International Security at Twenty-five
From One World to Another

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The modern field of international security studies is roughly half a century old. It emerged after World War II and took hold in the 1950s. The journal International Security has spanned half that period, having now completed twenty-five years of publication. During that time, the world and the field have changed dramatically. We are not in the habit of utilizing the pages of this journal for introspective or self-referential ruminations, but it seems appropriate to mark the passage of a quarter-century with some reflections on the history of the journal, the evolution of the field within which it operates, and the altered world that the field seeks to understand, explain, and perhaps even influence. Here, the aim is simply to sketch suggestive snapshots of then and now, in the hope of conveying the magnitude and character of the changes that a quarter of a century has wrought. This exercise provides the opportunity to revisit some of the issues and articles that have justified and animated the pages of International Security over its first twenty-five years.

The Origins and Conception of International Security

Nearly thirty years ago, then-President of the Ford Foundation McGeorge Bundy launched a major initiative to promote university-based research and

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1. I do not mean to imply that the field lacks pre–World War II antecedents. From Thucydides to Clausewitz and beyond, there have been serious efforts to think systematically and analytically about issues of war and peace. Moreover, the first stirrings of the modern field of international security studies can be clearly traced to the late 1930s. Examples of strategic thought from that and earlier periods can be found in the classic volume, Edward Mead Earle, ed., Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1943). The combination of World War II, the nuclear revolution, and the emergence of the Cold War, however, galvanized attention to these issues and produced a field that was much more extensive and visible than the more episodic work that came before. An interesting discussion of interwar and immediate postwar security studies can be found in David A. Baldwin, “Security Studies and the End of the Cold War,” World Politics, Vol. 48, No. 1 (October 1996), especially pp. 119–120.

2. In what follows, I refer liberally to the contents of International Security over the years, but obviously it is impossible to cite every article among the roughly 900 published items in the first 100 issues of the journal. Similarly, though I range through a large number of topics, I cannot cover every worthy issue. This essay is meant to be illustrative rather than comprehensive. Apologies to all those who might have been cited but were not.

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training in the field of international security and arms control. Harvard was one of the first beneficiaries of this Ford Foundation undertaking, and what was then known as the Program for Science and International Affairs (PSIA) commenced operation in the fall of 1973.3

In developing the portfolio of activities for this new organization, the idea of establishing a journal soon found its way onto the agenda. The founding director of PSIA, Paul Doty, was enthusiastic about moving forward. He shared with McGeorge Bundy a concern that the field of international security was not deeply rooted in the academic world. Moreover, there did not then exist an academic journal specializing in international security. The most prominent journals of the time—Foreign Affairs and Foreign Policy—devoted only a portion of their space to security issues and were not based in universities. The leading academic journals in international relations—World Politics and International Organization, for example—were and remain distinguished outlets. But they covered much wider agendas and were not particularly oriented toward security issues. Two of the most scholarly journals, the Journal of Conflict Resolution and the Journal of Peace Research, focused particularly on peace research. The prestigious bimonthly Survival, published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) did specialize in security affairs, but in those days published in short, mostly topical articles, some of which were reprinted from other sources. There existed a few other specialized outlets, such as Arms Control Today and the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, but these were primarily preoccupied with commentary on immediate policy issues. Doty and his staff believed that there was still a niche that could be filled by a university-based academic journal devoted to the field of international security.

PSIA’s board of directors, however, was not wholly convinced that a new journal was necessary, desirable, or sustainable. Some were concerned that there would be problems of both supply and demand. Would there be enough academic work produced in the field to warrant the publication of a quarterly? Would there be enough interest in such work for the journal to be viable over the long run? Some five thousand submissions and countless syllabi assignments later, it is hard to imagine such worries, but such was the debate in 1975.

Doubters notwithstanding, the decision was taken to go ahead. Ironically, the founding of IS turned out to be the beginning of a substantial and protracted wave of journal creation in the field. Soon after came the Journal of Strategic Studies, Comparative Strategy, and Contemporary Security Policy (initially

3. PSIA later became the Center for Science and International Affairs (CSIA) and, eventually, the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (BCSIA).
known as Arms Control). Gradually these were joined by an ever growing roster of more specialized journals, such as the Journal of Slavic Military Studies, European Security, Small Wars and Insurgencies, Defense Analysis, International Peacekeeping, Science and Global Security, and so on. Ten years ago, the journal Security Studies was established with a mandate that resembles that of International Security, providing another worthy outlet for this sort of work. In addition, some newer journals of commentary and analysis in foreign affairs, such as the National Interest and the Washington Quarterly, often cover issues of security and strategy. The field is now blessed with a rich assortment of publications, but this was not the case when IS was created in 1975.

The first issue of the journal appeared in the summer of 1976. In the brief and unassuming foreword that announced the launch of this new publication, the founding editors (Paul Doty, Albert Carnesale, and Michael Nacht) defined both the ground to be covered by the journal and the role that they hoped it would play:

We view international security as embracing all of those factors which have a direct bearing on the structure of the nation state system and the sovereignty of its members, with particular emphasis on the use, threat, and control of force. Our goal is to provide timely analyses of these issues through contributions that reflect diverse points of view and varied professional experiences. This interdisciplinary journal is offered as a vehicle for communication among those . . . who bear a continuing concern for this aspect of international life.4

Revealed in this passage are several impulses that have persisted throughout the journal’s twenty-five-year history.

A BROAD MANDATE
From the beginning, IS has had a wide definition of the substantive domain to be covered in its pages. Though force and conflict are clearly central concerns, IS has never been governed by a narrowly military or purely force-oriented sense of its ambit. Rather, its field of operation has always consisted of “all of those factors” that bear on problems of international security, broadly construed. Its coverage has ranged from weapons acquisition issues to the role of human rights in security, from traditional great power relations to the role of emotions in international politics, from nuclear proliferation to the security implications of population growth.5

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

*International Security* has aspired to reflect the inherently multidisciplinary character of the field. We are well aware that this is not an easy aspiration to fulfill, given our wide mandate and limited number of pages. Nevertheless, we make a serious effort to publish articles that reflect the diversity of the field, including history, technology, political science, and policy analysis. A number of notable historians and historical articles have appeared in the journal. David Alan Rosenberg, for example, contributed to the significant revision of our understanding of the early history of U.S. nuclear weapons policy by demonstrating that the operational nuclear doctrines of the United States and the Soviet Union were far more alike than had been assumed in the public debate.6 Similarly, Marc Trachtenberg provided evidence to suggest that in the early Cold War period the United States took very seriously the potential advantages conferred by nuclear superiority, including explicit deliberation on the subject of preventive war against the Soviet Union.7 John Lewis Gaddis offered (among his other articles) influential and provocative interpretations of the Cold War and the end of the Cold War.8 In addition, numerous articles in *IS* have sought to reinterpret World War I, often using the lens of more recent theoretical or analytic concepts. Our collections of these articles in book form have remained continuously in print for more than fifteen years, attesting to the enduring interest in that cataclysmic historical event.9

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IS has also sought regularly to include work of a technical nature, reflecting the reality that technological factors and issues are often relevant or even central to contemporary security debates. Indeed, in security terms, the period since the end of the Cold War has been substantially defined by technology, including nuclear weapons, missiles, satellites, and the suite of conventional technologies that some label the revolution in military affairs. From its beginnings, IS has welcomed work that addressed the evolution, performance, and implications of military technology. In the second issue of IS, for example, Richard Garwin assessed emerging technological options for enhancing U.S. defense capabilities and suggested that the Pentagon was not suitably organized to maximize the benefits of new, or even existing, technologies. Over the years, IS has covered such technically oriented topics as the interaction of satellites and antisatellites, the consequences of limited nuclear strikes, the reliability of nuclear weapons under a comprehensive test ban, the character and potential uses of satellite imagery, possible basing modes for ICBMs, the consequences of and management challenges associated with the global positioning system, and so on. Perhaps the most intense and memorable technical controversy—one that continues to simmer—involves competing assessments of the performance of Patriot air defense missiles during the Persian Gulf War. The analysis of Theodore Postol suggested that Patriot had been strikingly ineffective, thereby directly calling into question the claims of President George Bush, the U.S. Army, and others that the missile had been almost completely successful in intercepting Iraqi missile attacks. Defenders of the Patriot criticized Postol’s analysis and conclusions. Criticisms of Postol persist, but over the years the claimed success for Patriot has been scaled back considerably.
over, Postol’s work was backed by a panel of the American Physical Society, which had been asked to adjudicate the dispute.13 Most recently, then-Secretary of Defense William Cohen said publicly in January 2001 that the Patriot missile “didn’t” work in the Gulf War, thus giving substantial support to Postol’s side of the debate.14

Political scientists have always constituted both a major source of submissions to International Security and a key constituency of the journal. Still, in the early days, the more academic articles tended to be less political science in the traditional sense and more in the nature of efforts to sketch the intellectual contours of the field. Thus we find, among the early issues of the journal, Bernard Brodie struggling with the meaning of Clausewitz or Colin Gray arguing for the continuing pertinence of prenuclear history in shaping the field’s understanding of the dynamics of international security.15 But one of the notable trends, as one surveys the accumulated output of IS, is the growing presence of more scholarly, and often more theoretical, articles. As we occasionally hear from some of our readers, not everyone welcomes this development. But if some of our less academic constituencies find this sort of work off-putting, one of our largest and most important audiences, the American academic community, finds it interesting, appealing, and perhaps even essential to the establishment of the field as a credible subdiscipline in the world of academic political science.16
Last, but far from least, *International Security* has since its inception been a hospitable outlet for policymakers and policy analysis. Thus we find Shimon Peres, in an early issue of *IS*, offering the warning, sadly still relevant, that those who push too hard for peace in the Middle East may cause more war and violence.\(^{17}\) In the first issue of *IS*, Gen. Maxwell Taylor analyzed the difficulties of translating the politically appealing notion of military superiority into any meaningful operational program. Later, former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger would provide a severe critique of President Ronald Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative, suggesting that its only real value lay as a potential arms control bargaining chip—a role that depended largely on how the Soviet Union reacted to SDI.\(^{18}\)

The field is often struggling to extract meaning from recent policy experiences. Without careful assessments of what went right or wrong, and why, it is impossible to draw useful lessons. A vivid example is the searing tragedy of the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, the United States encountered misfortune on a large scale. What were the sources and implications of this disaster? This question has haunted the field ever since.\(^{19}\) Another good example is the battle in the 1970s over the policy of détente with the Soviet Union. Did it represent a misguided attempt to replace the inescapable realities of deterrence or a premature assumption that conflict with the Soviet Union was coming to an end?\(^{20}\) Was it the only rational choice in a world in which the two superpowers could rapidly annihilate each other with nuclear weapons?\(^{21}\) Was the Soviet approach to détente serious and well intended, or was this another devious diplomatic ploy to divide and weaken the West?\(^{22}\) Such questions cut to the core of America’s Cold War strategy. Accordingly, the debate over détente was

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prominent, intense, controversial, complicated, ideological—and, perhaps as a result, often muddled. As Hans Morgenthau complained in the pages of *IS*, in the “vaporous” debate over détente “the concept has been used not to clarify thinking and sharpen policy choices, but to obfuscate both.” At *IS*, we remain convinced that contentious policy issues deserve our attention and that the effort to extract persuasive meaning from past policy experiences is one of the main responsibilities of the field.

**DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES**

*International Security* has always been open to “diverse points of view and varied professional experiences.” Viewed in the whole, the field of international security is incredibly diverse, stretching from peace studies to war studies, from rational choice to policy choice, from activists to warriors, from physicists to psychologists, from far left to far right, from the past to the future.23 We cannot claim to have covered everything and do not pretend to have treated all approaches equally well; some perspectives or approaches we may not have covered at all. We concede that our finite annual published output overlooks, ignores, or otherwise gives short shrift to some approaches, traditions, methods, and issues. Indeed it is our impression, from the occasional feedback that we receive, that members from virtually every subset of the field—historians, technologists, theorists, soldiers, and so on—feel inadequately represented in our pages. We are aware, moreover, that critics of the journal have occasionally sought to situate it on a particular patch of intellectual or policy turf. We perceive, in short, the imperfection of our efforts to achieve diversity.

Nevertheless, our goal across time is to offer serious views on a range of significant topics using whatever method is suitable. *IS* adheres to no political, substantive, or methodological line. It will welcome and equally consider any submission that falls within our broadly defined mandate, no matter the source of the submission, the method employed, or the perspective represented. *IS* has published hawks and doves, liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats. It has published Americans and non-Americans (though not enough of the latter). It has published graduate students and major schol-

24. A good illustration of this point is Steve Smith, “The Increasing Insecurity of Security Studies: Conceptualizing Security in the Last Twenty Years,” in Stuart Croft and Terry Terriff, eds., *Critical Reflections on Security and Change* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 72–101. Smith identifies and describes no fewer than seven schools of thought that represent simply the “new thinking” about security. Other chapters in the same volume also attest to the vitality of numerous contending schools of thought and illustrate the various strands of criticism directed at the “mainstream” field of international security.
ars, policymakers and policy analysts, journalists and military officers. It has published realists and critics of realism, liberals, institutionalists, and constructivists. It has published the pro and con on a whole range of issues—whether the maritime strategy, the issue of no first use of nuclear weapons in Europe, the modernization of the U.S. strategic bomber force, or the utility of rational choice as a method for advancing the field. Indeed one of our general objectives is to have included in our pages the strongest possible articles on all sides of important topics. Some issues and approaches—nuclear weapons or realism, for example—are frequent visitors to our pages. Others turn up only occasionally but are nevertheless a valued part of the mix. Over the years, IS readers have had encounters with peace research, quantitative work, and so on. Some subcultures within the field have other preferred outlets, and their work rarely finds its way into our hands, but when it does we are not averse to publishing any essay that tackles an important subject and fares well in our review process.

POLICY RELEVANCE

IS has aspired to be not only scholarly but also relevant. It has attempted to straddle the worlds of scholarship and policy. This does not mean of course that every article must bear directly on a current policy issue; the contents of the journal clearly indicate otherwise. But in our view, the ultimate goal of our collective endeavor in this field is applied learning. Knowledge and understanding should be sought not for their own sake but to improve the ability of the human race to address security challenges in the safest and most effective possible manner. In the broad social division of labor, it is the role of the academy to contribute useful knowledge and understanding. We try to take this responsibility seriously. Accordingly, in the corridors of IS, we give considerable weight to what we call the “So what?” question.

Unless the field is to be confined to irrelevant abstraction, it must engage the real world. If the goal of the field is not only to understand security problems but to facilitate healthy debate, influence policy discussions, and promote better policy outcomes, this can be accomplished only by confronting the ma-

jor issues of the day. If the true value of theory is to deepen our understanding of how the world works so that we may more effectively manage its affairs, then theory itself finds meaning only in application to real-world problems, issues, and choices. Hence we have never felt any tension between our university base and our scholarly mode of operation, on the one hand, and our orientation to the current problems of security on the active policy agenda, on the other.

The World at Birth: International Security Then

Over the course of a quarter of a century, change is inevitable. Looking back on the international and intellectual environments in which IS was created, however, it becomes clear that what we have witnessed during this period were not normal processes of change but a stunning transformation. IS was created in a different world.

When work first began in 1975 on the initial issue of International Security, Gerald Ford was president, Henry Kissinger was secretary of state, Watergate was a recent memory, and the Vietnam War was a fresh wound (made all the more painful by the fall of South Vietnam that very year). The overriding international concern continued to be the ongoing rivalry with the Soviet Union, its global geopolitical implications, and the nuclear dangers that attended the still hostile competition. Within the United States (and NATO), debate raged about the value and risks of détente and about the advisability, feasibility, and utility of arms control. The SALT I agreements (including the Interim Agreement on Offensive Forces and the Antiballistic Missile Treaty) had been signed in 1972, but arms control remained a controversial instrument, and the agreements attracted intense and persistent criticism. Indeed, in his pursuit of the 1976 Republican presidential nomination, President Ford was subjected to a severe assault from the more hawkish wing of the Republican Party (especially by his prime challenger, Ronald Reagan), and in reaction he backpedaled from both arms control and détente. Jimmy Carter’s victory in the 1976 presidential election resulted in a brief revival of détente and arms control; the SALT II agreements were signed in 1978.

The détente-oriented phase of Soviet-American relations came to an abrupt and decisive end, however, with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The global superpower rivalry, often played out in remote third world locations, proved to be so toxic that it undermined efforts to expand cooperative approaches to managing relations between Moscow and Washington. The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 was the definitive refutation of the détente era.
and marked the beginning of a new phase, often labeled the New Cold War. This period was characterized by an intense preoccupation with the military competition, by fears of Soviet superiority and Western weakness, and by intense debates about the nuclear and conventional balances. American policy was focused on an unprecedented, across-the-board military buildup and on an assertive campaign to compete more effectively with the Soviet Union in the third world. This phase lasted until the Gorbachev revolution gathered steam in the Soviet Union during the second half of the 1980s.

In broad strokes, these were the features that shaped the world and the field of international security in the early years of the journal’s history. Much of the work in the field and much of the contents of IS in those years reflected the contours of this international reality. Soviet power and Soviet-American relations were overwhelming preoccupations of the worlds of policy, journalism, and scholarship. As James Schlesinger wrote in the first issue of IS, “The United States has since 1945 been the only available counterweight to Soviet power. This has been the unchanging, the fundamental element in American foreign policy.” The United States, concluded Schlesinger, had replaced Britain as the guarantor of international security; he approvingly quoted Adlai Stevenson’s line, “Now it’s our turn.” But what should the United States do? What did it need to do? What was required of the United States to ensure its own security and that of its friends and allies? Though there was little disagreement with the broad proposition that the United States needed to contain the Soviet Union, few of the answers to these questions commanded universal support.

The lines of debate often hinged on interpretations of the question asked by Les Aspin in an early issue of IS: “What are the Russians up to?” Because the Soviet Union was a closed society with a deserved reputation for deceit and duplicity, because the meaning of its behavior was often ambiguous, and because Western observers viewed the USSR through diverse political, ideological, and methodological lenses, there was even contention over how this question should be answered, never mind what the most defensible answer might be.

Nevertheless, analyses of Soviet thought and behavior in all relevant contexts constituted a core concern of practitioners and scholars alike. There were efforts to understand how the Soviet Union viewed the world.29 There were attempts to identify patterns in Soviet external behavior.30 Extensive attention was given to Soviet designs and involvement in regional settings. Were the Soviets making inroads in Africa? Did they have designs in South Asia? How did East Asia fit into Soviet strategy?31 Further, the collision of U.S. and Soviet interests and strategies in locales as far-flung as South Asia and Central America were subjected to careful assessment.32

Above all, there was relentless attention to and fierce debate over the state of the East-West military balance and over the content and merits of the military doctrines of the two sides. Nuclear forces and nuclear strategy occupied a particularly central position in the pantheon of military issues. The enormous expansion of Soviet nuclear forces during the 1960s and 1970s raised a host of disturbing questions. Once, the United States had possessed unquestioned superiority in nuclear capability. Now the Soviet Union had achieved at least parity in such forces. What were the political implications of this development? Would the momentum of the Soviet buildup lead to Soviet superiority?33 Had American nuclear forces become dangerously vulnerable and, if so, what should be done about it?34 Further controversy attached to the issue of nuclear doctrine. Did the Soviet Union, as Richard Pipes famously put it, think that it could fight and win a nuclear war? Was the United States disadvantaged in the

nuclear rivalry by the character of its own doctrine? If the United States needed to revise its nuclear doctrine, what form should the new doctrine take? From the vantage point of hindsight, it may be tempting to dismiss these intense debates as the obsessive broodings of a small cadre of so-called nuclear theologians. It would be a mistake, however, to overlook the deep and genuine fears that undergirded the nuclear discussions of that time: fears that Western and American security were in jeopardy, and perhaps even more, fears that nuclear war between the superpowers was an eventuality that had to be taken seriously and that could well happen. For the protagonists in these debates, the stakes could not be more grave. As Colin Gray put it, “nuclear war would be so terrible as virtually to warrant description as an obscenity.” Avoiding nuclear war while protecting U.S. and Western interests was the greatest intellectual and policy challenge of that era.

The vast accumulations of nuclear weapons that resulted from the Soviet-American nuclear competition and the evident dangers associated with the nuclear rivalry produced intense interest in the subject of arms control. Some of the resulting work was conceptual, seeking to define this policy instrument, situate it in national policy, and suggest its value, benefits, limits, and implications. The very first issue of International Security contained articles of this nature by Bernard Brodie and Hedley Bull. But by the mid-1970s, this was more than a theoretical subject. The 1972 SALT I agreements had ushered in an unprecedented era of negotiated restraint in the realm of nuclear weapons. Further, a new round of negotiations, known as SALT II, were under way. Those talks would result in a second agreement on offensive forces, signed in June 1979 (but never ratified as a consequence of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan). In this context, there was enormous interest in and debate over not simply the abstract notion of arms control but the practical application of strategic


arms control in the Soviet-American rivalry. How should arms control fit in U.S.-Soviet relations, and what were its implications? How should the United States negotiate with the Soviet Union, a notoriously difficult negotiating partner? How did strategic arms control fit into Soviet security policy? How could strategic arms control contribute to nuclear stability? How could it be extended to cover more and different weapon systems? What would happen if the arms control process were to collapse?

A particularly vigorous debate, which seems to revive at least once each decade no matter how the issue is resolved in the context of the time, has to do with the role of missile defenses in the nuclear balance and the wisdom of restraining such defenses through arms control. The ABM treaty itself produced intense disagreement in the 1970s (even as it appeared to settle the matter permanently), only to be followed by the controversy associated with President Reagan’s Star Wars program in the 1980s, which in turn has been succeeded by the disagreements triggered in the late 1990s by the growing U.S. pursuit of deployable missile defenses even if this came at the expense of the ABM treaty.

Nuclear questions were at the heart of the agenda for both analysts and policymakers, but this did not mean that other issues relating to the military balance were ignored. On the contrary, there were animated disagreements about almost every major issue. Even the most basic questions were sources of controversy. Was the Soviet Union outspending the United States on defense? On its face, this is a simple factual question. But because the Soviet Union provided no credible defense spending figure, answering this question involved what was essentially very sophisticated guesswork. Various conclusions were possible, depending on methods used and assumptions employed. If one

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canvassed the estimates, it appeared that the Soviets were outspending the United States by a lot, a little, or not at all. Though all available answers were uncertain and debatable, policies and positions often depended on the answer chosen or preferred.

Closely linked to appraisals of Soviet defense spending and military power were assessments of the adequacy of American and allied defense preparations. The Reagan administration came to office in 1981 gripped by the belief that American restraint in defense spending during the 1970s had resulted in the extremely dangerous circumstance of Soviet military superiority. The controversy over the so-called decade of neglect lasted for years and produced confident, passionate salvos on both sides of the question. Colin Gray and Jeffrey Barlow, for example, insisted that a “very substantial adverse shift” in the military balance was both visible and uncontroversial. Robert Komer, on the other hand, was equally firm that the notion of a “decade of neglect” was mere partisan sloganeering that failed to properly acknowledge U.S. efforts during the 1970s to preserve a credible defense effort.42 That the Soviet Union had made a sustained effort to strengthen its military capabilities was undisputed, but the net effect on the military balance and the implications for U.S. defense policy were vigorously debated. By the early 1980s, the terms of the debate were framed by the Reagan administration’s plans for an enormous U.S. military buildup to support an ambitious and aggressive military strategy. Some would argue that the Reagan defense strategy was necessary, overdue, and deserving of wide political support.43 Others would criticize the buildup as extravagant, infeasible, or strategically unsound. “The Reagan Administration’s declared global military strategy,” wrote Jeffrey Record in 1983, “is a standing invitation to potential strategic disaster.” 44 In short, both the extent of the Soviet threat and the scale of the required response were subjects of strong disagreement.

In terms of the conventional force balance, the across-the-board Soviet buildup produced across-the-board challenges for American and Western capabilities and across-the-board debates for scholars and analysts in the field of

international security. With the expansion of Soviet naval capabilities, for example, concern grew steadily that the once unquestioned supremacy of the United States and NATO at sea was being undermined or eliminated. This, in turn, led to worries that NATO’s presumed dominance of the North Atlantic, so critical for seaborne reinforcements in the event of a major war in Europe, could no longer be taken for granted. When the Reagan administration came into office in 1981, it responded to such concerns by launching an ambitious plan for the expansion of U.S. naval power and by developing a much more assertive naval strategy—one that came to be known as “the maritime strategy.” The advantages and disadvantages of the Maritime Strategy were hotly disputed throughout much of the 1980s.

Another source of contention was the possible Soviet threat to critical regional actors, especially in the Middle East and Persian Gulf. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the potential Soviet threat to Iran became a particular obsession. Iran was a long-time ally of the United States, now hostile and destabilized in the aftermath of the fall of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1979. It was also a major oil-producing state as well as a key power in the entire Persian Gulf area. Iran was thus regarded as a strategic prize, one thought to be long-coveted by Moscow. Hence another debate: Could the Soviet military drive into Iran and capture oil fields and warm-water ports? Could the United States and its allies do anything meaningful to prevent this outcome if the Soviet Union did attack? Out of such worries came the impetus to create a rapid deployment force (RDF) for the United States, meant to give Washington some capacity to interpose forces in the path of a Soviet advance into Iran. In view of the long-standing hostility between Washington and Tehran, it seems truly odd to recall that defending Iran from the Soviet threat was once one of the primary preoccupations of American defense policy. But such was the case.

All of these were serious questions, seriously debated. But by far the biggest conventional issue, with the widest implications, had to do with the military balance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Europe was the greatest prize over which the Cold War was conducted. The largest share of American military power was dedicated to protecting European allies of the United States. It was Soviet conventional military power massed on a large scale in the heart of the continent that constituted the gravest challenge to alliance security and the substantial preoccupation of Western policy and analysis. Here was an issue that most profoundly influenced perceptions of Western security (or insecurity), the adequacy of NATO capabilities, the level of required defense spending, the diplomacy of arms control in Europe, and the meaning and value of the American commitment to Europe. But what was the state of the conventional balance in Europe? Once again, this absolutely pivotal question had no clear-cut answer.

Employing simple bean counts—numbers of troops and equipment deployed in the center of Europe—the Soviet Union was ahead (often by wide margins) in many categories. Such bean counts did not constitute serious analysis of military capability, but they were very salient in political terms and contributed to the wide belief that the Soviet Union possessed military superiority in Europe. But in the professional literature, these influential bean counts were regarded as barely even the beginning of a serious assessment of the military balance in Europe. Wide disagreement existed about the state of the balance, depending on assumptions made about the conflict and the methods chosen for measuring the conventional balance. Would the war be long or short? In a longer war, NATO’s enormous advantage in overall economic capacity could be brought to bear. Would NATO’s forces be caught by surprise, or would surprise be impossible for the Soviet Union to achieve given the telltale activities that would accompany preparations for any large-scale assault? Surprise would greatly increase the likelihood of a quick and decisive Soviet victory.49 Were NATO’s advantages in fighting on the defensive large enough to compensate for Soviet advantages in numbers? How did one weigh NATO’s presumed technological supremacy?50 Was it sufficient or insufficient to negate Soviet quantitative advantages? Similarly, what of NATO’s qualitative superiority in air power? Was this important or irrelevant

to the outcome of a large-scale conflict in Central Europe? Obviously, conclusions about the balance in Europe would depend on the judgments made about such questions. Similarly, analysts chose various methods for assessing the balance; much effort went into the development of models that could be employed to compare NATO and Warsaw Pact capabilities. The result of this situation was predictable: different assumptions, different methods, different conclusions.

These were not, however, mere analytic disputes. Because of its policy implications, the state of the military balance in Europe was an ideologically and politically charged issue. Thus, when the Reagan administration based its huge—indeed unprecedented in peacetime—military buildup in large part on the assumption of enormous Soviet military superiority in Europe, this reinvigorated debate on the subject. An extensive body of work resulted, some of it supportive of the Reagan administration’s basic interpretation, but much of it very critical of the premises, conclusions, and consequences of the administration’s view of the military balance in Europe. As with the related nuclear debate, this issue received considerable attention in *International Security* (more than its appropriate share, to judge from the reactions of some readers at the time).51

In sum, in the era in which *International Security* was born, the world, the field, and the pages of the journal were preoccupied with the Soviet Union, its global designs, its relations with the United States, and its military power in all its manifestations. Looking back, it is easy to see how extensively this preoccupation was represented in the contents of the journal. If one wanted to be relevant, this set of issues, above all, was the one to address.

*The Field at Birth: International Security in Scholarly Context*

The field of international security was also very different in the mid-1970s. As an academic area of inquiry, it was young and not well developed. Many of the university-based research institutions and graduate training programs were
relatively new and not well established. The Vietnam War not only discredited U.S. policymakers but divided and undermined the academic field, driving many students away from security studies. Much of the formative work in international security in the first couple of decades after World War II was done not at universities but at independent research centers and think tanks such as RAND and IISS. And, as noted above, much of the work in the field was inspired by compelling items on the current policy agenda, centered in particular on struggles to comprehend, assess, and manage the nuclear revolution. Without a doubt, the field was narrower, less academic, and more policy-oriented twenty-five years ago. But this was changing, even then. Looking back, it is clear that several more academic streams of work are identifiable in the period of *International Security*’s birth.

A major strand of work, from the late 1960s onward, for example, focused on internal determinants of defense policies and postures (contrary to the common claim that the field is excessively attached to the rational actor model). Much of this work explored bureaucratic political influences on foreign and defense policy outcomes. Key analytic works in this genre included well-known books by Graham Allison and Morton Halperin. Detailed case studies of weapons acquisition sought to identify the factors that had an impact on defense decisionmaking. Other studies sought to explore other political and intellectual influences on defense and foreign policymaking. Over the years, consideration of internal factors bearing on security questions brought in a host of diverse topics. What was the impact of peace movements on security policy? How did internal politics affect the course and outcome of arms control negotiations? How should the economic resources of the

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56. See, for example, Steven E. Miller, “Politics over Promise: Domestic Impediments to Arms Control,” *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Spring 1984), pp. 67–90.
United States be marshaled to support its defense posture? What are the implications of organizational structure and the distribution of bureaucratic power in making and implementing defense policy? In short, this genre made clear that outcomes in the realm of security policy could not be explained apart from the political processes associated with decisionmaking. For those who came into the field at this time, this body of work was one of the more prominent and fashionable features of the literature in international security.

Also influential in this period was a growing interest in the importance of perceptions in shaping international politics. Robert Jervis’s formative book, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, was published in 1976, almost coincident with the first issue of *International Security*. Jervis’s work led in more than one direction. His emphasis on psychological sources of misperception and on the perceived importance of image and reputation inspired further work on such subjects. In addition, Jervis’s exploration of the security dilemma in the context of what he termed the deterrence and spiral models of international politics spawned an enormous and unflagging debate. Among other things, this line of inquiry triggered extensive and ongoing disputation about the impact of the offense-defense balance and its implications for international security.


Several years after IS was founded, Kenneth Waltz published his provocative and controversial volume, Theory of International Politics. This of course was not the beginning of the debate over realism in all its variants. But the Waltz volume did reignite the argument between realists and critics of realism over the virtues, value, limits, and inadequacies of this theoretical approach. Over the years, this argument figured prominently in the pages of International Security, reaching a crescendo in the 1990s as theorists on both sides of the debate contended over the content of realist theory, its relevance to the post–Cold War order, and its explanatory power in the context of issues of war and peace. This debate continues unabated to the present day. Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, for example, have recently insisted that realism “is in trouble.” Waltz, on the other hand, is equally insistent that realism “retains its explanatory power” and suggests that “with so many of the expectations that realist theory gives rise to confirmed by what happened at and after the end of the Cold War, one may wonder why realism is in bad repute.” Moreover, as Jeffrey Taliaferro points out, realism “remains the bête noire of every nonrealist approach.”

As these several examples suggest, the predominance of Cold War preoccupations coexisted, even in these early years of the journal’s existence, with a slowly rising tide of more theoretical and analytical work. The more academic work done in the 1970s had a lasting impact on the field, spawning numerous lines of inquiry and argument, many of which persist to the present day. The roots of a more academic field are evident in this period. The work done then had a large impact on the future contents of International Security.

Changing World, Changing Field: International Security after the Cold War

The Berlin Wall came down, the Soviet Union collapsed, and the world was transformed. Obviously, this represented a massive change in the realm of in-

ternational politics and for the field of international security. Much of the Cold War policy agenda, and many of the core substantive preoccupations of the field, disappeared from view or receded in importance. What had once been the heart of the matter—the security issues associated with the Cold War—no longer mattered. Because (as noted above) the Soviet Union and its power had occupied such a large place in the field of international security, many (especially those from outside the field) questioned whether the discipline itself was a Cold War relic destined to fade. Some believed that with the end of the Cold War, the field had entered a phase of “terminal decline.” A prominent political scientist, David Baldwin, argued that international security studies was becoming irrelevant and that its abolishment as a subfield should be considered. At IS, in the early days of the post–Cold War era, we were occasionally asked whether we intended to close up shop.

In one sense, such reactions were utterly ahistorical. The problems of security in national and international politics did not begin with the Cold War and were unlikely to end with the Cold War. In another sense, those reactions were quite understandable, given that the field had arisen during the Cold War, partially as a consequence of the Cold War (though the nuclear revolution was equally important), and pursued a substantive agenda heavily influenced by the Cold War. It is not surprising that the disappearance of the Cold War agenda would raise in many minds the question of whether this portended the decline of the field.

More than ten years on, however, it is clear that the field is very different than it once was, but alive and well. From the vantage point of IS, it appears that the passage into history of the Cold War, far from devastating the field, has been quite liberating: International security has been freed from its focus on the latest wrinkles and arcana of the Cold War rivalry. In the framework of the Soviet-American competition, politics and policy often revolved around hotly contested but narrow, discrete, and familiar issues, such as ICBM basing modes or NATO theater nuclear modernization. Prominent debates could arise over fine-grained details: What range should NATO’s theater nuclear forces possess? These were important and worthy issues in their day. But they played out in the context of a fully articulated intellectual framework in which the big

69. Baldwin, “Security Studies and the End of the Cold War,” pp. 135–140. Baldwin argues for a “reintegration” of security studies with international politics and foreign policy studies. I suspect that most who regard themselves as specialists in international security believe that these fields have always been closely linked.
questions about the broad contours of international politics in a bipolar world had long since been answered, at least to the satisfaction of most policymakers, scholars, and analysts. Lines of contention were well established, positions on substantive or policy issues were hardened and often predictable, and the latest wave of major concerns often represented the reincarnation of matters much considered in earlier Cold War periods. The conceptual development (in nuclear strategy and arms control, for example) and the policy innovation (the construction of an alliance system, for example) that marked the first ten to fifteen years of the Cold War had given way to a more routine exercise of battling over familiar intellectual and policy ground.

The situation today is totally different. As viewed from the editorial offices and in the pages of International Security, the field looks altered in three large and positive ways.

**A More Fundamental Agenda**

Much more fundamental issues are now on the agenda. Where once the structure of the Cold War system was taken for granted, now there is a need to ask what sort of international order might be possible in a world not structured around great power rivalry. Might some sort of collective security system now be feasible? Would such a system be desirable? What would be the character of the new international order now that the old structure had been swept away? Where once America’s place in the world was well defined, it is now far less clear what role the United States ought to play, or will want to play, in a unipolar world. A wider range of options is, or at least seems, available. Should the United States choose retrenchment, isolation, selective involvement, active interventionism, or global enforcement as its strategy? Can and


74. A range of arguments on the choice of America’s post–Cold War grand strategy can be found in Michael E. Brown, Owen R. Coté, Jr., Sean M. Lynn-Jones, and Steven E. Miller, eds., America’s Strategic Choices, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000).
should the United States seek to prolong and exploit its presently unques-
tioned supremacy, or should it attempt to establish through cooperative ap-
proaches the best possible terms for its inevitable relative decline?75 Where once Europe was a stable zone of confrontation whose security arrangements were well established and well understood, post–Cold War Europe raised large uncertainties: Would it remain stable and peaceful? Would the Western alliance endure? Could the Europeans manage their own affairs and provide for their own security? The impact of the end of the Cold War was felt above all in Europe, and the elimination of Europe’s Cold War framework opened up wide vistas of possibility, some hopeful and others less so.76

What these few illustrations are meant to convey is that the last ten years have witnessed stimulating and often animated debate on very basic questions about the post–Cold War international order and the role and likely fate of major players within that order. This roster of questions is more consequential politically and more challenging intellectually than the substantive agenda of the mature Cold War period.

A FRESH AND FULL AGENDA

In the post–Cold War era, engagement with the real world has produced a fresh agenda of issues that have achieved high salience. No longer is the field occupied with recycled Cold War debates and revisited Cold War issues. IS has tried to continue to be relevant to the issues of the day, and this has led in a number of interesting directions. To offer one obvious illustration, during the


Cold War the field tended to be quite Eurocentric. Now there is mounting concern about the rise of Asia—both as a pivotal arena in world affairs and as the region in which serious security problems are most likely to emerge. What, for example, are we to make of the rise of China? Will it emerge as a great power rival of the United States? How does Beijing see and understand the world? How serious is the potential threat of Chinese military power? And what of American policy toward China? Should Washington engage and integrate, or confront and contain, Beijing? Such questions figured almost not at all in the journal during the Cold War, but they have figured prominently in our pages over the past decade.

As in the past, over the last decade *IS* has sought to provide examinations of the phenomenon of war. Despite hopes to the contrary and despite the expectations of some, war has persisted into the post–Cold War era. But the recent experience of war has taken place in a new political, technological, and international legal context. The world in which one superpower automatically balanced the other no longer exists. New military technologies, especially those in the hands of the lone superpower, seem to offer new options and to raise new implications. Meanwhile, efforts and aspirations to strengthen the role of international law in global affairs introduce another potential constraint or complication in using or contemplating the use of force.

It seems somehow ironic that one of the first major developments of the earliest and most hopeful days of the post–Cold War era was the war against Iraq in 1991. The Gulf War involved both the massive application of air power against Iraq as well as the largest employment of armor since World War II. In the end, Iraq was expelled from Kuwait, but its confrontation with the United States and the UN over the implementation of the peace terms continues. What


were the lessons and implications of this war? What does this war tell us about the utility of force in this new age and about the role that the United States might play in that new world? How does one square the large-scale use of force with hopes for a new, law-based international order? Similarly, it seems almost perverse that Europe spent the final years of the twentieth century just as it had spent the first years of that century: embroiled in a series of Balkan crises and wars. For the transatlantic security community, the seemingly endless Balkan crisis was the closest thing to an obsessional replacement for the Cold War. Though the region is at the edge of Europe and lacks any inherent strategic significance, this disaster came to have enormous implications for NATO, for transatlantic relations, for the evolving European order, and for the cause of human rights. Thus it was that NATO fought its first war in the Balkans in the late 1990s, after never having fired a shot in anger throughout the entirety of the Cold War. The crisis in the Balkans is not finished, and there remains room for ongoing analysis of what can and should be done to bring the tragedy to a complete end. And in addition, no doubt we will be sifting through the causes, consequences, and implications of this imbroglio for years to come, a process that has already begun.

Alongside war is the closely related problem of intervention, a problem brought to the fore by the prevalence of civil conflict around the world. In the aftermath of the Cold War, this is one of the topics that has leapt toward the top of the agenda. In a world full of weak states, inept states, impoverished states, and failed states, internal conflict across various sociopolitical cleavages (ethnic, religious, economic, ideological, and political) is distressingly commonplace, and large-scale human rights abuses are not unusual. Why does this happen? What should be done about it? What role can and should outside...
powers play in attempting to address internal conflict or respond to human rights travesties? What is the utility of military power in coping with such situations? How can such circumstances be successfully resolved, and what are the major impediments to resolution? This family of issues was never absent from the agenda, merely overshadowed by overweening Cold War concerns. Over the last decade, work in this broad area has become one of the more prominent strands in the field.83

Where once the debate was largely preoccupied with instruments of large-scale violence—notably nuclear weapons and armored divisions—now there is interest as well in other instruments of foreign and security policy. Economic sanctions, for example, have become an increasingly common policy tool for the United States. Their frequent use has been accompanied by a vigorous debate about whether sanctions work, the conditions that enhance or undermine their effectiveness, and the objectives to which they may be relevant.84 Assassination is another potential instrument of policy, one rarely employed, it seems. Under what circumstances might it be an appropriate option? What are the barriers to its use, and why is it not more common?85 Yet another line of analysis explores the link between economic interests and certain kinds of military restraint. Might economic leverage, in one form or another, be an ally of nonproliferation policy?86 And what about the argument that arms racing itself, in the hands of rich and technologically advanced states, might be an effective strategic instrument, a conscious means of harming adversaries who are less rich and less advanced? More specifically, did the massive Reagan military buildup of the 1980s cause or contribute to the demise of the Soviet Union? It is an argument that is commonly heard, but its critics appear to be as numerous as its proponents.87

The demise of the Cold War has opened room for increased attention to previously neglected subjects. A good example is the connection between environmental problems, resource scarcities, and conflict. This is not a new subject. But during the 1990s, discussion of these issues was reinvigorated. A burgeoning literature explores possible causal linkages that lead from environmental concerns to conflict, examines particular cases in great detail, and explicitly considers the extent to which the environment deserves to be regarded as a security problem.

In short, though the Cold War is more than a decade into the past, IS finds the agenda in the field of international security to be full, diverse, interesting, and important. Big questions are being asked. Different topics are being addressed. New voices and perspectives are being heard. Sadly, though not surprisingly, war and violence remain with us. The post–Cold War era contains too many heartbreaking reminders—from Kosovo to Tajikistan, from Rwanda to Sri Lanka, from Kashmir to the Congo—that the intentional use of organized force for political ends remains a common phenomenon, one with large political, social, human, and economic costs and consequences. Thus core concerns of the field of international security remain germane in today’s world. The end of the Cold War meant the close of an era in the world and in the field, but the new era, with its ongoing blight of political violence, has raised a new and worthy agenda of issues for the field.

A MORE SCHOLARLY AGENDA

IS works hard in deciding what to publish, so it would be disingenuous to suggest that the editors have little or no impact on the contents of the journal. Still, IS is to a large extent a reflective instrument: Because we must choose from among those manuscripts that are sent to us, the journal inevitably reflects the character of the work that is generally being done in the field. In the


90. As a general rule, International Security does not commission work (though in rare instances there are exceptions to this rule). Every many of the book review essays published in the journal
1970s, as we saw above, the field was preoccupied with immediate and often urgent issues that attended the Cold War. The current policy agenda and the current substantive agenda overlapped substantially. This reality was very much reflected in the pages of *International Security* during the early years of its existence.

Over the years, however, the topical agenda increasingly has been accompanied by work that seeks to explore the theoretical underpinnings and conceptual foundations of international politics and security. This trend has accelerated across time and was particularly notable during the 1990s. If the trend is clear, the cause is less so. Perhaps the end of the Cold War had something to do with it. A field that had been captivated by the Cold War policy agenda was now released to explore other directions. Moreover, the effort to chart the new course of international politics in the absence of the Cold War may have driven some to consider basic forces and underlying factors. How else was one to navigate in these unknown waters? Part of the explanation, though, may be generational change. Many of the founding fathers of the field were physicists, economists, mathematicians, and chemists—most of whom were drawn into the field by their own involvement in World War II or in the early years of the U.S. nuclear weapons program. Neither by training nor by experience were they oriented toward the kind of theoretical analysis that has become the hallmark of academic political science. A further, and related, explanation is that the creation of research institutions and training programs in the field, mostly in or associated with political science departments or public policy programs, gradually produced a growing cadre of more theoretically inclined specialists in international security—who are the successors to the founders. This would be a natural consequence of the establishment of international security alongside international political economy and international politics as a necessary component of any coherent international relations program. Moreover, academic political science demands and rewards theoretical work, so the incentive structure for those who wish to teach international

come to us unbidden. Hence the contents of the journal must be drawn from the large number of unsolicited manuscripts sent to us. With the help of anonymous external reviews, the editors must winnow this pool of submissions down to twenty to twenty-five published articles per year. With the exception of commissioned articles, all articles appearing in *International Security* have been subjected to double blind external review. We could not operate in this manner without the voluntary help of large numbers of individuals in the field, many of whom do yeoman's work by reviewing numerous articles and reviewing them well. We are grateful to all who have contributed in this way. (Unfortunately, you can probably count on hearing from us again.) Those interested in more detail about how *IS* operates and how to prepare essays for submission should consult Teresa Pellon Johnson, “Writing for *International Security*: A Contributor's Guide,” *International Security*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall 1991), pp. 171–180, http://mitpress.mit.edu/ISEC.
security in these international relations programs would incline them in this direction.

Whatever the cause, the consequences are clearly seen in the pages of *International Security*. Viewing the rise of theory from the vantage point of one journal cannot, of course, provide a full overview of the theoretical evolution that has occurred in international security studies over the last decade. Nor can it be said that *IS* has managed to provide coverage of every significant theoretical debate to have emerged (though we certainly wish this were the case). Nevertheless, many of the interesting and vigorous theoretical debates of recent years have played themselves out in part in the pages of *International Security*.

One of the hottest topics of the last decade, for example, was the democratic peace theory (though, as Kenneth Waltz pointedly comments about the connection between democracy and peace, “we have not a theory but a purported fact begging for an explanation, as facts do”).91 If it is true that democracies never, or rarely, fight each other, why is this the case? Are there alternative explanations for the absence of war between democracies? Even if mature democracies are peaceful in their relations with one another, does this proposition also apply to democratizing states?92 Hundreds of pages have been devoted to arguing about such questions, in *International Security* and elsewhere.93 This debate was topical as well as theoretical and historical, given that promoting the expansion of democracy around the world was one of the central planks of the Clinton administration’s foreign policy; whatever the state of the academic debate, the president was an explicit believer in the democratic peace hypothesis.

Another very visible and influential stream of work has focused on the offense-defense balance. How does one define this balance? Is it really possible to differentiate offensive from defensive environments? If so, what are the consequences of the existence of, or the belief that there exists, an offensive or defensive advantage? Proponents of the concept argue that offensive security arrangements are dangerous, but is this always true, or are there circumstances

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92. An influential essay on this question is Mansfield and Snyder, “Democratization and the Danger of War.”
in which offensive approaches are desirable? Is there confirming or disconfirming evidence to suggest that states behave as these theories would predict? On these questions, the battle continues.94

Numerous other theoretical issues now routinely occupy the field and the journal. Do states fear relative gains for others more than they covet absolute gains for themselves?95 Is interdependence a force for peace or a cause of conflict?96 If belief systems are socially constructed, what does this imply for the study and practice of international security?97 Are international institutions potent agents of order and the embodiments of important norms, or are they weak and manipulable instruments of states?98 What is the impact of strategic culture on the security calculations and preparations of states?99 This roster of concerns is a long way from the days when the East-West military balance got most of the ink.


Along with the rise of theory has come an increase in focused attention to methods. How, for example, should history be used by political scientists? Is a case study a piece of history? Should it be? What is the relationship between the craft of the historian and the domain of the political scientist? How can the theories of political science contend with the unknown, the indeterminate, and the contradictory in history? These are fundamental questions that must be answered by anyone who has attempted to explore cases for the sake of making arguments or testing theories. These issues were explored in a symposium on “History and Theory” in the Summer 1997 issue of *International Security*. The exercise attests to the enormous difficulty of bridging disciplinary divides, even when there is an inevitable and inescapable connection between the two fields: How can political science function without history? Here we learn, among other things, that the two disciplines have “drifted apart,” that the history used by political scientists is often “unrecognizable” to the historian, that the two fields are capable of sinking “ever more deeply into mutual incomprehension.”

On the constructive side, however, there is a genuine effort to find ways of surmounting the divide and allowing the two fields to meaningfully use and learn from each other.

More recently, *IS* hosted a vigorous debate on the utility and net value of rational choice and formal modeling as methods for addressing security issues. In a notably skeptical assessment, Stephen Walt suggested that the contribution of rational choice and formal models was overrated by its proponents and that its contributions to the accumulation of knowledge in the field tended to be marginal. A number of distinguished practitioners of rational choice offered robust rejoinders, suggesting that Walt has misunderstood the method and undervalued the rigor it brings to reasoning in secu-

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rity. This sort of serious and spirited exchange is, in our view, one sign of a healthy field.

Overall, the proportion of work in the field of international security studies that is devoted to these more scholarly endeavors has risen substantially. This is certainly true of *International Security*, and I believe it is true of the field more generally. To be sure, much work still derives from the real-world policy agenda—as it should. IS continues to feature direct policy analysis and to encourage authors of more theoretical pieces to address the policy implications of their analyses. The balance has changed, but there is still a mix of theory and policy. Moreover, some theoretical or methodological work has always been a part of the field (especially if one views the boundary between international relations and international security as inevitably porous). But more policy-oriented work is now joined by a more vigorous parallel strand of research that seeks to identify and evaluate generalizable propositions about cause and effect, explore root causes and fundamental forces, seek meaningful patterns across important cases, and test hypotheses against evidence. As is true in all realms of political science, the struggle in this field for validated theory is not easy, is not always edifying, and is not always successful. But the struggle is now more visible and more prominent than in the past. This has been one of the major changes we have witnessed across the first 100 issues of *International Security*.

**Conclusion**

*International Security* was born into a world dominated by concerns over Soviet power and supremacy, American decline and weakness, and fears of nuclear intimidation and purposeful nuclear escalation. A quarter of a century later, the United States reigns supreme, the Soviet Union is no more, Russian weakness is regarded as a potential danger, and the main nuclear nightmare derives from the possibility of accident or unauthorized use. We have gone from debating the degree of American inferiority to debating how long America’s unprecedented primacy can last. It has truly been a journey from one world to another. In both of these worlds, however, security issues and concerns have

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been abundantly evident. For the field of international security, the same quarter-century has seen a journey from the outskirts of the academy toward the mainstream of academic life, toward a more balanced mix of historical discovery, theoretical exploration, and policy analysis.

This has been an openly parochial and admittedly incomplete look at those journeys. If the foregoing has provided some sense of where we started, what we have done, and how we have changed, then our aim in offering these modest reflections is fulfilled. If I may be permitted a personal reflection, as one who started with *International Security* in 1979 as a lowly and invisible graduate student intern, it has been a pleasure to wander back through the hundreds of articles and thousands of pages that have, like archaeological layers, accumulated with the passage of time; it has been pleasant to reacquaint myself with distant essays, familiar like old friends not recently seen; it has been a point of pride to rediscover what a rich trove of work can be found on those loaded shelves whose contents reflect more than two decades of my own labor. Indeed the seductiveness of the past, the pull of former battles, the allure of essays that, once sampled, cannot be put aside has turned this reconsideration into a much larger and longer exercise than originally envisioned—to the consternation of my deadline-driven colleagues.

Questions of international security, force, and war, though only part of the complex reality of international politics, remain highly salient and highly consequential. It is impossible to understand the rise of the modern state or the evolution of the international system, including its present contours and character, without confronting the profoundly influential role played by war and the threat of war. As Michael Howard has recently written, for example, “War, armed conflict between organized political groups, has been the universal norm in human history.”

Similarly, Charles Tilly has written, “Over the millennium as a whole, war has been the dominant activity of European states.” Tilly also provides an explanation of why this is the case: “The central, tragic fact is simple: coercion works; those who apply substantial force to their fellows get compliance, and from that compliance draw the multiple advantages of money, goods, deference, access to pleasures denied to less powerful people.”

proposition. It is for this reason that it is desirable to deepen our understanding of the sources of conflict and of peace; the utility and limits of force; its coercive potential; its consequences for political, social, and economic development; its costs and implications in human terms; and the mobilization and control of military power. This is a high-stakes agenda, one that retains its importance and relevance.

Some twenty-five years ago, Paul Doty and his colleagues launched this enterprise, offering it as a “vehicle of communication” in the field of international security for those “who bear a continuing concern with this aspect of international life.” It was their aspiration that the journal “contribute to the disciplined discourse that distinguishes a profession.” We hope we have made that contribution, and we resolve that we will continue to try. To paraphrase a famous line from founding co-editor Michael Nacht, this violent world we live in continues to “require further study.”