13

Military Security

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Chapter Contents

Reader's Guide

This chapter examines the continuing importance of military security. It notes that International Relations has historically seen security almost entirely in terms of the military dimension, before going on to review the impact of the broadening of the concept of security on approaches to the study of its military dimension. It then analyses the key aspects of the traditional approach to military security and some of the most common ways in which states have sought to acquire it historically, such as war, alliances, and, more recently, nuclear deterrence. The chapter then reflects on some of the difficulties in acquiring military security, and ways in which its pursuit can sometimes reduce, rather than increase, security, before concluding with a reminder of the continuing centrality of military security, even within a significantly broadened understanding of security as a multifaceted concept.

Introduction

Attention to issues of military security has always been central to the discipline of International Relations. A preoccupation with the study of war after 1919 was foundational to the emergence of International Relations as a university discipline in the first place. The catastrophe of the Second World War, and the almost immediate outbreak of the Cold War meant that in the subsequent decades, security was defined very narrowly, being seen almost entirely in terms of 'national' or military security. Although Buzan (1991a: 7) has argued that security is an 'essentially contested concept', this was not really the case during the Cold War, during which there was a consensus that it related to military threats to the state posed by the military capabilities of adversaries. In practice, during this period, Security Studies was synonymous with strategic studies. States were seen as entities that provided 'collective goods' to their citizens, of which the most important was freedom from external attack (Kapstein 1992: 14).

Even with the emergence of a broader understanding of security at the end of the Cold War, a focus on military security remained fundamental and it was one of the five core sectors of the broader security conception advocated by the Copenhagen School. To a significant extent however, as attention moved to the new non-military sectors of security, the study of military security itself began to be comparatively neglected, a process that critics have argued has produced a crucial loss of focus on the critical issues of 'war-making, war-preparation and military power in contemporary world politics' (Stavrianakis and Selby 2012: 3). The study of military security may have lacked appropriate attention because it is in some ways 'a monstrous, pathological subject, distasteful to many, and congenial to only a few' (Garnett 1970: 13), but it remains of central concern for states and other international actors. Therefore the revival of critical attention to issues of militarism and militarization is necessary to restore balance to the sectoral approach to security.

In Buzan's wider, sectoral understanding, military security was defined as 'the two-level interplay of the armed offensive and defensive capabilities of states, and states' perceptions of each other's intentions' (Buzan et al. 1998: 51). This, however, is more a description of the method for attaining military security, rather than a description of the objective or desired outcome, which is covered in an earlier assertion that the military security agenda revolves largely around 'the ability of governments to maintain themselves against internal and external military threats, but it can also involve the use of military power to defend states or governments against non-military threats to their existence' (Buzan et al. 1998: 50).

The tendency to focus on the means, rather than the ends, of military security is typical in Security Studies. However as Baldwin has noted, Clausewitz's statement that war was a continuation of politics was an insistence that 'military force should be understood in the context of the purposes it serves' (1995: 103).

In this regard, military security is clearly the focus of strategic studies, that is, the study of the relationship between the pursuit and possession of military power and the achievement of political objectives, and of the use of military force to advance one's own political agenda and frustrate those of other states or sub-state actors (Snyder 2008: 3). Thus, while military power can be used to supplement policing, emergency service, and intelligence capabilities in dealing with non-military threats, its distinctive identity as a security sector refers to the use, or threatened use of national and allied military capabilities to achieve political-military goals in International Relations, and to frustrate the efforts of other national or international actors to impose their own political agenda through the threat or use of their military capabilities.

Approaches to military security

Military issues continue to be paramount, because 'a state and its society can be, in their own terms, secure in the political, economic, societal and environmental dimensions, and yet all of these accomplishments can be undone by military failure' (Buzan 1991b: 35). Military forces capable of defending the country and supporting its foreign policy remain central to state security. It is therefore important that it remains a priority in terms of the attention paid to it by International Relations as an academic discipline.

In the traditional approach, security is a military phenomenon, military capabilities take priority in governments' budgetary allocations, and the projection and deterrence of military force are central to understanding the workings of international politics. The absolute primacy given to the pursuit of military security for most of the Cold War period needs to be explained, because prior to the Second World War, and even during the first few years of the Cold War, this was not an automatic assumption of International Relations scholars. During this period, security was seen as one among several goals pursued by states and the importance attached to it could vary from state to state, depending on their circumstances. In addition, International Relations analysts did not automatically assume that the use of the military instrument should be prioritized over the other instruments of influence available to states, such as diplomacy and economic inducements. Military power was seen as a tool to be used, either in isolation, or more usually, in combination with other techniques, only when it was clear that alternative approaches were unlikely to succeed.

As the Cold War progressed, however, the increasingly dominant realist paradigm promoted the pursuit of security as the primary duty of governments, and the view that military security took priority over all other goals. The justification for this prioritization was a set of interrelated arguments that gave a special status and meaning to military security and did so in such a way that it clearly trumped all other state objectives and forms of security. In the first place, military security challenges were seen as being of a fundamentally distinctive and immediately threatening character because they involved the threat or use of force (Buzan 1983: 76). If insecurity is seen as being defined by perceived threats to cherished values, then deliberate military attacks on a state's population or infrastructure clearly represent an immediate and unambiguous security threat. The reality of such dangers is seen in the fact that in the past two centuries more than a quarter of the states in the international system have ceased to exist at some point, making the requirement to prioritize military security an obvious one for states (Fazal 2004).

Second, the existence of military security was seen as being necessary in order to allow other forms of security such as economic or societal security to be pursued behind its protective shield. Such military security was also vital because it made possible the political independence that allowed governments the freedom to choose between competing goals, including which security goals they wished to pursue, and with what resources. A state that was dominated by or occupied by another would no longer be in a position to independently make such critical choices.

Third, the death and destruction endured by a state in wartime could frustrate the pursuit of other goals, but also undo the historic achievements it had already made (Buzan 1991b: 35). For all these reasons, realists argued that it made sense for governments to give military security absolute priority.

In an early realist contribution to the study of national security, Arnold Wolfers (1962: 150) noted that threats can result from a psychological construction as well as an empirical reality. Wolfers pointed out that 'security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked'. His insight was not followed up for several decades, which was unfortunate, since it opens the analysis to a more social-constructivist understanding of security in all its forms. Military insecurity can be an objective reality which states must acquire capabilities to address. But it is also subjective. For example, Finland would not be alarmed by Swedish defence acquisitions, whereas it might well be by a similar build-up by Russia. Similarly, the armed forces of the United States do not alarm Canada. Historical experience and contemporary political relations contextualize the meanings of these actions for the different states. In a real sense the notion of 'security' has no meaning in and of itself. It is a 'floating signifier', a socially constructed understanding that has a particular meaning only in relation to other assumptions and understandings. During the Cold War, for example, the superpowers saw their adversary as a primary and absolute military threat and this shaped how they interpreted all other developments in International Relations, legitimized a very particular international order, and influenced their interpretation of their own ideological and ethical ideas and behaviour.

It is possible to study military security through non-realist analytical lenses, however. Rather than making the realist assumption that the structural realities of the international system are a given, which define the need for particular forms of military capability and policy, it is possible to adopt a social-constructivist approach, which sees all human reality as the product of human interaction and capable of being interpreted in different ways, and altered by human actions. In this approach, cultural factors and **norms** become central to the analysis (Adler and Barnett 1998). It is also important to be aware that the security of the state is an essential, but not always sufficient, condition for making its citizens secure.

Snyder (1977) introduced the concept of **strategic culture** in understanding the way that countries formulate and implement military-security policies. In

contrast to the structuralist approach of neorealism, Snyder argued that societies' beliefs and historical behaviour patterns are crucial for understanding their policy decisions. Factors such as the continuing influence of national myths and social and political norms (Wendt 1996) help shape the boundaries of what a government considers vital or not, acceptable or not, achievable or not, urgent or not, and influences the manner in which governments seek to implement their policy choices.

In the past 40 years, the major powers have seen their military security challenged by non-state actors, such as terrorist organizations, rather than by the military forces of other states. In their wars on terror, both the United States and Israel have deployed their armed forces abroad in large-scale military operations: the United States in Afghanistan (post-2001) and Israel in Lebanon (2006) and Palestine (2009), where the operations were directed not against the armed forces of those states, or to secure the territory, but in pursuit of sub-state **insurgent** or terrorist forces (Al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, and Hamas). In Colombia, US forces have been operating against insurgent forces linked with the international drugs trade. This is a very different use of military capability from the realist state-to-state logic, although the use of military forces in the counter-insurgency role has a long historical pedigree. Prior to the development of national police forces in the nineteenth century, the military were the only force the state had at its disposal for such purposes.

Constructing 'military security' as solely relative to threats to a state or population emanating from the armed forces of other states is also problematic because in many parts of the world, the 'military security' threat facing a population, and sometimes facing the national government, is not the armed forces of neighbouring states, but those of the state itself. The 'threat' to states such as Argentina, Chile, Greece, South Korea, Nigeria, Pakistan, and many others in recent decades has been military coups against the national government, followed by long periods of brutal military dictatorship. In these circumstances, the 'military insecurity' felt by a population would originate from the actions of its own national armed forces rather than those of another state. The cosy assumption that a state needs to maximize its own military capabilities to face external threats safely takes no account of these realities. In 1948, Costa Rica abolished its armed forces in recognition of the fact that they, not those of other countries, were the real threat.

Focusing on the population rather than the state is typical of the social constructivist approach, which highlights the implications of notions of 'identity' for military security. Where realism sees identities as essentially fixed, the social constructivist approach sees them as being more fluid, and this has important implications for the use of force in International Relations. Conflict can be the forge in which national identity is formed, rather than a struggle between pre-existing rival identities, as Campbell (1998b) argues was the case during the Bosnian War in the early 1990s. Campbell (1992) in fact insists that the state itself is constructed through the practice of pursuing militarized security against real or imagined external threats.

The social constructivist approach to security is useful because, in Onuf's (1989) words, the international system is 'a world of our making'. The meaning that governments and individuals attach to events is crucial—for example, President George W. Bush seeing the 9/11 attacks as part of a war rather than a terrorist attack requiring a policing response, or the way in which the understanding of 'child soldiers' has evolved in recent decades, or whether the conflict in Bosnia was a 'civil war' or an 'invasion'. The socially constructed meanings societies give to events shape the way they respond to them, and interpretations of 'national interest' are crucial in underpinning national security policies.

Governments can choose to 'securitize' certain issues and not others (see Chapter 12 for more on securitization). The decision about whether or not to place an issue within the military-security discourse will reflect the political objectives of those promoting the move. Militarization (in the conceptual sense), like theory, is 'always for someone and for some purpose'. It is not a politically neutral step; it will be taken because it advances the objectives of an influential group within the national polity.

KEY POINTS

- Military security has historically been prioritized by governments ahead of other objectives.
- Military security has both an objective and a subjective dimension.
- While realist approaches have dominated the study of military security, other approaches, such as constructivism, can also be employed.

Traditional military-security studies

Prior to the expanding of the definition, security was understood in overwhelmingly military terms and was seen as meaning military protection against the threats posed by the armed forces of other states. It was further assumed that the referent object of security, the thing that needed to be made secure, was the state. Thus, military security was about identifying actual and potential military threats from other states, and coping with them, either by acquiring sufficient levels of appropriate military capability oneself, or by allying with other states that possessed such a capability. The ultimate mechanism for maintaining security was the resort to war, something which Article 51 of the United Nations specifically affirms in relation to a state's right to self-defence. Thus, Lippmann (1943: 51) argued that 'a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war'. The study of military security is, therefore, the central concern of strategic studies, and one of the central concerns of Security Studies. In this regard, one can think of Security Studies as a subset of International Relations, and strategic studies as a subset of Security Studies, the latter focusing solely on the military dimension of security in terms of the threat and use of force to achieve political objectives.

For traditionalists, the requirement for governments to focus their attention on military rather than other forms of security was seen as being a result of the structure of the international system. For realists, the key element of the system is that it is an anarchy—that is, there is no world government. States are therefore obliged to produce their military security through their own efforts, and these efforts will seem threatening to other states in the system, causing them to respond in kind, and triggering an arms race spiral as a result of this '**security dilemma**' (see Key Quotes 13.1). This produces what Snow (1991: 1) called the 'violent peace'. John Herz (1950: 158), who originated the term 'security dilemma', argued that it had crucial domestic as well as international implications because it resulted in 'power-political, oligarchic, authoritarian and similar trends and tendencies in society'. In this regard it has implications for the other security sectors as well, particularly political and societal security.

This was important, because the **traditional security** approach assumed that the domestic political

> **KEY QUOTES 13.1 The security dilemma**
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> 'When states seek the ability to defend themselves, they get too much and too little—too much because they gain the ability to carry out aggression; too little because others, being menaced, will increase their own arms and so reduce the first state's security. Unless the requirements for offence and defence differ in kind or amount, a status quo power will desire a military posture that resembles that of an aggressor. For this reason others cannot infer from its military forces and preparations whether the state is aggressive. States therefore assume the worst. The other's intentions must be co-extensive with his capabilities.'
>
> Jervis (1991: 92–3)

order was stable and essentially peaceful, whereas there was an arena of 'necessity, contingency and violence beyond the state' (Dalby 1992b: 105). In reality, the boundaries of military security are themselves necessarily somewhat fluid. Since the perception of a 'threat' implies the recognition of vulnerabilities, military security must encompass internal elements such as actual or potential insurgencies and terrorism, ideological division, nationalist pressures, in fact any 'national weaknesses that might be exploited by an enemy' (Freedman 1992: 754). Moreover, states tend to define 'threats' not just in terms of existential dangers to the country, but also of actions by other states or actors which frustrate certain foreign policy objectives.

As well as this specific ontology (understanding of what it was that was being studied), traditional military Security Studies also operated with a very particular positivist epistemology (or understanding of what constituted legitimate knowledge). A 'scientific objectivism' was held to be characteristic of the way that military security issues were studied (Wyn Jones 1996). Military security theorists assumed that the scientific method was applicable both to the natural and the social worlds (naturalism), and that it was possible for security analysts to remain objective by distinguishing between 'facts' and 'values' (objectivism). Finally, analysis, following the scientific method, would proceed through empirical validation or falsification. The 'real world' would be investigated, without bias or ideology influencing the results. As outlined by Walt (1991: 222), 'security studies seeks *cumulative* knowledge about the role of military force. To obtain it, the

field must follow the standard canons of scientific research.' The study of military security is in this sense seen as a search for 'truth'.

However, although security realism is often contrasted with idealism, there are idealistic elements within the realist world view in this regard. As Reus-Smit (1992: 17) notes, many traditional security specialists effectively see the state as an 'idealized political community', where the survival and well-being of the population as a whole are aggregated into a minimalist notion of state security. It is this assumption that allows Buzan (1991a: 328), for example, to claim that 'national security subsumes all other security considerations'. For critics such as Booth (1991: 320) this is illogical, since it gives priority to 'the security of the means as opposed to the security of the ends'.

Military power is a dynamic as well as a relative concept, it is always relative to the situation in which a state tries to use it, and to the capabilities possessed by each side. It was a fatal error by Iraq under Saddam Hussein to think that, because its army performed well against Iran, it was capable of standing up to the forces of the United States. How much military capability is deemed to be enough depends partly on what threats exist, and partly on what a state wishes to do with its military capabilities, both in terms of its overall defence strategy and on whether it sees the security of other states as also crucial to its own security, and thereby feels a need for power projection capabilities. Thus, Andre Beaufre argued that strategy was about the dialectic of force, or rather, 'the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute' (1965: 22).

For most of the Cold War period, therefore, thinking about security in the heavily armed states of the developed world focused not on security in a broad sense, but rather on what were seen to be the requirements for maintaining the **balance of power** in the nuclear age, through policies of deterrence, **alliance** formation, and force projection. These ideas were reflected in the writings of key scholars such as Kissinger (1956), Brodie (1959), and Schelling (1960b).

More recently, contributors to realist thinking have divided into somewhat different *contemporary* realist approaches that have differing assumptions on the implications of the security dilemma for military security. Offensive realism operates with a traditional interpretation of the security dilemma, in which rivalry and conflict are inevitable. Defensive realists, in contrast, do not assume that the international anarchy always

leads to conflict. It can often produce relatively peaceful areas of the world, where states do not face any insurmountable military security threats, so that major external military dangers are seen as exceptional and unusual, rather than the norm (Rose 1998: 149).

War

States acquire and maintain military capabilities ultimately because they face the possibility of war. The problem of war has always been foundational to the study of International Relations and central to Security Studies. Security Studies has always operated with a Clausewitzian perspective on war: that war is not a social aberration or mass psychological disorder, but rather is simply a rational instrument of policy, in the same way as diplomacy or economic sanctions. It is a continuation of politics by other means. War, according to Clausewitz, is a political activity, 'intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will'. It is the application of military means to fulfil the ends of policy; essentially a brutal form of bargaining.

This was a major reason why planning for massive use of nuclear weapons during the Cold War was so controversial. The absolute destruction of *both* sides' populations and infrastructure that would be likely in such a war broke with the Clausewitzian logic of war as a rational instrument of policy that had dominated Western thinking about warfare for a century. An unlimited level of violence and destruction meant that war was no longer a political act because there was no longer a clear linkage between the level and type of violence being employed, and the political objectives being pursued.

In the 1970s, and again in the 1990s, it became fashionable in some academic circles to argue that war was on the decline and the use of military force as a foreign-policy instrument was increasingly unattractive

for states. Most of this writing originated in America and Western Europe, two areas of the international system that had certainly become less dangerous environments since the end of the Second World War.

Advocates of this logic argued that foreign-policy objectives had become more intangible, that there was less emphasis on territorial expansion and more emphasis on trade. States now sought to win friends and influence people, rather than to invade and occupy their territories. Nuclear weapons had proved to be effectively unusable, great powers had failed dismally to achieve their military objectives in wars in Vietnam (the United States) and Afghanistan (the USSR), and the international system seemed dominated by states with major constraints on their armed forces, such as Germany and Japan. Some went so far as to suggest that, at least between the major powers, war was becoming obsolete, a view that was reiterated by Mueller at the end of the Cold War (Mueller 1989, 2006).

Certainly war is a risky option to resort to. Of all wars occurring between 1815 and 1910, 80 per cent were won by the governments that started them. But 60 per cent of the wars between 1910 and 1965 were lost by the initiating state. But, in the post-Cold War period, war does not seem to have lost its salience for military security. The debates about it have rather been concerned with the nature of the wars that have taken place and the implications of revolutionary developments in military technology.

The changing character of military capabilities clearly has encouraged an evolution in the *forms* of warfare characteristic of engagements between the major powers. The period 1861–1945 was characterized by the move to full-scale industrialization of warfare and the consolidation of the modern nation state. These two processes led to the emergence of a form of warfare in which all the human and material resources of the state were mobilized to support the war effort, and the entire human and material resources of the opponent were deemed legitimate targets in wartime. The catastrophic consequences of these logics were seen in the Second World War and the advent of nuclear weapons led to the emergence of the belief that this form of unrestrained great power warfare was no longer a cost-effective instrument of policy. Military security could not be attained with such a suicidal method. Nevertheless, the major powers still had to defend their interests in the global order and particularly in regional orders and sub-systems where their interests were threatened. They therefore reacted to this

situation not by abstaining from war altogether, but by avoiding direct military conflict with each other, and developing new forms of limited war to allow them to pursue their military security objectives.

One area of debate has concerned the question of whether or not a 'revolution in military affairs' (RMA) has been underway in the post-Cold War period. The term revolution suggests a sudden and radical break with the past, and it has been suggested that the technological superiority of American military forces revealed in the 1991 Gulf War showed that just such a revolution had occurred. This interpretation placed great emphasis on technological developments. However, the evidence from historical examples such as the Napoleonic revolution and the German Blitzkreig tactics of 1939–41 suggests the need for caution against overemphasizing the significance of technological change, while underestimating the importance of changes in doctrine and organization.

Kaldor and Münkler have engaged with the issue of whether the wars typical of the post-Cold War period differ in form sufficiently from previous eras that they can be termed 'new wars'. While Kaldor (1999), argues that such wars are indeed a new phenomenon, Münkler (2005) disagrees, arguing that such a view lacks historical depth, but that a 'new terrorism' is the central challenge facing contemporary states.

In the 'new wars' thesis, identity politics are central to the explanation of political violence. Kaldor argues that the conflicts typical of the post-Cold War period have been struggles to control the state in order to assert a particular understanding of national identity. A feature of such conflicts is that they are internal to the state, taking the form of insurgencies and civil wars. They therefore lend themselves to a constructivist analysis, rather than a traditional analysis of military security.

Alliances and neutrality

One method of acquiring military security is to become a member of a military alliance. Security analysis has thus historically also paid attention to the issues relating to the attractiveness or otherwise of alliance membership, usually linking it to structural realist explanations of international politics (Waltz 1979; Gilpin 1981). Most of the scholarly analysis of alliance theory was conducted during the Cold War, but there has been a smaller literature since then exploring the implications of unipolarity for alliance systems and tracking the changes in alliance forms since 1991. Historically, alliances have been seen as a way to overcome national resource constraints in order to maximize military security. States will seek membership of an alliance if they believe that their own resources are inadequate to maintain their **sovereignty** and security, and will make common cause with states that share their goals, or at least perceive similar threats. Alliance formation is particularly notable when a potential hegemonic power threatens the other states in the system. Alliance theories are therefore often linked to balance-of-power theory. While some scholars argue that states automatically ally to 'balance' against a threatening state (Walt 1987), others argue that states are just as likely to 'bandwagon'—that is, to ally with the likely winning hegemon. In practice, the reasons for joining alliances vary widely.

More powerful states may also create alliances in order to extend their protective umbrella over weaker friendly states. Alliances are often seen by members not so much as essential tools for balancing against a potential hegemon, but rather as mechanisms for exercising influence over allies, whose own military security policies may increase the dangers to their allies—for example, by drawing them into confrontations or expeditionary commitments against third parties. They allow states to restrain or exert pressure on states within the alliance framework (Osgood 1968; Ikenberry 2000). States will prefer to join alliances that allow them a meaningful role in the formulation of alliance objectives and strategies (Holsti 1996: 1014), but some alliances, such as the Cold War Warsaw Pact, may be so dominated by the leading ally that other states have little influence in policy-making. While the idea that states prefer to join alliances with states that share common cultures or ideologies appears logical, such 'affinity theories' have not been confirmed by detailed studies of alliance formation (Russett 1971; Walt 1987).

The obligations assumed as members of an alliance vary significantly between organizations, although definitions of alliances normally require that they involve a formal commitment by the participating states (Miller and Toritsyn 2004/2005). Because of its size and longevity, NATO can sometimes be seen as a 'typical' alliance (see Case Study 13.1). In reality it is a very unusual alliance, completely unlike most others in history. Alliances vary in terms of issues that cause them to be created, the situations in which military commitments are triggered, the degree of military integration that takes place within the alliance, the numbers of allies, the geographical scope of the alliance, and many other factors.

Most military alliances are assembled for the purpose of waging war, and end when the war is concluded. Their purpose is to coordinate the allies' common war effort to maximum effect. Integration of forces is unusual. NATO is unusual, both in that it is a peacetime alliance and in that it has remained in existence for 60 years, outlasting the disappearance of all its original reasons for being created. Alliances tend to have brief existences because they require the harmonization of many conflicting interests, which becomes more difficult over long periods, particularly if there is not an overwhelming sense of commonly perceived external threat. In the post-Cold War period, the emergence of a unipolar international system has raised questions about whether or not alliances would remain a typical response to military insecurity, and to what extent they were being replaced by more ad hoc coalitions (Menon 2003; Campbell 2004), as well as how alliances might evolve in the new strategic geography of the post-Cold War world (Hansen 2000).

Critics of alliances argue that they contribute little to a state's military security, and are destabilizing for the international system. Wright (1965: 774) argued that they simply generate opposing alliances and are incompatible with collective security, since they promote a selective response to acts of aggression. However, Kegley and Raymond (1982) found that, on balance, alliances make a positive contribution to peace and security as long as the alliance structure is flexible and when alliance commitments are considered binding by the member states.

Nevertheless, a state is likely to avoid alliance membership if it feels strong enough to maintain its security unaided, or if it feels that its sovereignty will be compromised by alliance membership, or that the obligations and risks involved outweigh the potential benefits. Many states have historically sought security, not by joining alliances, but, on the contrary, by declaring neutral or non-aligned status. Occasionally **neutrality** is forced upon a state. Austria's neutral status was not a national political choice, but rather the price imposed by the superpowers in return for ending their military occupation and restoring Austrian sovereignty in 1955. Finnish neutrality was a conscious choice by Finland's government, but one taken in the knowledge that any other option would be likely to trigger a renewed Soviet invasion after 1945. Other states, such as Sweden, have seen neutrality as providing more security, sovereignty, and freedom than entry into a military alliance dominated by one or more of the great powers (Joenniemi 1988: 53). Neutrality does not come cheaply. Because they do not have access to the military capabilities of allied states, neutral countries typically have to maintain large armed forces and institute systems of national service.

Neutrality is a legal status. A neutral state must remain outside military alliances in peacetime, and refrain from activities that might seem to align it too closely with the members of any existing alliances. In return, its neutral status will (or at least should) be accepted by the belligerent states in wartime. While the end of the Cold War seemed to weaken the rationale for the neutrality of many European states, the vigorous domestic debates on the centrality of national neutrality policies in Ireland and Sweden that followed the European Union's adoption of enhanced military cooperation in 2017 showed that it remains an important concept. In the post-Cold War period, collective security organizations have become more prominent than collective defence bodies, but, given that the systemic factors promoting alliance formation have changed little in the post-Cold War period, alliances are likely to remain important mechanisms by which states pursue military security (Snyder 1997: 78).

KEY POINTS

- Military security can be pursued unilaterally by relying on one's own capabilities, multilaterally via alliance membership, or unilaterally via a policy of neutrality.

- States join alliances to compensate for their own relative military weakness.

- Alliances vary significantly in terms of their membership, objectives, and obligations.

- Some states have historically preferred to remain neutral rather than join alliances.

Deterrence

For most of the Cold War period, not only did 'Security' Studies in the developed world focus almost exclusively on military security, but within that focus there was an enormous, if perhaps understandable, emphasis on the study of the issue of nuclear deterrence (see Key Quotes 13.2). The stress on deterrence occurred despite the fact that nuclear weapons were never actually employed in war during the Cold War.

CASE STUDY 13.1 NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was created in 1949 with the signing of the Washington Treaty. NATO is a military alliance that has expanded in the post-Cold War period and by 2009 comprised 28 countries from North America and Europe. It was originally created as an insurance against a revival of German militarism after the Second World War and as a collective defence initiative against the perceived threat from the Soviet Union.

The key clause of the Washington Treaty is Article 5, which declares that each ally will treat an attack against one Ally as an attack against all and respond with its own military forces as if it itself had been attacked. Article 4 of the treaty ensures consultations among Allies on security matters of common interest. The NATO members routinely consult each other on security matters, a habit that has become ingrained over six decades since 1949. In the post-Cold War period, NATO expanded its remit and geographical zone of operations, to allow it to become a collective security organization, operating in counter-insurgency warfare in Afghanistan, as well as peacekeeping in Kosovo.

Although its longevity and political influence encourage a perception of NATO as a 'typical' alliance, in reality, NATO is historically unique. In terms of the length of time it has existed, the fact that it has done so in peacetime, rather than wartime, the degree of military integration among its members, and a number of other factors, NATO is an institution without precedent or parallel in recorded human history.

> ### KEY QUOTES 13.2 Deterrence and defence

'Defence is possible without deterrence and deterrence is possible without defence. A state can have the military wherewithal to repel an invasion without also being able to threaten devastation to the invader's population or territory. Similarly, a state can have the wherewithal to credibly threaten an adversary with such devastation and yet be unable to repel his invading force. Defence, therefore, does not necessarily buy deterrence, nor deterrence defence. A state that can defend itself from attack, moreover, will have little need to develop the wherewithal to deter. If physical attacks can be repelled or if the damage from them drastically minimized, the incentive to develop a retaliatory capability is low. A state that cannot defend itself, however, will try to develop an effective deterrent if that be possible.'

Art (1980: 7)

Early writers on nuclear weapons believed that they would be a 'powerful inhibitor to aggression' and would lead military security policies to become designed to avert wars rather than to win them (Brodie 1946: 73). In practice, the impact of nuclear weapons was more complicated. They did act as an inhibitor of full-scale war between the nuclear-armed great powers during crises (Kennedy 1969), but had no impact on those states (the vast majority) that did not possess such weapons. The existence of nuclear weapons certainly encouraged superpower diplomatic caution during the Cold War, and also encouraged the superpowers to pursue **arms control**. But it also encouraged the development of a balance-of-power system that tried to limit the propensity for superpower military engagement worldwide, and stabilized a nuclear balance where the superpowers constantly strengthened themselves so as not to have to fight.

In terms of generating a sense of security, military power can serve a number of ends. Where feasible, defence is the goal that all states aim for first. If defence is not possible, deterrence is generally the next priority. The defensive use of military power revolves around two purposes. The first is to ward off an attack. Should this not succeed, the second purpose is to minimize the damage to oneself if attacked.

The deterrent use of military power works with a different logic. Deterrence is based upon the threat of retaliation. It seeks to prevent an adversary from doing something by threatening him with unacceptable punishment if he does it. The threat of retaliation or punishment is directed at the adversary's population or industrial infrastructure. It is effective only if the adversary is convinced you have both the will and the power to carry out the threat. Hence deterrence can be judged successful only if the retaliatory threat has not had to be carried out.

Nuclear weapons have paradoxically made those that possess them more militarily secure than any previous states in history, and more militarily insecure than any other states in history. Everything depends on the effectiveness of deterrence. Robert Art (1980: 22) argues that nuclear security buys conventional power projection capability: 'precisely because security can be bought so cheaply with nuclear weapons is each superpower able to use the bulk of its defence dollars on conventional forces, which can be readily employed and more finely tuned'.

Deterrence produces security not by physically obstructing a certain course of action, as defence does, but by threatening a response that makes the action seem disproportionately costly and therefore unattractive in the first place (Morgan 2006: 79–81). In practice, this is not entirely straightforward. Deterrence will work only if the threatened state clearly possesses the capability to inflict overwhelming retaliation, successfully convinces the adversary that it would be certain to do so if attacked, and is able to communicate clearly what is and is not acceptable within its deterrence doctrine. All these requirements are problematical in various ways. There are additional issues related to commitments to allies. Against a fellow nuclear-armed state, the willingness to use nuclear weapons is tantamount to committing suicide. Such a 'passive' deterrent threat may be credible when one's own population is threatened, but an 'active' deterrent threat, to follow the same course in defence of an ally, is much more difficult to make credible.

There are also clear moral issues. Actually to carry out the threat of retaliation is for a state to commit genocide against its enemies. This would be in breach of all existing laws of war, and the moral codes of all the world's major religions. Given social norms against **blackmail** and violent intimidation of other people, and particularly those who threaten violence against children, the old, or the helpless, it is debatable whether even the *threat* to use nuclear weapons is morally acceptable. Such issues spawned a large and lively scholarly literature (see, e.g., Elshtain 1992).

Michael McGuire argues that the 'theology' of deterrence encouraged the development of an arcane language that disguised the brutal realities of nuclear weapons' 'countervalue' rather than, say, city-targeting strikes. It also assumed a particular kind of worst-case analysis, where an enemy course of action needed only to be conceivable for it to be included in the threat assessment. Finally, because 'retaliation' actually meant genocidal mass murder of civilian populations, deterrence encouraged continual efforts to paint the adversary as a people deserving of such a terrible fate (McGuire 1986: 24–9). This critique is another example both of the importance of cultural determinants of military security thinking, and of the potential disjuncture between 'state' and 'population' logics when pursuing military security.

A number of authors have argued that the characteristics of the nuclear balance of power since the end of the Cold War are so different from the 1945–91 period that the world has now entered the Second Nuclear Age (Gray 1999; Walton 2013). In this new era, it is argued, the number of nuclear-weapons states will continue to increase, but the stability of deterrent relationships will decrease, so that a failure of deterrence and an outbreak of nuclear war becomes more likely.

> **KEY POINTS**
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> - Nuclear deterrence theory dominated Cold War Security Studies.
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> - Nuclear deterrent relationships can increase and decrease security simultaneously.
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> - Deterrence has very different moral implications from policies based upon defence.
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> - The Cold War was the First Nuclear Age. The post-Cold War period may represent a Second Nuclear Age, with different implications for the pursuit of military security.

Cooperative security and arms control

Traditional approaches to military security assume that the existence of international anarchy leads inevitably to the security dilemma. However, a number of scholars, such as Wendt (1992: 407), have argued that while the anarchy may indeed exist, it is not inevitable that it should produce a security dilemma, and might indeed encourage cooperation among states. The operation of the security dilemma is a result of the practices of states, not of the structure of the system, and practices can change.

One example of states seeking to circumvent the difficulties of the security dilemma is through practices of cooperative security such as the pursuit of arms control and disarmament. A feature of the search for military security in the Cold War period was the pursuit of arms control. It was recognized that a purely adversarial relationship between nuclear-armed states was far too dangerous and that therefore efforts should be made to negotiate agreed constraints on military capability in certain areas, particularly with regard to weapons of mass destruction.

Arms control is a distinctive approach to the pursuit of military security because it involves both the deliberate acceptance of self-restraint in regard to the acquisition and deployment of weapons, and because it operates on the assumption that it is both possible and profitable to pursue security cooperatively with a potential military adversary. In the post-Cold War period, it has been increasingly associated with the concept of cooperative security, defined as 'a commitment to regulate the size, technical composition, investment patterns, and operational practices of all military forces by mutual consent for mutual benefit' (Larsen 2009: 3).

Classical disarmament theory assumed that weapons, rather than being a route to security, were a cause of insecurity. They were seen as both deepening tensions between states, and making them more likely to resort to the use of force in times of crisis (Claude 1964: 262–3). The solution was therefore to reduce armaments, thereby reducing tension. Booth (1975: 89) described this approach by paraphrasing Clausewitz as 'a continuation of politics by a reduction of military means'. Arms control is a more conservative approach to building military security, although it can lead to disarmament in the longer term. Arms controllers did not see weapons as producing insecurity merely by their existence. On the contrary, they believed that weaponry was a normal and acceptable part of International Relations. The arms control community therefore promoted the creation and maintenance of balances of power in which arms control would complement unilateral force improvements as the route to military security (Lefever 1962: 122).

Arms control as an approach to military security sought to distinguish between 'those kinds and

quantities of forces and weapons that promote the stability of the balance of power and those which do not; to tolerate or even to promote the former and to restrict the latter' (Bull 1961: 61). Thus while disarmament always implies weapon reductions, arms control may simply freeze numbers, or even increase them through mutual consent. Schelling and Halperin (1961: 2) defined the objectives of arms control as 'reducing the likelihood of war, its scope and violence if it occurs, and the political and economic costs of being prepared for it'. In practice, however, subsequent decades of experience with arms control have demonstrated that these objectives often conflicted with one another. Increasing the number of survivable nuclear weapons may make war less likely, but increases the cost of preparing for it, and the death and destruction if it occurs. Developing complex verification regimes reduces the likelihood of war, and the death and destruction if it occurs, but still increases the cost of being prepared for it.

One problem that policy-makers encountered in subsequently implementing arms control was that politicians and the general public expected agreements to produce lowered numerical balances, what Krepon (1984: 130) called 'optical parity'. But, as Schelling (1985–6) pointed out, this reflected a shift from a concern with the *character* of weapons to an obsession with numbers. Bertram also argued that what is important is 'who could do what' rather than 'who had what'. But, from the point of view of economics

and public perceptions, numbers are clearly important. Nevertheless, the arms control approach led to the conclusion of a large number of important agreements during the Cold War period, which can be held to have had a significant stabilizing function.

In the post-Cold War period, arms control lost momentum. A number of agreements were signed in the first half of the 1990s, but these represented the tidying-up of the Cold War agenda. They nevertheless established an important framework for co-operative security, particularly in Europe, and the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the START nuclear treaties led to massive reductions in the numbers of weapons held in each category (see Case Study 13.2). Nevertheless, arms control became less central both to the practice of military security after 1991 and to scholarly debates about the best way to sustain such security. The very different international political environment called for what Daalder (1993) described as 'threat deconstruction'. However, while progress largely halted in some areas, arms-control thinking was applied to some new areas, such as light weapons and to the issue of conventional weapons proliferation. Efforts to contain the proliferation of nuclear weapons also continued, with a new 'counterproliferation' emphasis on activities such as interdiction of transfers of components of weapons of mass destruction to hostile states and terrorist organizations and a renewed emphasis on defensive

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CASE STUDY 13.2 The 'New START' Treaty

The New START Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States was signed in Prague in April 2010 and entered into force in February 2011. It has a lifespan of ten years, but can be extended for a further five. It superseded the 1991 START Treaty signed at the end of the Cold War which reduced superpower strategic nuclear delivery systems to 1,600 each with a total of 6,000 warheads per country. New START reduces delivery systems to 700 each (with 100 in permitted non-operational reserve) and 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads. This represents a huge reduction from the 12,000 warheads each, on 2,500 delivery systems permitted under the 1979 SALT II Treaty. Unlike SALT and START, the New START has no sub-limits; each country can choose for itself how it wishes to divide its permitted total between inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched

ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and bombers. New START continues the verification techniques pioneered in earlier treaties and also has mandates for eighteen on-site inspections per year. Every six months, the two countries exchange an updated database of their strategic nuclear holdings and facilities, and there is a continuous process of 'notifications' of treaty-relevant information to the other country. The treaty also obliges the signatories to hold 'exhibitions' showing new weapon systems, such as the US B-2A bomber and Russian RS-24 missile.

The USA and Russia have seven years in which to complete the New START reductions. By the end of the process US–Russian nuclear warheads will have fallen to their lowest level since the 1950s.

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capabilities. This was evident in the 2002 United States National Security Strategy Document and in the 2003 Proliferation Security Initiative. An increasing number of intergovernmental organizations are involved in ad hoc initiatives to identify and block transportation of treaty-limited materials, so that the traditional term of 'arms control' may no longer accurately reflect state practices, which are more typically focused on more varied and flexible international security initiatives.

The cost of military security

Analysts of International Relations have reflected not only on the nature of security and alternative military strategies for maximizing it, but also on the fact that some of these strategies can be self-defeating, or generate security problems in other dimensions of the broader security agenda. Military security is of a different moral order to the other security sectors. The right of a people to defend their independence and way of life by maintaining and, if necessary, employing military capabilities is recognized under international law. However, as Klaus Knorr (1970: 50) said 'military power is ultimately the power to destroy and kill, or to occupy and control, and hence to coerce', and it therefore has rather different implications to the pursuit of environmental security, for example.

There are also economic and political issues. Military power can be acquired only by enormous effort in terms of the commitment of manpower and economic resources. All states struggle to acquire and maintain what they consider to be adequate military forces, and democratically elected governments therefore face particular difficulties in deciding upon the

appropriate level of military capability. There are two main reasons for this. In the first place, such capability is extremely expensive to acquire, and high levels of defence spending may be unpopular, especially during a long period of peace. Defence spending generates 'opportunity costs', the value of the social good a government could not invest in because it chose to spend the money on military capabilities. When President Eisenhower was asked the cost of the latest American bomber, he replied that the cost was 'a modern brick school in more than thirty cities, or two fully equipped hospitals'.

Acquiring military security is neither simple nor straightforward. One issue that overlaps with issues of economic security is the question, not so much of how much military capability does a state *need* to be secure, but how much can it *afford*? States often acquire less military capability than they would ideally like. The costs of acquiring such capability are real. The demand for security is a normative demand; it is the pursuit of a particular value. As Wolfers (1962: 150) noted, security is a value 'of which a nation can have more or less and which it can aspire to have in greater or lesser measure'.

The pursuit of military security requires states to make sacrifices in terms of spending on other social, or even security, goals that they might have. State resources are relatively scarce, and therefore the decision to spend resources on acquiring military security means such decisions are inevitably a subject for political judgement, and like any other area of government spending, they are subject to the law of diminishing marginal utility.

Second, the concentration of military power that a government feels is required to defend a democracy against its enemies in certain ways poses an inherent threat to the very values it is designed to protect. A state can become dangerously 'militarized' by such efforts. And the *use* of military force may damage democratic values, since it represents an undemocratic mechanism—the resort to force and violence to resolve disputes, rather than using dialogue and compromise, as would be expected in the domestic democratic context. In wartime, civil rights are invariably weakened, and normally abhorrent practices such as the use of torture may be condoned. During the Cold War academic security analysis included a significant focus on the dangers of militarism and militarization associated with the pursuit of military security (Vagts 1959; Berghahn 1981). These dangers did not disappear

in the post-Cold War era and remain a key reason for continuing to emphasize the importance of military security analysis even within the broadened agenda of security.

Efforts to acquire military security may generate security problems of their own. Increasing the size of national armed forces may trigger an arms race with other states, for example, and require modified policies, such as the addition of arms-control initiatives. Historian Paul Kennedy has argued that in pursuing maximum levels of military power, states may fatally overstretch themselves and that historically this has been a key cause of the collapse of imperial powers (Kennedy 1988). Acquiring substantial military capabilities may also encourage states to pursue military options when non-violent instruments still had the capacity to succeed. The use of force is seen both as legitimate for states and as a threat to the stability of the system, but the perception of the possibility of military threats from external actors ensures that states continue to maintain such capabilities.

The inhibitions on the use of violence between states are considerable, and they rest on the most basic kind of self-interest. Violence is seldom the most effective way of settling disputes. It is expensive in its methods and unpredictable in its outcome. However, no state (with the exception of Costa Rica) has yet found it possible to dispense with armed forces. The capacity of states to defend themselves, and their evident willingness to do so, provide the basic framework within which the business of international negotiations is carried on. Every new state since 1945 has considered it necessary to create armed forces.

> **KEY POINTS**
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> - Military security is expensive to acquire.
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> - The 'costs' of doing so are social as well as economic.
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> - Acquiring military capability can have consequences that threaten as well as secure a state's values.

Conclusion

The expansion of the concept of security has moved the focus of Security Studies away from a purely military understanding. Nevertheless, military security remains an absolutely crucial dimension of security as a whole. Governments continue to invest considerable resources in attempting to acquire it, and analysts of International Relations seek to understand military security both in its

own right and in relation to efforts to increase security in the non-military realms. Military security is extremely expensive to acquire, and the opportunity costs in terms of the human security agenda are profound. Efforts to increase military security can have unintended counterproductive consequences in the military or other fields. Questions about how much, and what kind of, military capability to seek in relation to perceived threats remain at the heart of the study of security.

> **? QUESTIONS**
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> 1. Why is it important to study military security?
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> 2. Are governments correct in prioritizing military security?
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> 3. To what extent is the requirement for military security produced by the international anarchy and the security dilemma?
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> 4. Has the end of the Cold War invalidated the arguments for security policies based on nuclear deterrence?
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> 5. In what ways can military security be said to have objective and subjective reality?
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> 6. How useful is arms control as a means of achieving military security?
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> 7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional realist approach to military security?

> 8. To what extent can the military-security environment be said to be 'socially constructed'?
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> 9. Is war becoming obsolete as an instrument of national policy?
>
> 10. Should Security Studies continue to address the dangers posed by militarism to society?

FURTHER READING

- Baylis, John, Wirtz, James J., and Gray, Colin S. (eds) (2015), *Strategy in the Contemporary World*, 5th edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press. An excellent collection of essays on the relationship of military power to international security.

- Biddle, Stephen (2004), *Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in Modern Battle*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. A good recent study of the issues involved in attempts to use force to increase military security in conventional terms.

- Freedman, L. (2004), *Deterrence*, Cambridge: Polity Press. A brief and effective study that provides a clear and well-structured explanation of the nature and history of nuclear deterrence.

- Kaldor, M. (1999), *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in the Global Era*, Cambridge: Polity Press. Kaldor offers a controversial take on the nature of war in the post-Cold War era. Some of her arguments are disputable, but the book is provocative, thoughtful, and worthy of study.

- Larsen, Jeffrey A. and Wirtz, James J. (eds) (2009), *Arms Control and Cooperative Security*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. A very useful collection of essays on the utility and future of arms control in the contemporary international system.

- Locke, Edward (2010), 'Refining Strategic Culture: Return of the Second Generation', *Review of International Studies*, 36/1: 685–708. An interesting and valuable survey of recent scholarship on the subject of strategic culture.

- Minear, L. and Weiss, T. G. (1995), *Mercy under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press. A very good study of the complexities of using traditional military capabilities in humanitarian interventions.

- Sloan, E. (2002), *The Revolution in Military Affairs*, Montreal: McGill-Queens Press. A good survey of the issues involved in the RMA debate.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

- http://www.armscontrol.org   The Arms Control Association is a national non-partisan membership organization that seeks to build public understanding of and support for effective arms-control policies. It produces the journal *Arms Control Today* and its website provides information on a range of issues relating to military security.

- http://www.defense.gov   The web portal for the United States Department of Defense, a crucial resource for understanding contemporary US defence policy and thinking.

- http://www.fas.org   The website of the Federation of American Scientists. Provides excellent resources on the military capabilities and policies of key states.

- http://www.sipri.org   The website of the excellent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Visit the online resources that accompany this book for lots of interesting additional material: www.oup.com/uk/collins5e/