

## The Global Security Management Crisis

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### Abstract

A preliminary outline of a larger work, this article briefly describes the history of global security structures in international politics as an introduction to the contemporary, very complicated, global security structure largely shaped by the United States and West, and then discusses the deterioration of this structure in recent years. It suggests that this is becoming an important crisis brought on to a considerable extent by the Western states that created and run it. It briefly reviews possible alternatives ranging from reconstituting and reinvigorating the existing system to possible other global security arrangements along realist lines, around regional security centers, or based on the original UN arrangements, or a reinvigoration and reconstruction of the existing global security management relied on since the Cold War.

Territorial and maritime activities, practices, conflicts, interchanges, and the like are deeply affected by the international system, particularly its political and security dimensions and developments. The global level of that system, particularly the political and security components, are of great relevance in this regard. States have numerous interactions, interests, and conflicts within the system and the system in turn strongly affects, helps shape, what states do and why. An increasingly important component of the international system is security management at the regional and global levels. Often also referred to as maintaining world order, it clearly pertains to both territorial and maritime matters, such as in the containment of disputes over boundaries, ethnic and religious clashes, or severe domestic violations of international norms.

The system emerging in Europe around 1,500 took considerable time to become truly global, replacing predominantly regional systems that preceded it (Watson 2009). The European system was centralized, or nearly so, only for short periods. Unlike in other regions of the world decentralization was its norm, particularly with regard to military security.<sup>1</sup> In the 20<sup>th</sup> century that characteristic incited using the term and concept of “anarchy” to describe the system’s fundamental dynamics and explain states’ behavior. But in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries efforts were mounted to try to give it centralized security management. Recently it has had a proactive global security management capability that has often and readily penetrated states deliberately, sometimes forcibly. That specific capability has been a major factor in the behavior of many states and societies, in territorial and maritime dimensions and activities, since the Cold War.

The security element in international politics today is relatively centrally overseen by what can be termed, for our purposes here, the contemporary Global Security Management System (GSMS). The GSMS can have an immense impact, good and bad, on members of the system and their citizens. It has been an important aspect of the world’s rising interactions and interdependence. It stands out because it has been a surprising and increasingly difficult management capacity and structure to create and effectively operate, and somewhat underestimated, probably because of analysts tending to emphasize the anarchical character of the system, treating that as responsible for much of the incidence of warfare—even its primary cause—and responsible for a supposed lack of security management.

Thus security management was taken seriously primarily as a regional or local level concern. The European states system, relatively soon after Columbus,

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1 In much of the world empires arose that for a time controlled what their rulers believed was most of the civilized world, empires ruled via a high degree of centralization.

gained almost global reach in a modest and primitive form and then steadily expanded on it, achieving ever more global reach and a gradually expanding global impact. But what that involved was a far cry from a GSMS until relatively recently. In fact European system expansion brought considerable *insecurity* to many societies, and a number of its members engaged in wars not only in Europe but often out in parts of the rest of the world. Britain came closest to supplying global management on security through its maritime dominance and the enormous extent of its empire but its control and management fell short of being global. For instance, despite the empire it was often not the most powerful state in Europe.

But centralized security management at the global level may have a longer history than this suggests. An alternative conception has been developed by World Systems Analysis advocates. Most relevant here is the George Modelski-William Thompson approach, which defines the historical global system as consisting only of states able and willing to operate on a global scale, confining that system to a handful of states for most of its history and seeing it as often rather detached from the heart of international politics in Europe. Its few members lived in two systems at different levels simultaneously, systems that were different (Modelski 1987; Modelski & Thompson 1988).

They claimed that the truly global system had usually operated differently than the European system. A dominant actor, a hegemon, would remain dominant for several decades, giving the system considerable security management and stability under a unipolar arrangement. It would then experience a period of gradual decline in its hegemony, in its power relative to rising competitors, again over several decades. This would eventually give way to a third period of growing conflict and disarray, culminating eventually in a period of major war between the top two or three states—a war that drew many other states into the fighting, making it a kind of systemwide war. In the end either the dominant state would triumph and restart the cycle again as the system hegemon, or the rising competitor or a third party would become the hegemon instead, rule for several decades or more until going into the same relative and gradual decline with another ensuing huge systemwide military conflict, and the same result. Over those 500 years, the recurring global system cycles had lasted a bit more than 100 years each, with the last period of systemwide warfare in 1914-1945 making the US the global system's dominant state. What was most significant in their analysis was the conclusion that the era of hegemony was a period of security, of progress, of development and overall management. Thus there has been significant *global* security management periodically, in lengthy eras with security provided by a dominant actor at its peak or while facing decline but still very potent and maintaining significant control over the system. It was in the periods that central security management was weak-

ening, that developments led ultimately to the emergence of severe conflict and widespread war. The dominant factor determining the unfolding of the cycle was the power distribution among the few global level competitors, but instead of the constant power shifting and power balancing of the European system, the global system experienced periods of real management, progress, and stability, of significant evolution toward elevating the general quality of life in international politics and its members, albeit being regularly punctuated eventually by an era of devastating conflict.

The Modelski world system approach fits the contemporary international system only unevenly. On the one hand, the US dominance which resulted from World War II persisted for quite a while and then began to decline as would be expected. But the main challenger then fell into a premature decline and a disastrous collapse well before past cycles would have predicted (fortunately without a systemwide war). And while at first this was followed by a new surge in US hegemony, that period has been too short for the first phase of a Modelski world system cycle. Instead, the US is now often depicted as facing a serious rising competitor or competitors. The result is one standard view today that US hegemony is ebbing and will continue to do so. If so, there should be evidence of a decline in global security management, and there are now numerous signs that this may be happening, with many observers and analysts citing increasing disarray within and among numerous states around the world (again with no signs of an imminent great war). But from the outset of US post-Cold War hegemony, the US—as renewed hegemon—promptly began pressing strongly for major improvements in the global system, particularly with regard to security management, as the Modelski approach would expect. Thus the Modelski world system model remains somewhat useful as a template for exploring how a global security management system can exist and perhaps how it can be sustained or deteriorate.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to that approach, the field of international politics has largely pursued the subject of security for states and others by seeing the international system as having emerged initially in Europe, then significantly developing there and spreading elsewhere over a considerable period of time. As a result the world experienced the expansion of an anarchical or at least semi-anarchical system. As noted above, that kind of system has been typically described as regularly beset by

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2 One possibility: US post-Cold War hegemony was just a relatively short interruption in the gradual decline normally experienced by the hegemon in a Modelski long cycle after about 25-30 years and extending another 25-30 years, followed by the really serious decline and system disarray that sets in which leads ultimately to a major period of warfare. Therefore the end of the Cold War was not the end of a long cycle and the onset of a new one, but rather roughly the mid-point in the current long cycle instead, with a further deterioration in system management to come from now on.

conflicts and suffering periodic stretches of devastating major warfare, the result of the decentralization of states within anarchy—a system of independent states preoccupied with sustaining their existence because there is no higher authority to provide rule. The system has been seen as largely operated by the most powerful states, at the global level or in particular regions, within the framework of power balancing in theory and practice, and as experiencing, as a result, considerable conflict, both peaceful and violent, among members. This conflict and resulting insecurity has been explained as either the natural *empirical* result of actors struggling to expand their power and thus their security, or as a *logical* result of governments seeking to cope with an anarchical environment by expanding their power, with both explanations citing constant struggles and warfare among members. Security management in the system has been seen as episodic, conducted mainly for the benefit of the most powerful participants, and as providing an uneven and often unpredictable security.

Nevertheless, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the emergence of notable efforts to establish an enduring global security management that was expected to prevent wars among great powers; limit wars between great powers and lesser states, or among lesser states, and thus provide a secure international environment. In effect the goal was to combine the best periodic feature of a Modelski system—a dominant concentration of institutionalized power at the global level to provide security and stability—with efforts to elevate security throughout the system as well. The major initial version was the Concert of Europe among European great powers after the Napoleonic wars. Composed of only the great powers, its major objective was preventing wars among them and containing situations that might lead to such wars, using conferences when necessary to work out effective solutions to dangerous situations. It had notable results for several decades but by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had been substantially eroded in leverage and effectiveness. The second effort at achieving an institutionalized global security management was the League of Nations, meant to cancel great-power wars and install security for other states through a potent collective deterrence of wars and potent collective military intervention to stop them once they began. It also took an interest in enhancing internal security for some states and their societies by curbing domestic violence. From its inception this security system suffered from serious defects. While it had some successes it began deteriorating after roughly a decade and eventually collapsed within another decade.

The third serious try was the establishment of the United Nations, with responsibility for maintaining security lodged primarily in the UN Security Council, which was dominated by several great powers and thus resembled the Concert of Europe. Severely handicapped from the start by lack of agreement among the

Council's five veto-wielding members, the Council and the larger UN have nevertheless compiled a lengthy but mixed record of success. After the Cold War, UN efforts to promote peace and security expanded markedly not only for dealing with interstate wars but also with intrastate fighting and its prevention. Eventually, though wars continued to occur their numbers, the resulting deaths very significantly declined, particularly after the end of the Cold War, which was results the UN has contributed to (Goldstein 2011).

However, the Security Council continued to be handicapped by lack of consensus among the permanent members. A potent but very unusual additional approach to global security management emerged as the Cold War got under way, which was the Cold War itself. The chief contestants in the Cold War had the capacity to be considerably more potent, effective, and applicable in maintaining a modicum of system security. The UN had been unable to dominate and operate security management, almost from the start, at the global level and often at lower levels of the international system. So the critical problem, the Cold War, quickly became at the same time the dominant factor in security management as well, containing the conflict between the US and Soviet blocs via an updated version of power balancing. In the new version, the core component in sustaining peace was the *deterrence* provided by the two bloc's nuclear arsenals and elaborate conventional forces. Also important for inhibiting lesser conflicts was US and Soviet control over their respective blocs, keeping some lower level conflicts from escalating into major wars. Security and stability of sorts was the result because no vastly destructive war occurred—because it would have been intolerable.

Unfortunately, this situation, plus the veto system in the Security Council, meant that global security management rested primarily on enormously dangerous weapons and an intense East-West political rivalry that had many actors in constant risk of penetration, manipulation, and military harm from the great powers directly or from proxies the great powers backed in fights among lesser states, or in the serious internal political and military struggles between factions they supported. The term "Cold War" captured quite effectively the peculiar, highly unsatisfactory "security" management for many members of the international system for decades. In effect, it was security on the brink of a cliff. It is not surprising that at the end of the Cold War there was an almost immediate revision in security management after much of this security structure disappeared.

## **THE CONTEMPORARY GLOBAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

After the Cold War the United States, with the West, significantly altered global

security management. But not via careful advance planning and extended consultation. At the outset the US was not really sure what it was doing and what results to expect. Without bipolarity, security management via power balancing among highly competitive great powers was out of date. The basically unipolar political situation allowed the US and its associates to extend their dominance in global security management to more parts of the world and in a more penetrating fashion. Efforts at doing this soon appeared in various ways in Europe (Bosnia, Kosovo), the Middle East (Iraq, Libya), and East Asia (East Timor, Kampuchea), and later on in East Africa (Somalia) and South Asia (Afghanistan and Pakistan) as well, while the US continued as dominant on security in Central America and the Caribbean and, in a more distant fashion, in South America. From the start the US had support primarily from long-time friends and allies. Global security management became significantly Western and moderately collective in character. The end of the Soviet bloc threat led to an obvious major shift in orientation, with a notable de-emphasis on security matters in Europe, and with the US in particular paying more attention to the Middle East, portions of South Asia, North Korea, and the rise of China militarily, culminating in the early stages of the so-called “pivot to Asia.”

How was this done? The most important initial step was the US decision, almost from the outset, to maintain its alliances and its other traditional security-related associations around the world for an indefinite period, even though they had been created for dealing with the now defunct Cold War. In part, especially early on, that decision was made because many of allies and associates strongly requested it. They had no clear sense of how their security situations would develop, what threats they might face. They naturally delighted in enhanced security via continuity—political, military, and institutional—to help cope with a major international environmental shift of unknown ultimate dimensions. However, the US soon realized that it needed to alter the primary focus of these alliances and associations away from just defending the allies and toward other missions and activities. The world was changing and without adaptation the alliance structure would soon look unnecessary and out of touch. For example, as the saying went with regard to NATO, now that Europe was much more peaceful NATO’s focus “had better be out of area or it would soon be out of business” (Danielson & Widerberg 2014).<sup>3</sup>

In the US, there was real concern in the Pentagon and elsewhere about a rush to rapidly reduce and withdraw US armed forces abroad and at home. After

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3 The phrase was coined by Senator Richard Lugar. See Danielson & Widerberg (2014).

all this was what had occurred to varying degrees right after World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War, leaving the nation ill prepared to meet threats later on. Sustaining a significant American military presence abroad might help slow such developments, which it did up to a point.

However, all this was far from certain to work for very long. Many governments, analysts and observers at the time felt that after the Cold War US alliances would more or less dissolve, including NATO, and began preparing for it (Mearsheimer 1990; Walt 1998/1999).<sup>4</sup> Others looked forward to it. This was, and remains, the very strong Russian preference on NATO, and the strong China preference on American East Asian alliances (which also continues), and they weren't alone. Reinforcing these predictions, hopes, or expectations was the fact that the US and most of its allies/associates were soon facing shrinking military resources, just as expected. Defense budgets began shriveling, there was a rapid decline in the perceived necessity for and salience of nuclear weapons, and a widespread political desire to secure major new financial resources by cutting military budgets and forces.

But rather than dismantling the military components of Cold War security management across the board the US, somewhat surprisingly, led Western efforts at remodeling them into what soon became basically an American Global Security Management System (AGSMS) with other Western participation. The main Western allies were somewhat or strongly interested in participating, at least on paper. Key elements on the military side included maintaining the alliances and other military associations (such as with Taiwan) intact, and moving toward substantially enlarging NATO. The US also introduced steps to make the shrinking forces of the governments involved significantly more flexible, mobile, and capable. The idea was to get allied forces in far better shape to integrate with US forces in operations when necessary, more readily prepared for operations jointly with the US. This was spurred on by how inadequate the US found NATO members' capabilities, especially in Bosnia and in the air during the war with Serbia, for working alongside American units. There was expanded US aid in allies' implementation of the elements of the Revolution in Military Affairs US forces had been undergoing since the Vietnam War. This included, for allies, upgrading and standardizing not only various military equipment, training, weapons, communications, transportation, etc. but also instilling greater military professionalization. The US also retained and even improved its vast military transport capacities to move forces,

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<sup>4</sup> Mearsheimer (2001) also predicted the reemergence of standard competitive and dangerous great-power politics. Huntington (1996) offered a similar prediction but with the main actors being nationalities.



including those of its allies, capabilities that could be at the disposal of allies when necessary. The US was soon into seeking to build a fairly integrated military expeditionary capability for upholding regional and global security virtually everywhere against threats and violence international or internal.<sup>5</sup>

In doing all this, one US advantage was how it had always insisted in treating its main alliances as largely *communities*, partners or associations rather than temporary military cooperation arrangements.<sup>6</sup> The American term for US-European relations has always been the Atlantic “Community” and for NATO, the North Atlantic “Community.” That curbed inclinations to let NATO just dissolve. The same was true of the US alliances with Japan and South Korea, Australia and the Philippines. Thus expanding the alliances or shifting their focus and the nature of the cooperation involved became more plausible.

But there was another, new, dimension to security management added after the Cold War, one only partly due to governments. It was a contribution coming not only from within the US but many other countries including friends, allies, and third parties. This was yet another effort to enhance security, independently of the US alliance system and often generated outside the UN as well. It became very influential in partially reorienting both the AGSMS and the UN. It rested on redefining and expanding the concept of security, embracing domestic security matters in particular. It involved an explosively widespread and growing movement on expanding the promotion in multiple ways of:

- Democracy
- Protecting human rights, particularly for women and minorities
- Expanding economic development and economic interaction
- Improving health and welfare in many societies
- Curbing violent ethnic and religious conflicts
- Ending terrorism
- Battling international criminal activity

The underlying rationale was that human security involved more than safety from military harm. People everywhere were threatened by many other dangerous things when lacking or losing the valuable items above. The term for mounting efforts on bettering the human condition everywhere was “*securitization*,” the point being that they would combat security problems too and should be treated

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5 Seldom recognized as such, this created an alternative to the UN rounding up forces when needed, a more or less standing military expeditionary force for UN and non-UN operations - a force envisioned for the UN initially but never seriously pursued.

6 The US aversion to alliances went back to George Washington, so the insistence on “communities” was not just a ploy.

as such, that efforts to deal with these problems should get the kinds of attention and resources, at least to a greater extent, normally lavished on armed forces. This was especially attractive to pursue when military forces nearly everywhere were being cut—pressure mounted to put some of the newly available resources into dealing with these, and related, kinds of “security” threats. The resulting efforts were linked into enhancing the roles and capabilities of international organizations and related institutions, as well as being taken up by a vast surge of private entities, and portions of national governments.

Bolstering all this was a vigorous expansion in efforts at promoting the acceptance, authority, and application of international norms pertaining to the many facets of this enhanced concept of security. The surge of interest in gaining greater support for these norms, to make them much more influential now that the Cold War was over, was also closely linked to revitalizing the UN and other international organizations. Thus the expansion of what many people saw as a major element of international security, had a corresponding parallel growth in people and organizations seeking important roles in it.

This fit in well with natural American perceptions and objectives. The United States has, almost from its beginning, felt it embodies and pursues values and a political and economic way of life that should be available to everyone else, and would be readily acceptable to them. That what the US ultimately stands for should be promoted vigorously and will be widely accepted. This has often shaped its policies in a central fashion since Woodrow Wilson. What was new after the Cold War was an explosion of interest in these things, and in helping to help others obtain them, in many places around the world. It seemed that these American expectations were about to be achieved, relatively easily.<sup>7</sup>

And the results? First, it was apparent that such humanitarian efforts had huge appeal across the western world and elsewhere, and they mushroomed. Second, it soon became clear that collectively these were enormous, quite complicated, and very difficult tasks for the US, allies, friends, and others to pursue and particularly complicated to get much of the rest of the world to undertake, at least in terms of Western understanding of what should be done to implement them effectively. They turned out to be much more costly, controversial, onerous, and violent to pursue as well.

The result is well known—numerous unevenly effective military interventions, often primarily organized and led by the US and in keeping with its im-

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7 This is a major theme throughout Kissinger (2014), particularly in discussions focused on the decades from Woodrow Wilson on.

mediate interests and concerns, such as terrorism, particularly the ill-defined and badly conducted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that were therefore eventually badly received in the US and elsewhere. There was also a huge jump in interventions on broader international humanitarian concerns such as development, ethnic conflicts, and human rights. As we know, these interventions have often been controversial to nonparticipants and participants, and very uneven in results (Stewart & Knaus 2012).

All this became part of the global security management structure, and it has contributed to how that structure has come to be in serious difficulty. What should be of serious concern now is how Western states and societies have become, almost universally, less supportive of all these activities, even though they remain attractive in principle, and that this lack of support is particularly noticeable when military operations are involved. This is a very serious development since Western societies and governments have been the bulwark of that security management. They are not abandoning the goals, nor the norms from which the goals spring, and remain disturbed in particular about serious cases of violence or damage to people in other ways. But they dislike the costs, particularly from military actions, in trying to do something about them, and this has been strongly reinforced by the global recession.

They are disappointed with the negative reactions often expressed by non-western governments and elements in their societies, and having to confront many criticisms from Western and non-Western analysts and observers. They have been badly stung by the level and kinds of violence involved, especially in view of the costs, the limited success or downright failure in many instances, whether as a result of their efforts and actions or the ensuing behavior in states and societies they sought to help. As a result Western governments and societies are tired—more introverted, less supportive of global security management and pursuit of related improvements, more skeptical about what will be achieved, less accepting of migrants and refugees, far less confident that newly installed governments and political systems, economies, etc. will work.

Next, many people in the West have concluded that other states and societies must find their own way to improve their situations and thus their security, because as they are now they are not worth caring about. They put their ethnic, religious, caste, tribal, and personal elements ahead of seeking comprehensive social cohesiveness, rule of law, even simple health care, education, good government, even decent diet and sanitation concerns. Many in the West are tired not only of trying to fight for their betterment, but tired of fighting for people who will, in the end they think, return to being as they were. Such harsh attitudes are widespread.

The natural response in the West has been to cut military forces at home and

abroad, and interventions abroad, and military spending, while limiting the scale of interventions. Public opinion polls show that this is what citizens want. On top of this Western and other analysts often assert that efforts to promote modernization, improve societies and governments, and the like, have been badly designed, implemented, and received. The efforts are often considered by those targeted for assistance and support as imperialist: arrogant, threatening, and insensitive. Popular now among analysts, western and nonwestern, is the notion that modernization must be left largely to societies and governments themselves to undertake and implement. Again, the greatest disapproval is often reserved for foreign military intervention.

Particularly salient is the widespread view that the US is already moving to retreat from its leadership role in all this. Others expect that to happen soon or suspect it is going to happen, as do many American analysts. Whether it does so or not, many American officials, leaders, and analysts believe this is what the US ought to do. Analysts in the realist school in particular see this as the best course, asserting that now US resources are overextended to no good purpose. And citizens across the West, especially with the recession in mind, have called for focusing instead on domestic problems and political leaders have taken note. As have major states in various parts of the world exacerbated about Western domination of the international system and eager to play a greater role themselves in its management.

## **THE CORE PROBLEM**

Why and how did this occur? Several factors have been prominent. Foremost, is that Western efforts to deal with standard security problems rooted in fighting—international and internal—are typically conducted simultaneously with trying to handle the expanse of security concerns elevated in prominence by securitization and related efforts. The former has primarily involved force—military intervention, with hopes it can be applied relatively precisely and briefly, thus inexpensively. The latter readily led to confronting other societies, cultures, political systems, and religious beliefs and practices with huge challenges to their legitimacy, leading to involvements that can take decades to resolve. The additional complication in this two-sided endeavor is that often the two security problems are considered interdependent—one cannot be successfully handled without dealing also with the other. Internal and interstate conflicts often have deep roots in the nature of societies and their political institutions and practices that need extensive modification or even elimination so as to spread elements of modernization that can help in reducing the conflict. But modernization of those societies is con-

sidered impossible unless something is done to repress or eliminate the particularly corrupt and vicious regimes and military forces or terrorist groups behind the security problems. US and allied military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan were under great strain in having to attend to aspects of nation-building, community development, relaxing ethnic conflicts, etc. and soon were appealing for waves of civilians to take on these activities. Of course, it was difficult for civilians to do their work if military forces were not around to protect them. But then the people to be helped often felt they were living in an oppressive environment, inhibiting their cooperation.

Second, however, the result of all this is that many regimes and societies tend to see global security management as Western imperialism rationalized in a new way—in fact, some Western analysts agree with them. This makes the resulting perceived threat virtually existential—the Western presence represents a serious threat no matter what the real objective behind it is. Even efforts to promote physical security—get fighting stopped, for example—is therefore condemned as attempted Westernization at work, not security management *per se*. And if the threat is not seen as Westernization, it may well be characterized as outsiders seeking to steal the nation's territory, resources, and wealth. The result, in various places around the world, is serious resistance to Western-driven globalization, to security links to the US and the West, plus a strong desire to obtain nuclear weapons, with treatment of Western rules and norms as unacceptably intrusive and dangerous, and so on (Kissinger 2014, 365).

This means that pursuing global security management in a classic fashion, using deterrence threats and military interventions when necessary, can be harshly incompatible with undertakings promoted under the heading of humanitarianism. Both are intended to broaden and improve security in the widest sense, yet each can often make the other much harder to achieve. People in the West have not found a way to blend the two, nor how to readily separate them. Moving to suppress a vicious regime or civil war, or a nasty interstate conflict, leads almost immediately to demands back home to do something to also suppress ethnic or religious discrimination, the mistreatment of women, authoritarian rule, etc. on grounds that nothing will come of efforts to end the violence without getting at the roots of it—the fighting, the exploitation, or the corruption will just erupt again. The flaws in conducting one will sooner or later erode the other, repeatedly.<sup>8</sup>

Third, while Western societies and governments have roughly similar norms

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8 Perhaps the most notable example was the US move after occupying Iraq to dissolve the Iraqi armed forces and Baathist elements in the bureaucracy, which seriously alienated very important sectors of the population.

and objectives or preferences, when pursuing global security they have clashing interests and great variations in available resources. The former make it difficult to either act or, having acted, to continue the effort until real success is achieved. The latter make it difficult for many Western states to meet the costs and burdens involved so, from the start, the efforts may be underfinanced, under sustained, and thus somewhat incomplete. Western coalition states are far from having equal intensity behind security endeavors for foreigners. The US, notably former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, has often strongly objected to this with little success (Matlary 2014).

Fourth, as a result many Western analysts and officials, analysts and commentators, are eager to resume classic balance of power thinking in which international politics is shot through with spheres of influence and preoccupation with narrowly national interests, with major nations turning to offshore balancing, leaving other states and societies to go their own ways as long as they do not threaten Western security in the classic sense. In terms of global security management, this is understandable but almost certainly out of date. The American propensity to promote American ideals and values has deep roots and is now reinforced by similar elements in other Western nations. It is simply not going to go away. The West would have to forego global security management almost completely which is probably impossible politically. And the world is getting smaller; it will be steadily more difficult to see very serious developments elsewhere as not posing any significant threat to a great many others.

All this contributes significantly to a final disturbing condition. The United States remains the only government and society in international politics, and has been for quite a while, that readily thinks globally. Not all the time, but more than any other society and government. It has responsibilities globally; resources globally; friends and associates globally, and worries globally. It despairs globally. Not just in security matters but in economic affairs, global warming, norms, its national image.... Russia, China, Arab states and Iran, to name a few, continue to challenge the international system out of familiar, distinctly regional and national preoccupations. And while the West has dominated the effort to sustain a new global security management system, in many Western societies and governments the commitment to this is rather limited. This is an unfortunate but understandable situation, particularly when serious fighting or very substantial expenses are involved, and it cannot readily be changed—it must be accommodated somehow within the existing global security management system. Thus the United States has to play the major role in any global security management effort. If its willingness to do so declines further no one else will step forward in its place, at least not in the foreseeable future.

Given the decline in Western support for participating in global security management, particularly when it involves military intervention, and the irritation or opposition it often generates, it is not surprising to see a more belligerent North Korea, the continuing Arab Spring disasters, the disturbing Western relationship with Russia, the expanding Chinese belligerence vis-à-vis its neighbors, and the difficult conflicts in Africa. The present situation resembles the 1930s, when a serious depression helped erode the energy, resources, and commitment necessary to sustain the security management arrangements set up after World War I. This led almost inevitably to rising tension and friction, increasing belligerency from autocratic states, and radical attacks on the democracies ideologically, politically, and eventually militarily, with not much done to stop it until it was too late.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Many of the endeavors and objectives noted above—military and otherwise—have indeed not worked out well, but the global security arrangements since the Cold War have had some success. Great power relations have been much less conflictual, with no wars among them and no situations where a war seemed possible until the recent conflict over the Ukraine. This has been a quarter century of unusually pacific interactions—a kind of pluralistic security community—among major powers while their interactions and interdependence steadily expanded. The world's nuclear weapons have been reduced by more than 75%; many of the remaining ones are in storage, deactivated, or on their way to being dismantled. There has been a modestly integrated international effort by the major states to halt nuclear proliferation. The incidence of interstate wars in general has fallen sharply (Mueller 1989). Until recently that had been true of internal wars as well. Loss of life from warfare in general had declined significantly, until recently. Norms opposing outright interstate territorial seizures have been largely upheld—Russia and China being the primary violators presently.

To a considerable extent this progress has been generated or facilitated by the GSMS put in place after the Cold War predominately by the (mostly) democratic and (mostly) Western states. This coalition has repeatedly sought to get other states to join if they are willing to cooperate in keeping with its norms and practices, but with only modest success. Many target states and their citizens oppose this coalition and its arrangements, primarily out of seeing it as a classic pursuit of domination or Westernization, but also due to lack of interest or concern about the costs and other burdens. If its security arrangements continue to erode, numerous harmful consequences seem more likely than not to result. Several states

will continue seeking to impose their own approach in trying to become the dominant actors in their regional security matters. The Ukraine crisis displays elements of what this will look like. These states may well deserve to be dominant in their regional systems, but a crazy quilt pattern of very different international systems alone, with no global management to effectively provide restraint and standards, would be periodically disastrous. Next, we could very well see the return of interstate fighting. Fear of this, or the desire in various governments either to dominate security matters in their neighborhood or prevent an opponent from doing it, has led to nuclear proliferation in the past and could well increase the pressure for it to expand further, and to a weakening of organized efforts to prevent it. There will be declining cooperation for and intervention on upholding the other post-Cold War dimensions of global security that have been playing a prominent role.

This will presumably generate serious reverberations, particularly because the international system is a steadily shrinking social construction. Linkages and interactions among states and societies are proliferating and deepening, due to increasing flows of all sorts. As a result there is a rising level of internal disturbances or other serious conflicts as well: disruptions, greater flows of migrants and refugees, more environmental damage, enhanced ethnic, religious, and cultural clashes. That will likely be accompanied often by insufficient or ineffective responses to nonmilitary threats and failures in nonmilitary security situations.

One result will be a serious strain on deterrence, the most important component of effective global *security* management. Not just in deterrence that prevents violent outbreaks and grievous disruptions poised to explode (immediate deterrence) but deterrence that curbs and suppresses such behavior well before it gets to the point of exploding (general deterrence). Deterrence is the spine of global security management. It is the fundamental product of an effective security system whether from a unipolar structure, a stable balance of power, an institutionalized international management, or a potent cluster of powerful influential states with cohesive integrated norms and values. The basic contribution of such systems, when successful, is the consistent presence of effective deterrence that prevents or strongly discourages outbreaks of violence, suppresses it when it erupts, and backstops other efforts to enhance security at many levels.

The US and its associates more or less ambled into generating, then maintaining, the current global security management system. They are now, more or less, ambling out of it, and may well continue doing so. This is being led, in large part, by the US but it has plenty of company. What do we have to replace it?<sup>9</sup>

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9 For a more optimistic view of the current state of security management and its prospects see Kagan (2012).



## OPTIONS?

It would be good to have a handy substitute or alternative for providing the military backup necessary to sustain the current global security system, but nothing like it is currently in sight. There are no alternative collective arrangements, military and otherwise, that can reasonably contain the outbreaks of violence we now see in too many places. There is no agreement on what a good one would look like. There is nothing like a consensus on what it should be and how it should operate. There is also a dearth of decent IR theory pertaining to this. The existing system is slipping away with no replacement at hand.

The most obvious alternative would be a modified “realist” one, as many international relations analysts suggest, “modified” because no one really wants a classic realist world reborn. The realist alternative today would stress entering into fewer military interventions in general, by stressing standard national interests and downplaying somewhat humanitarian concerns. For example, the realists’ reaction in the US to the Ukraine situation has been that the West should not have expanded NATO into Eastern Europe, particularly Ukraine, because it had no serious interests at stake there. All it did was threaten Russian interests, to which Russia naturally reacted very strongly—verbally at the start and now more physically as that government sees the existing security management system slipping away and thus vulnerable to being challenged.

How effective would this security management be? History suggests such arrangements can work for considerable periods of time if the states primarily involved in disagreements emphasize maintaining a reasonable level of order and avoid excessively threatening each other’s interests. But it also suggests that such arrangements too often begin to break down, and in the contemporary international system that seems rather likely. The whole point of seeking systemwide security management, since the Concert of Europe, has been to reduce relying on classic power balancing because it is too unreliable, which is too costly when it begins to deteriorate. On the other hand, if the major states in particular combine modest nuclear arsenals with resting world order on decent respect for each other’s interests, including collectively suppressing other nuclear arsenals, perhaps stability would be suitably sustained.

A second alternative would be to return to taking the UN seriously. That means an end to Western states maneuvering around Chinese and Russian vetoes and other objections so they can run global security management as they wish, and an end to their maneuvering around the UN entirely at times. Instead the major powers would have to do as much as possible collectively, with general agreement, to manage security and settle for what the limits on consensus pro-

vide. That would revive the way the Security Council worked during the Cold War, something the West lost patience with decades ago. One result would be the growing devolution of security management responsibilities to dominant regional powers.

Thus a third option, attractive to various governments, is a world managing security matters largely at the regional level, primarily through the dominant regional powers. The UN would have even less relevance, even if those powers had permanent seats on the Security Council. Each would carefully protect its regional fief, using the Security Council to reinforce its right to do so. The study of regional international systems has gained ground in the past few decades, and that might contribute to enhancing security in many of them (Paul 2012). And each regional leader might be more readily satisfied having its own bailiwick, enough to create broad world order. Of course, there could be very serious conflicts instead inside regional systems, like the terrible fragmentation associated with the Arab Spring and the rising frictions between China and its major neighbors, or conflicts between regional systems as in the speculation about a serious US-China conflict eventually.

These options envision a less centralized global security management. The main theory of *global* security management is liberal. It asserts that the Western approach to international politics among Western nations and their closest associates, a kind of Deutschian community,<sup>10</sup> will continue spreading, however slowly, because of the appeal of the West and its ways, the appeal of the related international norms, and the effects of rising interactions around the world. It takes seriously the need to attend to major security threats domestically in states. It envisions an expanding conglomeration of states being drawn into promoting global security management collectively. There is no necessary anarchy in international politics because international interdependence is eating away at it, and the resulting level of community in international affairs is too powerful, appealing and pervasive to fall victim to retreats from it (Ikenberry 2014).

The necessary basis for this would be US determination to lead it, including willingness to use its military power when necessary, and the US getting suitable military and other backing from more than just Western states. With the present day Western malaise, this seems unlikely, but it is not impossible. After all, on several occasions the US seemed determined to step well back from the dominant position it eventually assumed after World War II, but in each case it ended up keep-

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10 This means having what Karl Deutsch called a "pluralistic security community" in referring to the emerging European community back in the 1950s, where actual fighting among the members becomes virtually inconceivable.

ing and enlarging its alliances and other associations and eventually expanding its security responsibilities. Maybe this will happen again, but is it very likely? After all the trouble spots could continue to multiply, and the West might be partly the cause because Western societies are not going to abandon their humanitarian and normative inclinations. The US pursuit of a democratic, free enterprise, prosperous, and tolerant world via a decent world order is now some 100 years old—since Woodrow Wilson sought to make it the heart of American foreign policy—and many major societies have since joined the club. How can this be kept from frightening and antagonizing many other parts of the world?

Global security management has to be taken very seriously now, as a major priority, because it is heading toward a serious crisis.<sup>11</sup> The other alternatives for dealing with the situation at present have little appeal. The US has a history of waiting too long in situations like this, leading to unfortunate outcomes. And while the current global security management system has some attractive elements, it is inadequately designed and operated. The UN has security responsibilities that include Security Council authorizations of military interventions, but less potently than the overlapping security responsibilities assumed by the US and the West. Nuclear deterrence remains an important component of global security management but is practiced by too many states. Efforts to control proliferation are being pursued by major states that lack true harmony about the problem. Meanwhile, a vast array of private or semi-private entities and NGOs are entangled with governments, the UN, and other IGOs in conducting an immense assortment of attacks on major nonmilitary threats that frequently antagonize many states, ethnic or religious groups, and entrenched elites. Traditional military arrangements for providing global level military security have to be somewhat disentangled from the many humanitarian endeavors but there is no clear path toward how to do this. The latter must be handled in ways that often soft-pedal what is being sought and how if we are to have fewer violence-prone reactions to them.

Starting over—having developed a new global security management structure with great bursts of energy and promise—would almost certainly be too complex and difficult to arrange now, not practical, not really possible. The best approach seems to be to continue taming the most serious military security problems today, however difficult, so as to halt, then reverse, the deterioration of the existing security management system. Otherwise it is likely to continue deteriorating due to the costs. Halting that would hopefully buy time for reconsideration and recon-

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11 For an early anticipation of this see Kaplan (2001).

struction of the presently very unwieldy system.

But if it turns out that we have to start over, it should begin to happen soon. "...the world awaits the distillation of a new regional order by America and other countries in a position to take a global view" in the Middle East, which would be a stepping stone to arriving at "a concept of order that transcends the perspective and ideals of any one region or nation," (Kissinger 2014, 145, 373) and the basis for security in international politics. That in turn suggests we badly need to be rejuvenating theoretical explorations of security *management* at the global level, not just theoretical explorations of what world order will look like. New thinking about international security management is indeed in need.

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