

NEW PARADIGM OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY IN THE POST COLD-WAR PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

Since the end of the Cold War, the concept of security has undergone radical changes, the once dominant realist conception that views the military protection of sovereign states' political freedom and territorial integrity as the utmost security concern has come under increasing intellectual and empirical challenge in recent years. Not only has the end of the bipolar military confrontation diminished the acuteness of traditional security concerns, but also the process of economic, social and ecological globalization has increasingly diverted our attention to non-military security issues including environmental degradation, population growth, terrorism, drug-trafficking and ethnic conflicts.

This paper focuses on the changing nature of security in the post-Cold War period and argues that military security has lost its primary position in the matrix of national security. Instead it requires greater appreciation that non-military security and human security define more comprehensively the total spectrum of threats to national security.

INTRODUCTION

The Cold War has had a revolutionary impact on the security policies of most states in the world. During the Cold War period, security thinking was dominated by the ideological and military confrontation between the two superpowers and their respective blocs. The Cold War era came to an end in the late 1980s. Since then a number of momentous changes have taken place. The Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan, the collapse of the Soviet Empire in East Europe, the Unification of Germany, the demise of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the bipolar world. The end of the Cold War has provoked an explosive increase in theories, concepts and debates in the discipline of International Relations. There is growing confusion as to what are the important

issues and what are the best ways of approaching them? What has replaced the bipolar system? Is the post-Cold War world a wholly new order or is it merely a new form of an earlier system? While there is little agreement over the shape of the emerging international order, a general recognition exists that a different global context requires a reappraisal and reformulation of the concept of security. With the collapse of the bi-polar confrontation, a variety of unconventional security issues have become the focus of increasing concern and there is growing debate over whether the concept of security should be extended to include a broad-range of non-traditional issues like environmental degradation, population, poverty, terrorism, narcotics drug trade, etc.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT IN THE POST COLD- WAR ERA

In the Post Cold-War period the danger of a new World War has been basically removed, the outside sources for the regional hotspots in the past are remarkably reduced, the issues of these hotspots have embarked on the way of peaceful resolution and the possibility of local wars on a large scale involving major powers is thus diminishing. The world has entered a peaceful period which would probably be a long one.

This general trend of world relaxation seems to be irreversible at least in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the world is not yet tranquil. There are still quite a lot of uncertainties and destabilizing factors, which give rise to tensions, turmoils and local conflicts from time-to-time. The dominant discourse about the security issues of the post-Cold War world is narrative of small-scale crises which could threaten global security unless unchecked and managed. This has fostered a broader understanding of what might constitute threats to international security. UN Security Council in 1992 itself stated, that the "the absence of war and military conflicts amongst states does not in itself ensure international peace and security. Non-military sources of instability in the economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields have become threats to international peace and security"¹.

SECURITY: MEANING AND NATURE

The study of security has been transformed by the ending of the Cold War. Theorists in international relations saw at the end of the Cold War the challenge and opportunity to reassess the concept of security. This, however, is no easy task. Security is one of those slippery concepts, which can take one in different directions. In W.B. Gallie's term, "security is an essentially contested concept. Such a concept involves fierce disputes about the proper application on the part of its users"².

A classic attempt to define the term provides some insight into its controversial nature. Arnold Wolfers argues that: "Security, in any objective sense, measures the absence of threat to acquire values and in a subjective sense the absence of fear that such values will be attacked"³. This definition alerts to the perceptual aspect of the concept. What matters ultimately for the security of an individual or a nation state is not an absolute level of capabilities, but capabilities, which are relative, clearly apparent to those possessed by a perceived or potential adversary⁴. That judgment will, in turn partially depend on an assessment of the environment in which these actors are located. In the international arena, there has been a high degree of agreement that security implies freedom from threats to 'acquired values'⁵.

Etymologically, the word 'secure' once meant 'careless' (se+cura), or 'freedom from concern' almost the reverse of current usage implying 'careful'⁶. This 'careless' sense of the term, which was dropped out of usage at the end of the eighteenth or middle of the nineteenth century, derives from the same root, and overlaps in meaning, with the English 'sure', French 'sur'. Laronsse Modern Dictionary notes the French usage: "Do not confuse 'securite', the feeling of having nothing to fear, and surete, the state of having nothing to fear"⁷. The connotation of 'careless' is thus related to the sense of 'certitude' carried by the term 'sure'.

The Oxford English Dictionary expresses it as the "state of being free from danger or threat," safe, objectively certain"⁸. The

freedom of security, therefore, is related to the possession of knowledge, confidence in the predictability of things, in knowing the objective order. The term 'to secure' was first used for people. It became attached to states in the nineteenth century. Eighteenth century examples of usage illustrate the emergence of a new sense of establishing a person in a position of comfort, an office, or privilege, rather than protecting from perceived threats. This may indicate the impact of capitalist social and economic change⁹. Subsequently, the term security became attached and used interchangeably with property, land, money, differentiating the security and means of achieving it. Property, land, money, fortifications these things are said to have, or to be, security, and the armies and weapons the means by which these things are protected. The common modern sense of security as an attribute of the state, ensured by military and diplomatic means, came into political usage at the end of the eighteenth century, aided by reasoning about the nature of the social contract, which linked the state to the individual. The theory of social contract was understood by Rousseau and also by Locke as the product of individual desire for security and liberty. "This is the fundamental problem to which the institutions of the state provide the solution"¹⁰

Bill McSweeney in his book *Security, Identity and Interests*, bifurcates the security into the material world 'out there' and the inner world of human relationship, reflected in the nominative and adjectival forms of the word¹¹. If seen in nominative form of the term, security means something solid and measurable. It may be an instrument, a weapon, a guard. When these instruments are used, one feels safe and defended. But one's defense activity may be taken as a threat to others. These efforts may yield insecurity. This predicament has its root in the same mistrust which underlies the so-called 'security dilemma' in the literature of international affairs. One solution to this is to escalate. The states' perception of the intentions of its regional rivals causes it to escalate security in different instruments, and this results in a sequential interaction of misperception, with the consequence of greater insecurity, which no one intended. This is a negative image of security the absence

of threat. Arnold Wolfers saw it thus: "Security after all is nothing but the absence of the evil of insecurity, a negative value so to speak"¹².

The other image is positive and is evoked typically in the adjectival, rather than the nominative form of the term. Security here, like peace, justice and honour denotes a quality of relationship. This positive connotation of the adjectival form contrasts with the negative freedom from material threats. Bill Mac Sweeney compares this image to that of mother and child¹³. The condition of security which it represents is commonly thought of as that which the mother provides for the child, but it is really a property of the relationship, a quality making each secure in the other. The author strongly advocates the inclusion of human dimension of security within the policy and research circles. He insists that the nominative form, and its commanding image of security as a commodity, needs to be complemented by adjectival usage as a relationship.

Intellectual debate on Security

During Cold War, the East-West conflict was the basic issue toward which all the strategic policies of states and the academic services provided by strategic studies were directed. Security studies have recently come under severe criticism by many scholars. Ken Booth, for example, lambastes security studies with seething openness. He is of the view that security concerns were overtly dominated by the threats from Soviet Union, being in desperate search for strategic balance mainly through deployment of specific weapons for that purpose. That era is jarringly called by him as the era of "looking at World Politics through the missile tube and gun-sight"¹⁴. This amounts to the policy of finding solution to all kinds of issues through the use of arms, all types of arms, irrespective of their cost.

In this prevalent thinking the demise of the Soviet Union and the resulting end of Cold War era, somehow rendered this policy quite irrelevant. Without a Soviet threat in Cold War, there was possibly no reason for arms deployment, as there was no strategic

balance to be maintained. Although the issue of looking at the world politics through 'missile tube and gun sight' has become debatable, it is yet far from being settled. But it has definitely become more difficult for its supporters to defend it in changed scenario. Now the issue of security required other reasons also. It was also important that those reasons are given proper importance and are taken seriously. People with such specific reasons have always being around. Actually they have been there even during the Cold War era. They had always advocated about the problem attached with the policy of seeking security through missile tube and had their reservations about it. In fact, these were the people, whose force of argument was mainly responsible for the renewed attack on strategic studies, bringing forth the core issue that what is really meant by the term security.

Remarkably prominent among these voices of renewed questioning about security concerns was that of Barry Buzan. Traditionally, the security is understood with reference to two basic points. The first point is quite clearly and elaborately explained in Barry Buzan's book *People, States and Fear*. It derives its argument from the fact that basically, security of human societies is affected by five major factors, which are military, political, economical, societal and environmental¹⁵. Military security is achieved through the ability of the state for effective defense as also through armed defense. Political security lies in organizational stability of the state, systems of government. Economic security lies in the availability of financial resources and markets necessary for maintaining a viable level of welfare. Societal security requires the attainment and sustaining of conditions where traditional pattern of culture, religion and language could not only survive but could also evolve and progress. Environmental security lies in preservation of local and on a larger scale of planetary bio-sphere in view of its utmost importance for all life forms and for its being of bedrock for all human enterprises¹⁶. All these five sectors are important contributors for the comprehensive concept of security.

Copenhagen School of Studies is the term that signifies this, more specified and all encompassing way of reviewing the concept of security. The proponents of this concept insist on widening the arena and the scope of security beyond its traditional military form. Buzan's sectoral approach to security takes direct issue with the militaristic assumptions of security studies¹⁷. The security concern of strategic studies, the security of state from external military threat, was now just one of five forms of threat, the state could face. This suggestion that security could be considered in sectoral terms and that military security would no longer be considered the exclusive form of security in the contemporary world, has spurred much of the rethinking on security. Buzan's contribution to this perspective is particularly important to those concerned with broadening the understanding of security, which usually means some form of sectoral widening of the universe of security concerns.

Further more the traditional concept of security focuses on state as the 'referent object' i.e. the object whose security is to be sought. Whenever threats are discussed in strategic studies, they are understood to be directed only toward the state. Deeply going into this consideration leads toward the political theory, which looks at the state as a 'container' of security¹⁸. In view of this theory, security of the people is also quite important but as only the state is capable of providing this security to its people in face of any kind of international armed conflict, - a strong and secure state is what matters in the final conclusions¹⁹.

According to Buzan, "Security as a concept clearly requires a referent object, for without an answer to the question "The Security of what?" the idea makes no sense. To answer simply 'the state', does not solve the problem. One soon discovers that security has many potential referent objects. These objects of security multiply not only as the membership of the society of states increases, but also as one moves down through the state to the level of individuals, and up beyond it to the level of the international system as a whole²⁰.

Defining Non-Traditional Security

In the post-Cold War period, the concept of national security and the process by which it is managed has been changed. No longer is security synonymous only with the physical well-being of the state. It is now associated with achieving safety from trans-boundary threats related to the environment, economy, human rights, and access to food and resources for example. This transformation of security from a primarily traditional military dimension to a multidimensional range of interests is accompanied by changes in the way these issues are managed among states. The non-traditional security issues are generally beyond the ability of individual states to control or mitigate. As a result, there is need for considerable reliance on cooperative process to resolve the issues. Few decades ago, the term "international relations" was virtually synonymous with military and economic affairs between states. Correspondingly, international negotiations largely emphasized the formation or maintenance of military and economic alliances or the resolution of specific conflicts. A positive state of affairs in these realms constituted "security". Since then, the subject of international relations has expanded dramatically. International relations now address such diverse issues as human rights, terrorism, illegal trade and the environment. A positive state of affairs in these new domains in addition to the older military and economic spheres now constitutes "security"²¹.

Is there anything new in the "new" definition of security? According to Emma Rothchild, "the permissive or pluralistic understanding of security, as an objective of individuals and groups as well as of states was characteristic of the period from the mid-seventeenth century to the French Revolution"²². Rothchild goes on to note that "even after that, when the military sense of security was introduced, security continued to be viewed as a 'condition', that constituted a relationship between individuals and states or societies"²³. This leads one to find that the two new ideas, world or global security and human security added to the security discourse are actually new. These new dimensions of security now

under the rubric "non-traditional" were present but over shadowed by predominance of state. As the state came to predominate in relationship, the core idea of the secure condition of the individual became unnecessary. A secure state meant, that individuals within were secure. In consequence, the "national interest" became the driving force in international relations and the justification for the strategies followed.

There is a range of non-military issues that have been a part of security. Starting with the welfarist conception that never fully disappeared with the rise of the military view. Moreover, security of the state for many developing nations concern the stability and resilience of social order within the state. Whether the threats to that order are from apposition ethnic or minority groups or from ideological challengers to the political elite in power²⁴.

A national security interpretation of national interest, focusing on defense and strategic issues, was a Cold War development. The other dimensions of security now under the rubric "non-traditional" were present but overshadowed by the dominant superpower interactions. This dominance was breaking down even before the end of the Cold War as states forged new responses to the perceived threats they faced. These responses invoked new ideas of security, variously categorized as "common security", "comprehensive security", and "cooperative security".

The two newer concepts, human security and world or global security are differentiated from the "C" concepts by elevating the individual or the collectively of all individuals to a level at least equal to that of the state as the subject of the security condition. These concepts have been derived both inductively and deductively. First, the sphere of human rights expanded from the rights of the individual to certain civil and political guarantees to economic, social, and even minority and cultural "group" rights (UN Declaration on Human Rights). These rights when effectively protected, create security for the individual, where this security is not only freedom from fear and want but positive reinforcement of an idea of each individual's human dignity and its expression.

Second, the World/Global view deduces a sense of security from an examination of the most serious threats affecting humanity. One argument is that no one and so no collection of people can truly be secure when environmental crises may disrupt their fundamental needs²⁵.

The literature on "redefining" security suggests two key distinctions. The global security paradigm holds that "humankind" as a whole is being exposed to a number of common threats. Key features of global security are a synergy between problem areas, the recognition of a "range of new perils that transcend national borders"²⁶. In contrast, the individual focus of the human security paradigm emphasizes that there can be no security unless all people are free from "worries about daily life". The main components of the human dimension of security are the assurance of basic income, food and health a healthy physical environment, a personal feeling of safety and the ability to live a supportive community in a society that honours basic human rights.²⁷

These two views hold in common the interdependence of the components of security and the existence of common threats. The main difference is that with global security, the threats that signal insecurity are threat that aggregate beyond individuals and indeed beyond the state, where as with human security, the focus remains centered on the individual. In both of these cases, what is clear is that a non-traditional view of security can focus on both internal as well as external threats. Some threats to security are derived from outside one's territorial boundaries, while others are generated from within (ethnic cleavages, environmental degradation, etc).

CONCLUSION

The main feature of the post-Cold War period has been a change in the nature of threats to international security. Since security aims to protect a referent from threat, changing the referent object of security also alters the source and nature of threats to that security and therefore alters the manner by which security can be achieved. Recent literature on the subject provides strong support to the thesis that security cannot be properly

understood, nor can the issues related to it be effectively addressed without due focus on wider social, political and economic factors.

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