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"Re-redefining" International Securing: Bringing Intent Back In

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"Re-redefining" International Security

BRINGING INTENT BACK IN

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The tectonic geopolitical shifts that have taken place since the end of the Cold War have led many to put forth a need to rethink and revise the concept of international security. The traditional definition, they assert, is no longer sufficient in the face of the modern era's most pressing security issues and threats. What are and will be the distinguishing features of international security problems? What should be considered an international security issue, and what should not? How can "international security" or "international security issue" be defined to allow academics and policymakers to most capably think about and deal with the world they face? Here it is argued that while there is no doubt that a revision of the traditional notion of security is in order, it would be wise to avoid excessive expansion of the concept. It is also argued that the most appropriate definition of an international security threat is one that retains the all-important aspect of human agency. Over-broadening of the concept will only lead to a variety of problems for theory and policy in the field of international security.[1]

The seismic geopolitical shifts that have taken place since the end of the Cold War and the panoply of threats that have ridden in on the most recent wave of globalization have led many to challenge the way we think about security (Baldwin 1995, 118; Buzan 1984, 109; Mathews 1989, 162). Post-World War II definitions, assumptions, and security institutions, they assert, are no longer sufficient to deal with the modern world's most pressing security problems. They argue that in order to face the problems of the twenty-first century, we need a more comprehensive definition of security—one that encompasses the increasing number of threats to an increasing number of actors.

These calls from prominent voices in the field lead to several critical questions: What are and will be the distinguishing features of international security problems in the world today and in the future? What should be considered an international security problem, and what should not? How can "international security" or "international

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security problem" be defined in a way that allows academics and policymakers to most capably think about and deal with the threats of the modern era? This study argues that although a revision of the traditional, state-centric, militarily-oriented, and externally-focused definition of security is no doubt an order, it would be wise to avoid excessive expansion of the concept. Along with these necessary conceptual revisions, I argue that the most appropriate definition of an international security threat retains the all-important aspect of human agency or intent. Over-broadening of the concept will lead only to a variety of problems for theory and policy in the field of international security.

To make this argument, I first examine some of the major changes in the twenty-first century international security arena. I then trace the evolution of the concept of "security," from the Cold War to today. I follow up with a look at some of the implications this new thinking on international security as a concept will have for both international relations theory and security studies as academic disciplines, and for the practice of foreign and security policy. I then attempt to "re-redefine" the concept, bringing the crucial aspects of agency and intentionality back into the definition. The study concludes with some of the broader implications of these arguments for international security theory and policy, both today and tomorrow.

The Post-Cold War World

It is difficult to deny that the sweeping changes wrought since the end of the Cold War have altered, and will continue to alter, the global geopolitical landscape. Conventional, "Great Power" warfare appears in precipitous decline. Global civil society seems to be on the rise. In today's world, it is the international economy that matters most. Of these vast and far-reaching shifts, four stand out as fundamental.

The first is globalization, a notoriously slippery concept that requires elaboration. For our purposes here, globalization is defined as the "widening, deepening, and speeding up" of economic, political, and social interconnectedness among individuals, groups, organizations, states, and other important actors in the international system (Naím 2009, 28; Brown 2008, 45). Globalization is largely a technology-driven phenomenon—the rapid rate of technological change has facilitated this explosion of connection across the globe (Naím 2009, 29).]

The definition outlined above consists of three primary aspects: the economic, the political, and the social. For one, globalization has been defined by a rapid expansion of global economic interconnectedness, with trade, investment, global production, and international aid bringing states, organizations, firms, and individuals closer together than ever before. And while some argue this is a positive force for peace (Brooks 1999; Koo 2009), others are less convinced (Barbieri 1996; Barbieri and Schneider 1999; Gasiorowski 1986; Rowe 2005).

Politics is globalized as well, with a rapid proliferation of intergovernmental organizations—going from just thirty-seven in 1909 to nearly 1,000 conventional and non-conventional organizations today (Kegley jr. and Banton, 2012).[2] Here too, there are those who argue that such institutions reduce the risk of conflict (Axelrod 2006; Ikenberry 2009; Keohane 2005; Nye 2011, 215-217), and those who argue that they are epiphenomenal; mere "reflection[s] of the distribution of power" (Mearsheimer 1994/95, 7).

Finally there are the social aspects of globalization. The world's individuals have been brought closer together through travel, trade, academic exchange, and the explosive growth of transnational nongovernmental organizations. Similarly here, while some argue such expansion will lead to greater global harmony (Kaldor 2003), others see it promising only greater friction (Barber 1992; Huntington 1993; Lieber and Weisberg 2002). While the world has experienced globalization in the past, the current phase is unique in the rapidity with which economic liberalization, communication, and integration are taking place (Wolf 2001). Some states, such as Belgium and Singapore, have positioned themselves to benefit immensely from this trend. While others, such as Burma and Niger, are being quickly left behind (KOF 2010).

The second great shift is what Fareed Zakaria (2009) has termed, "the rise of the rest": the economic emergence of a number of non-Western powers, from Brazil to Indonesia, South Africa to Turkey. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, international relations entered an unprecedented era of unipolarity (Brooks and Wohlforth 2008; Jervis 2009; Walt 2009; Wohlforth 2009). The United States' overwhelming dominance in military, political, and economic terms was unmatched in

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2 The real number is 989. 247 conventional, 742 nonconventional.

human history, and seemed likely to remain so for the foreseeable future (Posen 2003). And yet today, according to the National Intelligence Council's *Global Trends 2025* report, we are witnessing a global shift in relative economic power, "roughly from west to east," and are approaching a truly multipolar economic order (NIC 2008, 7, 12).

This "rise of the rest" emerged through the profound, sustained growth of the global economy, what Zakaria (2009) calls the "big story of our times" (27). Over the past four decades, the global economy increased nearly twenty-two fold, going from $2.9 trillion in 1970 to $63.1 trillion today (World Bank 2012).[3] And with this global growth we have seen a massive movement for political change, largely in the direction of democracy (Fukuyama 1989; Huntington 1991; Inglehart 2000). In 1973, democracies comprised only 27 percent of the state system—by 2006 this number had swollen to just under 63 percent (Diamond 2007, appendix 2). While most would assume that the United States will remain first among equals in this more economically horizontal, democratic world, "among equals" is what merits particular emphasis (NIC 2008, 29).

The third great shift is the changing nature of power, which Joseph Nye (2011, xv) characterizes as "a power transition among states and a power diffusion away from all states." While the more-historically-familiar power *transition* is resulting in an entirely different distribution of capabilities (Gilpin 1981; Zakaria 2009), the more-novel power *diffusion* has led some to talk of "shrunken sovereignty" (Barber 2009) and others of a reactionary, state-centric "return of history" (Kagan 2008; see also Bremmer 2009). The rise of a variety of non-state actors, such as multinational corporations, nongovernmental organizations, and terrorist networks, has also led Richard Haass (2008) to describe the twenty-first century as the "age of nonpolarity," one in which many centers of power exist that are not—and need not be—nation states.

Underwriting these three fundamental shifts is a fourth seismic shift concerning demographics. We are witnessing massive demographic declines among the richest, most industrialized nations, and rapid growth among the demographically youngest, economically least-developed, and most conflict-ridden states. The fertility rates in a number of countries make this clear. In Japan (GNI/capita $41,850), Singapore ($40,070), and Germany ($43,070), fertility rates are 1.39, 0.78, and 1.41 births-per-woman

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[3] Measured in current U.S. dollars.

respectively—well below the replacement rate of 2.1. However, in Mali (GNI/capita $600), Somalia ($150), and Afghanistan ($410), fertility rates sit at 6.35, 6.25, and 5.64, leading to "youth bulges" in the countries that are least prepared to deal with them (CIA 2012; World Bank 2012).[4]

These two demographic trends are coupled with a great global urbanization movement, with approximately 70 percent of the global population estimated to be urban by 2025 (Goldstone 2010, 38). While roughly a century ago the 'global cities' were London, Paris, and New York, today urban centers like Karachi, Kinshasa, Lagos, and Dhaka have exceeded or are creeping towards 10 million residents, putting enormous strain on local resources and infrastructure. The combination of high fertility rates, mass migration, and urbanization among some of the poorest global societies could have explosive consequences in some of the world's most volatile regions. While some argue that this fourth shift will be a force for "Great Power peace" in the modern era (Haas 2007), others are less sanguine about its implications for the developing world (Goldstone 2008, 36-38).

These four great shifts and the end of the multi-decade global ideological standoff that defined the latter half of the twentieth century produced three important changes in how we conceptualize international security. First, theorists and practitioners now tend to think of security *internationally*, recognizing that much of the modern world is defined by complex political, economic, and social interdependence (Baldwin 1995, 131). Gone are the days when "national security" was the primary concern of states, and stable borders the primary goal. In the current context, threats seem to emanate not merely from without, but also from within. They can affect multiple states at once and can require complex forms of cooperation.

Second, military might is declining in importance, with the modern era showing a steady drop in interstate war and a sharp increase in intrastate conflict (Call and Cousens 2008, 5; Harbom and Wallensteen 2009, 578-579; Mathews 1997, 51; Ripsmand and Paul 2008, 36). From the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 to the ceasefire that unofficially ended the Korean War in 1953, no less than 129 wars and major interventions took place, with "territory" being the defining cause of most (Holsti 1991, 48-49, 85-88, 140-144,

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[4] All GNI statistics from (World Bank 2012); all fertility rate statistics from (CIA 2012).

214-218, 274). Yet since this time, no two great powers have engaged in violent conflict with one another on a scale befitting the term "war" (Sarkees and Wayman 2010).[5]

Simultaneously, war has gone from the being primarily the province of developed states to increasingly being an occurrence among and within states in the developing world. As Fearon and Laitin (2003) point out, between the end of WWII and the turn of the century, the number of civil war dead exceeded that of interstate war by a factor of five, with 16.2 million casualties. Moreover, from 1989 to 2008, minor conflicts made up 63% of all global armed conflicts; 94% being some variation of intrastate conflict (Harbom and Wallensteen 2009, 578).

This increase in intrastate conflict has led to the rise in the importance of peace operations as a tool for dealing with global conflict (Daniel 2008, 2). Theory and practice in the areas of peacekeeping (Call and Cousens 2008), peace-building (Doyle and Sambanis 2000), and conflict mediation (Zartman 2000) have seen great advances since the end of the Cold War. With this, we have seen global militaries reduce in size, going from 28 million in 1985 to 19.8 million by 2006. Complementing this trend has been a massive increase in non-military tools of statecraft such as the use of economic sanctions, up 50% from the 1980s to the 1990s (Ripsman and Paul 2008).

Finally, nuclear deterrence and the role of nuclear strategy have declined markedly. Since the Soviet Union shook the world with its first nuclear test in 1949, academics, politicians, and interested citizens have concerned themselves with the "balance of terror" between the U.S. and its Soviet rival (Wohlstetter 1959). Scholarship describing the "nuclear revolution" (Jervis 1989) that took place and the importance of nuclear deterrence (Schelling 2008) dominated the field of security studies. Although there is still important work being done on these more traditional topics (Lieber and Press 2006), the broader dialogue on international security seems to have shifted from states with the most power to those with the least.

With most modern nuclear threats coming from "failing" nuclear states (such as Pakistan) and "rogue" nuclear or emerging nuclear states, (such as North Korea and Iran), some even argue that great power arms control is essentially irrelevant (Bohlen 2003).

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[5] This is, of course, according to the criteria set out by the Correlates of War database of at least 1000 battle deaths and at least 100 on either side.

With the receding importance of problems of strength, such as great power nuclear deterrence and the rising threat of problems of weakness, such as "loose nukes" and collapsing nuclear states, we have witnessed a resurgence of the nuclear abolitionist movement, most recently exemplified by President Obama's "commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons" (Obama 2009). And while few can disagree with the laudability of his goals, there are some who question their practicability (Joffe and Davis 2011; Lieber and Press 2009; Tertrais 2010).

Definition and Redefinition

Given these four fundamental shifts, and their corresponding effects on the international security landscape, we now need to look at what is meant by "international security," and of what international security issues consist, to see if a redefinition of the term is in order. The importance of this exercise is difficult to overstate, for as Robert Jervis (2009, 160) notes, "the best definitions do a great deal of theoretical work." In its most basic form, security is simply the absence of physical harm or the threat of physical harm. Security is gradational rather than dichotomous: you can have neither perfect security, nor perfect insecurity, only security by varying degrees (Baldwin 1997, 15; Caldwell and Williams, Jr. 2006, 2). Security and insecurity also have objective and subjective aspects: things can at times appear more threatening to one's security than they are in reality, and at times less, leading some to label them as "socially constructed" concepts (Caldwell and Williams, Jr. 2006, 1). Security also involves, and in fact requires, a threat; and threats, in the traditional-security-sense, are made up of a combination of the capability and intent to do harm or enact violence (Baldwin 1997, 15; Caldwell and Williams, Jr., 2006, 9). Tacking "international" onto the front of the concept of security simply broadens the scope, referring to threats that have inter-national, multi-national, or trans-national implications. Finally, the concept of international security requires what Barry Buzan (1991, 3-5) refers to as a "referent object," an agent that is being threatened. This final requirement of a threatened agent brings us to the familiar issue of levels of analysis in international relations theory: the focus on individuals, families, minority or majority groups, organizations, states, or the entire state system (Waltz 2001). What the

threats consist of and who is being threatened have important implications for the definition of international security.

Traditionally, the concept of security has been most closely associated with "national security," namely, external military threats to the nation state (Ayoob 1995, 4-8). Over time, however, the limitations of this definition grew glaringly apparent. By defining threats solely in terms of foreign militaries, one misses out on the vast number of nonmilitary threats of the modern era, such as terrorist groups, transnational criminal organizations, piracy networks, and the like. Further, if the threatened agent is defined simply in terms of the nation state, one ignores the fact that threats and violence can be directed exclusively at certain groups, classes, families, and even individuals within states, and can, in many cases, emanate from the state itself (Caldwell and Williams, Jr., 2006, 8).

Considering these problems, security theorists have called for a "broadening" of what constitutes a security threat, and an "extending" or a "deepening" of who can be considered "threatened" (Caldwell and Williams, Jr., 2006, 7; Paris 2001, 97). With regards to who can justifiably be considered a threatened agent, it seems only reasonable to allow extension down to the individual. It is not lost on anyone, for instance, that the North Korean and Syrian governments are far greater threats to their own people than any foreign military. But the issue of broadening the scope of security threats is a somewhat more complicated task, largely because of the simple question of where it stops.

As stated above, threats have traditionally been thought to comprise some combination of the capability and intent to do harm, both being required to constitute a threat. New paradigms of security studies, however, have tended to eliminate this important element of intent or agency, and have generated a variety of threats that lack this crucial qualification. For example, through a process Copenhagen School IR theorists refer to as "securitization" (Wæver 1995; Williams 2003), environmental decline, natural disasters, poverty, deadly diseases, and resource scarcity should all be considered grave threats to international security (Kahl 2006; Mathews 1989; Podesta and Ogden 2007-2008; McInnes and Rushton 2010; Yergin 2006). Many of these types of ideas fall under the broad umbrella of "human security" studies, a term coined by the 1994 *UN Human Development Report*. The report outlined what are now seen as the seven fundamental

elements of human security: economic security, health security, food security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security (UN 1995). But as Roland Paris cleverly quips, "if human security is all these things, what is it not?" (Paris 2001, 92).

Implications for Theory and Policy

Buzan (1984, 125) refers to "security" as "an essentially contested concept," meaning that it can't and shouldn't be strictly defined, for to do so undermines its durability and versatility as a term. But as noted above, rather than undercutting its utility, a narrower definition of security is necessary for sound theoretical and practical work in the field of security studies. What the unwelcome consequences of an expansive security concept might be, and how the concept can be reasonably and usefully circumscribed, is what will guide the remainder of this article.

On the academic side, there are four initial problems to consider. First, too broad a definition for 'security' in security studies will erode the coherence of the discipline. If "international security" is an umbrella term that captures too many disparate elements, it will be rendered essentially indistinguishable from international political economy, international development, global health studies, or international law and global governance (Caldwell and Williams, Jr., 2006, 15; Walt 1991, 213). Without clear demarcation lines, it will be difficult for scholars to tell what, exactly, they should be studying (Paris 2001, 93). Defining security studies in such broad strokes would water down the expertise each field requires, and would make training in the subfields largely impracticable.

Second, this expansive definition will hinder scholarly communication, leading academics to talk *past* each other, rather than *to* each other (Baldwin 1997, 5). If "security" refers to that of states, economies, communities, genders, individuals, healthcare systems, food distribution networks, and political groupings, scholarly discourse in the field will be reduced to a perpetual "dialogue of the deaf," or as Lake (2011, 472) puts it, "an intellectual Tower of Babel."[6] While the boundaries are no doubt

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[6] Though Lake is referring to the use of paradigms, or "isms," in IR, not the concept of security.

fuzzy, somewhat clearly circumscribed concepts in social science enable us to mostly speak the same language, most of the time.

Thirdly, human security, nontraditional security, and other, more expansive concepts, also contain many aspects that are inherently difficult to operationalize. This doesn't completely refute their importance as phenomena worthy of study in social science, but it is undoubtedly a challenge for these emerging fields. The concern is, given their relative abundance of "social facts" like threatened "identity security" or "cultural security," whether it would be possible for human security theorists to effectively validate or invalidate hypotheses (Baldwin 1997, 5; Paris 2001, 3). A more clearly defined field will enable scholars to separate and test individual elements, and avoid the problems of endogeneity that the grab-bag method seems to invite. This, in turn, will allow academic debate and discussion to take place on a more equitable and mutually discernible level, sharpening all of our analyses and insights.

A fourth and final concern for academia is that security studies will be fundamentally altered by this new wave of theories and theorists, and will be left unrecognizable to its core experts (Levy 1999, 40). If the field of security studies is no longer centrally concerned with the causes of war, alliance politics, deterrence, arms races and control, the use and control of force, terrorism, and ethnic and nationalist conflict, and instead becomes the study of poverty, of demographics, of environmental change, and of global health, the voices that have brought the subfield thus far will be entirely drowned out. Key texts, such as *The Peloponnesian War*, *Arms and Influence*, *Man, the State, and War*, and *War and Change in World Politics* will go unread, and the foundation of the discipline will disappear.

Thus, for problems of coherence, communication, operationalization, and the protection of its core principles, the concept of security and the field of security studies would likely not be well served by excessive broadening. And while new, expansive human security concepts pose the above-mentioned problems for academia, they have even graver implications for the security policy community. In addition to the practical problems of communication outlined above, there are five additional problems for the policy community.

First, too expansive a definition for security would make comparing similar policies essentially impossible, and distinguishing between different policy options inherently difficult (Baldwin 1997, 6). Take, for instance, the types of discussions surrounding counterinsurgency versus counterterrorism policies for the war in Afghanistan, with counterinsurgency being more people-centered and counterterrorism being more threat-centered. It is important to note that both are centrally concerned with *security*. But security for whom? And security from what? This is where a catchall security concept becomes problematic, for those advocating different positions will, in effect, be arguing for the same thing. And those making these ominous, life-and-death decisions will be left without the requisite clarity to make prudent, rational, and at times moral, judgments.

Secondly, the human security concept has a bearing on bureaucratic questions concerning areas and responsibilities. Should we expect, for instance, the Department of Defense to be putting together climate change legislation proposals or running HIV/AIDS relief centers? Conversely, would it be wise to have the State Department, USAID, or the U.S. Geological Survey conducting operational planning? This isn't to say that there shouldn't be cross-departmental collaboration and exchange, for today's most complex security problems are often too much to handle for any one department alone. But these different agencies are designed, funded, and staffed according to different criteria and for different purposes. While more holistic approaches are undoubtedly necessary, a more clearly circumscribed security concept will help ensure that agency overlap won't lead to detrimental results.

Third, unlike academics, policymakers are tasked with the difficult requirement of allocating resources. Considering these requirements, if everything is a security threat, it is difficult to set priorities or single out areas of particular concern (Koblentz 2010, 108; Paris 2001, 92). If we conceive of such disparate issues as deficit spending, illegal immigration, the H1N1 virus, and the receding Arctic ice cap as "vital" security threats, right alongside the rise of China in Asia, Iranian nuclear proliferation, and al Qaeda training camps, knowing what matters when will be next-to-impossible.

Fourth, if what constitutes a security problem or security threat is too broad, problems will be subject to incompatible policy solutions that could undercut each other,

or will be paralyzed by competing demands, relegating them to lowest-common-denominator compromises (Koblentz 2010, 108). At the best of times, as the bureaucratic politics literature points out, this "pulling and hauling" in inter- and intra-agency battle leads to less-than-optimal outcomes, generally far from what would be decided upon according to more rational calculation (Allison 1969). If the meaning of what is being battled over lacks consensus, and the means to solve such problems come from every different direction, matters will be made far worse.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, it is worth pointing out that security threats are used to justify the suspension of civil liberties, waging war, and legitimizing the reallocation of vast resources. In many cases, this is a necessary cost for maintaining security and part of the burden we must bear as citizens and members of democratic societies. And yet, even in the healthiest of democracies, we would be ill advised to provide the government an exponentially expanding list of "vital" security threats to protect against (Baldwin 1997, 8; Caldwell and Williams, Jr., 2006, 12). One can easily see how this is a potential first step on the road toward an Orwellian world much like that described in 1984: Oceania being at war with Eurasia, and having always been at war with Eurasia (Orwell 2004).

"Re-redefinition": Bringing Intent Back In

How then, are we to define international security and what should be categorized as international security threats? Arguably, the most intelligent way of narrowing the definition of international security is to accept the wide variety of possible threatened agents, but to restrict allowable threats to those with international implications that include the fundamental aspect of human agency or intent. This circumscription of the concept will help avoid many of the critical theoretical and policy problems outlined above. Furthermore, it is important to distinguish between tangible international security problems and what might be termed "latent security problems." Adherents to the human security paradigm may argue that this distinction is not worth making, but it is important to recognize that nearly anything can have international security implications if the causal chain is drawn long enough. A useful rule of thumb is the more deliberate an

international threat, the more justifiably it can be classified as a security issue (Caldwell and Williams, Jr., 2006, 11).

Under this definition then, many of the modern era's purported rising "nontraditional threats" (Mathews 1997, 51) do not necessarily merit classification as international security problems. Rather than being vital security issues in and of themselves, those that exclude the important aspect of human agency are better classified as "latent." Climate change in the developing world, for instance, promises to bring food and water shortages, catastrophic natural disasters, deadly disease, mass human migration, and resource competition (Podesta and Ogden 2007-2008, 116). And yet, while it certainly poses an international threat, it does not merit classification as a *vital* security threat in itself, because of the absence of intent. Deadly infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS or the Avian flu are another such example. While they are clearly important problems posing potentially grave threats to individuals around the globe, classifying them as threats to international security will only cloud the necessary clarity needed to think and act intelligently in dealing with these problems (McInnes and Rushton 2010, 225).

A great number of other examples that are often raised, such as poverty, economic recession, drug abuse, declining natural resources, and rapid urbanization and population growth, simply *are what they are*, and are not definitively vital issues of international security. While each has the potential to lead to serious international problems, even security problems, they are simply too many steps removed from posing a direct security threat to states, governments, militaries, communities, and individuals in the international system.

A number of today's oft-cited threats to international security, on the other hand, *are* rightly categorized as such. The traditional issues of interstate conflict, military threats, arms races, nuclear deterrence, and contestation of the commons obviously continue to fit the definition. Some of the more-recent threats, too, such as nuclear proliferation among "rogue" and weak states (Litwak 2007), increased international piracy, expanding organized crime rings, and international terrorism (Byman 2008; Cronin 2006; Roberts 2005) all include human agency and have international implications, therefore befitting the classification as international security problems.

Even many emerging threats can be considered as such. Cyber-threats, for instance, fit this classification if they are carried out with the intent to threaten the state, its military, or its people (Diebert and Rohozinski 2010). For example, Chinese hackers stealing trade secrets is not an international security issue, whereas cyber-penetration of classified intelligence files or online terrorist recruitment and funding are. Biosecurity threats, too, can be justifiably classified as international security problems, but only if they include the fundamental issue of intent. Bio-warfare, bio-terrorism, malicious dual-use biological research, and bio-crime with violent intent or consequences are all obvious threats to international security. Laboratory accidents, pandemic and epidemic diseases, and agricultural blights, on the other hand, are not (Koblentz 2008, 111).[7]

Admittedly, the lines are not nearly as clear as they have been made out to be here. Issues like military accidents, inadvertent missile launches, and abandoned mine fields fit within a grey area between tangible and potential international security problems. But these problems, among many others, can still be traced back to the key concept of intent. Militaries, missiles, and landmines are created and maintained with the intent of deterring, threatening, or even harming governments, militaries, communities, and individuals, and although the harms they may happen to commit may not be intentional on given occasions, they still carry with them this important aspect of intentionality. And so an accidental nuclear weapon detonation should certainly be considered a true international security problem, but nuclear reactor accidents, even meltdowns, no matter how threatening, should not.

Conclusion

Based on this narrower definition of international security and more stringent designation of international security problems, what are some lessons for international security theory and policy going forward? Three, I would argue, are preeminent. First, this study highlights the importance of recognizing and understanding the causal chain that leads to international security problems. There is no doubt that an earthquake can lead to a breakdown of social order, leading then to lawlessness, looting, and violence. Similarly, carbon emissions resulting in global climate change have proven to lead to

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[7] See Koblentz's "Taxonomy of Biological Threats."

water shortages in the more arid parts of the world, and violent, inter- and intrastate conflicts have already been waged over this declining critical resource. And yet the earthquake and the emissions are not security threats in and of themselves, they are simply the independent variables that can set the causal chain towards insecurity in motion. This understanding will help us think of how to preempt security issues with other tools of statecraft, such as aid or diplomacy, before they arise.

Second, the obvious benefit of cross-disciplinary academic and interagency governmental exchange is clear. On the academic side, security studies experts could gain immensely from the knowledge of epidemiologists, climatologists, and nuclear or biological scientists, and vice-versa. For those in the policy community, members of the Department of Defense or the Central Intelligence Agency, too, have a lot they can potentially learn from USAID, State Department, and Department of Health and Human Services staff-members—but they should not be trying to do each other's jobs.

Finally, this study points to the fact that perhaps what needs changing is not the definition of international security per se, but rather our tendency to see security issues as being far more important than all other considerations. We need to resist the knee-jerk reaction we have when politicians call HIV/AIDS, the swelling budget deficit, or the state of the education system, "threats to our national security," and think about allocating resources to preempt the real threats before they truly emerge. Clear thinking and sharp definitional lines surrounding the concept of international security will only lead to the sound formation of theory and policy regarding these all-important issues.

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