

differences, as well as diverse values and the tensions inherent in globalization itself, prevent the emergence of global agreement on a wide range of important issues. Water resources, food, and energy are potential sources of conflict, and it remains unclear how great power relations will develop in the years ahead, as geopolitical and geo-strategic changes unfold. At a time of uncertainty and anxiety, individual and societal insecurity is increasingly evident as the forces of fragmentation and integration associated with globalization destabilize traditional identities and thereby complicate relationships within and between states.

As a result, it would be difficult to conclude that a paradigmatic shift towards a more peaceful world is taking place in international politics, or indeed perhaps that such a permanent shift is possible. The empirical historical evidence, as well as contemporary events, suggests caution. Periods of more cooperative inter-state (and inter-group) relations have often in the past led to a false dawn and an unwarranted euphoria that 'perpetual peace' was about to break out. The structure of the international system, particular kinds of political systems, human nature, and the forces of globalization impose important constraints on the way that individuals, states, or international institutions behave. So does the continuing predominance of realist attitudes towards international and global security among many of the world's political leaders (see Ch. 6). It is also possible that contemporary discussions and discourse about 'geopolitics' may themselves be self-fulfilling.

This is not to argue that there is no room for peaceful change or that new ideas and discourses about world politics are unimportant in helping us to understand the complexities of contemporary global security and insecurity. Opportunities to develop greater international and global security will always exist. It is noteworthy that the potential for considerable conflict in the aftermath of the global financial crisis from 2008 to the present has not materialized, partly, at least, because of the cooperative efforts of world leaders. In a broader sense, however, the crisis created very considerable insecurity and the potential for social, political, and economic unrest. Similarly, in 2010 there were encouraging signs of attempts to marginalize nuclear weapons in world politics. Whether they will be enough to reverse the trend towards greater nuclear proliferation and offset the dangers of nuclear terrorism, however, remains far from clear.

In a world of continuing diversity, mistrust, and uncertainty, it is likely that the search for a more cooperative global society will remain in conflict with the powerful pressures that exist for states, and other political communities, to look after what they perceive to be their own sectional, religious, national, or regional security against threats from without and within. Whether and how greater international and global security can be achieved still remains, as Herbert Butterfield once argued, 'the hardest nut of all' for students and practitioners of international politics to crack. This is what makes the study of global security such a fascinating and important activity.

Questions



- 1 Why is security a 'contested concept'?
- 2 Why do traditional realist writers focus on national security?
- 3 What do neo-realist writers mean by 'structure'?
- 4 Why do wars occur?
- 5 Why do states find it difficult to cooperate?
- 6 Do you find 'liberal institutionalism' convincing?
- 7 Why might democratic states be more peaceful?
- 8 What is distinctive about 'constructivist' views of international security?
- 9 How do 'critical security' theory, 'feminist' views, and poststructuralist views about international security differ from those of 'neo-realists'?
- 10 Are 'globalization' and 'geopolitics' compatible concepts, and do they increase or decrease global security?

non-state actors challenge the dominant economic and cultural status quo. Similarly, geopolitics is seen by some as a force that helps to prevent the emergence of overly dominant states in the world. In contrast, others see 'Old Geopolitics', in particular, as resulting in thinking that encourages constant violence and war. It would seem, however, that in the complex world in which we live, globalization and geopolitics are powerful forces and both have contradictory effects on global security.

Key Points

- Some writers see globalization and geopolitics as contradictory concepts, while other writers argue there is no opposition between them.
- Traditional ideas about geopolitics stem from the writings of people like Harold Mackinder and Nicholas Spykman.
- Different interpretations of both concepts give rise to alternative views about how world order can be achieved.
- In practice, global politics exhibits the effects of both.

Conclusion: the continuing tensions between national, international, and global security

At the centre of the contemporary debates about global and international security dealt with above is the issue of continuity and change, as well as different ways of thinking about 'security'. This involves questions about how the past is to be interpreted and whether international politics is in fact undergoing a dramatic change as a result of the processes of globalization. There is no doubt that national security is being challenged by the forces of globalization, some of which have a positive effect, bringing states into greater contact with each other, while others have a more malign effect. Bretherton and Ponton have argued that the intensification of global connectedness associated with economic globalization, ecological interdependence, and the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction means that 'co-operation between states is more than ever necessary' (1996: 100–1). It has also been argued that the increased need for interdependence caused by globalization will help 'to facilitate dialogue at the elite level between states, providing significant gains for global security' (Lawler 1995: 56–7). At the same time, however, globalization also appears to be having negative effects on international security. It is often associated with fragmentation, rapid social change, increased economic inequality, terrorism, threats to cyber security, and challenges to cultural and religious identities that contribute to conflicts within, and between, states. Globalization has also facilitated the proliferation of weapons technologies, including those associated with weapons of mass destruction, which remain a

major potential source of international insecurity. This ambivalent effect of globalization, in turn, reinforces the search for national security and unilateralism for some states, while at the same time encouraging other states to seek greater multilateral and global solutions as they are less able to provide security for their citizens.

Despite important changes taking place in world politics, therefore, the traditional ambiguity about international security remains. In some ways the world is a much safer place to live in as a result of the end of the cold war and the removal of nuclear confrontation as a central element in East–West relations. It can be argued that some of the processes of globalization and the generally cooperative effects of international institutions have played an important part in dampening down some of the competitive aspects of the security dilemma between states. These trends, however, are offset to a significant extent, as the continuing turmoil in Afghanistan and the Middle East, and the conflicts associated with the 'Arab Spring', demonstrate. It is evident that military force continues to be an important arbiter of disputes both between, and particularly within, states, as well as a weapon used by terrorist movements who reject the status quo. Also, conventional arms races continue in different regions of the world. Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons still exert a powerful influence on the security calculations of many states (as demonstrated by events in North Korea and Syria); crazy and ambitious politicians remain at the head of some governments; and cultural

Case Study 2 Growing tensions in the South and East China Seas

Although the origins of the disputes go back centuries, there has been a recent upsurge of tensions between China and its neighbours (and between the neighbours themselves) in the South and East China Seas. In the South China Sea the disputes centre on the ownership of the Paracels and Spratlys islands, together with various uninhabited atolls and reefs, especially the Scarborough Shoal (see Fig. 15.1). In the East China Sea the dispute is largely between Japan, China, and Taiwan over what the Chinese call the Diaoyu islands and what the Japanese call the Senkaku islands (see Fig. 15.2).

The South China Sea disputes

The main dispute over the Paracels and Spratlys islands is between China and Vietnam. China claims historical rights to the islands dating back 2,000 years. China's claims are also mirrored by those of Taiwan. Vietnam rejects these historical claims and says it has ruled over both the island chains since the seventeenth century. At the same time, the Philippines also claims the Spratlys islands because geographically they are close to its territory. The Philippines also has a further dispute with China over the Scarborough Shoal. These islands lie 100 miles from the Philippines and 500 miles from China. To complicate matters further, Malaysia also claims that some of the Spratlys islands fall within its economic exclusion zone.

The most serious conflicts, however, have been between China and Vietnam. In 1974 China seized the Paracels from Vietnam, and in the late 1980s clashes took place in the Spratlys, with further Vietnamese losses. Tensions have risen even higher in recent years due to a belief that the region contains vast quantities of natural gas and oil. This has led to the build-up of military

forces in the region and strongly-worded diplomatic exchanges between the major protagonists.

The East China Sea disputes

Japan's claims over eight uninhabited islands and rocks that it calls the Senkaku islands date back to 1895, when they were incorporated into Japanese territory. They claim this right was recognized under the 1951 Treaty of San Francisco. China, in contrast, argues that the Diaoyu islands have been part of its territory since ancient times. Taiwan also claims the islands with a similar claim. In recent years, activists from both China and Japan have landed on the islands to assert the rights of their respective countries. Clashes have also taken place between Japanese patrol boats and Chinese and Taiwanese fishing vessels. In 2010, Japan seized a Chinese trawler which had collided with two of its coastguard vessels. This led to anti-Japanese protests in a number of Chinese cities and diplomatic protests until the crew were released. In 2012, fresh tensions emerged after Chinese and Japanese activists again landed on a number of the islands. These tensions escalated after the Japanese government bought three of the islands from private owners.

In both cases, while major military conflict between the states involved has been avoided in recent years, the renewed disputes have raised the level of regional insecurity. With many of the smaller states looking towards the United States to balance the growing power of China, the future stability and tranquillity of the South and East China Seas remains in doubt.

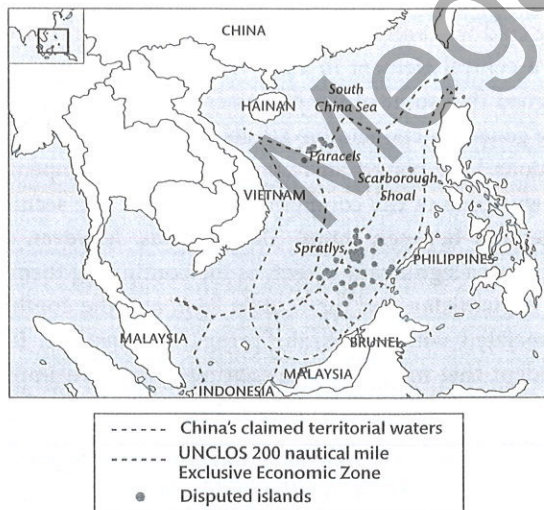


Figure 15.1 Disputed areas in the South China Sea
 Source: UNCLOS and CIA



Figure 15.2 Disputed areas in the East China Sea
 Source: UNCLOS and CIA

Spykman. Mackinder's ideas were very influential after the First World War, especially his dictum:

- *Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland.*
- *Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island.*
- *Who rules the World Island commands the World.*

(Mackinder 1919)

These ideas were updated during the Second World War and the cold war by writers like Spykman, who emphasized the need to prevent the emergence of a new hegemon, by preventing any simple state from dominating Eurasia. Echoing Mackinder, Spykman argued that: 'Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia, who controls Eurasia rules the world' (Spykman and Nicholl 1944). These ideas led to the policy of containment of the Soviet Union in 1946 and the formation of the NATO alliance.

With the end of the cold war, the threat of a Eurasian hegemon receded. In recent years, however, the importance of the 'Rimland' has re-emerged in the works of writers like Ross Munro and Richard Bernstein. Their concern focuses on the Pacific Rim and the rise of China. They argue that:

The central issue for the United States and its Asian allies and friends is whether an increasingly powerful China is going to dominate Asia, as its leaders intend, or whether the United States, working primarily with Japan, can counterbalance China's emergence to great power and eventually to super-power status. That issue will be resolved on Asia's eastern rim—in the band of territory that begins in the Russian Far East and continues through the Korean peninsula, Japan and Taiwan and probably the Philippines and Indonesia as well.

(Bernstein and Munro 1998)

For Bernstein and Munro, traditional geopolitics is just as important as ever, and requires a significant shift in American grand strategy. For those who support this view, the recent shift (or 'pivot') in US strategic priorities towards the Pacific are an indication that such geopolitical analysis is an important element in contemporary strategic thinking in Washington. Equally, it is argued that Chinese policies in relation to islands in the South and East China Seas indicate similar thinking in Beijing (see Case Study 2).

At the heart of geopolitical thinking is the realist notion of the importance of achieving world order through a balance of power which seeks to prevent

regional or global hegemony from arising. Some supporters of globalization often suggest that world order can be achieved through greater economic and cultural interaction. Looked at from these standpoints, the events of the 'Arab Spring' can be viewed from the perspectives of both globalization and geopolitics. Globalization was critical in the spread of ideas (through the social media) as well as the spread of weapons across state boundaries which challenged dictators across the Arab world. Equally, outside powers have sought to intervene both directly and indirectly, with a view to achieving a balance of power in a critical region of the world which will suit their interests. This realpolitik is seen most clearly in the case of Syria, where the US, Turkey, and their allies have provided support for the rebels, while Russia and Iran have aided the Assad regime.

A rather different view of the parallel impact of both globalization and geopolitics on contemporary world politics is provided by Richard Falk. Falk argues that traditional geopolitics 'was dominated by the United States, and operationally administered from Washington, and continued despite the collapse of colonialism to be West-centric when it came to the shaping of global security policy'. The problem, he argues, is that this 'Old Geopolitics' has not registered the implications for the world order of the collapse of the colonial order or the relative weakening of the position of the United States. However, he argues that while the 'Old Geopolitics' remains embedded, especially in Western thinking, a 'New Geopolitics' is emerging which rests less on the importance of military power and more on the importance of soft power. These important trends, enhanced by the processes of globalization, are exemplified by the emergence of the BRIC countries and the rise in importance of a wide variety of non-state actors. Falk also argues that the 'winless withdrawals' of the US from Iraq and Afghanistan are evidence that superiority in hard military power 'is no longer able to reach desired political outcomes in violent conflicts'. In this sense, the US should learn that depending on the main currency of the 'Old Geopolitics', military power, will only bring 'frustration and defeat'. The problem, he says, is that the aged architects of the 'Old Geopolitics', for a variety of reasons, are unable to learn from failure, and so the cycle of war and frustration goes on and on with disastrous human results' (Falk 2012).

Different views of globalization and geopolitics, therefore, give rise to very different conclusions about world order. For some, globalization can bring greater peace and security, while for others, it can lead to greater fragmentation and conflict as some states and

Box 15.4 Securitization theory

Securitization theory argues that 'security' is a 'speech act'. This is summed up by one writer who argues that 'A securitizing actor by stating that a particular referent object is threatened in its existence claims a right to extraordinary measures to ensure the referent object's survival. The issue is then moved out of the sphere of normal politics into the realm of emergency politics, where it can be dealt with swiftly and without normal (democratic) rules and regulations of policy making. For the content of security this means that it has no longer any given meaning but that it can be anything a securitizing actor says it is. Security—understood in this way—is a social construction, with the meaning of security dependent on what is done with it.'

(Taureck 2006)

to 'national security'. The idea is that once the 'software program' of realism that people carry around in their heads has been replaced by a new 'software program' based on cooperative norms, individuals, states, and regions will learn to work with each other and global politics will become more peaceful (see Box 15.4).

Key Points

- Constructivist thinkers base their ideas on two main assumptions: (1) that the fundamental structures of international politics are socially constructed; and (2) that changing the way we think about international relations can help to bring about greater international security.
- Some constructivist thinkers accept many of the assumptions of neo-realism, but they reject the view that 'structure' consists only of material capabilities. They stress the importance of social structure, defined in terms of shared knowledge and practices as well as material capabilities.
- Critical security theorists argue that most approaches put too much emphasis on the state.
- Feminist writers argue that gender tends to be left out of the literature on international security, despite the impact of war on women.
- There is a belief among poststructuralist writers that the nature of international politics can be changed by altering the way we think and talk about security.

Globalization and the return of geopolitics?

In recent years there has been a debate between scholars about whether 'globalization' and 'geopolitics' are compatible in the changing world in which we live. There have also been debates about whether the world is reverting 'to traditional power dynamics with untraditional players' or whether a 'new geopolitics' can successfully emerge based on the importance of soft power rather than traditional hard military power. This section will consider these important contemporary debates.

There are some writers who argue that 'globalization' and 'geopolitics' represent fundamentally different approaches to policy. Brian Blouet argues that: 'Geopolitical policies seek to establish national or imperial control over space and the resources, route-ways, industrial capacity and population the territory contains.' In contrast, he sees globalization as 'the opening of national space for the free flow of goods, capital and ideas'. 'Globalization', he says, 'removes obstructions to movement and creates conditions in which international trade in goods and services can expand' (Blouet 2001). Another writer, Ellen Frost, argues that globalization is changing the world in a

radical way. We are moving, she argues, towards a much more 'interconnected world system in which independent networks and flows surmount traditional boundaries (or make them irrelevant)'. For Frost, 'external threats have increasingly assumed transnational forms', which renders traditional geopolitics, with its emphasis on balance of power and inter-state conflict, largely irrelevant (Kugler and Frost 2001).

This notion, however, that globalization and geopolitics are incompatible (and that geopolitics is no longer important) is not accepted by all writers. Douglas E. Stausand rejects the idea that there is opposition between the two concepts, 'both as historical forces and as policy alternatives'. He argues that 'the era of globalization has not ended the need for geopolitical analysis' and 'the policy imperatives that geopolitical analysis generates do not contradict the principles of globalization' (Stausand 2002).

Those who take this position argue that traditional ideas of geopolitics remain as important as ever in the twenty-first century. These ideas stem from the works of writers like Halford Mackinder and Nicholas

defined critical security studies in the following terms: 'Contemporary debates over the nature of security often float on a sea of unvoiced assumptions and deeper theoretical issues concerning to what and to whom the term security refers ... What most contributions to the debate thus share are two inter-related concerns: what security is and how we study it' (1997: 34). What they also share is a wish to de-emphasize the role of the state and the need to re-conceptualize security in a different way. Critical security studies, however, includes a number of different approaches. These include critical theory, 'feminist' approaches, and 'poststructuralist' approaches (see Buzan and Hansen 2009). Given that these are covered in other chapters, they are dealt with only briefly here.

Robert Cox draws a distinction between problem-solving theories and critical theories. Problem-solving theorists work within the prevailing system. They take the existing social and political relations and institutions as starting points for analysis and then see how the problems arising from these can be solved and ameliorated. In contrast, critical theorists focus their attention on the way these existing relationships and institutions emerged and what might be done to change them (see Chs 9 and 11). For critical security theorists, states should not be the centre of analysis because they are not only extremely diverse in character but they are also often part of the problem of insecurity in the international system. They can be providers of security, but they can also be a source of threat to their own people. According to this view, therefore, attention should be focused on the individual rather than on the state. This has led to greater attention being given to what has been called human security (see Ch. 29) and has resulted in a further broadening of the conception of 'security' to include areas such as health security (McInnes and Lee 2006).

Feminist writers also challenge the traditional emphasis on the central role of the state in studies of international security. While there are significant differences between feminist theorists, all share the view that works on international politics in general, and international security in particular, have been written from a 'masculine' point of view (see Ch. 17). In her work, Tickner argues that women have seldom been recognized by the security literature despite the fact that conflicts affect women as much as, if not more than, men. The vast majority of casualties and refugees in war are women and children and, as the recent war

in Bosnia confirms, the rape of women is often used as a tool of war (Tickner 1992).

In a major feminist study of security, *Bananas, Beaches and Bombs*, Cynthia Enloe points to the patriarchal structure of privilege and control at all levels that, in her view, effectively legitimizes all forms of violence (Enloe 1989). She highlights the traditional exclusion of women from international relations, suggesting 'that they are in fact crucial to it in practice and that nowhere is the state more gendered in the sense of how power is dispersed than in the security apparatus' (Terriff et al. 1999: 91). She also challenges the concept of 'national security', arguing that the use of such terms is often designed to preserve the prevailing male-dominated order rather than protect the state from external attack.

Feminist writers argue that if gender is brought more explicitly into the study of security, not only will new issues and alternative perspectives be added to the security agenda, but the result will be a fundamentally different view of the nature of international security. According to Jill Steans, 'Rethinking security involves thinking about militarism and patriarchy, mal-development and environmental degradation. It involves thinking about the relationship between poverty, debt and population growth. It involves thinking about resources and how they are distributed' (Steans 1998. See also Smith 2000).

Recent years have seen the emergence of post-structuralist approaches to international relations, which have produced a somewhat distinctive perspective towards international security (see Ch. 11). Poststructuralist writers share the view that ideas, discourse, and 'the logic of interpretation' are crucial in understanding international politics and security. Like other writers who adopt a 'critical security studies' approach, poststructuralists see 'realism' as one of the central problems of international insecurity. This is because realism is a discourse of power and rule that has been dominant in international politics in the past and has encouraged security competition between states. Power politics is seen as an image of the world that encourages behaviour that helps bring about war. As such, the attempt to balance power is itself part of the very behaviour that leads to war. According to this view, alliances do not produce peace, but lead to war. The aim for many poststructuralists, therefore, is to replace the discourse of realism or power with a different discourse and alternative interpretations of threats

Box 15.3 Key concepts

'A security community is a group of people which has become "integrated". By integration we mean the attainment, within a territory, of a "sense of community" and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure ... dependable expectations of "peaceful change" among its population. By a "sense of community" we mean a belief ... that common social problems must and can be resolved by processes of "peaceful change".'

(Karl Deutsch)

'Security regimes occur when a group of states co-operate to manage their disputes and avoid war by seeking to mute the security dilemma both by their own actions and by their assumptions about the behaviour of others.'

(Robert Jervis)

'Acceptance of common security as the organizing principle for efforts to reduce the risk of war, limit arms, and move towards disarmament, means, in principle, that co-operation will replace confrontation in resolving conflicts of interest. This is not to say that differences among nations should be expected to disappear ... The task is only to ensure that these conflicts do not come to be expressed in acts of war, or in preparations for war. It means that nations must come to understand that the maintenance of world peace must be given a higher priority than the assertion of their own ideological or political positions.'

(Palme Report 1992)

themselves as structuralists; that is, they believe that the interests of individual states are, in an important sense, constructed by the structure of the international system.

However, constructivists think about international politics in a very different way from neo-realists. The latter tend to view structure as made up only of a distribution of material capabilities. Constructivists view structure as the product of social relationships. Social structures are made possible by shared understandings, expectations, and knowledge. As an example of this, Wendt argues that the security dilemma is a social structure composed of inter-subjective understandings in which states are so distrustful that they make worst-case assumptions about each other's intentions, and, as a result, define their interests in 'self-help' terms. In contrast, a **security community** (like NATO) is a rather different social structure, composed of shared knowledge in which states trust one another to resolve disputes without war (see Box 15.3).

The emphasis on the structure of shared knowledge is important in constructivist thinking. Social structures include material things, like tanks and economic

resources, but these only acquire meaning through the shared knowledge in which they are embedded. The idea of power politics, or *realpolitik*, has meaning to the extent that states accept the idea as a basic rule of international politics. According to social constructivist writers, power politics is an idea that affects the way states behave, but it does not describe all inter-state behaviour. States are also influenced by other ideas, such as the rule of law and the importance of institutional cooperation and restraint. In his study, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It', Wendt argues that security dilemmas and wars can be seen, in part, as the outcome of self-fulfilling prophecies (Wendt 1992). The 'logic of reciprocity' means that states acquire a shared knowledge about the meaning of power and act accordingly. Equally, he argues, policies of reassurance can also help to bring about a structure of shared knowledge that can help to move states towards a more peaceful security community (see Wendt 1999).

Although constructivists argue that security dilemmas are not acts of God, they differ over whether they can be escaped. For some, the fact that structures are socially constructed does not necessarily mean that they can be changed. This is reflected in Wendt's comment that 'sometimes social structures so constrain action that transformative strategies are impossible' (1995: 80). Many constructivist writers, however, are more optimistic. They point to the changes in ideas introduced by Gorbachev during the second half of the 1980s, which led to a shared knowledge about the end of the cold war. Once both sides accepted that the cold war was over, it really was over. According to this view, understanding the crucial role of social structure is important in developing policies and processes of interaction that will lead to cooperation rather than conflict. For the optimists, there is sufficient 'slack' in the international system to allow states to pursue policies of peaceful social change rather than engage in a perpetual competitive struggle for power.

Critical, feminist, and discursive security studies

Despite the differences between constructivists and realists about the relationship between ideas and material factors, they agree on the central role of the state in debates about international security. Other theorists, however, believe that the state has been given too much prominence. Keith Krause and Michael Williams have

Box 15.2 Democratic peace theory

Another 'liberal' approach to international security has gathered momentum in the post-cold war world. This centres on the argument that democratic states tend not to fight other democratic states. Democracy, therefore, is seen as a major source of peace (see Chs 7 and 8). As with 'liberal institutionalism', this is a notion that has received wide support in Western political and academic circles. In his State of the Union Address in 1994, President Bill Clinton went out of his way to point to the absence of war between democracies as a justification for American policies of promoting a process of democratization. Support for this view can be seen in the Western policy of promoting democracy in Eastern and Central Europe following the end of the cold war and opening up the possibility of these states joining the European Union.

Democratic peace theory has been largely associated with the writings of Michael Doyle and Bruce Russett. In the same way that contemporary realists have been influenced by the work of Hobbes, Rousseau, and Machiavelli, Doyle points to the importance of the insights contained in Immanuel Kant's 1795 essay, *Perpetual Peace*. Doyle contends that democratic representation, an ideological commitment to human rights, and transnational interdependence provide an explanation for the 'peace-prone' tendencies of democratic states (1995b: 180-4). Equally, the absence of these attributes, he argues, provides a reason why non-democratic states tend to be 'war-prone'. Without these domestic values and restraints, the logic of power replaces the liberal logic of accommodation.

opportunities to achieve greater international security in the years ahead. Although the past may have been characterized by constant wars and conflict, important changes are taking place in international relations that create the opportunity to dampen down the traditional security competition between states (see Box 15.2).

This approach, known as liberal institutionalism or neo-liberalism, operates largely within the realist framework, but argues that international institutions are much

more important in helping to achieve cooperation and stability than 'structural realists' realize (see Ch. 7). According to Keohane and Martin (1995: 42), 'institutions can provide information, reduce transaction costs, make commitments more credible, establish focal points for coordination and, in general, facilitate the operation of reciprocity'. Supporters of these ideas point to the importance of European economic and political institutions in overcoming the traditional hostility of European states.

As such, it is suggested that in a world constrained by state power and divergent interests, international institutions operating on the basis of reciprocity will at least be a component of any lasting peace. In other words, international institutions themselves are unlikely to eradicate war from the international system, but they can play a part in helping to achieve greater cooperation between states.

Key Points

- Realists and neo-realists emphasize the perennial problem of insecurity.
- The 'security dilemma' is seen by some writers as the essential source of conflict between states.
- Neo-realists reject the significance of international institutions in helping many to achieve peace and security.
- Contemporary politicians and academics, however, who write under the label of liberal institutionalism or neo-liberalism, see institutions as an important mechanism for achieving international security.
- Liberal institutionalists accept many of the assumptions of realism about the continuing importance of military power in international relations but argue that institutions can provide a framework for cooperation that can help to mitigate the dangers of security competition between states.

Alternative approaches

'Constructivist' theory

The notion that international relations are not only affected by power politics but also by ideas is shared by writers who describe themselves as 'constructivist theorists'. According to this view, the fundamental structures of international politics are social rather than strictly material. This leads social constructivists to argue that changes in the nature of social interaction between states can bring a fundamental shift towards greater international security (see Ch. 10).

At one level, many constructivists, like Alexander Wendt, share a number of the major realist assumptions about international politics. For example, some accept that states are the key referent in the study of international politics and international security; that international politics is anarchic; that states often have offensive capabilities; that states cannot be absolutely certain of the intentions of other states; that states have a fundamental wish to survive; and that states attempt to behave rationally. Some, such as Wendt, also see

Christensen, Randall Schweller, William Wohlforth, and Fareed Zakaria. Their work is sometimes referred to as **neoclassical realism**.

The realist, pessimistic view of international relations is shared by other writers, such as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer. The pessimism of these **neo-realists** rests on a number of key assumptions they make about the way the international system works (see Ch. 8).

Key neo-realist assumptions

- The international system is anarchic. By this they do not mean that it is necessarily chaotic. Rather, anarchy implies that there is no central authority capable of controlling state behaviour.
- States claiming sovereignty will inevitably develop offensive military capabilities to defend themselves and extend their power. As such they are potentially dangerous to each other.
- Uncertainty, leading to a lack of trust, is inherent in the international system. States can never be sure of the intentions of their neighbours and therefore must always be on their guard.
- States will want to maintain their independence and sovereignty, and, as a result, survival will be the most basic driving force influencing their behaviour.
- Although states are rational, there will always be room for miscalculation. In a world of imperfect information, potential antagonists will always have an incentive to misrepresent their own capabilities to keep their opponents guessing. This may lead to mistakes about 'real' state interests.

Taken together, these assumptions, neo-realists argue, produce a tendency for states to act aggressively towards each other.

According to this view, national security, or insecurity, is largely the result of the **structure** of the international system (this is why these writers are sometimes called 'structural realists'). The structure of anarchy is seen as highly durable. The implication of this is that international politics in the future is likely to be as violent as international politics in the past. In an important article entitled 'Back to the Future', written in 1990, John Mearsheimer argued that the end of the cold war was likely to usher in a return to the traditional multilateral **balance of power** politics of the past, in which extreme nationalism and ethnic rivalries would lead to widespread instability and conflict. Mearsheimer viewed the cold war as a period of

he argued that there would be a return to the kind of great power rivalries that had blighted international relations since the seventeenth century.

For neo-realist writers like Mearsheimer, international politics may not be characterized by constant wars, but nevertheless a relentless security competition takes place, with war, like rain, always a possibility. It is accepted that cooperation among states can and does occur, but such cooperation has its limits. It is 'constrained by the dominating logic of security competition, which no amount of co-operation can eliminate' (Mearsheimer 1994/5: 9). Genuine long-lasting peace, or a world where states do not compete for power, therefore, is very unlikely to be achieved. For neo-realists the post-cold war unipolar structure of power, with US pre-eminence, is likely to give way to a new international structure with the rise of states such as China, India, and Brazil.

Liberal institutionalism

One of the main characteristics of the neo-realist approach to international security is the belief that international institutions do not have a very important part to play in the prevention of war. Institutions are seen as the product of state interests and the constraints imposed by the international system itself. It is these interests and constraints that shape the decisions on whether to cooperate or compete, rather than the institutions to which states belong.

Such views have been challenged by both statesmen and a number of International Relations specialists. The British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, for example, made the case in June 1992 that institutions themselves had played a crucial role in enhancing security, particularly in Europe. He argued that the West had developed 'a set of international institutions which have proved their worth for one set of problems'. He went on to argue that the great challenge of the post-cold war era was to adapt these institutions to deal with the new circumstances that prevailed (Hurd, quoted in Mearsheimer 1994/5).

This view reflected a belief, widely shared among Western statesmen, that a framework of complementary, mutually reinforcing institutions—the EU, NATO, WEU, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)—could be developed to promote a more durable and stable European security system. It is a view also shared by a distinctive group of academic writers that has developed since the 1980s and early 1990s. The view is that

Case Study 1 Insecurity in the post-cold war world: the Democratic Republic of Congo



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Events in the Democratic Republic of Congo since the end of the cold war provide a good illustration of the complexities of contemporary conflict and the dangers of providing simple explanations of why wars occur. Between 1996 and 2013, in this 'forgotten war' (sometimes called 'Africa's World War'), it is estimated that 6 million people have lost their lives as a result of ethnic strife, civil war, and foreign intervention, as well as starvation and disease. The key events are as follows.

In 1996 the conflict and genocide in neighbouring Rwanda (in which 800,000 people died) spilled over into the Congo (named Zaire at the time). Rwandan Hutu forces, who fled after a Tutsi-led government came to power, set up bases in the eastern part of the country to launch attacks on Rwanda. This resulted in Rwandan forces invading the Congo with the aim of ousting the existing government of Mobutu Sese-Soko and putting in power their own government under Laurent-Désiré Kabila. This was achieved in May 1997. Kabila soon fell out with his backers in August 1998, however, and Rwanda and Uganda inspired a rebellion designed to overthrow him. This led to further intervention,

this time by Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Chad, and Sudan in support of the Kabila government. Although a ceasefire was signed in 1999, fighting continued in the eastern part of the country. In January 2001 Kabila was assassinated and replaced by his son, Joseph Kabila. Fighting continued until 2003, partly due to ethnic divisions (the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a country of 250 ethnic groups and 242 different languages) but also because of the continuing occupation of foreign troops (often engaged in illegal mining of minerals and diamonds). These foreign troops often formed alliances with local militias to fight their enemies on DRC soil. Negotiations designed to broker a peace agreement eventually led to the Pretoria Accord in April 2003. As a result, some of the foreign troops left, but hostilities and massacres continued, especially in the east of the country, as rival militias backed by Rwanda and Uganda continued to fight and plunder the resources of the DRC.

On 18 July 2003, the Transitional Government was set up as a result of what was known as the Global and All-inclusive Agreement. The Agreement required parties to help reunify the country, disarm and integrate the warring parties, and hold elections. Continued instability, however, meant that the elections did not take place until 2006. And even after these elections peace has remained elusive. Conflict continued among foreign troops and numerous militia groups on the Rwandan and Ugandan borders, causing serious refugee crises and civilian deaths. Child soldiers and the use of rape as an instrument of war has also characterized the conflict. The death rate in recent years has been estimated at 45,000 a month from widespread disease and famine, as well as the continuing fighting. In October 2012 the UN produced a report arguing that Rwanda was directly controlling one of the main militias (M23) in eastern Congo.

This conflict in the DRC highlights the utility of a broader definition of 'security' and the importance of new ideas relating to 'human' and 'societal' security.

The traditional approach to national security

As Chapter 2 has shown, from the Treaties of Westphalia in 1648 onwards, states have been regarded as by far the most powerful actors in the international system. They have been 'the universal standard of

system was viewed as a rather brutal arena in which states would seek to achieve their own security at the expense of their neighbours. Inter-state relations were seen as a struggle for power, as states

societal, and environmental, as well as military aspects, and that is also defined in broader international terms. Buzan's work raises interesting and important questions about whether national and international security considerations can be compatible, and whether states, given the nature of the international system, are capable of thinking in more cooperative international and global terms (see Box 15.1).

This focus on the tension between national and international security is not accepted by all writers on security. There are those who argue that the emphasis on state and inter-state relations ignores the fundamental changes that have been taking place in world politics. For some, the dual processes of integration and fragmentation associated with globalization that characterize the contemporary world mean that much more attention should be given to 'societal security' (see Case Study 1). According to this view, growing integration in regions like Europe is undermining the classical political order based on nation-states, leaving nations exposed within larger political frameworks (like the EU). At the same time, the fragmentation of various states, like the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, has created new problems of boundaries, minorities, and organizing ideologies that are causing increasing regional instability (Wæver et al. 1993: 196). This has led to the argument that ethno-national groups, rather than states, should become the centre of attention for security analysts.

Box 15.1 Notions of 'security'

At the same time, other commentators argue that the stress on national and international security is less appropriate because of the emergence of an embryonic global society in the post-cold war era. Like the 'societal security' theorists, they point to the fragmentation of the nation-state but they argue that more attention should be given, not to society at the ethno-national level, but to global society. These writers argue that one of the most important contemporary trends is the broad process of globalization that is taking place. They accept that this process brings new risks and dangers. These include the risks associated with such things as international terrorism, a breakdown of the global monetary system, global warming, cyber conflict, and the dangers of nuclear accidents. These threats to security, on a planetary level, are viewed as being largely outside the control of nation-states. Only the development of a global community, they believe, can deal with this adequately.

Other writers on globalization stress the transformation of the state (rather than its demise) and the new security agenda in the early years of the new century. In the aftermath of what has become known as '9/11' in September 2001 and the new era of violence that followed it, Jonathan Friedman argues that we are living in a world 'where polarization, both vertical and horizontal, both class and ethnic, has become rampant, and where violence has become more globalized and fragmented at the same time, and is no longer a question of wars between states but of sub-state conflicts, globally networked and financed, in which states have become one actor, increasing the risk of global conflict.'

Introduction

Students of international politics deal with some of the most profound questions it is possible to consider. Among the most important of these is whether it is possible to achieve international security in the kind of world in which we live. For much of the intellectual history of the subject a debate has raged about the causes of war. For some writers, especially historians, the causes of war are unique to each case. Other writers believe that it is possible to provide a wider, more generalized explanation. Some analysts, for example, see the causes lying in human nature, others in the outcome of the internal organization of states, and yet others in international anarchy. In a major work on the causes of war, Kenneth Waltz considers what he calls the three 'images' of war (man, the state, and the international system) in terms of what thinkers have said about the origins of conflict throughout the history of Western civilization (Waltz 1954). Waltz himself puts particular emphasis on the nature of international anarchy ('wars occur because there is nothing to stop them from occurring'), but he also recognizes that a comprehensive explanation requires an understanding of all three.

In this on-going debate, as Waltz points out, there is a fundamental difference between political philosophers over whether conflict can be transcended or mitigated. In particular, there has been a difference between realist and idealist thinkers, who have been respectively pessimistic and optimistic in their response to this central question in the international politics field (see Ch. 6). In the post-First World War period, idealism claimed

widespread support as the League of Nations seemed to offer some hope for greater international order. In contrast, during the cold war, which developed after 1945, realism became the dominant school of thought. War and violent conflict were seen as perennial features of inter-state relations stretching back through human history. With the end of the cold war, however, the debate began again. For some, the end of the intense ideological confrontation between East and West was a major turning point in international history, ushering in a new paradigm in which inter-state violence would gradually become a thing of the past and new cosmopolitan values would bring greater cooperation between individuals and human collectivities of various kinds (including states). This reflected more optimistic views about the development of a peaceful global society. For others, however, realism remained the best approach to thinking about international security. In their view, very little of substance had changed as a result of the events of 1989. Although the end of the cold war initially brought into existence a new, more cooperative era between the superpowers, realists argued that this more harmonious phase in international relations was only temporary.

This chapter focuses on this debate in an era of increasing globalization, highlighting the different strands of thinking within these two optimistic and pessimistic schools of thought. Before this can be done, however, it is necessary to consider what is meant by 'security', and to probe the relationship between national security and global security.

What is meant by the concept of security?

Most writers agree that security is a 'contested concept'. There is a consensus that it implies freedom from threats to core values (for both individuals and groups), but there is a major disagreement about whether the main focus of inquiry should be on 'individual', 'national', 'international', or 'global' security. For much of the cold war period most writing on the subject was dominated by the idea of national security, which was largely defined in militarized terms. The main area of interest for both academics and statesmen tended to be on the

military capabilities that their own states should develop to deal with the threats that faced them. More recently, however, this idea of security has been criticized for being ethnocentric (culturally biased) and too narrowly defined. Instead, a number of contemporary writers have argued for an expanded conception of security, outward from the limits of parochial national security, to include a range of other considerations. Barry Buzan, in his study, *People, States and Fear* (1983), argues for a view of security that includes political, economic,

Chapter 15

International and global security

JOHN BAYLIS

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Reader's Guide

This chapter looks at the question of whether international relations, especially in an era of increasing globalization, are likely to be as violent in the future as they have been in the past. The chapter begins by looking at disagreements that exist about the causes of war and whether violence is always likely to be with us. It then turns to traditional/classical realist and more contemporary neo-realist and neo-liberal

perspectives on international security, before considering a range of alternative approaches. The chapter ends by looking at recent debates about globalization and geopolitics. The conclusion then considers the continuing tension between national and international security, and suggests that, despite the important changes associated with the processes of globalization, there seem few signs that a fundamentally different, more peaceful, paradigm of international politics is emerging.