex organizations and applied them to a variety of defense issues.

Since the late 1970s, there have been many promising developments in the field of international security studies. Many younger scholars who entered the field in the 1970s have begun to publish the fruits of their research. Renewed public interest in defense and foreign-policy issues has encouraged an expansion of scholarly efforts. The late 1970s and 1980s witnessed a renewed debate over U.S. nuclear strategy and deterrence theory, much greater use of history by political scientists, greater scholarly attention to problems of conventional warfare, increasing applications of psychology to security issues, more explicit attention to the ethical dimensions of security, and the emergence of important theoretical debates over realism and theories of international cooperation.

III. The Current State of the Field

A. Why Security Studies is Ready for the Post-Cold War World

The intellectual rebirth and institutional growth of security studies in the past 15 years should enable the field to adjust to the post-Cold War world. Several recent developments have particularly prepared the field to study the new international system. First, recent work in the field has placed much greater emphasis on social science methods. Scholars have sought to elaborate, refine, and test theories in hopes of generating cumulative knowledge. This aspiration may not always be fulfilled, but it ensures that security studies will gradually develop a stock of accepted propositions that should be applicable to policy questions in the post-Cold War world. General propositions about, for example, when deterrence fails or the links between nationalism and war can be applied to a wide variety of cases, giving the field an intellectual apparatus that can be applied to new problems.

Second, the field's renewed emphasis on history, including the history of the pre-nuclear world, should ensure that its central theories transcend the Cold War and U.S.-Soviet nuclear rivalry. The post-1990 world will have much in common with the 19th century, the pre-1914, and the 1919-1939 international systems. Political scientists in security studies have increasingly built and tested their theories through careful reconsiderations of historical cases. This trend has been enhanced by the widespread use of the comparative case-study approach. At the same time, historians have contributed
important studies of military and diplomatic history and entered into a productive
dialogue with political scientists.

Third, security studies has become more entrenched in universities compared
to the "Golden Age," when much of the conceptual innovation took place in "think
tanks" like RAND or was otherwise supported by government contracts. The net effect
has been to promote a more informed and objective debate on contemporary security
issues and to maintain an independent community of researchers specializing in
security studies. An academic community that focuses on security studies is able to
give policy problems independent analysis, and is under less pressure to support
government programs or policies. Academic researchers also are more likely to train
subsequent generations of scholars, ensuring that security issues receive continuing
attention.

Fourth, the number of journals and other publishing opportunities has expanded,
giving the field greater visibility and a broader range of ideas. When International
Security was founded in 1976, few other journals focused on security affairs. Since
then several new journals devoting exclusive attention to security have joined the field:
Journal of Strategic Studies (1978), Comparative Strategy (1978), Defense Analysis
University Press began a series of books called "Studies in Security Affairs" in the early
1980s and a decade later Princeton University Press started a series on "International
History and Politics" that will feature many security-related books. The Mershon Center
at Ohio State University has awarded the Edgar S. Furniss, Jr., prize for first books in
security studies, as well as sponsoring a series of publications. Merely creating a series
may not increase the absolute amount of publishable material, but it can call attention to
good work.

Finally, the field has been institutionalized in an international network of research
centers and institutes that provide the infrastructure for scholarly collaboration and
dialogue. Many of these centers, particularly those established with support from the Ford
Foundation, are based at universities. Others are not associated with academic
institutions, but still offer non-governmental sources of analysis and information. This
international network of major universities and independent research institutes like the
International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) and the Brookings Institution can be
expected to support the field for many years to come.

B. Recent Debates in Security Studies

The field's new theoretical and historical consciousness have been reflected in
several important debates that have enlivened international security studies in recent
years. If, as Stanley Hoffmann has argued, "sound and fury are good for creative
scholarship," then the field is indeed very healthy.

THE RATIONAL DETERRENCE DEBATE. Deterrence theory has occupied a
central place in security studies, but it has been challenged repeatedly, most recently in
the late 1980s. Many scholars have criticized deterrence theory for being abstract and
ahistorical. Others have argued that its assumptions of rationality neglect psychological
and organizational factors. Proponents of rational deterrence theory emphasize the
superiority of deductive theoretical approaches or the flawed historical basis for some critiques of deterrence theory. The debate over deterrence theory will continue, particularly as the participants examine new cases of apparent deterrence failure in conflicts like Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the ensuing war. Conventional deterrence, which began to receive attention in the 1980s, will become more prominent as a practical and intellectual problem.

REALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS. Realism has always provided the theoretical foundation for much -- but not all -- of the work in security studies, both in its early postwar manifestations and its more modern "neorealist" reformulations. Tenets of realism have been challenged by liberal theories that suggest that institutions and cooperation can emerge despite the anarchic nature of the international system, or that liberal democratic states do not behave as structural realist theories would predict. This debate will be given new impetus as the competing schools of thought present their explanations for the end of the Cold War and the continuing changes in the international system.

WAR, PEACE, AND THE FUTURE. Even before the end of the Cold War, a debate was emerging on the obsolescence of major war. The changes initiated by the 1989-90 transformation of Europe led some scholars to proclaim new dangers of war and others to identify factors that would promote peace on that continent. These debates raise important theoretical questions about the causes of war and the conditions for peace. Although the prospects for war in the Third World after the Cold War initially received less attention, continuing instability and growing military arsenals in developing countries will encourage the security studies field to assess the prospects for conflict in regions other than Europe.

OFFENSE AND DEFENSE. In the late 1970s, a continuing debate began on the role of the offense-defense balance in causing wars. A group of scholars argued that offensive advantages often created dangerous instabilities by increasing the incentives for war. Others suggested that offensive advantages and doctrines were not necessarily destabilizing and that the concept of an offense-defense balance was problematical. The largely American theoretical debate was paralleled by proposals from European peace researchers -- especially in Germany -- for non-offensive or non-provocative defense. These two sets of arguments arose independently, and featured different approaches to the problem of the instabilities created by offensive postures, but they were based on a shared belief that defensive postures could reduce the risk of war.

AMERICAN DECLINE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS. The publication of Paul Kennedy's The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers in 1987 aroused public concern over America's position in the world and provoked critics to argue that Kennedy exaggerated U.S. relative decline and wrongly attributed poor U.S. economic performance to excessive external commitments. This debate raised issues of the likely direction and importance of shifts in the structure of the international system, the bases of power, the relationship between economics and security, and the proper direction for U.S. grand strategy. Even as the public debate over U.S. decline dies down, these topics will remain important in international relations theory and international security studies.
ASSESSING CONVENTIONAL BALANCES. The advent of nuclear parity, the continuing Soviet arms build-up, the Reagan administration's defense program, and the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty stimulated a vigorous debate in the United States over the state of the European conventional balance and the proper methods to assess it. The end of the Cold War in Europe made the conventional balance on that continent seem less important, but the difference between many predictions and outcomes in the 1991 Gulf War highlighted the need to develop and refine methods for combat modeling and net assessment.

C. Some Recent Criticisms of the Field

Since the revolutions of 1989, many observers have debated the status and future of international security studies. Four criticisms of the field have been prominent: First, some have suggested that the apparent end of the Cold War means that security studies is obsolete because major war has become extremely unlikely. Second, some have argued that scholars in security studies failed to predict the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe and that this failure exposes the shortcomings of the field. Third, the recurring criticism that the field is excessively preoccupied with military hardware and the technical dimensions of security has re-emerged. Finally, some commentators have faulted experts in security studies for inaccurately estimating U.S. and allied casualties in the 1991 Gulf War. Each of these criticisms is overdrawn at best, and several are simply mistaken.

SECURITY STUDIES AND THE OBSOLESCENCE OF WAR. In the euphoria following the opening of the Berlin Wall and the rapid collapse of the communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe, it was fashionable to suggest that peace had broken out and the field of security studies was obsolete. This conclusion was given apparent scholarly support by the prominent arguments of Francis Fukuyama and John Mueller. In a widely-quoted article, Fukuyama argued that liberal free-market democracy had triumphed over communism and that the age of ideological great-power conflict was over. John Mueller's Retreat from Doomsday proclaimed the obsolescence of major war on the grounds that it had become unthinkable among advanced countries, like slavery and duelling. Fukuyama and Mueller both wrote before the revolutions of 1989 and 1990, but these events seemed to confirm their arguments.

There are at least three reasons why the events of 1989-90 have not sounded the death knell for major wars and for security studies. First, even if world peace had broken out, security studies would still have a reason for being: to ensure that peace was preserved. Economists do not go out of business in periods of prosperity. If permanent peace had broken out, understanding why would be a precondition for maintaining security. There is still no consensus on how and why the Cold War ended. Understanding the transformation of the international system and its implications for peace provides ample opportunities for further research in security studies.

Second, claims that war was obsolete were not supported by the arguments of Fukuyama and Mueller. The former only suggested that great conflicts over principle and ideas had ended, not that wars would never break out again. Mueller's central argument was that war was obsolescent among the developed countries. He did not claim that war in the Third World was impossible. Fukuyama and Mueller may be right
or wrong in their more general arguments, but neither offers support for sweeping claims that war is obsolete. Wars between developing countries remain possible and perhaps even likely, as do wars between developed and developing countries.

Third, events have shown that pronouncements of war's obsolescence were at best premature. Security studies will continue to have a full agenda. The 1991 Gulf War demonstrated that major war is still possible. That conflict may have been anomalous -- few cases of aggression will be so clear-cut, political cooperation among the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council may never be so easy, the United States will rarely have extensive base facilities and six months in which to deploy forces -- but other states like Iraq may initiate future conflicts. Long-standing regional conflicts in Angola, Namibia, Nicaragua, and Ethiopia appear to have been resolved (at least for now), but other violent conflicts continue in Peru, Kashmir, and many other countries. In Europe, the euphoria over the collapse of communist regimes has given way to concern about ethnic and national conflicts, particularly in the Yugoslavia and elsewhere in the Balkans. The continuing uncertainty about the long-term political evolution of the Soviet Union means that East-West security issues will remain important. And many threats to peace in the Middle East -- in addition to the Arab-Israeli dispute -- remain in the aftermath of the war against Iraq.

In short, there are few grounds for believing that wars will become less frequent. For centuries, prophets of peace have been proved wrong by events. Proclamations that perpetual peace has broken out at the end of the 20th century sound all too much like earlier declarations that "War is on its last legs; and that a universal peace is as sure as is the prevalence of civilization over barbarism" and "War has become impossible, except at the price of suicide." Security studies and the end of the cold war. Many have argued that security studies failed to predict the end of the Cold War and that this failure reveals the intellectual weaknesses -- even bankruptcy -- of the field. In particular, this criticism suggests that the field should have recognized the important changes underway in the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, but failed to do so because analysts were preoccupied with military arsenals and ignored societal and political changes.

For three reasons, this criticism does not undermine the intellectual legitimacy of international security studies. First, this type of specific prediction is not the aim of social science; it is unfair to judge security studies by this criterion. Any social science may only be able to predict broad trends and changes, not the timing of specific events. Economists and political scientists may be called upon to predict the stock market, recessions, or election outcomes, but it is not the central element of their work and their fields are not denounced if they get it wrong sometimes. Paul Krugman, for example, notes that few economists in the 1960s would have predicted that U.S. growth rates would be so low during the 1970s and 1980s, but virtually no one charges that economics has failed dismally.

Second, the same logic that "blames" security studies for failing to predict the remarkable changes in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union, should accord even more blame to the regional specialists who studied that area much more than those in the security studies field did. Many experts in Soviet studies have repeatedly been surprised.
by political changes in the Soviet Union. But most observers agree that such specialists have much to contribute to ongoing discussions of contemporary developments.

Third, the security studies field may not in fact have failed so miserably. The events of 1989-90 are remarkably similar to the predictions that George Kennan offered in his famous "X" article in the late 1940s. At least some analysts foresaw the basic outlines of how the Cold War would end.

Finally, the fact that many observers did not predict the end of the Cold War should spur the field to greater efforts to improve its theories and methods, instead of giving up the effort to understand complicated events with limited information.

The real failure of security studies was that few scholars thought about what would happen if the West got what it wanted in the Cold War -- Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe. This outcome was presumed to be the long-term aim of Western strategy, but relatively few seem to have explored some of the emerging questions: Should the post-communist states be integrated into NATO and the EC? What sort of relationship would the West want with the Soviet Union? What security system would best preserve peace in Europe? Although a few scholars in security studies did address these questions before 1989, the field might profitably set its future agenda by asking what will happen if countries succeed in getting what their national security policies call for.

**THE BALANCE BETWEEN POLITICAL AND MILITARY ANALYSIS.** The security studies field has frequently been criticized for paying excessive attention to the military dimensions of security. Typical charges are that the field has placed an inordinate focus on capabilities instead of intentions; that its members display excessive fascination with weapons technology, neglecting the political causes and consequences of war that would reveal how and why war should be avoided, and fail to recognize that military force does not solve political problems, but actually may create more. It is also alleged that scholars who employ game theory did not recognize that the Soviet Union is not simply "Country B" to the United States' "Country A."

To some extent, this criticism is well-taken. Security studies should not focus entirely on the military dimensions of war. But the argument should not be overdrawn. The military focus of security studies can be justified, although it will have to change to address some future problems. Overall, however, criticism of the field for being too interested in military issues is misplaced, for two reasons. First, during the Cold War, military aspects of security became more prominent because the political dimensions of security remained remarkably constant. The U.S-Soviet rivalry was the principal factor in international security, and its political aspects varied little throughout the Cold War. The superpower relationship remained basically hostile, despite minor fluctuations in periods of détente. The division of Europe appeared permanent. Some analysts decried the field's fixation on deterrence and its neglect of attempts to improve U.S.-Soviet political relations, but major changes in the political relationship did not occur until the Soviet Union began to make its peace initiatives under Mikhail Gorbachev.

Given the constant nature of U.S.-Soviet political rivalry, the military aspects of security were the only ones that varied significantly, particularly because of the rapid evolution of technology. For over 40 years, analysts had the luxury of focusing their attention on a narrow set of variables. That period featured apparently unchanged bipolarity, U.S.-Soviet rivalry, the division of Europe, and Soviet domestic politics, but major changes in the political relationship did not occur until the Soviet Union began to make its peace initiatives under Mikhail Gorbachev.
authoritarianism. It became analytically convenient and justifiable to regard changes in military factors as the key determinants of the danger of war. Thus analysts focused on the military balance, the quantitative and qualitative arms race, the possibility of a surprise attack, crisis stability, and the minutiae of arms control agreements.

To understand future security threats, however, the emphasis on military variables will now have to change. The U.S.-Soviet political relationship has changed dramatically at several times in recent years, and may change even further in either direction. At least as important, the relative decline of the Soviet Union and, to a lesser extent, the United States, means that a broader array of relationships now affects international security.

Second, the military dimensions of security will continue to be important, even if analysis should include political factors as well. Military factors cannot be ignored in analyzing politico-military affairs. Stephen Meyer, for example, correctly suggests that the "relative tank balance between the United States and Warsaw Pact, for instance, does not seem very important after the collapse of Communist regimes" in Eastern Europe. Analyses of that balance, however, yielded insights about the qualitative superiority of U.S. tanks that were highly relevant to the battles of the 1991 Gulf War. As some analysts long recognized, U.S. tank cannons were more accurate and had greater range than even the most advanced Soviet tanks in the Iraqi arsenal. Given the widespread exports of U.S. and Soviet tanks and the continuing potential for conflict, they will almost certainly confront one another again.

More general conclusions drawn from analysis of the U.S.-Soviet military balance will also remain relevant to future conflicts, many of which will involve military balances. Although the security studies field should not ignore the political causes and consequences of war, it must also be prepared to analyze the military aspects of war. The techniques developed and refined in assessing the U.S.-Soviet military balance should remain useful, even if the U.S.-Soviet balance is no longer a central concern. In conflicts like the Gulf War, analysis informed by careful scholarship is more likely be accurate than pundits' off-the-cuff predictions.

PREDICTING CASUALTIES IN THE 1991 GULF WAR. Several commentators have suggested that experts in security studies failed to predict the remarkably low number of U.S. casualties in the Gulf War. One declared: "Never in the field of human conflict have so many been so wrong about so much, so publicly." Another proclaimed: "Conventional wisdom, softened up for weeks, has now been thoroughly routed.

Many predictions about the likely course and casualties during the war were indeed off the mark. One analyst suggested that in a ground war Iraqi forces would channel coalition forces into "killing grounds," that chemical weapons would make U.S. troops "panic and run," that U.S. equipment would prove unreliable in combat, and that the United States would become bogged down and resort to tactical nuclear weapons. As the crisis unfolded unnamed Pentagon sources estimated U.S. casualties at 10,000-20,000. It was later reported that early Pentagon computer projections put U.S. casualties at 40,000, but on the eve of the assault they predicted 5,000 casualties.
Center for Defense Information estimated that an attack that went all the way to Baghdad would cost 10,000 American lives.  

Although nobody was exactly right, the record suggests that the most accurate forecasts of the war came from the analysts who had been most actively involved in devising and debating methods of assessing military balances. For example, on January 15, 1991, John Mearsheimer predicted that "the American military will sweep Hussein's forces from Kuwait quickly and easily. The campaign should be over in a week or less and probably fewer than 1,000 Americans will die ... In fact, American forces may suffer as few as 500 fatalities." Writing well before the United States had completed its buildup of an offensive capability, Barry Posen presented an essentially accurate prediction of the course of the war and suggested that U.S. battle deaths might not exceed 1,000.

The attempts to forecast the course and outcome of the 1991 Gulf War provide reminders of the difficulties of predicting combat. Some estimates missed the mark because they were driven by the political biases of the forecaster. In other cases, analysts did not spell out their assumptions or offer a full range of predictions that would apply under different conditions. Many predictions depended on the postulated course of the war. The protracted allied bombing campaign probably surprised many analysts and had the effect of reducing coalition casualties. But the overall experience shows that disinterested nongovernmental analysis -- especially those in universities who devote sustained attention to these issues -- can present important conclusions about contemporary security issues. The 1991 Gulf War does not reveal that security studies as a field has "failed." It does suggest what kind of work is most useful and offers some basis for discriminating between competing "expert" forecasts.

IV. The New Agenda for Security Studies

War is not obsolete, but the end of the Cold War has changed the agenda for security studies. The Cold War narrowed the scope of the field. Much attention focused on how to deter the Soviet Union or how to reduce the risk of nuclear war. These problems have become less important, because the Soviet Union will have less military power for several years, regardless of its domestic politics, and many new and neglected problems have emerged. Security studies will no longer emphasize the U.S.-Soviet nuclear rivalry because a more complex pattern of conflicts will emerge. The United States confronts a new set of strategic choices that will inspire vigorous debates, while the field as a whole has a wider range of theoretical and practical questions to answer. No list of topics can be complete, so in compiling this one I have attempted to emphasize broad and enduring questions, instead of the shifting agenda of contemporary policy issues.

A. The Changing U.S. Policy Agenda

Much of security studies in the United States has been driven by U.S. policy concerns." For scholars and analysts in the U.S. security studies community, five current policy issues stand out as particularly important: (1) the task of defining a new grand strategy for the United States; (2) U.S.-Soviet relations; (3) the future of Europe; (4)
proliferation of advanced weapons, including weapons of mass destruction; (5) reducing the U.S. defense establishment.

U.S. GRAND STRATEGY. The ebbing of the Soviet threat and the apparent triumph of liberal democratic and capitalist ideas in much of the world has set the stage for a new debate over America's purpose in the world. As in the immediate aftermath of World War II, basic questions about U.S. strategy will be raised. What are U.S. interests in the world? What are the principal threats to those interests? To what extent and in what regions should the United States be politically or militarily involved? Should the United States attempt to maintain its position as the world's only superpower? What is the relative importance of economic, military, and political power?

U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. The collapse of Soviet power and the continuing political turmoil in the Soviet Union has made the future of U.S.-Soviet relations more uncertain than at any time since 1945-47. In 1986, few would have imagined that the United States in 1991 would be debating the amount of aid it would offer the Soviet Union and whether this aid should be channeled through the Soviet president or the leaders of the individual republics. Changes in the Soviet Union may produce equally unexpected debates in the next five years. There is also an agenda of unfinished negotiations on strategic nuclear and conventional arms control. A vast array of complex questions confronts the United States: Should the United States support the continued unity of the Soviet Union? Can meaningful negotiations be conducted with the Soviet Union while it is going through what amounts to a revolution? What sort of global diplomatic role should the United States want the Soviet Union to play? Did the United States place too much emphasis on personal ties to Gorbachev? Will a more threatening Soviet Union re-emerge after a period of turmoil and rejuvenation? Will Soviet decline eventually lead to aggressive behavior, much as it did for the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1914?

THE FUTURE OF THE U.S. ROLE IN EUROPE. The withdrawal of Soviet forces and the virtual dissolution of the Warsaw Pact have forced a reconsideration of long-standing assumptions about European security. What military and political role should the United States play in the new Europe? Are U.S. forces still necessary for European security? Should the United States seek a pan-European security system that might ultimately supplant NATO? How can the United States help the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe become prosperous democracies? Most of these questions rest on implicit theories about the causes of war, peace, and international cooperation.

THE PROLIFERATION OF ADVANCED WEAPONS. The 1991 Gulf War focused public attention on the spread of advanced conventional weaponry, ballistic missiles, and the potential for nuclear, biological, and chemical capabilities. Assessing the threat posed by this spread and evaluating potential responses has already become a significant issue within security studies. Nuclear proliferation, in particular, is likely to become a more important practical problem and research focus in the post-Cold War world. Nuclear capabilities will spread as more countries acquire advanced technologies. At the same time, the retraction of superpower nuclear umbrellas and the emergence of old and new regional conflicts may increase incentives to acquire nuclear weapons. The problem of conventional arms transfers will also require more attention. Future questions include determining which weapons are likely to be the most threatening and developing
multilateral regimes to control their spread. But in the long run the problem will become one of managing regional conflicts to reduce the probability that such weapons will be used.

REDUCING THE U.S. DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT. The U.S. defense budget and military establishment will almost certainly continue to shrink in the 1990s. The decisions about how the reduction occurs will be as important as the debates over how to spend the rising budgets of the early 1980s, although they will probably attract far less attention. Whether to cut active or reserve forces, the Army or the Navy, research and development or readiness, will all be important questions. This "downsizing" process may also provide an opportunity for rethinking the roles and missions of the various services. The security studies community can play a valuable role in presenting more objective analyses of these issues than those likely to emerge from within the administration or Congress. One important theme is likely to be a reconsideration of the arguments of the "military reform" analysts who decried what they saw as excessive emphasis on high-technology weapons. Many studies will evaluate the performance of U.S. weapons in the 1991 Gulf War to assess that conflict's lessons for weapons acquisition policies.

This agenda is not exhaustive, but it suggests that the U.S. security studies community will not lack for policy problems to analyze. Taken singly, none of these issues is as dramatic as the risk of U.S.-Soviet nuclear war. Together, however, they amount to a more intellectually diverse set of problems that should stimulate research and analysis for many years. The United States no longer confronts a single overriding threat, and it is probably more secure now than any great power has been in history. But reorienting U.S. strategy and foreign policy will require continuing thought. And the broad array of lesser threats deserves intellectual attention.

B. Promising Topics for Research

Looking beyond the changing policy agenda for the United States, there are many interesting theoretical and practical questions that merit research.

REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD. Traditionally, the security studies field, particularly in the United States, has neglected Third World security issues, except when they have been linked to superpower competition. These issues will now occupy a central place in the field. Since 1945 international wars have been largely confined to the developing world and such conflicts may assume greater prominence if East-West tensions remain low. Much of the earlier work on these questions has been heavily empirical and focused on particular regions, but several studies have offered more general conclusions about security in the developing world. Security studies should turn a greater proportion of its intellectual energies to the general problems of security in developing countries. Regional security questions can now be examined without the distortion imposed by viewing them through the prism of intense global U.S.-Soviet rivalry. With the end of the Cold War, will conflicts in the developing world become more likely? What will happen to regimes or states that were propped up by a superpower patron for geopolitical or ideological reasons? Will many collapse,
producing anarchy? How will environmental degradation affect the prospects for violent conflict in developing countries? In civil conflicts, how is the international arms market changing the military balance between governments and insurgents? How will these civil conflicts affect migration flows?

DOMESTIC POLITICS AND SECURITY. Most realist analyses of international security problems begin by looking at the structure of the international system, but this approach often overlooks the importance of domestic politics and regime type. The 1989-90 changes in the international system, for example, appear to have begun within states. The field has produced several seminal studies of defense policymaking in the United States and other countries, but there are many issues of domestic politics or regime type that should be reconsidered in security studies. The field devote more attention to the apparent connection between democracy and peace. Much evidence suggests that democratic states rarely fight one another, but there is no consensus on a theory that explains this persistent pattern. More research is needed on the domestic sources of international aggression. Problems of militarism and civil-military relations will become more important, particularly in post-communist states.

THE CAUSES OF PEACE AND COOPERATION. The security studies field has traditionally focused on war, but studying wars in isolation would be like analyzing business cycles and only looking at depressions. Some theories of war are at least implicitly theories of peace, but more research is needed on why rivalries end peacefully, why some states seem to make the transition from being militaristic to being pacifist, and why cooperation and security regimes are possible in the anarchic international system. If peace research and security studies gradually converge, this area should be one of fruitful debate.

ECONOMICS AND SECURITY. Concern about American economic decline has stimulated research on the economic bases of power, but the connections between economics and security go beyond this debate. Although many observers have called for increased study of the economics-security nexus, many recent attempts to explore this area have not been fruitful. Instead of merely encouraging economists to enter the field of security studies or undertaking more studies of the relationship between military spending and economic performance, some neglected topics should be added to this agenda. For example, further research is necessary to move beyond simplistic arguments that poverty breeds instability; the relationship between economic development and war is far more complex, and this issue is critically important in many countries and regions. There should also be additional studies of the role of the military-industrial complex, the relationship between military power, international economic openness, and economic stability, and why some states choose economic over military gains.

EXPLAINING THE END OF THE COLD WAR. Just as the outbreak of the Cold War ignited a fierce debate between orthodox, revisionist, and post-revisionist historians, the end of the Cold War will touch off a series of theoretically and politically charged debates. International security studies should ask which theory of international politics best explains the end of the Cold War. We should allow theories to compete by applying them to the same set of events. Proponents of different theories should put forth their
explanations of the end of the Cold War and the apparent transformation of the international system so that they can be considered and challenged by others.

NATIONALISM. The collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe has produced not the end of history but the return of nationalism. The re-emergence of nationalism in the Balkans and within the republics of the Soviet Union will affect the prospects for international and civil conflict in those regions, yet the connections between nationalism and war are not fully understood. To understand this potential source of conflict, security studies needs to broaden its focus to address questions such: How does nationalism arise? What different categories of it exist and which are dangerous? When and how does it create conflict and war?

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM.

Understanding the new international system and its implications for international security poses considerable intellectual challenges. Has the world become multipolar? If so, will this make war more likely? Have advanced states in effect renounced war as an instrument of policy so that they can maximize economic gains? What is constant? What has changed? What structural or other elements of the old system have disappeared and what does this mean?

V. Conclusions

The revolutionary changes in East-West relations that began in 1989-90 should stimulate further intellectual vitality for international security studies. Although the threat of U.S.-Soviet nuclear war has diminished, a broader array of more complex security problems has emerged. War is unfortunately not obsolete; even in Europe the potential for new or resurgent conflict remains. If security studies can adapt to this new agenda, it should see intellectual ferment similar to the level achieved in the "Golden Age" of the 1950s and early 1960s.

The security studies field revived in the 1980s and drew more widely on history and international relations theory, precisely the kinds of approaches that are necessary in the post-Cold War world. If the field can build on its recent advances by re-emphasizing the political, economic, and social aspects of security, it should be able to offer insights into the emerging security problems of a new world. The field will always have much relevance to contemporary policy issues, but current policy concerns should not crowd out basic research on questions like nationalism, imperial decline, and the sources of international cooperation.
ENDNOTES


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2 A single paper cannot hope to offer a comprehensive list of important works in security studies. Moreover, the citations included necessarily reflect the author's research interests and linguistic limitations. For a more comprehensive overview of the field, see the works cited in note 1.

3 See Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," pp. 222-223, for an excellent discussion of how the field should "steer between the Scylla of political opportunism and the Charybdis of academic irrelevance."


5 Haftendorn, "The Security Puzzle," offers a discussion of the meanings often attached to these three terms.

6 For example, the International Studies Association has an International Security Studies Section, and there is a Center for International Security and Arms Control (Stanford University) and a Center for International Security Studies at Maryland (University of Maryland), among many other institutions.


9 This possibility also has been noted by scholars in peace studies. See, for example, David J. Dunn, "Peace Research versus Strategic Studies," in Booth, ed., New Thinking About Strategy and International Security, pp. 69-70.


For a more complete discussion of these issues, see Daniel Deudney, "The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security," Millennium, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Winter 1990), pp. 461-476.

Ibis., p. 467.


Security studies existed in the sense that war and peace were given scholarly attention long before 1945. Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, and Clausewitz all wrote about strategy, an important part of the subject matter of security studies. In the past century, civilians studying war in a scholarly fashion, including Hans Delbruck, Julian Corbett, and B.H. Liddell Hart, served as important precursors of the modern field of security studies. But a distinct academic field -- a community of scholar and other analysts -- only began to emerge after World War II. For a discussion of modern strategic thinkers, particularly in Europe, see Peter Paret, ed., Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

This description of the field's evolution largely examines its development in the United States, where much of the work in international security studies has taken place. Active and growing security studies communities exist in many other countries, however, and they will almost certainly play an important role in the future evolution of the field.


See Rob Paarlberg, "Forgetting About The Unthinkable," Foreign Policy, No. 10 (Spring 1973), pp. 132-140.


Stephen Walt regards this development as particularly important. See Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," pp. 216; 219; 229.

Survival had been published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies since 1959, but it mainly reprinted articles from other sources until the mid-1970s. Since then, it has shifted its
emphasis to publishing original articles on contemporary security issues. For many years, Orbis featured important scholarly articles on security affairs, but in recent years its editorial philosophy has shifted and that journal now emphasizes shorter articles on current events. The Journal of Conflict Resolution and its European counterpart, the Journal of Peace Research served the peace research field throughout this period, but were (sometimes unjustly) perceived as having little relevance to current policy issues because of their political orientation and methodological approaches.


30 See Pages, "The Evolution of Deterrence Theory," for a summary of the successive "waves" of deterrence theory.


34 See Mearsheimer, Conventional Deterrence.


For representative samples of this approach, see Anders Boserup and Robert Neild, eds., The Foundations of Defensive Defense (New York: St. Martin's, 1990); and the section of articles on "Nonoffensive Defense" in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol. 44, No. 7 (September 1988), pp. 12-54. The newsletter Non-Offensive Defence, published by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Research at the university of Copenhagen, has offered a useful summary of publications, conferences, and other developments in this area.


Few, if any, articles, have developed this argument, but it was a recurrent theme at conferences held in 1990 and 1991 to discuss the future direction of security studies.


"Air Strike on Iraq, the Favored Strategy, Means Big Risks for Both Sides," New York Times, October 23, 1990, p. A10. This and other estimates of casualties include both killed and wounded. Generally the ratio of wounded to killed in combat is 3-4:1.


Thus Joshua Epstein, who otherwise offered a highly prescient overview of what the campaign for Kuwait would look like, estimated U.S. battle deaths at 1,049 to 4,136 on the assumption that the ground assault would begin after less than a week of bombing. Epstein recognized that "by relying primarily on airpower, casualties would be kept lower," but concluded that political pressures would force an early ground campaign. See Joshua M. Epstein, "War With Iraq: What Price Victory?" Brookings Discussion Paper (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, January 10, 1991).

Security studies, of course, exist outside the United States and scholars in other countries have examined issues other than U.S. policy. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the security studies field has been based in the United States or has focused on U.S. policy problems.


I am indebted to Barry Posen for a discussion of these points.

I am indebted to Scott Sagan for many of these points in this paragraph.


For an important recent attempt to analyze and explain the domestic sources of expansionism and belligerence, see Jack Snyder, Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991). Snyder examines how the politics of domestic coalitions and patterns of industrialization shape security policies.


See Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers; Huntington, "The U.S. -- Decline or Renewal?"; and Nye, Bound to Lead.


There is an extensive literature on nationalism, but remarkably few works assess its international impact. For a recent exception, see James Mayall, Nationalism and International Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).