

THE DYNAMICS OF GLOBAL SECURITY

Sean Kay

In fall 2002 I had the privilege helping to coordinate Ohio Wesleyan University's Sagan National Colloquium on the theme of the changing meaning of security. Distinguished visitors on the program such as Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams gave professors and students alike the opportunity to rethink the nature of security. This experience sparked my own scholarly interest in re-examining a range of security paradigms and policies. My research has culminated in a new book entitled *Global Security in the 21st Century: The Quest for Power and the Search for Peace*. This essay draws on that research to survey the major power shifts in the international security system and assesses the role of education as a national security commodity.

The New Power Dynamics

The central theme of *Global Security* is that the key variable that shapes international security outcomes remains power. The focus on power has dominated international relations literature from the days of Thucydides to Hobbes to Machiavelli and in recent decades George Kennan, Hans J. Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer. What is fundamentally new in the contemporary study of international security are the expansion and acceleration of the means through which power is exercised in the international system. Power has taken on new forms, become more diffuse and is increasingly privatized away from the historical analytical focus on the nation-state. In this sense power has become globalized. A combination of traditional policy problems and emerging policy issues force a dramatic shift in thinking about how power is distributed in the international system.

The terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, significantly illustrated three major problems: the nation-state no longer provides the kind of protective barrier for deterring threats that it has historically done; modern technology applicable to civilian life rather than conventional military tools is increasingly utilized as a weapon (the civilian airliner, for example); and the attacks were coordinated across many state boundaries building on a network of global relationships commencing in Afghanistan, transmitting across Europe and culminating in New York City and Washington, D.C. An additionally important dynamic behind these trends was that the tactics of warfare were increasingly influenced by information technology. The tactical targets on 9/11 were the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. However, the strategic center of gravity was more likely Americans watching it on television and public sentiment in the Islamic world. In this new global security dynamic great powers still have massive armies and stockpiles of nuclear weapons; regional flashpoints in Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia could draw great powers into

confrontations; technology and trade create new channels for power transmission and proliferation of tools of violence; asymmetrical threats such as genocide and terrorism abound; human security dilemmas such as population and health are growing; and challenges of environmental and energy security are pressing upon governments and populations.

The processes of globalization are at the center of these accelerating security trends and this is where the central question lies: will the new channels of global security create more or less security in the 21st century? The central aspect of globalization is interdependence both among states and among international actors across borders. This process is not new – but it has been heightened by the advancement of modernity in the contemporary international system. The key source of power in this globalized security system remains the relative distribution of military, economic, and political capabilities among the great powers. The United States, Russia, China, and the European Union continue to establish the hierarchy of capabilities – and thus influence – in the international system. However, the expansion of trade, travel, communications, and other aspects of the global economy create new means of exercising power. This translates into influence for medium and small states and for non-state actors seeking to affect security outcomes. Globalization increases the complexity and the reach of international anarchy which can create fear and uncertainty but can also create demands for cooperation between states and across borders in the quest for peace.

These dynamics of global security create a range of emerging, and often conflicting, security dilemmas. For example, China would see globalization as a tool for increasing its economic power thus helping to increase its security. As China's economic development accelerates, so does the general well-being of its traditionally peasant and poor society. Yet this same development increases China's consumption of energy and more burning of highly polluting coal thus making Chinese people suffer from respiratory illness and at the same time accelerating global warming trends. Another problem is the more exposed China is to globalization the more its elite Communist leadership risks instability generated by internal pressures for advances in human rights and democracy, possibly leading to significant confrontation between civilian-military elites and their own people. Also China's growth creates new security dilemmas for the United States which is highly dependent upon Chinese investment to finance its national debt and China's one billion person consumer market to sell American made products. This desire for engagement conflicts directly with China's relative capacity to transfer economic gains into military capabilities – modernizing its military and building a navy while increasing its capacity to threaten Taiwan. Nonetheless, China can achieve dominance around Asia without military force and instead work tactically through the economic channels of globalization. Just in case, though, China is examining a range of non-traditional means of war fighting including the incorporation of terrorism, paramilitary operations, economic sabotage and environmental damage into military-operational concepts.

The Dimensions of Modern Power

The diversifying tools of power include, first, the historical role of the nation-state. The traditional function of the state as a protector of sovereignty remains dominant in the modern international system. In some respects such as the quest for homeland security the state is increasingly turned to by citizens for protection against external vulnerabilities

enhanced by globalization. The means through which states exercise their power have nonetheless changed significantly in the global security system. For example, before the 1999 war with NATO over Kosovo Yugoslav officials applied a tactic of “a village a day keeps NATO away” – seeking to accomplish ethnic cleansing without prompting an attack. When NATO did threaten war, Yugoslavia pointed its deterrent gun not at NATO but rather at the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo NATO wanted to help. When NATO attacked in March 1999 the Yugoslav response was to expel 800,000 ethnic Albanians from Kosovo – precisely what NATO hoped to prevent. Ironically, the Yugoslav defeat revealed another aspect of global security – the live televised images reminiscent of the Holocaust of refugees being expelled on trains. These images helped to strengthen NATO’s member countries’ public resolve to stay the course, thus overcoming Yugoslavia’s strategy of winning by surviving and seeking to divide the NATO alliance.

A second major manifestation of power in the global security system is soft power. Soft power is the measure of the overall appeal of a state to others and is directly related to the ability to accomplish objectives through persuasion rather than the use of force. Credibility of commitments, setting positive examples, educational and economic capacity, and the ability to work effectively with other countries in multilateral coalitions and international organizations are some ingredients of soft power. The tools of soft power include the effective use of diplomacy, the appeal of one’s political system, and a state’s ability to calculate their interests in terms of the interests of other states. Thus a sensitivity to culture, traditions and the security concerns of other actors are essential to achieve effective persuasion in a world where soft power is important.

The rise of American primacy in the latter half of the 20th century illustrates why soft power is so important. The United States embarked on a strategy of global engagement through containment that was explicitly defensive in nature and thus reassuring to others who chose to align with the United States. Additionally, the United States exercised its hegemony through the creation of multilateral institutions such as the United Nations and NATO which provided inputs for other countries into collective decision-making, thus giving legitimacy to America’s military and political ascendancy in the 20th century. America also championed the global free trade system which allowed states who aligned with global trade norms to reap relative gains from participation. Most crucially, America defined its security in political and economic as well as military terms. The Marshall Plan in particular, which facilitated the reconstruction of Western Europe after World War II, instilled a generation of good will while fostering European integration as a hedge against nationalism and Soviet communism.

Conversely, the United States witnessed the dangers of ignoring soft power dynamics before and after the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Choosing to fight outside the norms of international rules regarding the use of force that Washington itself had fostered for over 50 years, the United States found it was able to win a rapid conventional invasion but struggled intensely with the postwar operations. In Iraq the US was left providing 90 percent of the troops, suffering 90 percent of the casualties and paying 90 percent of the costs as a major insurgency waged on years after President George W. Bush declared “mission accomplished.” Meanwhile, global public opinion had turned deeply hostile toward the United States which is no longer viewed as a country to be emulated. By 2003, according to Pew Global Attitudes surveys, the US had approval ratings of below 10 percent in Egypt and Pakistan – two of its largest recipients of foreign aid. These surveys also show that about 50

percent of the public in the United Kingdom and Canada – America's two closest allies – no longer view the United States as having admirable customs and values.

Asymmetrical power, a third variation, also has an increased prominence in the contemporary global security system. As power is increasingly diffused and privatized, new access to agenda-setting creates increasing incentives to apply asymmetrical tactics to the accomplishment of strategic objectives. The idea of "asymmetrical power" is highly contested – especially as most every relationship has some kind of imbalance of power. In military terms World War I and World War II as well as the nuclear stand-off during the Cold War illustrated proximate symmetrical balances of power. But such conditions of relative symmetry are rare – especially at the military level.

Manifestations of asymmetrical security dynamics include divergences of interests between adversaries – especially if one side in a contest is more inclined to bear heavy costs or seek harsh punishment against a foe. There can also be asymmetries in terms of tactics applied to overcome conventional disadvantages such as the use of military force against civilians and terrorism. There are cultural asymmetries when, for example, some states might seek to fight according to norms that can constrain them in battle while others will use whatever means are necessary. Technology can facilitate the primacy of one major state and its allies, while at the same time creating new integrated targets for an adversary to hit. For example, America gains major asymmetrical advantages due to its strategic use of technology in space but is highly vulnerable to communications or other infrastructure disruptions. North Korea does not need an overwhelming nuclear deterrent to do major damage to the United States. Exploding a Hiroshima-sized nuclear bomb just above the Earth's atmosphere and sparking a residual electro-magnetic pulse would eventually destroy most of the lower-orbiting satellites America relies on for modern communications and modern military power. Individuals also gain significant influence when asymmetrical power is prominent as their actions can have strategic impacts as was the case with American military police at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq who were abusing their captives. Media (such as television and the Internet) also serve as a force multiplier and moves the center of gravity in conflicts into new areas of the battle space. Finally, the United States applied asymmetrical tactics in the 2001 Afghanistan war by aligning with the far weaker Northern Alliance. This gave the US an asymmetric advantage by integrating the anti-Taliban forces into the American technological dominance of the battle space.

The most common definition of asymmetrical tactics is "not playing by the rules." The Hutus did this against the Tutsis in the Rwandan genocide, the Serbs against the Kosovar Albanians and in the tactics of terrorist movements such as Al Qaeda. The primary consequence of asymmetrical tactics is to break down traditional conventional defenses. Classical deterrence and alliances still matter regarding great power and regional security architectures but against asymmetrical tactics such as terrorism conventional responses offer little protection. Globalization creates a rich target base and complex means of transmitting asymmetrical attacks. Because it allows new actors to set the security agenda globalization gives power to the powerless. The image of Americans fearing a man living in a cave in Afghanistan proves this point only too well. Such fear is particularly ironic given that Americans are statistically more likely to be hurt sleeping in their own bed or to get sick from being overweight and smoking cigarettes than they are ever to be near a terrorist attack. The fact is, however, that the incentives to apply barbaric tactics such as genocide

and terrorism will likely increase in the decades to come.

The rise of asymmetrical power poses significant planning challenges for international security operations. Should states put their resources into conventional military power to manage state-to-state concerns? This is problematic because state-to-state wars, while possible, are highly destructive and this creates disincentives for states to fight each other conventionally. Such conflicts are deterred by the presence of significant military capabilities. Asymmetrical conflicts such as terrorism or insurgency movements are far more likely in terms of actual violent conflict but they require entirely different military planning concepts. We cannot stop a terrorist car bomb with a Stealth bomber nor can we prevent a terrorist from putting a nuclear weapon in a harbor with a sophisticated national missile defense system. Regional (civil or international) wars along with natural disasters which create major instability can require heavy troop deployments and sustained peace operations. What are the best military and civilian force structures for these missions particularly when economic and political engagement can be as, if not more, important than military engagement? Finally, the relationship between information war and democracy raises profound challenges. Asymmetrical wars often take the form of sustained wars of attrition where the target audience is the hearts and minds of populations. Democracy and its inherent freedoms become tools to be taken advantage of by terrorists and other asymmetrical threats. On the other hand, authoritarian denial of freedom also breeds popular resentment which can often turn violent.

The same dynamics that give rise to asymmetrical tactics in warfare also create new opportunities for people, ideas and media power to influence the international system. The power of information, knowledge and agenda-setting articulated effectively through local, national and transnational media has proliferated dramatically from newspapers to phones to faxes to the Internet. Popular people movements have the capacity to promote issues that states traditionally ignore and the powerless become powerful if they are able to gain access to knowledge and control over information. Illustrating the positive application of asymmetrical power, Mohandas K. Gandhi used organized non-violence to defeat British colonial rule over India in the first half of the 20th century. In the late 1990s non-governmental organizations successfully lobbied the World Bank to change its loan policies to include environmental impact assessments. Massive protests at the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle in 1999 forced the leaders of this institution to address (at least rhetorically) issues of human rights, labor and the environment in their discussions of free trade. In the summer of 2005 millions of people around the world united for the "Live 8" concerts which put considerable pressure on the leaders of the G-8 industrial nations to address the problem of global poverty, especially in the often forgotten African region.

The growth of people, ideas and media power can have positive and negative manifestations while being a direct challenge to the primacy of nation-states. Jody Williams won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997 for her leadership of the global anti-landmine coalition which successfully promoted a formal treaty banning these deadly devices often left behind in civilian areas after wars. Conversely, the same tools available to those working for peace are available to those who would use power for nefarious and destructive purposes. Thus winning the battle of ideas has become one of the central fronts in the quest for peace in the 21st century. The mechanisms are in place for the emergence of a global civil society that coalesces around a range of shared norms. But the mechanisms are also in place for

division, isolation and, in Samuel Huntington's phrase, a clash of civilizations.

Meanwhile, the power of the media to educate about the nature of emerging security threats is significant. Politicians often speak of moral causes to win elections. But the media has the power to broaden thinking about such issues. Is it moral if we live in a world where a child that is lucky enough to be born in a developed country will have security but one born in Africa will not? Is it moral for the developed world to over-consume food calories, energy and health care, while in the underdeveloped world 10 million children die every year from preventable and curable diseases, when 40 percent of the world's population can not drink the water where they live, and when two billion people survive on less than \$2.00 a day? Does a wealthy developed country like America want to live in a 21st century version of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* – a gated community keeping the outside at bay? Or does it want to be part of the solution to these problems? The media's role in informing people about these issues is crucial because in fact most of these problems have solutions.

Finally, the power of nature continues to play an age-old role though the lesson not to upset other nature seems still to be unlearned. In 2005 alone over 300,000 people were killed from tsunamis, hurricanes and earthquakes. Many of these deaths were preventable. However, nature has within it significant rebalancing measures and often defeats human efforts to over-exploit or control it. In the 21st century the world confronts new environmental challenges. Growing population, youth bulges, massive urban growth, deforestation, lack of freshwater and global warming all have the capacity to take a heavy toll on the human condition. Such trends have their own power to drive states and people toward either cooperation or conflict. Eventually the power of nature might force a radical redefinition of security to include the necessity of living in harmony with the environment.

Education As A Strategic Commodity

In this new context of global security education is a vital strategic asset. The education provided in America's top liberal arts institutions which unites faculty and students closely across disciplines is essential for educating strategic thinkers in the 21st century. Educational approaches that simply train, teach to the test or induce conformity risk contributing to major strategic setbacks for states and societies seeking to promote their security in this new world. Even if measured in hard military terms advanced education is needed to operate the high-tech systems applied in modern combat from tactical Internets all the way up to integrated precision guided missile-satellite systems. American soldiers also found quickly in Iraq that language skills are a vital tactical and strategic component to successful operations.

Education as a strategic tool is essential for fostering long-term solutions to global security threats. For example, in the area of human security more educated young adults are more likely to delay having children, avoid dangerous sexual practices that spread HIV/AIDS and find local solutions to local problems and thus decrease dependency on developed countries. Such strategic investments, while obviously important, nonetheless face serious obstacles. In countries like Bangladesh, India, Uganda and Zambia teacher absenteeism and ramshackle facilities are pervasive. Teachers have to deal with unprepared students and teach in the most desperate of conditions. There is currently a shortage of about four million healthcare workers in the underdeveloped world. Training local citizens to address such

threats as transnational disease is vital for the underdeveloped world but also for people living in the developed world who are increasingly vulnerable to the cross-border spread of disease. In effect, everyone has an interest in more doctors and nurses from Africa to Asia but insufficient resources for such training are allocated. Often the lack of investment is compounded when many educated individuals leave their home countries to make more money in wealthier countries.

Simply learning about complex security issues and how they cross a range of academic and professional disciplines is an obvious starting place for developing effective prioritization and planning. In 2004 the Global Campaign for Education advocated a Global Action Plan to assure access for every child in the world to primary school by 2015 with a projected cost of eight billion dollars a year. This would be complemented by coordinated debt relief to poor countries, increased aid for basic education, changes in International Monetary Fund policies to protect education spending during economic crises, increased investment in education and changes in national policies by developing countries. Such an approach to addressing fundamental causes of underdevelopment and human insecurity would be a low-cost tactic in the strategy of winning hearts and minds for a country like the United States. It would also help create a new generation of grateful consumers with purchasing power to buy American-made products. Nonetheless the United States chooses not to do this; instead by 2005 we will have increased overall spending on defense, homeland security and combating terrorism by \$160 billion. Additionally, by 2006 the US will have committed over \$300 billion to the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Some cost estimates suggest US expenses in Iraq will total \$600 billion by 2010. Non-Iraq defense spending is projected to rise to almost \$500 billion by 2007. Alternatively, an expenditure of eight billion per year over ten years – \$80 billion in total – would provide primary school education for every child that does not currently have it.

Another study by Howard Baker and Lloyd Cutler in 2001 showed that by spending \$30 billion over ten years the United States could solve the problem of nuclear weapons proliferation from the former Soviet Union. The simple math suggests that it is possible to educate much of the world's poor and secure these nuclear weapons for a cost of \$110 billion spread out over 10 years. This is one-third the cost of what will have been spent in Iraq by the end of 2005. As another example of looking anew at the issue of priorities, the US by 2004 was spending every three days in Iraq more than what it had spent in the previous three years on securing its ports. The United States only inspects 10 percent of what enters its ports, gets on trucks and is then sent all over the country and through its major cities. Yet the only way, according to the Central Intelligence Agency, that a terrorist group could get a nuclear weapon into the United States is through its 361 sea and river ports.

Gaining basic facts also helps to ease unnecessary fear. Terrorism, for example, is a very scary phenomenon and that is why it is used as a tactic to achieve strategic objectives. Ironically, before September 11, 2001, Americans were highly vulnerable to major catastrophic terrorist attacks and yet were not afraid. Experts had warned of terrorism in and out of government as being not a matter of whether but when. However, the media chose to focus on political sex scandals and shark attacks through the summer of 2001. After September 11, Americans overall were safer because steps to prevent terrorism that were either long-deferred or not funded were put in place but at the same time their fear

and anxiety increased. The National Mental Health Association in January 2004 showed that 49 percent of Americans were "worried," 41 percent were "afraid," eight percent were emotionally upset for no apparent reason, and seven percent had sleep problems. By a 2:1 margin, Americans feared terrorism more than natural disasters. And yet, between September 2001 and September 2005, no Americans died from terrorism on home soil.

Strategic Thinking and Threat Assessments

Learning about what is really a threat helps put fears into relative perspective and can motivate the allocation of energy and resources for solving other major challenges. According to a study commissioned by the U.S. Defense Department by two climate change experts (Peter Schwartz, former head of planning at Royal Dutch Shell Group and Doug Randall of the Global Business Network), a worst-case change in the 21st century risks producing a "significant drop in the human carrying capacity of the Earth's environment" and that eventually "an ancient pattern re-emerges: the eruption of desperate, all-out wars over food, water and energy supplies." According to the DOD study, in this case war itself may "come to define human life." While some dispute remains over the pace of global warming and impact of human behavior on it the facts are inescapable and can have very serious strategic implications. In Alaska, western Canada and eastern Russia average temperatures have increased by as much as seven degrees between 1954 and 2004. About 50 percent of the Arctic Sea ice is projected to melt by the end of the 21st century. The year 2004 was the fourth hottest on record and between 1990 and 2004 the 10 hottest years were recorded. Yet in the summer 2005 the New York Times reported that a White House official in the administration of President George W. Bush was deleting or augmenting hard scientific findings showing a relationship between human behavior and global warming. This person had come to the White House from his previous position as the top lobbyist against global climate change policy adjustments at the American Petroleum Institute. When his efforts to change science became public he announced his "long-planned" return to the private sector and within several weeks was employed by Exxon.

As citizens become more educated a sense of ranking threats can become politically marketable. Approximately 8,000 Africans die every day from HIV/AIDS and 10 million children die every year from preventable and curable diseases. Terrorism kills several hundred people a year worldwide. People fear new diseases like SARS but traditional diseases like the flu, tuberculosis and malaria kill far more. Which security challenges get more attention from the media? To be sure terrorism ranks high but it is a lesser threat than the risks of nuclear war between India and Pakistan, war between China and Taiwan, on the Korean Peninsula or in the Middle East; the impact of growing HIV/AIDS in the nuclear powers of Russia, China, and India; accelerated demographic change combined with massive unemployment in key regions of the world; diminishing fresh water supplies; a decrease in oil production and dramatic energy demands created by the growth of China and India. Perhaps more pressing in strategic thinking about threat assessment is the reality that terrorism is a tactic. Even the most zealous of religious terrorist movements justify the use of such political violence as a means to a larger end, not as an end in itself. As General Anthony Zinni, former commander of U.S. troops in the Middle East, has said: "declaring war on terrorism is like declaring war on bridge crossings." Terrorism is a tactic and wars against it are won by defeating the enemy's strategic designs.

Education and National Power

Education is a critical component of national power in the 21st century. Societies that educate their citizens with the capacity to interact across cultures and language barriers are likely to emerge as winners in the decades to come. Language skills combined with sociological understanding of other cultures are becoming critical national security requirements. Interdisciplinary education, integrated into international security policy mechanisms can provide unique opportunities to enhance national security for generations to come. Expertise in physics, biology, geology, geography, medicine, communications, language, math and information technology is essential to national security. For example, abstract mathematical modeling can help counterterrorist organizations better understand how to attack terrorist networks and to disrupt their communications. At CarnegieMellonUniversity mathematicians have created simulations of Hamas and al Qaeda that take publicly available information about these groups to create a database that is searched for existing and predicted patterns and relationships between individuals. The data is then used to identify both known and unknown leadership nodes within a transnational terrorist network.

The United States faces potentially severe problems regarding its relative standing in education for the 21st century. While we continue to have top quality educational institutions, the best colleges and universities have become unaffordable for average Americans. And government funding for the more accessible state universities and community colleges has dropped significantly since the 1980s. At the secondary level, local communities struggle to maintain tax investments in education and now often find themselves forced often to “teach to the test” to sustain federal funding or risk having to cut programs that encourage leadership, teamwork skills and innovative thinking such as sports, music and drama. In the critical area of science and technology America has declined significantly. The percentage of American jobs requiring a Ph.D. in science and technology that are filled by foreign workers rose from 24 percent to 38 percent between 1990 and 2000. Due to new opportunities provided by globalization many of these workers are finding better employment in their native lands as American jobs have been outsourced – especially in key industries such as telecommunications and computer hardware and software. Additionally, fewer international students are coming to the United States to study. These students are both a major source of investment in the American economy and often stay and provide high-skilled labor in the United States. Many who return to their home countries tell positive stories of the experiences in the United States – thus advancing America’s international image and soft power. Visa problems and other travel restrictions have also made it harder for university professors from overseas to participate in exchanges and share knowledge with their American counterparts.

Conclusion

The primary conclusion from the several years of work that went into the Global Security book was that all of the 21st century challenges have some form of solution, particularly if governments and publics can be shown the benefits of early action. The key dynamic that links all possible solutions is the elevation of education to the level of a strategic national interest. The sooner states and societies grapple with the need for investment in education on a par with that historically given to the military the sooner the emerging security

challenges will be met. If humanity fails to innovate and adapt to new challenges ranging from asymmetrical threats to environmental scarcity then it risks a very dark future. The developed world caught but a glimpse of what could go severely wrong on September 11, 2001. The underdeveloped world had already long been living daily with deeply ingrained insecurity. The challenge to the citizens of the world is to ensure that September 11 was the beginning of the end of these emerging security threats, the last shot of a dying age. A renewed commitment to interdisciplinary education as is promoted in America's unique liberal arts tradition is a major means of inspiring the next generation of strategic thinkers. Hopefully, such an education will also result in a renewed commitment to public service among the world's next leadership generation at the international, national and local level. The threats to global security at each of these levels must be met in the ongoing quest for peace.

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