

Given the contemporary importance of realism in IR, the book's focus on the link between realism and the Second World War is particularly timely. The book is a comprehensive and accessible introduction to the field of strategic studies, covering the history of the discipline and its relationship to international relations theory. It is a valuable resource for students and scholars alike.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first part, 'The History of Strategic Studies', traces the roots of the discipline back to the early 20th century, highlighting the influence of classical realist thinkers like Machiavelli and Hobbes. The second part, 'Strategic Studies and the Second World War', explores how the war shaped the development of strategic studies as a distinct field of inquiry. It examines the role of military strategists and the impact of technological advances on warfare.

The book is written in a clear and engaging style, making it an excellent starting point for anyone interested in the field. It provides a solid foundation for understanding the complexities of strategic studies and its relevance to contemporary international relations.

# Introduction

JOHN BAYLIS AND JAMES J. WIRTZ

## → Chapter Contents

- What is Strategic Studies?
- Strategic Studies and the Classical Realist Tradition
- What Criticisms are made of Strategic Studies?
- What is the Relationship between Strategic Studies and Security Studies?



Books often reflect a specific historical context, shaped by the hopes, fears, and problems that preoccupy authors and policy-makers alike. This is especially true of books on strategy, security studies, and public policy because contemporary issues are of paramount importance to authors in these fields. Our efforts also reflect contemporary threats and opportunities. When we gathered in September 2000 to present chapters for the first edition of this volume, we wanted to create a textbook that demonstrated the continued relevance of strategy and strategic studies and to interpret contemporary issues using insights gained from the classic works on strategy. Little did we know that less than a year later the 'New World Order' would be shattered by the Al-Qaeda attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the terrorist bombings in Madrid in 2004 and London in 2005, and the possible proliferation of nuclear weapons to North Korea and Iran, have erased any lingering doubts about the relevance of strategy to today's students and practitioners of foreign and defence policy. When we gathered again to discuss our contributions to this volume in September 2005, it was with the realization that we face real and immediate threats to national and international security; these threats demand the return of strategy.

It is clear to us now that interest in strategic studies is cyclical and reflects the times. Strategic studies emerged during the early years of the cold war when political leaders, government officials, and academics interested in security issues wrestled with the problems of how to survive and prosper in the nuclear age, when Armageddon might be just minutes away. Given the experiences of the 1930s, when appeasement and 'utopian' ideas of collective security had largely failed to ensure peace, the prevailing mindset during the cold war was one of 'realism'. It was believed that, in a world characterized by anarchy and unending competition, states inevitably exercised power to secure their national interests. For nuclear age realists, however, power had to be exercised in a way that promoted the interests of the state, while at the same time avoiding a conflict which would lead to the destruction not only of the states involved but of civilization as a whole. This predicament gave rise to theories of deterrence, limited war and arms control that dominated the literature of strategic studies (and indeed international relations) during the period from the 1950s to the 1980s. Writings by Herman Kahn, Bernard Brodie, Henry Kissinger, Albert Wohlstetter, and Thomas Schelling became classics in the field.

Did the key assumptions inherent in the strategic studies literature lead to the adoption of particular security policies or did policy itself drive the writing on the subject? The answer to these questions remains a matter of debate. Some believed that the literature reflected existing realities, others believed that the writings themselves helped to generate a particular way of looking at the world and legitimized the use of military power. An iterative process was probably at work, however, as theory and practice modified and reinforced each other.

The great strength of the literature on strategic studies was that it reflected the harsh realities of a world in which military power was (regardless of 'utopian' ideals) an instrument of state policy. One of its weaknesses, however, was the inherent conservatism in realist thinking that implied that the contemporary world was the best of all possible worlds. For good theoretical and practical reasons, realists hoped that the cold war, with its magisterial confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, would continue into the indefinite future. Significant change, because it raised the spectre of nuclear

Armageddon, was a prospect that was nearly too horrific to contemplate and too risky to act upon.

With the relatively peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union, realism came under suspicion and the ideas and policies of disarmament advocates and utopian thinkers began to hold greater sway in policy circles. The 1990s was the decade of the 'peace dividend' and 'dot.com' mania as the information revolution entered consumer and business culture. The preoccupation of strategists with the state, and its use of military power, was viewed by a new generation of 'utopian' scholars as part of the problem of international security itself. Strategists were often seen as 'dinosaurs'. Preoccupied with 'old think', they appeared unwilling to come to terms with the fact that force was apparently fading as a factor in world politics. The traditional emphasis on the military aspects of security was challenged by scholars who believed that the concept should be broadened and deepened. According to this view, there were political, economic, societal, and environmental aspects of security which had been ignored. Some scholars asserted that 'security' as a concept had been used by political elites to push issues to the top of the political agenda or to secure additional resources for particular policies and government organizations and military programmes. In the view of some critics, official policy was pushed along by armies of military contractors and manufacturers, government workers, and members of the military themselves had a vested interest in 'keeping war alive' to preserve their careers and livelihoods.

By the mid-1990s, these criticisms of traditional realist thinking were transformed into mainstream scholarship. Security studies emerged as an area of intellectual enquiry which increasingly eclipsed strategic studies. Researchers came to focus on the nature of security itself and how greater security might be achieved at the individual, societal and even global levels, compared with the cold war preoccupation with state security, defined only in military terms. Although security studies reflected a wider range of theoretical positions than had characterized strategic studies in the past, there was a strong normative (realists would say 'utopian') dimension to much of the writing, especially from those of a post-positivist persuasion. The end of the cold war fundamentally challenged the conservative tendency in realism (and the strategic studies literature). Peaceful change was now a reality and military power was no longer seen by many as the predominant prerequisite for security. The balance of terror between East and West had not simply been mitigated (in line with the theories proposed in the strategic studies literature) but had now been transcended, opening up the prospects for a new more peaceful world.

The post-cold war euphoria and the literature that followed in its wake was very much a product of its time, but there were warning signs in the years leading up to the millennium that the emergence of peace, or as Francis Fukuyama put it 'an end of history' (meaning an end of major conflicts), might have been premature. The first Gulf War, the conflicts associated with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and tribal wars in Africa demonstrated all too clearly that military force remained a ubiquitous feature of the contemporary world. It was at this point, just as the attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon took place in September 2001, that the first edition of this book was published. The book reflected a growing feeling that perhaps too much emphasis in security studies literature had been given to non-military security. The argument contained in the book was that, useful as this new literature was, there was still room for writing and scholarship that focused on the sad, but continuing, reality that military power remained a significant feature of world politics.



The book was very much a product of its time, and things changed on the morning of 11 September 2001.

Although the first edition had much to say about our present circumstances, this second edition reflects a more mature set of reflections on the role of military power in the contemporary world and the changes that have occurred over the last decade. This new volume reflects analyses of the recent conflicts from Afghanistan to the Iraq war and the ongoing debates about the lessons that can be learnt from these wars. We also explore the debates about whether there has been a revolution in military affairs and the future of warfare given the phenomenal pace of innovation in electronics and computer systems. Attention is also given to the strategic implications of the changing structure of global politics and the role of American military power in a unipolar world. At a broader conceptual level this edition goes further than the first volume by analysing the continuing relevance of the various theories of peace and security in a world that is vastly different from the cold war era when these concepts were central to most thinking about strategic studies. There is also considerably more emphasis in this edition on the implications of 9/11 and the war on terrorism, as well as on the prospects for further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, not only by states but also by non-state actors.

To set the scene for the chapters that follow, this introduction answers three questions: (1) What are strategic studies? (2) What criticisms are made of strategic studies? and (3) What is the relationship of strategic studies to security studies?

## What is Strategic Studies?

The definitions of 'strategy' contained in Box 1 display some common features but also significant differences. The definitions by Carl von Clausewitz, [Field Marshal] Count H. Von Moltke, B. H. Liddell Hart, and Andre Beaufre all focus on a fairly narrow definition which relates military force to the objectives of war. This reflects the origins of the word 'strategy' which is derived from the ancient Greek term for 'generalship'. The definitions from Gregory Foster and Robert Osgood, however, draw attention to the broader focus on 'power', while Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley highlight the dynamic quality of 'process' inherent in the formulation of strategy. Recently, writers have emphasized that strategy (particularly in the nuclear age) has a peacetime as well as a war time application. Strategy embodies more than just the study of wars and military campaigns. Strategy is the application of military power to achieve political objectives, or more specifically 'the theory and practice of the use, and threat of use, of organized force for political purposes' (Gray 1999). Broader still is the concept of *Grand Strategy* which involves the coordination and direction of 'all the resources of a nation, a band of nations, towards the attainment of the political objectives' sought (Liddell Hart 1967).

Because strategy provides the bridge between military means and political goals, students of strategy require knowledge of *both* politics and military operations. Strategy deals with the difficult problems of national policy, the areas where political, economic, psychological, and military factors overlap. There is no such thing as purely military

### BOX 1

#### Definitions of Strategy

Strategy (is) the use of engagements for the object of war.

**Carl von Clausewitz**

Strategy is the practical adaptation of the means placed at a general's disposal to the attainment of the object in War.

**Von Moltke**

Strategy is the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy.

**Liddell Hart**

Strategy is . . . the art of the dialectic of force or, more precisely, the art of the dialectic of two opposing wills using force to resolve their dispute.

**Andre Beaufre**

Strategy is ultimately about effectively exercising power.

**Gregory D. Foster**

Strategy is a plan of action designed in order to achieve some end; a purpose together with a system of measures for its accomplishment.

**J. C. Wylie**

Strategy is a process, a constant adaptation to the shifting conditions and circumstances in a world where chance, uncertainty, and ambiguity dominate.

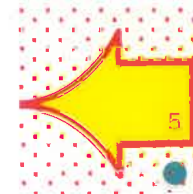
**Murray and Grimsley**

Strategy must now be understood as nothing less than the overall plan for utilizing the capacity for armed coercion—in conjunction with economic, diplomatic, and psychological instruments of power—to support foreign policy most effectively by overt, covert and tacit means.

**Robert Osgood**

advice when it comes to issues of strategy. This point also has been made in a different way by Henry Kissinger who stated that 'the separation of strategy and policy can only be achieved to the detriment of both. It causes military power to become identified with the most absolute application of power and it tempts diplomacy into an over-concern with finesse' (1957).

Strategy is best studied from an interdisciplinary perspective. To understand the dimensions of strategy, it is necessary to know something about politics, economics, psychology, sociology, and geography, as well as technology, force structure, and tactics. Strategy also is essentially a pragmatic and practical activity. This is summed up in Bernard Brodie's comment that 'Strategic theory is a theory of action'. It is a 'how to do it' study, a guide to accomplishing objectives and attaining them efficiently. As in many other branches of politics, the question that matters in strategy is: will the idea work? As such, in some ways strategic studies are 'policy relevant'. They can be an intellectual aid to official performance. At the same time, however, they also can be pursued as 'an idle academic pursuit for its own sake' (Brodie 1973).





Strategic studies, however, cannot be regarded as a discipline in their own right. They form a subject with a sharp focus—the role of military power—but no clear parameters, and rely upon arts, sciences, and social science subjects for ideas and concepts. Scholars who have contributed to the literature on the subject have come from very different fields. Herman Kahn was a physicist, Thomas Schelling was an economist, Albert Wholstetter was a mathematician, Henry Kissinger was a historian, and Bernard Brodie was a political scientist.

Given the different academic backgrounds of strategic thinkers, it is not surprising that strategic studies has witnessed an ongoing debate about methodology (i.e. how to study the subject). Bernard Brodie, who more than anyone else helped to establish strategic studies as a subject in the aftermath of the Second World War, initially argued that strategy should be studied 'scientifically'. He was concerned that strategy was 'not receiving the scientific treatment it deserves either in the armed services or, certainly, outside them'. In his 1949 article entitled 'Strategy as Science', Brodie called for a methodological approach to the study of strategy similar to the one adopted by economics. Strategy, he argued, should be seen as 'an instrumental science for solving practical problems'. What he wanted was a more rigorous, systematic form of analysis of strategic issues compared with the rather narrow approach to security problems adopted by the military, who were preoccupied with tactics and technology.

As Brodie himself was later to recognize, however, the enthusiasm for science, which he had helped to promote, meant that strategic studies in the 1950s 'developed a scientific strain and overreached itself'. By the 1960s, Brodie was calling for a 'mid-course correction'. The conceptualization of strategy using economic models and theories had been taken further than he had expected. Brodie was concerned about the 'astonishing lack of political sense' and the 'ignorance of diplomatic and military history' that seemed to be evident among those writing about strategy. Brodie's worries were heeded. From the 1970s onwards, more comparative historical analysis was introduced into strategic studies.

The academic approach to the study of strategy also raised concerns about the neglect of operational military issues. For Brodie (echoing Clemenceau) strategy was too serious a business to be left to the generals. As strategic studies developed in the late 1940s, civilian analysts came to dominate the field. By the 1980s, however, there was a growing feeling that many of the civilian strategists in their university departments and academic 'think tanks' were ignoring the capabilities and limitations of military units and operations in their analyses and theorizing. For a new breed of strategists, the reality of operational issues had to be brought back into their studies. Military science had become the 'missing discipline'. Writing in 1996, Richard K. Betts suggested that: 'if strategy is to integrate policy and operations, it must be devised not just by politically sensitive soldiers but by military sensitive civilians'. Just as Brodie had been concerned about the overly narrow approach of the military in 1949, so Betts was concerned that the pendulum had swung too far in the opposite direction. Although as Stephen Biddle has demonstrated in his recent volume entitled *Military Power*, in the end it was left to a civilian strategist to make headway in understanding the changes unfolding on the modern battlefield (Biddle 2005).

This concern with operational issues helped to revive an interest among strategists with the different 'elements' or 'dimensions' of strategy. In his study *On War*, Clausewitz argued that 'everything in strategy is very simple, but that does not mean that everything is very

easy'. Reflecting this sentiment, Clausewitz pointed out that strategy consisted of moral, physical, mathematical, geographical and statistical elements. Michael Howard, in a similar vein, refers to the social, logistical, operational, and technological dimensions of strategy. This notion of strategy consisting of a broad, complex, pervasive, and interpenetrating set of dimensions also is explored in Colin Gray's recent study, entitled *Modern Strategy*. Gray identifies three main categories ('People and Politics'; 'Preparation for War'; and 'War Proper') and seventeen dimensions of strategy. Under the 'People and Politics' heading he focuses on people, society, culture, politics, and ethics. 'Preparations for War' includes economics and logistics, organization, military administration, information and intelligence, strategic theory and doctrine, and technology. The dimensions of 'War Proper' consists of military operations, command, geography, friction, the adversary, and time. Echoing Clausewitz, Gray argues that the study of strategy is incomplete if it is considered in the absence of any one of these (interrelated) dimensions.

## Strategic Studies and the Classical Realist Tradition

What are the philosophical underpinnings or assumptions of the scholars, soldiers, and policy-makers who write about strategy? Most contemporary strategists in the Western world belong to the same intellectual tradition. They share a set of assumptions about the nature of international political life, and the kind of reasoning that can best handle political-military problems. This set of assumptions is often referred to by the term 'Realism'.

Although there are differences between 'Realists', there are certain views and assumptions that most would agree upon. These can be best illustrated under the headings of human nature; anarchy and power; and international law, morality, and institutions.

### Human Nature

Most realists are pessimistic about human nature. Reflecting the views of philosophers like Thomas Hobbes, people are seen as 'inherently destructive, selfish, competitive and aggressive'. Hobbes accepted that human beings are capable of generosity, kindness and cooperation but the pride and egoism inherent in human nature mean that humankind also is prone to conflict, violence, and great evil. For realist writers, one of the great tragedies of the human condition is that these destructive traits can never be eradicated. Reflecting this view, Herbert Butterfield argued that 'behind the great conflicts of mankind is a terrible human predicament which lies at the heart of the story' (in Butterfield and Wight 1966). Thus, realism is not a normative theory in the sense that it purports to offer a way to eliminate violence from the world. Instead, it offers a way to cope with the ever present threat of conflict by the use of strategy to minimize the likelihood and severity of international violence. Realists tend to stress what they see as the harsh realities of world politics and are somewhat contemptuous of Kantian approaches that highlight the possibility of 'permanent peace'. As Gordon Harland has argued: 'Realism is a clear recognition



of the limits of reason in politics: the acceptance of the fact that political realities are power realities and that power must be countered with power; that self-interest is the primary datum in the action of all groups and nations' (in Herzog, 1963). In an anarchical system, power is the only currency of value when security is threatened.

### Anarchy and Power

Given this rather dark view of the human condition, realists tend to view international relations in similarly pessimistic terms. Conflict and war are seen as endemic in world politics and the future is likely to be much like the past. States (upon which realists focus their attention) are engaged in a relentless competitive struggle. In contrast to the way in which conflicts are dealt with in domestic society, however, the clash between states is more difficult to resolve because there is no authoritative government to create justice and the rule of law. In the absence of world government, realists note that states have adopted a 'self-help' approach to their interests and especially their security. In other words, they reserve the right to use lethal force to achieve their objectives, a right that individuals living in civil society have given up to the state. Who wins in international relations does not depend on who is right according to some moral or legal ruling. As Thucydides demonstrated in his account of *The Peloponnesian Wars*, power determines who gets their way. In international relations, *might makes right*.

### International Law, Morality, and Institutions

Realists see a limited role for 'reason', law, morality, and institutions in world politics. In a domestic context, law can be an effective way for societies to deal with competing selfish interests. In an international system without effective government, states will agree to laws when it suits them, but will disregard them when their interests are threatened. When states want to break the rules, there is very little to stop them from doing it apart from countervailing force.

Similarly, realists do not believe that moral considerations can significantly constrain the behaviour of states. Some realists believe that very little attention should be given to moralizing about the state of world politics. They point to the absence of a universal moral code and to the disregard of constraining moral principles by policy-makers, especially when they believe their vital interests are threatened. This is not to argue that realists are wholly insensitive to moral questions. Great realist thinkers, including Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau, agonized about the human condition. Most realist writers, however, attempt to explain the way the world is, rather than how it ought to be. Realists view international institutions (e.g. the United Nations or the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty) in much the same light as they view law and morality. Just as law and morality are unable to constraint state behaviour significantly when important state interests are threatened, international institutions also can only play a limited role in preventing conflict. Realists do not dismiss the opportunities created by institutions for greater cooperation. They see these institutions, however, not as truly independent actors but as agents set up by states to serve their national interests. As long as they do this, the member states will support the institution, but when support for the institution threatens national interests, nations tend to abandon or ignore them. Realists point to the inability of the League of Nations in the

inter-war period to stop aggression, or the way the United Nations became a hostage to the cold war as evidence of the limited utility of these organizations. When it really mattered, international institutions could not act against the interests of their member states.

## What Criticisms are made of Strategic Studies?

Although the shared philosophical underpinnings of strategists have helped to give the subject intellectual coherence, many realist assumptions have been subjected to fierce criticism. This critique has been discussed in detail elsewhere (Gray 1982), but our purpose here is to give a flavour of the concern expressed by critics of strategic studies. Strategists are said to be:

- obsessed with conflict and force;
- insufficiently concerned with ethical issues;
- not scholarly in their approach;
- part of the problem, not the solution;
- state-centric.

Many critics argue that, because strategists focus on the role of military power, they tend to be preoccupied by violence and war. Because their view of the world is conflict-oriented they tend to ignore the more cooperative, peaceful aspects of world politics. This leads critics to claim that strategists have a distorted, rather than realistic, view of the world. Some critics even suggest that strategists are fascinated by violence, and even take grim satisfaction in describing the darker side of the human condition.

For their part, strategists accept that they are interested in violence and conflict. In their own defence, however, they point out that, just as a doctor of heart disease does not claim to deal with all aspects of health, so they do not claim to be studying every aspect of international relations. They reject the view that they have a distorted view of the world, and that they are fascinated in an 'unhealthy' sense by violence.

The claim to moral neutrality, sometimes made by strategists, is another shortcoming identified by critics. Strategists are depicted as clinical, cool, and unemotional in the way they approach the study of war, despite the fact that, in the nuclear age, millions of lives are at risk in the calculations that take place about strategic policies. Emphasizing the moral outrage felt by some, J. R. Newman described Herman Kahn's book, *On Thermonuclear War*, as 'a moral tract on mass murder, how to comment on it, how to get away with it, how to justify it' (1961: 197). Philip Green, in his study of *Deadly Logic*, also accused strategists who wrote about nuclear deterrence as being 'egregiously guilty of avoiding the moral issue altogether, or misrepresenting it' (1966: 250).

Although many strategists have justified the moral neutrality of their approach in terms of scholarly detachment, some have been sensitive to this criticism. As a result, a number of studies of ethical issues have been written. These include Joseph Nye's book on *Nuclear Ethics*, Michael Walzer's *Just and Unjust Wars*, and Steven P. Lee's study of *Morality*,



*Prudence and Nuclear Weapons*. These books (together with the moral critical studies by writers like Green) now form an important part of the literature on strategic studies.

Another important criticism levelled against strategic studies is that it represents 'a fundamental challenge to the values of liberal, humane scholarship, that define a University'. The implication is that it is not a scholarly subject and should not be taught at a university. This criticism has a number of related parts. First, according to Philip Green, it is pseudo-scientific, using apparent scientific method to give it a spurious air of legitimacy. Second, because strategists often advise governments on a paid basis, they are operating 'in a manner incompatible with the integrity of scholarship'. E. P. Thornton described the cosy relationship between strategists and government officials as 'suspect, corrupt and at enmity with the universal principles of humane scholarship'. Third, critics charge that strategists not only provide advice to governments, but they also are involved in policy advocacy—which is not part of scholarship. Critics claim that strategists are a vestige of government and spend their time either providing advice on how to achieve or justify dubious international objectives.

With a qualification on the issue of policy advocacy, strategists reject the view that their subject should not be found in a university. They would argue that war cannot be made to disappear simply by ignoring it. (Leon Trotsky, a leading figure in the Bolshevik revolution, put it best: 'You might not have an interest in war, but war has an interest in you.') They argue that the study of war and peace are issues of profound importance that can, and should be, studied in a scholarly way. There have been attempts at developing a 'scientific' approach to strategy (and as Brodie recognized, some writers might have taken this too far) but the debate about methodology is not confined to strategic studies. The nature of 'science' in a social science context remains a lively, ongoing debate.

In general, strategists recognize the dangers of developing too cosy a relationship with officials when they advise governments on a paid basis. Like many other experts,

#### BOX 2

##### Strategic Studies in the Academy

The study of strategy in Universities may be defended on several different, yet complementary, grounds. In strictly academic terms, the subject poses sufficient intellectual challenge as to merit inclusion in, or even as, a course of study fully adequate to stretch mental resources. In, and of itself, that argument is sufficient to justify the inclusion of strategic studies in University curricula, but one can, and should, proceed to argue that the study of strategy is socially useful . . . Many views are defensible concerning the proper and appropriate duties of a university. This author chooses a liberal, permissive perspective. He sees value in a field of study that seeks truth and may have relevance to contemporary policy and, as a consequence, may contribute to the general well-being.

(C. S. Gray)

In strategic studies the ability to argue logically and to follow a piece of strategic reasoning is very important, but even more important is the elusive, almost indefinable quality of political judgement which enables a man to evaluate a piece of analysis and locate it in a wider political framework.

(J. C. Garnett)

(e.g. economists), however, they see no necessary inconsistency between scholarship and advice. Because it is a practical subject, there are some benefits from analysing strategic issues at close hand, providing that a 'detached' approach is adopted. Policy advocacy, however, is a different matter. Some strategists do drift into the realm of advocating specific policies, but when they do so they slowly but surely lose their credibility. People who make a career out of arguing for the adoption of specific policies or weapons systems gain a reputation for knowing the 'answer' regardless of the question that is posed.

Another forceful criticism of strategic studies is that it is part of the problem, not the solution. What opponents mean by this is that the Clausewitzian perspective of strategists, which sees military power as a legitimate instrument of policy, helps to perpetuate a particular mindset among national leaders and the public that encourages the use of force. It is this realist thinking, critics argue, which lies behind the development of theories of deterrence, limited war, and crisis management which were so dangerous during the cold war. Anatol Rapoport is one writer who charges strategists with a direct responsibility for promoting a framework of thinking about security which is largely hostile to what he regards as the proper solution to global conflict, namely disarmament. In a stinging attack he argues that 'the most formidable obstacles to disarmament are created by the strategists who place their strategic considerations above the needs of humanity as a whole, and who create or help maintain an intellectual climate in which disarmament appears to be unrealistic' (Rapoport 1965). Instead of spending their time thinking about how to better justify and conduct mass murder, critics suggest that strategists should spend their time devising disarmament strategies, cooperative security arrangements, and global campaigns to denounce violence.

Linked to this criticism is the view that, because strategists are so pessimistic about human nature and the chances of significant improvements in the conduct of international politics, they *ignore the opportunities that exist for peaceful change*. It is suggested that to see the past as a history of constant conflict and to suggest that the future will be the same is to help create a fatalistic impression that plans for human progress will always fail. By emphasizing mistrust, self-help, and the importance of military power in an anarchic international system, their advice becomes self-fulfilling. In other words, if policy-makers take strategists' advice to heart, deterrent threats and defence preparations would lead to a spiral of hostility and mistrust as leaders respond to the defence policies of their competitors. Given this 'socially constructed' view of the world, it is not surprising that states will constantly find themselves in conflict with each other.

Once again, strategists vigorously contest these criticisms. They argue that their ideas reflect (rather than create) the 'reality' of world politics. The fact that most policy-makers and elected officials tend to share their 'realist' assumptions is due to an intellectual climate 'socially constructed' not by academic strategists but by the challenges and threats presented to them by international relations. The notion that strategic studies as a subject is 'a monstrous crime committed by self-interested strategists against the general public' is seen as absurd. Of course, throughout history, various observers have championed war as a preferred instrument of statecraft. Often they depict war in romantic or heroic terms; today's romantic image of war is simply a slightly more technologically embellished version of this traditional imagery. Enthusiasts see war as a relatively bloodless contest in which technically adept professionals use their superior skills and equipment to paralyse



the opponent's military command, leading to quick and humane victories. Strategic studies, however, stand as a major impediment to those who claim to have found a quick and easy path to guaranteed victory. Because they recognize the true nature of war, most strategists consider armed conflict to be a tragedy, an activity unfit for human beings that must be limited to the greatest extent possible.

On the question of 'peaceful change', strategists do not dismiss the fact there are opportunities for periods of peaceful coexistence. They are, however, very sceptical about the prospects for 'perpetual peace' based on a radical transformation of world politics. They believe that conflict can be mitigated through effective strategy, but it is highly unlikely that it can be transcended completely. In such a context, it is impossible to abolish the need for strategic studies.

The fact that strategists focus on the task of creating effective national strategies or international initiatives creates the basis for another criticism of the enterprise. Strategic studies incorporate a state-centric approach to world politics. According to this critique, strategists are so preoccupied by threats to the interests of states that they ignore security issues within the state or new phenomenon such as transnational terrorist networks. Many observers argue that the state is not the most appropriate referent for studying security. Rather, attention should be focused on the individual whose security is often threatened rather than protected by the state. Other writers who perceive the growing erosion of the state prefer to focus on 'societal security' or even 'global security' issues.

Strategists would argue that, while they have stressed the role of the state, they have not neglected intra-state conflict. Clausewitz himself dealt with peoples war and a considerable part of the strategic studies literature addresses revolutionary warfare. As wars of national disintegration (Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya) have become more prevalent, more attention has been given in the literature to the problem of ethnic conflict. The emergence of Al-Qaeda has led to an explosion of research and writing on the origins, objectives, strategies, and tactics of violent non-state actors with an eye towards destroying international terrorist networks and other criminal organizations. Despite the prevalence of intra-state violence or the rise of important non-state actors, strategists continue to argue that, even with all the contemporary challenges to the modern state, it continues to be the major actor in world politics. In fact the importance of the state, with its access to a myriad of resources and instruments of control and surveillance, has only been highlighted by the emergence of 'super-empowered individuals' and transnational terrorism. Strategists offer no apologies for their continuing interest in issues of state security.

## What is the Relationship between Strategic Studies and Security Studies?

One of the main challenges to strategic studies since the end of the cold war has come from those who argue that attention should be shifted away from the study of strategy to the study of security. According to this view 'security', defined in terms of 'freedom from threats to core values', is a more appropriate concept for analysis. The problem with

strategy, it is argued, is that it is too narrow and increasingly less relevant at a time when major wars are declining and threats to political, economic, social, and environmental security interests are increasing. Because it is defined more broadly, security is depicted as more valuable than strategy as an organizing framework for understanding the complex, multidimensional risks of today.

However, as Richard Betts, noted in his article 'Should Strategic Studies Survive?', those who champion new definitions of security run two risks. First, Betts noted that even though it is appropriate to distinguish between 'strategy' and 'security' studies, security policy requires careful attention to war and strategy. In other words, military power remains a crucial part of security and that those who ignore war to concentrate on non-military threats to security do so at their peril. Second, he argued that 'expansive definitions of security quickly become synonymous with "interest" and "well-being", do not exclude anything in international relations or foreign policy, and this becomes indistinguishable from those fields or other sub-fields.' In other words, by including potentially everything that might negatively effect human affairs, security studies creates the risk of being too broad to be of any practical value.

The contributors to this book recognize the importance of security studies while at the same time sharing these concerns about the coherence of the field. 'Strategy' remains a distinctive and valuable area of academic study. Strategy is part of security studies, just as security studies are part of international relations, which itself is part of political science. This relationship is expressed in the figure below.

Despite all of the changes that have occurred in world politics since the late 1980s there is in many respects an underlying continuity with earlier eras. The euphoria produced by the hope that a fundamental transformation of international relations was underway, has proved to be ill-founded. As we have seen from the first and second Gulf Wars, the Iraqi insurgency, Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, and the terrorist attacks launched by Al-Qaeda and various fellow travellers, force and military power continue to be an important currency in the international system at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Certainly important changes are taking place in world politics, associated with the twin forces of globalization and fragmentation, and wars between the great powers, for the moment at least, have

Figure 1



slipped into the background. The sad fact remains, however, that the utilization of military power as an instrument of political purpose and, therefore, strategic studies remain just as relevant today as they have been in the past.

Our exploration of strategy in the contemporary world is divided into four sections. In Part I, our contributors describe the enduring issues that animate the study of strategy and provide a historical and theoretical overview of the topic for our readers. Our study opens with an essay on the causes of war, a complex issue that ultimately shapes approaches to mitigating interstate violence. It then offers two essays of grand historical and theoretical sweep: one on the evolution of warfare since the Napoleonic age; the other a tour d'horizon of strategic thinkers and thinking. The issues of culture, morality, and war also are addressed in this section. Despite popular imagery, cultural, legal, and moral considerations play a role in shaping both the recourse to and the conduct of war. These chapters are important because they illustrate the normative basis for strategy: to help to mitigate both the occurrence and death and destruction produced by war.

Two further chapters focus on two perennial factors that shape warfare. Geography—land, sea, air, space, and now even cyberspace—has shaped the conduct of war and technology itself—the so-called ‘revolution in military affairs’ or ‘transformation’—continues to shape the evolution of warfare and strategies in each of these geographic settings.

In Part II, our contributors explore issues that appear in today's headlines and that animate strategic debate today. Peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention pose unique problems for military forces, especially when treated by policy-makers as an afterthought in the global war on terrorism. Fears about North Korean and Iranian nuclear programmes, and the possibility that terrorists might acquire and use weapons of mass destruction, suggest that it is time for a reappraisal of the threat posed by nuclear, radiological, chemical, and biological weapons. This section also explores emerging issues that are likely to animate debate not only about weapons of mass destruction but also about conventional military power in the decade ahead. Part II also explores emerging issues related to Homeland Defence and the link between domestic counter-terror operations and strategy. Given the contemporary importance of terrorism a new chapter has been added to this edition dealing with the links between terrorism and organized crime.

Part III offers a conclusion to our overview of contemporary strategy not by summarizing the findings of each of our contributors, but by considering new approaches to the study of security that have emerged in recent years and by charting a new way forward for strategic studies after the challenges the subject faced at the end of the cold war.

### FURTHER READING

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