

**Asia Security Initiative Policy Series  
Working Paper No. 17  
August 2011**

**(Not) Reconciling International Security (IS)  
with Non-traditional Security (NTS) Studies:  
Westphalia, the 'West' and the  
Long Shadow of 1944**

Shaun Breslin  
Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation  
University of Warwick  
UK

and

Visiting Senior Research Fellow  
Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies  
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies  
Nanyang Technological University  
Singapore

## Abstract

Understandings of what constitutes international security have been largely influenced by the historical experiences of the great powers. The failed attempts to prevent war in Europe from the 17th century onwards, and latterly the more successful (in its own terms) prevention of a third World War in the second half of the 20th century, did much to establish what was to be secured and how this security could best be achieved.

The end of the Cold War has seen a shift away from states towards more people-centred understandings of security, leading to some previously neglected issues becoming part of the international security agenda. However, the move to address non-traditional security challenges tends to be limited to the causes of insecurity for people in the developed world. The causes of fear and want of millions in the developing world are left outside the discourses of IS, and consequently, these concerns are often marginalised when it comes to attempts to find new ways of ensuring international security.

This paper argues that the differences between non-traditional security (NTS) and international security (IS) studies may be too fundamental for them to ever find a comfortable common ground; and it suggests that the sub-disciplines of regional/area studies and international political economy (IPE) may offer greater utility in moving forward the NTS discourse.

*This Policy Series presents papers in a preliminary form and serves to stimulate comment and discussion. The views expressed are entirely the author's own and not that of the RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies. The paper is the result of research conducted under the Asia Security Initiative programme on internal challenges supported by the MacArthur Foundation. Visit [www.asicluster3.com](http://www.asicluster3.com) to find out more about this initiative. More information on the work of the RSIS Centre for NTS Studies can be found at [www.rsis.edu.sg/nts](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/nts).*

### **Terms of Use:**

*You are free to publish this material in its entirety or only in part in your newspapers, wire services, internet-based information networks and newsletters and you may use the information in your radio-TV discussions or as a basis for discussion in different fora, provided full credit is given to the author(s) and the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). Kindly inform the publisher ([NTS\\_Centre@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:NTS_Centre@ntu.edu.sg)) and provide details of when and where the publication was used.*

### **Recommended Citation:**

Breslin, Shaun, 2011, *(Not) Reconciling International Security (IS) with Non-traditional Security (NTS) Studies: Westphalia, the 'West' and the Long Shadow of 1944*, Asia Security Initiative Policy Series No. 17, Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies.

## **Biography**

Professor Shaun Breslin is Director of the Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation at the University of Warwick, UK, and Associate Fellow of the Chatham House Asia Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, UK. His research focuses primarily on China's international relations and political economy and the study of comparative regionalism. He is currently directing a European Union (EU) Framework 7 integrated research project on the EU in a multi-polar world, where he is also involved as a researcher in a sub-project on different discourses on the nature of security.

## Introduction

The overarching aim of this paper is to interrogate whether ‘new’ forms of non-traditional security (NTS) challenges can be incorporated into discourses and practices of international security (IS). It argues that, at least prior to September 11th, and to a large extent afterwards as well, the search for international security has been dominated by definitions that have been largely driven by the major (Western) global powers, built on their histories and experiences of the 19th and 20th centuries. These have taken the security of the (Westphalian) state as their starting point, and focused on how best to prevent inter-state war – primarily in Europe or on a global scale. This emphasis on international security and/or national security, it is argued, does not create the foundations for guaranteeing human security, or make it easy to find a common ground between the two. Indeed, the primacy of statist- and system-level analysis at the heart of definitions of international security has at times been the source of the abrogation of national and human security elsewhere.

As Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen argue, ‘after the Cold War, “security” became a concept that generated – and hence could unify – debates across perspectives previously opposed.’<sup>1</sup> This is partly because, in the West, the idea of what constitutes an existential threat has changed – both in terms of what might cause that existential threat, and who or what is under threat. In the process, attention has shifted, becoming closer to what has long been considered real and present dangers for millions in the developing world. However, while this paper shares Buzan and Hansen’s perception that the study of IS has diversified away from a focus on states and (preventing) war, and become a discipline that embraces diversity, it is less convinced that this has resulted in a full reconciliation between IS and NTS.

This is because the transition from traditional IS thinking has only been partial, and largely – though to be fair, not wholly – still reflects an asymmetric distribution of influence on the ontological and methodological foundations of the study of the changing nature of security. It typically focuses on those elements of NTS that impact (or might impact) Western states/nations, economies and individuals, and privileges these concerns over the broader set of issues that are at the root of insecurity in large parts of the world.

The changing understanding of IS, and what it constitutes, is not just a matter of academic interest. Many of the solutions to the ‘new’ security challenges are not to be found in the existing IS agenda and architecture, but are instead (in part at least) grounded in what is often considered ‘development’ discourses and practices, and in the global financial (rather than security) architecture. The shadow of 1944, and the very unequal balance of global power established at that time, still hangs over the global order today; partly in terms of the objectives of international organisations (and some of the norms and principles that underpin them), and partly in terms of the formal and informal distribution of power within them. With the distribution of global power today rather different than at the end of World War II, the legitimacy of these arrangements is being questioned. As the official communiqué of the Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) leaders’ summit put it in 2010, ‘we share the perception that the world is undergoing major and swift changes that highlight the need for corresponding transformations in global governance in all relevant areas’.<sup>2</sup> These

---

<sup>1</sup> Barry Buzan and Lene Hansen, *The Evolution of International Security Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 13.

<sup>2</sup> BRIC – Brazil, Russia, India and China Grouping II Summit of Heads of State/Government, ‘Official Joint Statement’, 15 April 2010. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/2649/t688366.htm> (accessed 17 April 2011).

transformations have been accelerated by the global financial crisis in the late 2000s, which, according to the architect of the concept of the Washington Consensus, has discredited 'Western views of development'.<sup>3</sup>

This suggests that not just the relationship between inequity and power in the global order – a fairly standard topic of attention – but also what we might call the 'international political economy of development'<sup>4</sup> should form an important component of the study of (in)security. Rather than trying to reconcile NTS with dominant conceptions of IS, perhaps NTS could be combined with international political economy (IPE) to produce a more effective framework for studying (and responding to) challenges to human security.

## Framing the Study

It is perhaps worth clarifying some basic starting points for this study. First, using any term as a means of delineating different types or groups of states in the global order is fraught with difficulty. 'The West', 'the North', 'the developed world' and so on are all loaded terms in one way or another and carry with them implicit (or sometimes explicit) connotations. So, in this paper, 'the West' and 'developing states' will simply be used as shorthand to refer to an overly blunt, and overly sharp, distinction between those states that have had more power to set global agendas and build global structures and those that have had less influence.

Second, while there is certainly no argument that the major Western states see security in a statist Westphalian way while developing states view it in an entirely different way, emerging developing countries such as China have become the strongest promoters of the supposed Westphalian emphasis on sovereignty (in the face of attempts to promote the idea that the 'collective responsibility to protect'<sup>5</sup> is more important than sovereignty). Non-Western voices have also not been silent in promoting understandings of security and preferences for security practices – the argument here is simply that their voices have not been as influential in setting global agendas as those of the major powers.

Third, this paper does not propose easy and obvious solutions in the form of the creation of new, improved alternatives to the dominance of a statist world order. On one level, replacing statist global organisations with others that are not built around states as key actors coordinating global affairs is not an easy task. Indeed, it is much easier to identify the failings of the Westphalian statist system or to suggest, as this paper largely does, that this system needs to refocus and reorientate itself than it is to identify workable alternatives. On another level, while this paper does suggest that the promotion of a neo-liberal agenda has indeed contributed to challenges to human security, it accepts that alternatives to the diktats of the Washington Consensus do not necessarily hold all the solutions. In particular, what we might call models of strong state developmentalism have, in many cases, resulted in threats as severe as those contributed by neo-liberal strategies.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> John Williamson, 'The Impact of the Financial Crisis on Development Thinking' (Max Fry Annual Lecture delivered at the University of Birmingham, 13 October 2010).

<http://www.iie.com/publications/papers/williamson20101013.pdf> (accessed 3 December 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Björn Hettne, 'Introduction: Towards an International Political Economy of Development', *The European Journal of Development Research* 7, no. 2 (1995): 223–32.

<sup>5</sup> UN General Assembly, *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/59/2005, 21 March 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Ben Selwyn, 'An Historical Materialist Appraisal of Friedrich List and His Modern-day Followers', *New Political Economy* 14, no. 2 (2009): 157–80.

So, having established what the paper does not argue, it is time to turn to what it does propose. The interests of the most powerful states in the global order have importance when it comes to, first of all, setting global agendas, and second, establishing not just national, but also regional and global mechanisms for dealing with them. So the key argument here is that the histories and experiences of first, the European powers, and second, those powers plus the US, have largely shaped how we theorise about international relations, how security has come to be defined, how power is distributed in major global institutions and how security is (or often is not) maintained.

## International History and the Evolution of Conceptions of Security

### *Westphalia (1648) and the 'creation' of a discipline*

To explore the claim that the histories and experiences of the major powers in Europe and the US have had a major influence on how security is conceptualised, it is important to consider the evolution of international organisations, institutions and norms based on attempts to construct means of ensuring peace, primarily (but not only) in Europe.

David Baldwin notes that 'it has become a commonplace to associate the origins of security studies with the twin stimuli of nuclear weaponry and the cold war'.<sup>7</sup> This, Joseph Nye, Jr and Sean Lynn-Jones argue, has 'led to a preoccupation with contemporary issues and a neglect of pre-nuclear problems of war and peace and of the broader economic and social context of security'.<sup>8</sup> Security studies, then, is seen as being in some ways separate from the study of international history and/or international relations theory. Yet as Terry Terriff et al. point out, concern with insecurity has been at the heart of international relations thinking from whenever one wishes to date the origin of the endeavour: '[t]he starting point for the field is *insecurity*, the experience and implications of war and resulting fears for the viability of new structures of peace'.<sup>9</sup>

Following E.H. Carr, texts on realist thinking typically attribute the start of this study of peace and war to Thucydides and Peloponnesian War. This paper takes the starting point of the modern interest in security as the supposed creation of the Westphalian notion of sovereignty in the peace treaties (of Münster and Osnabrück) in 1648. Here was a settlement that was designed to prevent the issues that had led to the onset and continuation of the 30 Years' War and the 80 Years' War in Europe from re-emerging and once more plunging the continent into turmoil and war(s).

Building on the now classic interpretation of Leo Gross,<sup>10</sup> Westphalia is usually considered to be an epoch-changing event. It is also often thought to represent the starting point for modern theorising on international relations (as inter-national relations),<sup>11</sup> that is, the start of territory-based theories of 'an international politics morally autonomous from the realm of

---

<sup>7</sup> David A. Baldwin, 'Security Studies and the End of the Cold War', *World Politics* 48, no. 1 (1995): 119.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph S. Nye, Jr and Sean M. Lynn-Jones, 'International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field', *International Security* 12, no. 4 (1988): 13.

<sup>9</sup> Terry Terriff, Stuart Croft, Lucy James and Patrick Morgan, *Security Studies Today* (Oxford: Polity, 1999), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Leo Gross, 'The Peace of Westphalia, 1648–1948', *The American Journal of International Law* 42, no. 1 (1948): 20–41.

<sup>11</sup> Kalevi J. Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648–1989* (1991; Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

religion'.<sup>12</sup> The Peace of Westphalia was supposed to be built on the recognition of the state as the highest source of sovereign political authority, the secularisation of politics and the establishment of 'modern' diplomatic relations by permanent and professional representatives of sovereign states conducting interactions on a basis of equity.

This understanding of the *actual* importance of Westphalia is challenged. Indeed, Andreas Osiander blames Gross' misperceptions of the causes and implications of the treaties for setting generations of scholars down paths that have created a 'Westphalian myth'.<sup>13</sup> In reality, the norms of sovereignty were already beginning to evolve before 1648, and continued to evolve for at least a couple of centuries afterwards.<sup>14</sup> It could in fact be argued that Westphalia in some ways represented a step back from the norms of sovereignty that were already in place.<sup>15</sup> So it is best to see Westphalia as emblematic of a change in the basis of international relations rather than a turning point in itself; it might be a myth, but it is one that has had considerable resonance for the development of thinking about the nature of international relations and security, the nature of global governance and the nature of theory building.<sup>16</sup>

### *Building European security institutions*

Post-war settlements often contain a degree of punishment for the defeated – the loss of disputed land, for example, or maybe reparations or forced disarmament. At the very least, dominant powers tend to try and use peace treaties and settlements for their own benefit. However, such settlements also often involve the 'never again principle', in an attempt to make sure that war will not be repeated. This might be through removing the authority of religious institutions, as the Peace of Westphalia supposedly did, or through creating mechanisms that allow for the peaceful resolution of inter-state tensions. This duality, and the tension between what we might call power politics on the one hand and institutionalising security mechanisms on the other, was evident in Westphalia – and in the way that the organisation of security in Europe continued to evolve over the next three centuries.

In terms of creating a lasting peace, Westphalia did not succeed. Europe witnessed various wars of succession in the 18th century (which saw fighting outside Europe, but *between* European powers, and thus were still effectively European conflicts). Westphalia was just one of a string of treaties, congresses and organisations that were designed to try and prevent the causes of the last war leading to the next one.

---

<sup>12</sup> John Gerard Ruggie, 'Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations', *International Organization* 47, no. 1 (1993): 163.

<sup>13</sup> Andreas Osiander, 'Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth', *International Organization* 55, no. 2 (2001): 251–87.

<sup>14</sup> Stephane Beaulac, 'The Westphalian Model in Defining International Law: Challenging the Myth', *Australian Journal of Legal History* 8, no. 2 (2004): 181–213.

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the 'Westphalia as myth' literature, see Benjamin de Carvalho, Halvard Leira and John M. Hobson, 'The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths That Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011): 735–8.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). Philpott sees the end of colonialism as marking a second epoch-changing moment that has changed the fundamental thinking on the nature of Westphalian sovereignty.



The same basic principle, for example, lay at the heart of the Congress of Vienna and the resulting Concert of Europe which was designed to keep the peace after the end of the Napoleonic Wars;<sup>17</sup> the outcome was a system of ‘great power tutelage’ built on a ‘European community of interests, and commitment to its defense’ where ‘the smaller states were thus shunted aside because the great powers had the responsibility of preserving the peace of Europe’.<sup>18</sup>

The principle is also evident in the establishment of the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague Conference of 1899. The Conference was designed to allow for the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes due, in part at least, to Prussia and France not having solved their disputes peacefully in 1870 and 1871. However, the Conference solved them (but not once and for all) through extreme force and the use of new military technologies, in a way that would eventually work in Germany’s favour. This ‘violently changed the course of European History’.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, perhaps the military-technological revolution of the 1870s was more important than the development of nuclear weapons in changing the nature of warfare, attempts to prevent it, and thinking on the nature of security.

Here, though, the decision to push for international coordination was not just an intra-European affair. It was also partly driven by Russian insecurity over its own position vis-à-vis other powers, war between a European power and a new rising extra-regional power (Spanish-American War, 1898) and war between a rising and a declining Asian power (Sino-Japanese War, 1894–1895).<sup>20</sup> So the 1899 Hague Conference perhaps represents the first move away from simply Euro-centric problems and solutions to a wider international process that some at the time might consider a presage to the much-needed creation of a ‘World Organisation’<sup>21</sup> or a ‘Federation of the World’.<sup>22</sup> The Hague Conference did not, of course, prevent the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, or the slide into a Great War in 1914 that became more than just a European affair. At the end of the supposed ‘war to end all wars’, the League of Nations once again proved unable to provide the hoped-for global solution to international tensions, and well before the onset of World War II, had lost its authority.

### *Sovereignty and hypocrisy*

This extraordinarily brief overview of over 300 years of the evolution of security governance is important here for three reasons. First, Stephen Krasner famously referred to sovereignty as ‘organized hypocrisy’, arguing that, however defined, supposed principles of sovereignty have always been overridden when other considerations have been deemed more important by the political elites:

---

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted, though, that the Congress actually concluded just prior to Napoleon’s final defeat.

<sup>18</sup> Richard B. Elrod, ‘The Concert of Europe: A Fresh Look at an International System’, *World Politics* 28, no. 2 (1976): 163–4.

<sup>19</sup> Geoffrey Wawro, *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Conquest of France in 1870–1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 51. As a result, the Conference also took the first steps in establishing what was justifiable conduct in war, which would later evolve into the Geneva Convention.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen Barcroft, ‘The Hague Peace Conference of 1899’, *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1989): 55–68.

<sup>21</sup> Raymond L. Bridgman, *World Organization* (Boston: Ginn, 1905).

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin F. Trueblood, *The Federation of the World, 3rd edition* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1907).



Outcomes in the international system are determined by rules whose violation of, or adherence to, international principles or rules is based on calculations of material and ideational interests, not taken-for-granted practices derived from some overarching institutional structures or deeply embedded generative grammars. Organized hypocrisy is the normal state of affairs.<sup>23</sup>

One does not have to accept Krasner's position on the nature of state interests and power to accept that for much of the post-Westphalian era, recognition (by the great powers) of the sovereignty of – or perhaps more accurately, the endowment of sovereignty on – extra-European states has been less than equitably applied. The Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 that helped shape the territorial division of the continent that is still reflected in the nature of the political borders today was based on the interests of the different Western powers in attendance<sup>24</sup> and the balance of power within the West, rather than any idea of Westphalian (or any other sort of) sovereignty for Africa. Indeed, it seems to have occurred without the participants even having a clear understanding of the physical geography that they were dividing, resulting in some 'absurd results'.<sup>25</sup> According to one notable scholar of imperialism, the percentage of the African continent under colonial rule rose from 10.8 per cent to 90.4 per cent between 1876 and 1900.<sup>26</sup> The prevalence of straight lines demarcating international boundaries in the Middle East is also testament to the creation of a territorial division of states and international politics based on the competing interests of the major Western powers. Woodrow Wilson's 14 points that called for the removal of foreign troops from occupied territory only referred to Europe (including Turkey). Further, the Treaty of Versailles that was supposedly built on these principles still managed to transfer Germany's possessions in China to Japan, without any concern for China's interests, even though the fifth of Wilson's points called for:

[a] free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.<sup>27</sup>

### *European security and global insecurities*

From this starting point, it is possible to build the argument that a considerable number of the challenges to security in large parts of the world today stem from this 'hypocrisy' and the rather large gap between how conceptions of sovereignty are applied to the major powers and the rest of the world. In particular, the processes of colonisation (and later decolonisation) that created states based on the power dynamics between dominant Western sovereign states (and lack of geographical knowledge) have resulted in war and

---

<sup>23</sup> Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 9.

<sup>24</sup> Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany, Russia, US, Portugal, Denmark, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium and Turkey.

<sup>25</sup> Brian Hudson, 'The New Geography and the New Imperialism: 1870–1918', *Antipode* 9, no. 2 (1972): 144.

<sup>26</sup> The original calculation is by Supan, but gained a wider audience when it was cited by Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline* (Petrograd: Mimeo, 1917). This is now widely available in many formats including online at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/index.htm>

<sup>27</sup> Woodrow Wilson, 'President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points', 8 January 1918. [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/wilson14.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp) (accessed 23 May 2003).

terror for millions who were not ‘beneficiaries’ of sovereignty in earlier periods – and indeed, they continue to be the source of both national and human insecurity today.

Statehood in Europe – both the conception of statehood and the concomitant principles of sovereignty, and the parameters and borders of the states – emerged out of centuries of interactions among the region’s inhabitants. Statehood outside of Europe often occurred as a by-product of these European interactions, rather than out of similar processes of indigenous interactions that might have produced other outcomes in Africa, Asia and elsewhere.

Indeed, perhaps we can talk of the security challenges that have emerged from ‘premature statehood’ built on the lack of congruence between ethnic groupings, nationality/nations and states; where state borders either divide ‘imagined communities’, force others to live together, or both. As Donald Horowitz argues, the nature of colonial rule is such that these tensions were likely to be buried, only tending to emerge as ethnic tension upon decolonisation, when the question of ‘to whom the new states belonged’ became predominant.<sup>28</sup> Premature statehood, and the incomplete transition from empires to nation-states where the political boundaries matched notions of imagined communities during the ‘unmixing’ of different peoples, has also been seen as the cause of ethnic tension in Eastern Europe.<sup>29</sup> Here, the outbreak of conflict was delayed as ‘after 1945, the Cold War froze and temporarily diverted conflicting attitudes along the axis of East-West polarization. [But the] post-World War II treaties did not change the complicated nature of minority issues in the region.’<sup>30</sup>

#### *European agendas, national security and the security of the state*

The second reason for looking to history is to show how the importance of state-centric understandings of security based largely (but not only) on European experiences came to dominate theory building, and the conceptions and definitions of security that still have considerable purchase today. The moves towards putative institutions designed for European and subsequently international (if not wholly global), security governance were largely inspired by the history of conflict in Europe. The failure to establish a working means of resolving territorial disputes, the relatively brief periods marked by the absence of war, and (as the 19th century progressed) the increasing ferocity of warfare as a result of technological advances and threats of revolution that increasingly concerned state elites, all played their role.<sup>31</sup> As James Goldgeier and Michael McFaul put it, quite simply, ‘the security dilemma in the international system during this period was quite strong, as states could be attacked, defeated, and even destroyed by others.’<sup>32</sup> Indeed, in some ways, to call this a security agenda – either national or international – misses the point. This was not simply

---

<sup>28</sup> Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 4.

<sup>29</sup> Rogers Brubaker, ‘Aftermaths of Empire and Unmixing of Peoples: Historical and Comparative Perspectives’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 18, no. 2 (1995): 189–218.

<sup>30</sup> Plamen Pantev, ‘The Balkans: Historical Origins and Present Dangers of Recurring Ethnic Conflict on the European Periphery, 1945–2002’, CIAO Case Studies, 2003. <http://www.ciaonet.org/casestudy/pap01/pap01.pdf> (accessed 6 April 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Louise Richardson, ‘The Concert of Europe and Security Management in the Nineteenth Century’, in *Imperfect Unions: Security Institutions over Time and Space*, ed. Helga Haftendorn, Robert O. Keohane and Celeste A. Wallander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 48–80.

<sup>32</sup> James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, ‘A Tale of Two Worlds: Core and Periphery in the Post-Cold War Era’, *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 472.

about the security of the state and/or national security, but in many cases, was about something more fundamental – '[n]ational survival, not international security or world government, was the nation's prime goal'.<sup>33</sup>

As the US became a great power (usually dated as the war with Spain),<sup>34</sup> it became a key actor in (and determinant of) European security (as well as its own). It was also a, if not *the*, key actor in the even greater horrors of what was to become known as World War I, the rise of fascism and authoritarian rule, and World War II. So it is hardly surprising that scholars of international relations were preoccupied with thinking about the causes of war, and theorising about how future wars might best be avoided. The two major theories that have dominated the study of international relations both have their origins in the search for ways of preventing yet another major conflict in north-west Europe that would (latterly) bring the US into the European theatre of war – albeit a search that in the 20th century has become one designed to prevent global conflict and even perhaps planetary destruction. Neither, given this history, is it surprising that security was defined as the security of the state – either from external enemies or internal revolution. As will be discussed shortly, the main existential threat emerged from the danger of inter-state war.

#### *Alternatives to the European model?*

As Brantly Womack puts it, just as the traditional Chinese concept of *tian xia* equated China with 'all under heaven', so 'contemporary thinking about international relations shares the unconscious parochialism of Western *tian xia*'.<sup>35</sup> So would it have been any different if other traditions and philosophies had dominated the evolution of global norms – if Chinese rather than European parochialism had come to dominate? Much has been written about the different understanding of inter-national interactions in the Chinese world order – where interactions were conducted on a hierarchical basis with China at its centre – that by and large resulted in a regional peace.<sup>36</sup> One extension of this argument is that theories that have been built only by assessing how European states acted in the past simply cannot explain how China will act as it emerges as a global great power. In particular, these theories may over-emphasise the destabilising impact of an Asian rising power on the Asian regional (and global) order.<sup>37</sup>

Not everybody agrees. Yuan-Kang Wang's study of the history of China's defence and military action suggests that the promotion of peace and harmony was only something that occurred when the country's leaders felt weak and threatened. When China was strong,

---

<sup>33</sup> Helga Haftendorn, 'The Security Puzzle: Theory-building and Discipline-building in International Security', *International Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1991): 8.

<sup>34</sup> Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961).

<sup>35</sup> Brantly Womack, 'Traditional China and the Globalization of International Relations Thinking', in *China and International Relations: The Chinese View and the Contribution of Wang Gungwu*, ed. Yongnian Zheng (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 117.

<sup>36</sup> David C. Kang, *East Asia before the West: Five Centuries of Trade and Tribute* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> David C. Kang, 'Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks', *International Security* 27, no. 4 (2003): 57–85.

military force, and war, was more often the dominant security paradigm.<sup>38</sup> For Andrew Scobell, China's policymakers have erroneously convinced themselves that they are guided by a historically inspired 'cult of defense' that not only fails to stand up to historical scrutiny, but runs counter to the more recent history of military activity (both overseas and in domestic politics) in the People's Republic of China (PRC) era.<sup>39</sup> While it might be true that traditional Chinese thought and practice did not share the same conceptions of statehood and sovereignty as that which emerged in the West, by the beginning of the 20th century, the security of the state, and even the potential for the disappearance of the state as a result of war and colonisation, was very much part of China's strategic thinking.<sup>40</sup>

It is also true that it was not just European experiences alone that influenced thinking and definitions. The Japan-China, US-Spain and Japan-Russia wars of the late 19th and early 20th centuries noted earlier seem to conform to pessimistic interpretations of power balancing in Europe. In terms of the percentage of combatants and civilians killed, the War of the Triple Alliance (1864–1870) that saw Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay collectively in conflict with Paraguay was more destructive than any of the European conflicts, resulting in the death of most of the male population of Paraguay (and possibly as many as 70 per cent of the entire population).<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, the argument here is that the experiences of a relatively small part of the world have had a massive impact on the definitional and theoretical understandings that have been at the core of the thinking and practice of international relations in general, and security in particular.<sup>42</sup> Further, as shall be discussed in more detail shortly, the way in which this has led to definitions and conceptions of international security has been particularly important for the (in)security of many across the globe.

### *The legacy of 1944*

The third reason for looking to history is to contextualise debates over the balance of global power. With the rise of China (and others), there is a strong feeling that that balance is moving away from the West. Nevertheless, contemporary understandings and definitions of security, and the global security architecture itself, remain heavily influenced by the past. The dominance of understandings of sovereign states as the key actors in international relations is a case in point. So too is the residual importance of the idea of security, and the structure of power, residing in the formal institutions of global governance. Indeed, in some

---

<sup>38</sup> Yuan-Kang Wang, *Harmony and War: Confucian Culture and Chinese Power Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). See also Warren I. Cohen, 'China's Rise in Historical Perspective', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30, nos 4 & 5 (2007): 683–704.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>40</sup> Kang Youwei's prescriptions for the modernisation of the Chinese state were partly inspired by his fears that China, like Poland before it, could simply disappear as an entity as the result of partitioning by the Western powers and Japan. Young-Tsu Wong, 'Revisionism Reconsidered: Kang Youwei and the Reform Movement of 1898', *The Journal of Asian Studies* 51, no. 3 (1992): 513–44.

<sup>41</sup> This is if deaths from disease as a direct result of the war are included. With civilian deaths, the mortality figure for Paraguay was at least 200 per cent of the Paraguayan armed forces, with the figure roughly 30 per cent for the triple alliance forces. Chris Leuchars, *To the Bitter End: Paraguay and the War of the Triple Alliance* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2002).

<sup>42</sup> Indeed, Franco-Germanic conflict, rival territorial claims and the desire to avenge the outcome of previous conflicts played a particularly important role.

respects we are living in a world where the balance of power as it emerged in 1944 (as planning progressed for the nature of the post-war settlement) still influences the global order today.

By 1944, it was becoming increasingly likely, if not yet inevitable, that the alliance of anti-Axis forces would emerge triumphant from World War II. European history since Westphalia seemed to suggest that the end of one war would alter the power balance in ways that set the foundations for the next conflict, so as Germany's defeat became ever more likely, Winston Churchill began to turn his attention to the next major power competition. With Russian troops advancing through Eastern Europe, the balance of power in post-war Europe seemed to be taking shape, with Churchill concluding in May 1944 that 'we are approaching a confrontation with the Russians about their communist intrigues in Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece.'<sup>43</sup> It was this 1944 concern with creating a post-war order that at the very least balanced the growing power of the Soviet Union that influenced the negotiations that took place in the summer of 1944 at Bretton Woods, and in 1945 at Yalta, Potsdam and San Francisco, that established the basis of a liberal economic order in the post-Communist world.

Of course, the Bretton Woods system has long been replaced by other forms of global economic governance. Nevertheless, the distribution of voting power in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank still bears the imprint of the 1944 balance of power manoeuvrings.<sup>44</sup> So too does the unequal power structure of the UN Security Council – albeit a power structure that was not intended to have 'Communist' China as a member and started off with the Soviet Union rather than Russia with a permanent seat. Given that the permanent members of the UN Security Council can veto changes that might undermine their position, it seems that 1944 might continue to cast its shadow over the global security architecture for some time yet.

### **The Cold War, Bipolarity and Defining International Security**

More importantly, in some ways, the 1944 balance of power also established and entrenched a form of bipolarity that during the Cold War became perhaps the defining characteristic of the global security environment (and architecture). The post-war security environment was tense – the showdown that Churchill had predicted in 1944 was a very real possibility and yet another inter-state war in Europe and/or a global war between the two new superpowers were far from impossible. As Buzan argues, definitions of security revolve around identifying existential threats. This requires not only identifying what those threats to existence are, but also the prior question of who, or what, is existentially threatened. In 'the military sector, the referential object is usually the state',<sup>45</sup> so in the highly militarised context of the Cold War, the primacy of defining security as equal to national security or the security of the state has a rather strong logic.

Crucially, though, it was not just national security, but *international* security that came to be defined in this way. The major powers equated international security with the absence of inter-state wars in Europe and/or the prevention of a third world war, again following the logic

---

<sup>43</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy: The Second World War Volume VI* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1953), 64.

<sup>44</sup> This is even after recent quota revisions at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

<sup>45</sup> Barry Buzan, 'Rethinking Security after the Cold War', *Cooperation and Conflict* 32, no. 1 (1997): 16.



of identifying existential threats, and with very good reasons. If war between the superpowers – either directly or in Europe – escalated into nuclear conflict, it would not just be the existence of the state that was under threat. Nuclear war was a major existential threat to individuals (it threatened human security in the most basic of ways) and perhaps even to the planet. For Nye and Lynn-Jones, what they term the ‘ethnocentrism’ of US-based scholars proved to be particularly important in focusing definitions of IS and the congregation of such studies around the threat of nuclear war:

The overwhelming majority of specialists in international security studies have been American. The policy issues that have attracted the most attention have therefore been U.S. policy issues. Most of the major concepts and theories in the field have been developed by Americans. Given that the United States has played a central role in international politics since World War II, this should not be surprising.<sup>46</sup>

#### *International security, national/human insecurity?*

This bipolar Cold War system did what it was intended to do – it kept ‘the peace’, defined as guaranteeing international security, where international security was defined as preventing war in Europe and/or on a global scale. However, keeping the peace in this definition did not equate to maintaining the security of all. This holds true even without making a transition in thinking from the state to the human being as the focus of security. As Stanley Hoffman argues, this Cold War peace ‘was like a War; it dominated the international agenda, it resulted in a multitude of interventions and proxy wars’.<sup>47</sup> This included abrogating the sovereignty of states that either threatened to move into the Communist camp (most notably, but not only, in Asia), or out of it (in Eastern Europe); prolonged ‘civil’ wars in Asia that had strong inter-state dimensions; and perhaps even bloody wars of independence and liberation that sometimes broke down along Cold War lines. It also included a tolerance for a balance of power and legitimate spheres of influence that resulted in many millions living in fear under oppressive regimes, not just the communist states of Eastern Europe and elsewhere but also those dictatorships that allied themselves to the US and provided a bulwark against the spread of communism, and quasi ‘low intensity’ democracies that replaced military rule in Latin America, Africa and Asia.<sup>48</sup>

In short, international security provided national security for the major powers, and through this also dealt with the major *transnational* existential threat to the individuals of those nations – the threat of death as a result of nuclear war. It did not, however, do the same for people in other parts of the world. Indeed, the argument here is that international security was partly built on the lack of national and human security for most of the inhabitants of the planet. In addition to facing the prospect of inter-state war and involvement in a third world war, the national security of most states was at threat either from intervention by external forces, involvement in localised wars or through internal challenges of civil war/wars of liberation. At an individual level, poverty, disease, migration, terrorism and state violence

---

<sup>46</sup> Nye and Lynn-Jones, ‘International Security Studies: A Report of a Conference on the State of the Field’, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Stanley Hoffman, *World Disorders: Troubled Peace in the Post-Cold War Era* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), 2.

<sup>48</sup> Barry Gills and Joel Rocamora, ‘Low Intensity Democracy’, *Third World Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (1992): 501–23. Gills and Rocamora are primarily interested in those democracies that emerged after the Cold War, but include a consideration of earlier phases of democratisation as well.



were all at least as clear and present dangers to existence as nuclear war for most of the world's population.

### **Changing Conceptions of International Security after the Cold War**

There are echoes of the Cold War in some of the fault-lines that still occasionally threaten to spill over into inter-state war today; war that might itself further turn into something wider than just a local conflict. The division of Korea and the occasional tension across the Taiwan Strait are two cases in point here, though both really have their origins in pre-Cold War politics; they are remnants of incomplete decolonisation that were then given an extra dimension by Cold War bipolarity. However, by and large, and certainly for the West, the existential threat posed by the Cold War has gone. Although intervention in Iraq was justified by a supposed real and present danger to Europe from weapons of mass destruction, and China's missiles are now reportedly capable of reaching US military bases in Guam, the chances of the territorial integrity of Western states being challenged through inter-state war have vastly decreased.

In the process, what constituted an existential threat to individuals in the West also changed. Nuclear war has largely been replaced by the environment as the looming apocalyptic threat to the planet as a whole. Buzan cites the environment (alongside political, military, economic and societal challenges) as one of five dimensions in the post-Cold War era that might weaken the state or fundamentally impact the quality or 'conditions of existence for the members of the society'.<sup>49</sup> In a review of the literature that emerged on the future of security studies after the Cold War, Baldwin notes that some people seriously proposed drawing a line under the notion of security studies at this stage, and incorporating 'new' challenges into broader studies of international politics and foreign policy analysis instead.<sup>50</sup>

Before moving on to consider changes to thinking about the nature of international security in more detail, it is important to make a key distinction between types of thinking, theorising and writing here. The development of NTS and the focus on human security has benefited from contributions from a wide range of scholars. Indeed, one of its great strengths is its plurality, and in particular, the attention that is paid to security challenges away from the 'core' (or the West). This is a sub-field with a broader geographic representation than many sub-disciplines in international relations and international politics (and a better gender balance too).

However, this does not mean that Western voices have been absent – far from it. Not only has there been considerable scholarship in the West but states such as Canada and Japan have adopted the promotion of human security as core pillars of their foreign policy and international relations.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, there is suspicion in some areas that these 'new' agendas are actually new tools of Western ideational hegemony, trying to force conceptions

---

<sup>49</sup> Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 145. See also Barry Buzan, 'New Patterns of Global Security in the Twenty-first Century', *International Affairs* 67, no. 3 (1991): 431–51, and Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, 2nd edition (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1991).

<sup>50</sup> Baldwin, 'Security Studies and the End of the Cold War', 117–41.

<sup>51</sup> See Sandra J. MacLean and Timothy M. Shaw, 'Canada and the New "Global" Strategic Alliances: Prospects for Human Security at the Start of the Twenty-first Century', *Canadian Foreign Policy* 8, no. 3 (2001): 17–36.

such as human rights and individualism on parts of the world with other traditions (and parts of the world that have had other Western 'values' imposed on them in the past).<sup>52</sup>

#### *How non-traditional security (sometimes) becomes international security*

The argument here is *not* that Western discourses on other forms of security have been absent, but that they were largely considered to be 'other'; they fall under the rubric of NTS or human security which typically form separate fields of enquiry from IS. So the focus here is on how and when NTS issues make the transition across the disciplinary divides to become part of what is considered to be IS. The answer, in keeping with the idea of the ethnocentric basis of thinking on international security identified above, is when 'their' problems begin to become 'ours' – with 'ours' here meaning primarily those of the US, but also of the major Western powers in general.<sup>53</sup>

Thus, for example, in 1994, Robert Kaplan sparked widespread debate in the US by pointing to how 'scarcity, crime, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease' in the developing world would destabilise many political systems.<sup>54</sup> Though this analysis was *about* the developing world, it was an analysis that was *for* the US – it contained within it implicit (and in a couple of places explicit) warnings about how these fragilities in other parts of the world would ultimately have a negative impact on the social fabric of the US.

The end of the Cold War, then, created a space (not a vacuum, because preventing interstate war has not fully disappeared as a key international security agenda) for transnational issues other than war (that threatened the existence of either the state or the individual in the West) to occupy. In the process, some of the very things that have been threatening national and human security in most of the world for decades (or even centuries) have been 'elevated' to the status of international security issues – under some definitions at least (if not all). However, the way in which this transition has taken place has been only partial, and in ways that reflect the relative importance of the issue at hand for the dominant definition-setting communities.

#### *Terrorism and international security*

International terrorism is a good case in point. What happened on 11 September 2001 was 'historic', however one wants to define the word. Quite apart from the scale of the attacks, or who was being targeted, the way in which the aftermath of the attacks in New York was played out in real time on TV, with footage of the collisions following soon after, gave the day a special place in history. Unlike other terrorist attacks, it was an event that was shared by millions across the globe. This and other major incidents targeted against Western powers – the 2004 Madrid train bombings and the attacks on the London transport system the following July – did much to restore the idea that international terrorism poses a real and

---

<sup>52</sup> Amitav Acharya, 'Human Security: East versus West?', Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Singapore Working Paper No. 17, 2001, 1. [http://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/handle/10220/4416/RSIS-WORKPAPER\\_25.pdf?sequence=1](http://dr.ntu.edu.sg/bitstream/handle/10220/4416/RSIS-WORKPAPER_25.pdf?sequence=1) (accessed 5 April 2005).

<sup>53</sup> Clearly, this understanding builds on the now well-established conception of securitisation, and in particular, the question of 'who securitises'. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 32.

<sup>54</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism, and Disease Are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of Our Planet', *The Atlantic Monthly* 273, no. 2 (February 1994): 44–76.

present threat to the nation, as well as to individuals. Concern that terrorists might be able to launch nuclear or biological attacks in major cities has heightened the sense of insecurity in many parts of the world and is (for good reasons) considered to be a potential existential threat.

Nevertheless, international terrorism did not of course start on 11 September 2001. Globalsecurity.org has been monitoring international terrorism for a number of years. The total figure of 355 terrorist attacks in 2001 was actually very low, only having been lower four times in the preceding two decades. The 1980s was a much more violent period, with 1987 the high point for international terrorist attacks with 665 cases. The statistics also show that, over the years, North America has had a minuscule number of attacks, with Latin America having by far the most – though September 11th leads the list of the number of fatalities if considered as a single attack.<sup>55</sup>

So, when the ‘war on terror’ became an international security issue, it in reality was designed to deal with that terrorist activity that threatened the national and human security of the US and its allies,<sup>56</sup> rather than a war on all forms of terrorism in all places. The resulting international security discourse and practice has done little if anything to address the myriad sources of terrorist threats to nations and individuals that existed prior to September 11th. Indeed, it is worth noting here that while the September 11th terrorist attacks were not conducted by a state, the response was largely statist in nature, including wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is despite the fact that none of the terrorists were from either of these states<sup>57</sup> and that Iraq was ‘eminently deterrable’ by other means.<sup>58</sup> In this respect, the way in which a long-standing non-traditional security issue – international terrorism – was constituted as an international security concern and recreated with a statist base has actually increased insecurity in some places, as growing anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism has played out in acts of violence across the world. For example, while nobody would claim that Pakistan was a wholly secure state before September 11th, the state’s already weak control over parts of its territory has been further eroded, raising questions over the long-term viability of the Pakistani state itself.<sup>59</sup>

#### *Whose/Which disease threatens international security?*

On perhaps a less dramatic scale, the promotion of the idea of transnational disease as a security threat is also a good example here. Diseases that thrive in poverty have been the single biggest existential threat to the largest number of individuals across the globe for centuries (quite apart from the human security threat of poverty itself). Mosquitoes are the single biggest transmitter of disease, but water is the root cause of millions of deaths either as the source of diarrhoea – something that despite being easily treatable with the right

---

<sup>55</sup> US Department of State, ‘Appendix H: Statistical Review’, in *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002* (Washington, DC: Department of State Publication, 2003).

<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/20125.pdf> (accessed 15 June 2011).

<sup>56</sup> Paul Rogers, *Global Security and the War on Terror: Elite Power and the Illusion of Control* (Oxon: Routledge, 2008).

<sup>57</sup> There were 15 Saudis, 2 from the United Arab Emirates, and 1 each from Egypt and the Lebanon.

<sup>58</sup> John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, ‘An Unnecessary War’, *Foreign Policy* 134 (2003): 51–9.

<sup>59</sup> Isaac Kfir, ‘The Crisis of Pakistan: A Dangerously Weak State’, *The Middle East Review of International Affairs* 11, no. 3 (2007): 75–88.

drugs is the second biggest cause of death of infants in the world (after pneumonia)<sup>60</sup> – or as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Yet, diseases that have at times looked like they might make the transition from non-traditional to international security have been severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and various forms of animal influenza (avian, swine, etc.).

The SARS epidemic killed around 800 people all told with around three-quarters of the deaths in China and Hong Kong. Clearly, this was a personal disaster for the people involved and for their friends and family, and the consequences of the epidemic should not be belittled. The people of China and Hong Kong were not surprisingly very fearful for their future. In China's case, the situation was compounded by a profound lack of trust in what the authorities were telling them about the spread of the disease because of the way that the truth about the scale of the problem had been hidden (not only from the public but from other branches of government) in the early days of its spread.<sup>61</sup> Compared to the 1.5 million child deaths from diarrhoea, or the million plus deaths from malaria every year, SARS was a relatively short-lived and localised epidemic, yet generated more concern in the developed West than many much more serious diseases. This was partly because of the uncertainty generated by new diseases and outbreaks that might have the potential to become truly global pandemics; with SARS, nobody knew how far it would go, how best to treat it, or why some people seemed to be 'super-infectors'. The way that the disease was reported as a 'modern plague', even within the medical profession itself, also helped spread fear and insecurity.<sup>62</sup> However, three other issues are worthy of consideration here.

First, although many diseases have been spread through international air travel, SARS in some ways became the first disease intertwined with globalisation; not just because 'globalised' business people played a role in its spread, but also because, due to the emerging importance of East Asia in the global economy, it was a disease that had a global economic impact.<sup>63</sup> Second, it was a disease that spread from the East to the West, with 43 deaths attributed to SARS in Canada, even though the rates of infection in other parts of the West were very low.<sup>64</sup> Third, we need to distinguish between different types or 'generations' of security challenges. Prior to SARS, the main focus in terms of security and disease had been AIDS, which had been declared a national security threat to the US in 2000, primarily because of the indirect impact of AIDS related insecurity and conflict elsewhere (primarily in Africa).<sup>65</sup> Notably, in the following years, the extent to which AIDS really was a challenge to the national security of the US or other Western powers came to be questioned. Indeed, Colin McInnes and Simon Rushton suggest that the consensus that HIV/AIDS represents a

---

<sup>60</sup> UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) / World Health Organization (WHO), *Diarrhoea: Why Children Are Still Dying and What Can Be Done?* (Geneva: UNICEF/WHO, 2009).

<sup>61</sup> Patricia M. Thornton, 'Crisis and Governance: SARS and the Resilience of the Chinese Body Politic', *The China Journal*, no. 61 (2009): 23–48.

<sup>62</sup> An editorial in the *British Journal of General Practice* in 2003 started with 'Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome has the hallmark of a modern plague. This infection has spread quickly across the globe.' Anthony Harnden and Richard Mayon-White, 'Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome – Novel Virus, Recurring Theme', *British Journal of General Practice* (June 2003): 434–5.

<sup>63</sup> Jong-Wha Lee and Warwick J. McKibbin, 'Globalization and Disease: The Case of SARS', *Asian Economic Papers* 3, no. 1 (2004): 113–31.

<sup>64</sup> According to the WHO, the only other non-Asian deaths were 1 each in France and South Africa. There were 15 recorded cases of infection in the US, 9 in Germany, 7 in France, 5 in Sweden, 4 each in the UK and Italy, and 1 each in Switzerland, Spain and New Zealand. See [http://www.who.int/csr/sars/country/table2003\\_09\\_23/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/sars/country/table2003_09_23/en/) (accessed 12 April 2011).

<sup>65</sup> Peter W. Singer, 'AIDS and International Security', *Survival* 44, no. 1 (2002): 145–58.

security threat (even in Africa itself) has not held up since the end of the 1990s, and the extent to which it represents a security challenge (other than to individuals) is contested.<sup>66</sup> The suggestion here, in keeping with the idea of a distinction between ‘ours’ and ‘theirs’, is that AIDS has not materialised as the existential threat in the West that was once feared, and so has been relegated back to being either a national/regional and/or human security issue rather than being an international security concern.

For David Heymann, SARS was different because it is part of a wider changing conception of existential threats after September 11th rather than being a discourse about infectious disease alone.<sup>67</sup> In light of the use of anthrax as a terrorist weapon, the unknown causes and implications of the spread of SARS gave it ‘space in national security debates. The reality of bio-terrorism immediately raised the infectious disease threat to the level of a high-priority security imperative worthy of attention.’<sup>68</sup>

As a result, microbiologic diseases that could be spread quickly (to the West) through air travel and human contacts became the focus of increased government-sponsored research while treatment for diseases that affected more people across the world remained relatively low in the list of priorities.

### **Non-traditional Security and the International Political Economy of Development**

The logical conclusion of these discussions is that the two sub-fields of IS and NTS cannot easily be reconciled. Insecurity that has poverty either as its root cause or as a contributory factor does not easily make the transition from NTS to something else and is not easily captured by the resulting conceptions and practice of IS. Despite an apparent ‘never ending move towards the “securitization of everything”’,<sup>69</sup> this does not mean that everything that has been securitised has become part of the IS agenda. Indeed, these agendas remain rather statist in their basic ontology, dealing with the immediate causes of security threats and often neglecting deeper seated political economy/developmental causes.

It is true that the nature of military action is changing, in part at least, as a response to these non-traditional security challenges. For example, armed US coast guard vessels have supported various governments’ actions against drug cultivation and trafficking in Latin America<sup>70</sup> and the Caribbean, while the UK navy has developed its role to include identifying and apprehending smugglers in the Caribbean.<sup>71</sup> Both the US and the UK have also

---

<sup>66</sup> Colin McInnes and Simon Rushton, ‘HIV, AIDS and Security: Where Are We Now?’, *International Affairs* 86, no. 1 (2010): 225–45.

<sup>67</sup> David Heymann, ‘The Evolving Infectious Disease Threat: Implications for National and Global Security’, *Journal of Human Development* 4, no. 2 (2003): 191–207.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>69</sup> Benjamin J. Muller, ‘Governing through Risk at the Canada/US Border: Liberty, Security, Technology’, Border Policy Research Institute at Western Washington University Working Paper No. 2, 2008.

<sup>70</sup> Indeed, this was happening even before the end of the Cold War. See Donald Mabry, ‘The US Military and the War on Drugs in Latin America’, in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 30, nos 2/3 (1988): 53–76.

<sup>71</sup> The UK, however, announced the end of its Caribbean activities in February 2011 in response to cuts to defence spending. See Nick Hopkins and Richard Norton-Taylor, ‘Navy Forced To Drop Warship Patrols in Caribbean through Lack of Funds’, *Guardian*, 7 February 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/feb/07/nacy-abandons-caribbean-warship-patrols> (accessed 12 February 2011).



provided training for local enforcement agencies and promoted good-governance programmes to combat corruption, which is often an essential component in allowing illegal activities to function in different states and across borders.

Institutions designed for primarily economic roles could also (unwittingly) take on a security agenda. Given the relationship between transnational crime and terrorist groups, and the argument that globalisation has allowed these groups to move money easily around the world in pursuit of profit and to fund terrorist attacks,<sup>72</sup> institutions that are designed to keep a check on these transnational transactions have an important security dimension. These include, for example, the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and the International Federation against Copyright Theft. In this respect, lawyers and academics can take on the role of agents of national security.

Also, given that the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) *World Drug Report* noted that in 2005 it was 10 times more lucrative for Afghani farmers to produce opium than wheat,<sup>73</sup> the role that agricultural interests in the developed world (though not just in the developed West) have played in the ongoing failure of the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to reach a settlement is part of a (negative) security agenda.

#### *Non-traditional security, international political economy and global governance*

Moreover, it is not just that the existing structure of power often does not help matters; they can actually make things worse. Here, we return to the issue of the shadow of 1944, and the way in which the structures of global economic governance have been used to promote neo-liberal development programmes in the post-Cold War era.<sup>74</sup> Identifying the sources of radicalisation is not an easy task; but if poverty and inequality (either international inequity or at home), and feelings of injustice and resentment at dominant economic strategies, play any role at all in destabilising some states, then the dominance of neo-liberalism and the power structure of the major global institutions may be part of the equation. There is much debate over whether such tensions lead to people joining terrorist groups or not, but even those who suggest 'not' typically accept that there are knock-on impacts for global stability and that, as Vincent Ferraro puts it, short of terrorism, '[t]he real political threat is that the deepening divide between rich and poor states creates the illusion of separate worlds, one in which genuine cooperation among states becomes impossible. Poverty undermines the political legitimacy of the richer states.'<sup>75</sup>

In this respect, the global financial crisis in the late 2000s might actually be as important for NTS agendas as it is for debates over models of economic governance. This is partly because the crisis in itself has refocused attention on economics as a security concern in the developed heartlands of the capitalist world. In June 2008, the European Commission held a

---

<sup>72</sup> Louise Shelley, 'The Unholy Trinity: Transnational Crime, Corruption and Terrorism', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 11, no. 2 (2005): 101–11.

<sup>73</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *World Drug Report 2006* (Vienna: UNODC, 2006), 211.

<sup>74</sup> Caroline Thomas, 'Global Governance, Development and Human Security: Exploring the Links', *Third World Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2001): 159–75.

<sup>75</sup> Vincent Ferraro, 'Globalizing Weakness: Is Global Poverty a Threat to the Interests of States?', Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Environmental Change and Security Program (ESCP) Report No. 9, 2003, 18.



seminar on 'Ireland's Economic Transformation – Miracle or Model?',<sup>76</sup> yet within a couple of years, the same country was close to bankruptcy. Moreover, the security challenge is not just exclusively economic in nature. According to the UK Royal United Services Institute (RUSI):

[a]n economic downturn of this magnitude is bound to impact on defence and security concerns. At the very least, a multi-year recession will pose a major test of social cohesion. On an international level, it will put old alliances under new strains and likely exacerbate tensions between the US and Europe. As its effects ripple outwards, the downturn could prove the final straw in many weak or failing states, potentially fuelling regional insecurity and anti-Western terrorism.<sup>77</sup>

The crisis might also impinge on the ability of states to defend themselves in more traditional ways. For example, spending cuts in the UK have led to the scrapping of new defence initiatives and purchases.

Building on the idea that the legitimacy of the 'richer states' is under question as outlined by Ferraro above, it might also be suggested that the global crisis has fed into feelings of the illegitimacy of the Western way and the dominance of Western ideas in the international financial institutions. Indeed, even calling it a 'global' crisis has caused irritation:

Most crises are known by their origin, from the Mexican peso crisis of 1994/5 to the Asian crisis of 1997/8. Given there is no doubt who caused our world's latest troubles, it should adopt its logical name: the western financial crisis. This reluctance to call a spade a spade reflects an inability to reckon with changes the US and Europe have to make to avoid a repeat.<sup>78</sup>

So the suggestion here is that both the legitimacy of the neo-liberal model and of the power structure of the major financial institutions have been further undermined by the crisis. And despite some adjustment of quotas at the IMF, to some extent the shadow of 1944 still influences the asymmetric power relations in global institutions (including the UN Security Council).

## Conclusion

This paper started by outlining what was not being argued, so it seems apt to conclude by returning to some negatives in terms of what the paper is not proposing, or at least to place some very big question marks against how realistic, and indeed how effective, alternatives to the status quo might be.

To start with, and returning to the note at the start of the paper, reforming the unequal power structure in global institutions is not simply a task for the Western powers; there are other vested interests on the UN Security Council, for example, that have not always been keen

---

<sup>76</sup> European Commission, '27/06/2008 – Ireland's Economic Transformation – Miracle or Model?'. [http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/events/event12482\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/events/event12482_en.htm) (accessed 11 April 2011).

<sup>77</sup> Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), 'The Effects of the Economic Crisis on Security'. <http://www.rusi.org/economy/> (accessed 12 April 2011).

<sup>78</sup> Kishore Mahbubani, 'Asia Has Had Enough of Excusing the West', *Financial Times*, 25 January 2011. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/44616bb0-28c0-11e0-aa18-00144feab49a.html> (accessed 26 January 2011).

on reform. Indeed, while yet to result in any significant concrete change, there is a recognition at the highest levels of US politics that there is a need to change the balance of power (which favours it) in the global institutions that resulted from the US construction of the post-World War II institutional architecture. As President Barack Obama argued in 2007:

it was America that largely built a system of international institutions that carried us through the Cold War ... Instead of constraining our power, these institutions magnified it ... [R]eform of these bodies is urgently needed if they are to keep pace with the fast-moving threats we face.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, there is no strong evidence that reforming this asymmetric power would lead in a substantial shift in the focus of international security towards new agendas. The primacy of the state as the unit of analysis and of the sanctity of sovereignty as the basic principle might even become strengthened.

We should also not put the blame for all the developmental insecurities that individuals face in large parts of the world at the door of the West or international financial institutions. That colonisation, decolonisation and the hypocritical application of principles of sovereignty created conditions where conflict is likely does not mean that actors have no agency. While there are some 'economically benevolent' dictatorships,<sup>80</sup> there are also many corrupt 'predatory' neo-patrimonial states,<sup>81</sup> kleptocracies and authoritarian regimes where the domestic elites are the main cause of the lack of freedom from want and freedom from fear. There are also a number of non-authoritarian states where generating growth is the order of the day, and economic policies simply do not emphasise those development and redistribution objectives that their most vulnerable citizens demand and/or need.

In terms of what has been argued in this paper, it seems that NTS studies and IS discourses and practices occasionally coincide when state elites are faced with 'new' challenges, either to national security or to the stability of the global order. Perhaps more important, they coincide when the most powerful actors, the ones that shape definitions and agendas, face challenges to national security that they 'upgrade' to become international security issues. However, by and large, IS and NTS seem to remain as two different strands of scholarship originating from different historical processes and studies, and from people asking fundamentally different questions.

The research agendas of those who study NTS and students of IPE do, however, seem to have much in common, particularly when it comes to research on inequity and power in global institutions and the political economy of development. Also, those who have focused on the politics of different parts of the world from the bottom up, as it were, have been

---

<sup>79</sup> Cited by Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, 'Reshaping the World Order: How Washington Should Reform International Institutions', *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 2 (2009): 50. Brooks and Wohlforth argue that despite arguments to the contrary, the US is not significantly losing its global power and should use its 'primacy' to shape the reform of global institutions to serve US interests in the future. See also Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *World out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). It should be noted, though, that this was written prior to the global financial crisis.

<sup>80</sup> Ronald J. Gilson and Curtis J. Milhaupt, 'Economically Benevolent Dictators: Lessons for Developing Democracies', *American Journal of Comparative Law* 59, no. 1 (2011): 227–88.

<sup>81</sup> Daniel Bach, 'The African Neopatrimonial State as a Global Prototype', Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics Working Paper No. 59, 2011, 34.

combining these two approaches almost instinctively for decades as they search for the power dynamics and drivers of change in the regions that they study. So, it is in the intersections between contemporary regional/area studies, NTS and IPE that the most effective basis for combining sub-disciplinary approaches to the study of non-IS challenges might be found in the future.