

Political and legal sciences



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THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY: THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND POLICY PRACTICE IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

The concept of international security has undergone a long evolution throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Its development has been driven by historical cataclysms – two world wars, the Cold War, regional conflicts – as well as by evolving theoretical approaches in international relations. Today, “international security” is an extremely broad and multifaceted concept, encompassing traditional military-political aspects alongside new challenges (terrorism, cyberattacks, pandemics, climate threats, etc.). As the scope of the term expanded, debates arose over its precise definition – it has essentially become an “essentially contested concept” in academic discourse. Nevertheless, the importance of security at the international level continues to grow. According to the UN, by the mid-2020s a quarter of the world’s population lives in conflict zones, and the level of global peacefulness is the lowest since the Second World War¹. The number of armed conflicts worldwide has reached a record high². Against this

1 United Nations Development Programme. UNDP. URL: <https://www.undp.org/>

2 The Institute for Economics & Peace. (n.d). IEP. URL: <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/>

backdrop, the international community recognizes the need to reconceptualize international security and to strengthen the mechanisms for upholding it.

International security as a scholarly concept emerged at the intersection of international relations theory and states' practical needs to protect themselves from threats. Different theoretical paradigms dominated in different periods. The main approaches can be categorized as traditional (realist), liberal, constructivist, and broadened critical approaches (the latter including the human security concept and other critical perspectives) (Table 1). The traditional paradigm that dominated international relations for much of the 20th century is grounded in realism. In the realist view, world politics is an arena of rivalry among sovereign states seeking power and survival under conditions of anarchy (the absence of any higher authority to guarantee order). Each state must therefore rely on self-help for its security. Classical realists (e.g. Hans Morgenthau, E. H. Carr) argued that a state's security depends primarily on its military capabilities and its ability to deter potential aggressors. In this view, international security effectively reduces to the aggregate security of individual states, maintained through either a balance of power or a hegemonic power that deters would-be aggressors by the threat of overwhelming retaliation. Within the realist paradigm arose the notion of a "security dilemma": one state's efforts to increase its security (for example, by armament or alliances) can make other states feel less secure, prompting them to also arm themselves and thus creating a vicious circle of insecurity. The advent of nuclear weapons in the Cold War vividly demonstrated this dilemma, as the superpowers' mutual fear of catastrophic destruction restrained them from direct military confrontation³.

Table 1

Main theoretical paradigms of international security

Approach	Key Features and Emphases	Main Actors (Referent)
1	2	3
Realism	The state is the central actor; anarchy prevails in the international system; security is equated with military power and state survival; emphasis on balance of power and deterring aggression through force.	Sovereign states (national security of the state)

³ Abhaya Shekhar Adhikari. The Concept of International Security. Hasanuddin Journal of International Affairs. 2024. № 4(2). P. 78-89. URL: <https://sal0.li/315aAFE>.

Continuation of table 1

1	2	3
Liberalism	International cooperation is possible and desirable; institutions, international law, and collective security can mitigate anarchy; economic interdependence reduces the risk of war; security is viewed as a common good achieved through coordinated action.	States, international organizations (collective security of groups of states)
Constructivism	Security is shaped by shared ideas, norms, and identities; perceptions of threats are socially constructed; the formation of “security communities,” where war among members is unthinkable, is possible; trust and shared values reduce conflict.	States and non-state actors as carriers of norms; communities of states (regional unions)
Critical (widened) approaches	Broadening of the security concept beyond the military realm: inclusion of economic, environmental, social, and humanitarian dimensions. Human security centers on the individual and their protection (from violence, poverty, disease). Emphasizes “bottom-up” security of people rather than only states. Pluralism of referents: nations, societies, humanity as a whole, the planet.	Individuals, society, supranational communities (humanity), the global environment

Liberal Institutionalism. By the latter half of the 20th century, the narrow, state-centric and militarized notion of security in realism came under criticism. The liberal-institutional approach emphasizes the possibility and desirability of international cooperation. It argues that through international institutions, law, and norms, states can overcome the anarchic nature of the system and achieve common security. Interdependence – economic, political, and societal – reduces the incentives for conflict, as war becomes mutually costly. Liberal theorists highlight mechanisms like collective security, wherein the international community can act in concert to address threats to peace, legitimately acting on behalf of the world community⁴. For example, the United Nations Security Council has at times authorized collective action to repel aggressors (as in the Korean War of 1950–53 and the Gulf War of 1991). Another manifestation of the liberal approach is the concept of collective defense – exemplified by alliances such as NATO – in which an attack on one member is met as an attack on all. Liberal institutionalists also ac-

4 UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION SERVICE. (n.d) UNIS. VIENNA. URL: <https://surli.cc/ijgwwe>.

knowledge emerging, non-traditional threats that go beyond interstate war, such as international terrorism⁵. Institutions and cooperation are seen as key to addressing these new challenges. Through such coordination, the liberal approach broadened the notion of international security from the narrow self-defense of states toward a vision of security as a shared good achieved through cooperation.

The constructivist approach, which gained prominence in the late 20th century, shifted the focus to the role of ideas, norms, and identities in international security. Constructivists argue that what states consider a “threat” is not objective or fixed, but rather is socially constructed – shaped by historical, cultural, and political contexts. State interests themselves are influenced by identities and norms. This perspective implies that conflict is not inevitable; if states come to share benign perceptions and common values, they can form security communities in which war between them becomes unthinkable. Trust, dialogue, and identity convergence thus become crucial for security. These insights echo earlier arguments that “security is not only about states.” As Barry Buzan noted in the 1980s, security concerns “all human communities,” not just nation-states⁶.

Critical and Human Security Approaches. In the late 20th century, theorists began to call for widening the concept of security beyond its traditional military scope. They pointed out that threats to security can take non-military forms – economic coercion, environmental degradation, societal collapse – that undermine the stability and well-being of societies⁷. These ideas laid the groundwork for an expanded security agenda. In 1994, representatives of the so-called Copenhagen School of security studies – Barry Buzan⁸, Ole Wæver⁹ and others – further developed the broadened perspective by introducing distinct “security sectors” and the process of securitization. Securitization refers to the act of framing an issue as an existential threat that merits an extraordinary security response. For instance, migration or a disease outbreak can be

5 United nations information service. (n.d) UNIS. VIENNA. URL: <https://unis.unvienna.org/unis/en/about/about-unis.html>.

6 Buzan, B. & Wæver, O. (2003). *Regions and powers: the structure of international security*. Cambridge University Press. URL: <https://surl.li/hbourx>.

7 Abhaya Shekhar Adhikari (2024). The Concept of International Security. *Hasanuddin Journal of International Affairs*. 4(2), 78-89. URL: <https://salo.li/315aAFE>.

8 Buzan, B. & Little, R. (2000). *International Systems in World History: Remarking the Study of International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. URL: <https://salo.li/7F04288>.

9 Buzan, B. & Wæver, O. (2003). *Regions and powers: the structure of international security*. Cambridge University Press. URL: <https://surl.li/hbourx>.

securitized by political leaders, turning it into a security issue that justifies emergency measures. By the end of the 20th century, a powerful assertion emerged: “security is about more than just the state.” Ken Booth, a leading critical security scholar, suggested that security should be understood as “survival plus,” where the “plus” signifies freedom from fear and want at the individual level. In this vein, analysts began distinguishing multiple dimensions of security – military, political, economic, environmental, and human¹⁰. This comprehensive approach posits that peace and stability are achievable only with simultaneous progress in traditional defense, economic development, environmental protection, and human rights. Such a concept of “comprehensive security” became a model for various regions, recognizing that true security must address the needs of people as well as states.

By the 2020s, the international security environment has been marked by a return of intense great-power rivalry and even war, after a brief post-Cold War period of optimism. The most dramatic example is Russia’s recent aggression in Europe. In February 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine – the largest armed conflict in Europe since 1945. This war, still ongoing, has brought levels of bloodshed and destruction unseen in Europe in over 75 years. It has “undermined peace and seriously altered our security environment,” as noted in NATO’s new Strategic Concept¹¹. Indeed, Russia’s war against Ukraine has become the biggest conflict in Europe in terms of scale of forces and casualties since World War II, even surpassing the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Beyond its devastating humanitarian impact on Ukrainians (and significant losses for the aggressor as well), the war has had profound global repercussions. It has exacerbated worldwide food and energy crises, and it has starkly revealed the weaknesses of international law and institutions (considering that Russia is a permanent member of the UN Security Council even as it brazenly violates the UN Charter). The war has effectively divided the world into two camps (roughly, democracies vs. revisionist autocracies), reminiscent of a new Cold War. Many countries of the so-called Global South have faced difficult choices – whether to join Western sanctions and efforts to isolate the aggressor or to remain neutral. Notably, China has provided Russia with mostly political support, and India and many others

10 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. (n.d.). The OSCE. URL: <https://www.osce.org/>

11 Welcome to allied command transformation. Nato’s Strategic Warfare Development Command. (n.d.). NATO. ATAN. URL: <https://www.act.nato.int/>

have maintained neutrality, so the alignments are not as rigid as during the old Cold War. Nonetheless, the conflict has revived a bipolar dynamic in international politics.

This war has also dealt a severe blow to decades of arms control efforts. Moscow and Washington signed the New START treaty in 2010 (extended in 2021) to limit strategic nuclear arsenals, but this last major nuclear arms agreement is now in jeopardy: in 2023 Russia “suspended” its participation. Earlier, in 2019, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty collapsed after the United States accused Russia of developing prohibited missiles (a violation NATO also confirmed)¹² and subsequently withdrew from the agreement. Thus, two key pillars of the Cold War-era arms control architecture have been shaken. (An even earlier pillar, the ABM Treaty, was abandoned by the U.S. in 2002.) What had been built over decades to reduce the risk of war is now largely dismantled. Experts warn of the danger of a new arms race and the loss of transparency – developments that directly threaten international security.

At the same time, NATO has experienced a revival in response to the return of high-intensity war in Europe. After Russia’s initial aggression in 2014 (the annexation of Crimea and instigation of conflict in Eastern Ukraine), the Alliance deployed rotational troops to its Eastern member states (Poland, the Baltic countries). Following the full invasion in 2022, NATO further reinforced its eastern flank, creating a forward presence that, for the first time in decades, is focused on deterring a large-scale war in Europe. In 2022 NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept that explicitly named Russia as “the most significant and direct threat” to Euro-Atlantic security and also noted the challenges posed by a strengthening China¹³. In essence, NATO has returned to its roots of collective defense and deterrence against a powerful adversary, even as it continues to emphasize cooperative security – i.e. collaboration with partners and international organizations (the EU, UN, etc.) in the pursuit of peace. The European Union has also stepped up as a security actor: alongside imposing economic sanctions on the aggressor, the EU for the first time launched large-scale programs of military assistance to a third country (Ukraine), and began serious efforts to bolster its own defense capabilities (with plans to increase defense

¹² The North Atlantic Treaty Organization. (n.d.). NATO. URL: <https://www.nato.int/>.

¹³ NATO 2022 STRATEGIC CONCEPT. Adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Madrid 29 June 2022. URL: <https://surl.li/qpvvyji>.

spending, coordinate arms procurement, and so on). Thus, the war in Ukraine refocused Europe's attention on traditional military security.

On the other side of Eurasia, strategic competition between the United States and China has been intensifying. A new web of security alignments is forming in response to China's rise. The U.S. has been cultivating alliances and partnerships across the Indo-Pacific – for example, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with Japan, India, and Australia, the AUKUS pact with the UK and Australia, and strengthened defense ties with allies like South Korea and the Philippines. The driving force behind these moves is the rapid growth of China's military capabilities and Beijing's more assertive posture regarding Taiwan and disputed areas in the South China Sea. Once again, "deterrence" has become a central concept, now applied to dissuading China. Globally, we see the emergence of two major centers of power (American and Chinese) engaged in sharpening rivalry – economic, technological, and military. This means that international security in the 2020s has begun to exhibit features of a new Cold War (albeit a more fluid and less ideologically rigid one, without the tightly defined blocs of the 20th century).

In parallel with the return of great-power competition, a range of transnational and non-military threats has continued to grow – threats that no single nation, acting alone, can fully address. In fact, these global challenges have become more acute even as geopolitical rivalries deepen. Cybersecurity is now a permanent concern: state-sponsored and non-state hackers regularly launch cyber attacks on critical infrastructure, steal data, and even meddle in democratic elections – all of which are now recognized as elements of international security. The concept of "hybrid threats" has emerged to describe coordinated campaigns combining cyber-attacks, information warfare, and economic pressure to weaken a state without formally waging war. For example, according to Western reports, Russian hackers have attacked power grids in Ukraine and elsewhere and conducted disinformation campaigns. In response to such dangers, NATO has declared cyberspace an operational domain of warfare and has stated that large-scale cyber attacks could be treated equivalent to armed attacks (in theory, potentially triggering a collective defense response).

Climate change has also become widely acknowledged as a "threat multiplier." Shifting climate patterns jeopardize food and water security, exacerbate resource scarcities, and can trigger conflicts and large-scale

displacement of populations. The UN Security Council has periodically debated the link between climate and security; in 2021 a draft resolution was proposed to formally designate climate change as a threat to international peace and security, although Russia vetoed it. Despite such setbacks at the global level, in regional contexts (e.g. in parts of Africa and the Middle East) the UN and researchers have noted correlations between extreme weather events (droughts, floods) and outbreaks of violence or civil strife. International diplomacy has started to develop new mechanisms – such as the Paris Climate Agreement – which, though environmental in form, are in effect tools for the long-term security of humanity.

The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–21) proved to be another painful lesson in global vulnerability. It starkly demonstrated how fragile the world is in the face of biological threats. Although COVID-19 was not a deliberate bio-attack, its effects were global: over 6 million deaths worldwide, a world economy pushed to the brink of recession, and internal instability in many countries. The international health security system (embodied by the World Health Organization) struggled to contain the outbreak, and cooperation among states was often fragmented. This experience led to calls for strengthening the global biosecurity system and pandemic preparedness as integral parts of international security. It also brought renewed attention to the possibility of pathogens being used as weapons – whether through bioterrorism or accidental leaks of dangerous strains – and the need to guard against such scenarios.

Among the more “traditional” security threats that persist is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. In the 21st century, the nuclear club expanded with North Korea (which conducted its first nuclear test in 2006 and several thereafter). The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime has faced serious challenges: North Korea withdrew from the treaty, and Iran for a long period was suspected of pursuing a clandestine weapons program (the 2015 JCPOA agreement placed limits on Iran’s nuclear activities, but the U.S. exit from that deal in 2018 has left it teetering on collapse). Thus, the risk of new nuclear crises remains. At the same time, there are also countervailing efforts: in 2017, a new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted, supported by dozens of states (though notably without the participation of any nuclear-armed powers). This reflects a growing desire in the international community

to move toward complete nuclear disarmament, even if the major powers are not yet ready to embrace that goal.

Another notable achievement in arms control, the Chemical Weapons Convention (in force since 1997), has been largely successful – the vast majority of declared chemical weapon stockpiles have been destroyed under OPCW supervision. However, even this regime has been tested by crises: chemical agents were used in the Syrian civil war and in isolated incidents (such as the 2018 Salisbury poisoning). These violations prompted international responses, including sanctions against the perpetrators, underscoring the need for continued vigilance to uphold established norms.

A new frontier of security is emerging in outer space. Modern societies are increasingly dependent on space-based technologies (satellite communication, navigation, Earth observation), which means that a conflict extending into space could paralyze critical systems on Earth. Several countries (the U.S., China, Russia, India) have been developing anti-satellite weapons. As a result, the question of establishing rules of responsible behavior in space has entered the agenda of international diplomacy, including discussions at the United Nations.

Summing up, in the 2020s international security has two parallel dimensions:

- ✓ a traditional geopolitical dimension, where state power rivalries and military force once again play a dominant role (as seen in the war in Ukraine, the U.S.–China standoff, and renewed emphasis on nuclear deterrence); and
- ✓ a global, comprehensive dimension, where the foremost challenges are transnational problems facing all humanity (climate change, health pandemics, cyber insecurity, terrorism) that require cooperative solutions.

Unfortunately, there is tension between these two dimensions. The rise of mistrust and hostility among the great powers undermines the capacity to jointly tackle common global threats. Analysts characterize the current period as one of fragmentation of the international system. Statistics bear this out: as of the early 2020s, the number of armed conflicts worldwide has reached its highest point since the 1940s¹⁴. More people have been displaced by conflict than at any time since World War II – over 100 million refugees and internally displaced persons globally (a record figure as of 2023,

14 Global Peace Index 2024. (2024). The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP). URL: <https://surl.lu/pkrffa>

according to the UN)¹⁵. Military expenditures have also spiked dramatically: in 2022, world military spending reached \$2.24 trillion – the highest ever recorded – and it is projected to exceed \$2.7 trillion in 2024¹⁶. Instead of a “peace dividend” after the end of the Cold War, the world has witnessed a new surge in armaments.

Faced with these troubling trends, the international community has been searching for ways to reinforce global security mechanisms and restore cooperation. In 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres initiated a broad reflection on the future of multilateral cooperation (“Our Common Agenda”), and in 2023 he presented a New Agenda for Peace¹⁷ – a vision for reforming the collective security system in the 21st century. This document calls for strengthening conflict prevention, revitalizing arms control (including new domains like drones and artificial intelligence), reducing military expenditures, enhancing the role of women in peace processes, and updating the tools of peacekeeping and mediation¹⁸. In parallel, there are ongoing discussions about reforming the UN Security Council to make it more representative and effective – proposals include expanding the Council’s membership and curtailing the veto power in situations of mass atrocities, among other ideas¹⁹.

A major emphasis is also being placed on rebuilding trust among states. Without a baseline of trust, it is nearly impossible to cooperate on either traditional security issues (such as arms control) or emerging challenges. Therefore, experts stress the importance of dialogue even in the midst of conflicts and rivalries. For instance, continuing NATO–Russia communications (to prevent incidents and miscalculations), or U.S.–China talks on cybersecurity and space issues, are crucial to avoid unintended escalation. Even adversaries need channels of communication to manage risks.

In response to the multiplicity of security challenges, the concept of collective security in a broad sense is being reasserted. Unlike the narrower post-World War II notion (which often referred simply to an alliance against an aggressor), 21st-century collective security implies joint efforts by all nations against common

15 Five things to know about the New Agenda for Peace (SEPTEMBER 19, 2023). UNDP. URL: <https://surl.li/xpahra>.

16 Unprecedented rise in global military expenditure as European and Middle East spending surges (28 April 2025). SIPRI. URL: <https://surl.li/flefka>.

17 Three takeaways from A New Agenda for Peace (April, 2022). UN. URL: <https://salolli/34fb581>.

18 Five things to know about the New Agenda for Peace (SEPTEMBER 19, 2023). UN. URL: <https://surl.li/bmlyde>.

19 Launching New Agenda for Peace Policy Brief, Secretary-General Urges States to “Preserve Our Universal Institution” amid Highest Level of Geopolitical Tension in Decades (20 JULY 2023). UNOAU. URL: <https://surl.li/jpfxal>.

threats. A related idea gaining renewed attention is “indivisible security” – the principle that security is shared and interlinked, meaning that instability or war in one region will affect others in an interdependent world, and no country can achieve lasting security at the expense of others. The Ukraine war’s global fallout (economic and beyond) has been a stark reminder that no nation can isolate itself from insecurity elsewhere.

International and regional organizations – UN, NATO, EU, OSCE, and others – are striving to adapt to the new landscape. Notably:

NATO: In its 2022 Strategic Concept, NATO not only returned focus to its core mission of collective defense, but also addressed topics like human security, climate change, and emerging technologies, integrating these issues into its strategy²⁰. This reflects an understanding that non-military factors can influence stability and must be part of security planning.

- ✓ European Union: In 2022 the EU approved a “Strategic Compass” – its first comprehensive threat assessment and action plan for security and defense. This document outlines steps to strengthen the EU’s defense capabilities and acknowledges the need to combine military and civilian tools (diplomacy, sanctions, development aid) to respond to modern threats.
- ✓ OSCE: The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, though weakened by the confrontation between Russia and the West, remains valuable due to its unique forum that includes 57 states – all key players in Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian security, including those currently in conflict. Even during the war in Ukraine, the OSCE has been implementing projects such as demining efforts, assistance to affected communities, and human rights monitoring – exemplifying “soft security” contributions on the ground despite a hard security stalemate.

Finally, it is important to recognize the role of non-governmental actors – expert groups, academic institutes, and civil society – in shaping new thinking about security. Many contemporary security initiatives (for example, the movement leading to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, or various climate security campaigns) have grown out of public advocacy and pressure. Greater information transparency and digital connectivity now allow the public

20 NATO 2022 Strategic concept. Adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Madrid (29 June 2022). URL: <https://surl.li/gdcfvp>.

to scrutinize government actions in the security realm more than ever before. This creates pressure for security policies to be more accountable and oriented not only toward narrow national or elite interests, but toward humanitarian values and the common good.

Over the last century, the concept of international security has changed dramatically – evolving from a narrow understanding of security as merely the absence of war between great powers to a complex vision encompassing military, political, economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Theoretical approaches have expanded accordingly: from traditional realism, with its emphasis on power and balance, to liberal and institutional models of cooperation, and further to constructivist and critical paradigms that highlight the importance of ideas, identities, and human factors. Today it is understood that international security is multi-layered: it begins with the security of individuals and communities, rises through the level of the state and region, and ultimately extends to the global scale.

The current state of international security is mixed. On one hand, international institutions and legal norms have become an indispensable part of the security landscape. Despite their flaws, the United Nations Security Council, multilateral arms control treaties, and regional organizations like NATO, the OSCE, the African Union, ASEAN, and others have accumulated experience and tools that help restrain or resolve many crises. Conflicts are generally more localized today – the world has so far avoided a new global war, and the major powers have up to now refrained from direct armed confrontation with each other. Many states that were once adversaries have been integrated into shared security frameworks. For example, most European countries are today linked by alliance obligations or at least common institutions (such as the OSCE and EU), making war between them almost inconceivable.

On the other hand, new fractures in the world order are calling those achievements into question. Recurrences of aggressive nationalism (as in Russia's case) show that basic security norms can be brazenly violated if they are not backed by effective guarantees. The nuclear factor has re-emerged in a disturbing way: explicit threats of nuclear weapon use – heard recently from Russia – undermine a 75-year-old taboo and could provoke proliferation (as other countries might decide they too need nuclear arsenals for protection).

Meanwhile, the race to develop new military technologies (from hypersonic missiles to AI-driven weapons) is outpacing the creation of rules to govern their use, raising the specter of uncontrolled and destabilizing consequences should conflict erupt.

Nonetheless, the history of the international security concept suggests that crises often become catalysts for positive change. After the darkest moments – the world wars – humanity did find the strength to build institutions and norms to prevent repeat catastrophes. It is possible that today's grave challenges will likewise spur a reimagining of collective security on a new level. The UN's New Agenda for Peace discussed above is one such attempt to renew a global consensus on core security principles: to reaffirm the inadmissibility of aggression, to develop new agreements for arms control (including in cyber and outer space), and to invest in preventive diplomacy and peacekeeping, thereby strengthening the world's resilience to shocks.

At the regional level, there is also potential to improve the security architecture. In Europe, once the war in Ukraine ends, there will be a pressing task of constructing an updated security architecture that accounts for the lessons of Russia's aggression. This will likely require a combination of deterrence (maintaining a strong defense posture to ward off any future aggression) and a renewed commitment to principles of indivisible security (ensuring that no country seeks to increase its own security by threatening the security of others). We may also see a revival of arms control efforts in Europe – new agreements designed to avoid dangerous buildups of forces and weaponry along contested frontiers. In Asia, to prevent a conflict over Taiwan or in the South China Sea, it will be crucial to develop dialogue mechanisms among the U.S., China, and other regional powers – possibly moving toward some form of an Asian security forum analogous to the OSCE, to manage tensions and build confidence.

Increasingly, the concept of resilience is becoming central to international security. Resilience refers to the ability of states and societies to withstand shocks and recover quickly from disruptions. Enhancing resilience involves measures such as cyber defenses (to resist and rebound from cyber attacks), energy security arrangements (so that countries are not easily blackmailed by cuts to critical resources), and secure supply chains (to reduce vulnerabilities to economic warfare). Integrating resilience into security strategy is very much

a sign of the times – NATO, for example, has made resilience of national infrastructures a key element of its planning.

In summary, international security is a dynamic concept, shaped by both ideas and the hard “punches” of reality. Theoretical approaches give us tools of analysis – reminding us that security has military, political, economic, and human dimensions; that we must ask “Security for whom?” (for states? for people?); and “Security from what?” (from aggression, from poverty, from climate catastrophe?). Practice, however, reminds us that the focus must remain on concrete mechanisms to prevent wars and conflicts. The 20th century and the beginning of the 21st have provided humanity with tragic lessons as well as valuable achievements – international law, institutions, and a legacy of cooperation. The task of the current and coming generations is to preserve and update those achievements, to devise new tools suited to new threats, and above all to not lose sight of the strategic goal: building a world in which peace and security are a global common good guaranteed to all peoples. As NATO’s vision declares: “We want to live in a world where sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected... We stand together for a more peaceful world.” These words capture the ideal to which we should aspire in shaping the concept of international security in the 21st century – a concept founded on shared values, responsibility, and cooperation, in spite of all differences [9] [10].

The concept of international security has undergone a profound transformation from a narrowly defined, state-centric, and militarized construct to a multidimensional and dynamic framework that incorporates political, economic, environmental, societal, and human factors. This evolution has been driven not only by theoretical diversification – from realism and liberalism to constructivist and critical approaches – but also by historical shifts in the nature of global threats and power configurations.

While traditional paradigms such as realism and liberal institutionalism remain relevant – particularly in the context of renewed great-power rivalry and the resurgence of high-intensity conflicts – their explanatory sufficiency is increasingly challenged by transnational phenomena that defy conventional state-based responses. The integration of human security, securitization theory, and comprehensive security models has expanded the analytical boundaries of the field and underscored the necessity of inclusive, preventive, and cooperative strategies.

The 21st century has exposed the limitations of existing security architectures. The erosion of arms control regimes, the fragmentation of international consensus, and the growing militarization of emerging domains such as cyberspace and outer space point to a deteriorating normative environment. At the same time, the persistence of global challenges – climate change, pandemics, migration, and technological disruption – demands a reconceptualization of international security as a truly collective and indivisible good.

Accordingly, the future of international security lies in the ability of the international community to reconcile geopolitical deterrence with cooperative resilience. This requires revitalizing multilateral institutions, enhancing strategic dialogue among rival powers, and embedding normative commitments to human dignity, environmental sustainability, and technological accountability within the global security agenda. Only through such an integrative approach can the international system effectively respond to the complexity of 21st-century threats while safeguarding the foundational principles of peace, sovereignty, and global justice.

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ПРАВОПОРУШЕННЯ ЯК НАСЛІДОК СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ НЕСПРАВЕДЛИВОСТІ

Несправедливість є природним компонентом соціуму, вона відтворюється у діяннях людей, у міжособистісних відносинах, у відносинах між громадянами й державою (в особі чиновників), у сприйнятті й оцінюванні людьми рівня, якості життя, їх особистої ролі й становища в суспільстві, ролі інших осіб. Субстанційну основу соціальної несправедливості утворюють несправедливі, передусім нерівноцінні соціальні відносини, що забезпечують перевагу окремим особам або спільнотам, тим самим принижують людську гідність інших осіб і спільнот, порушують права людини. Істотними детермінантами соціальної несправедливості є аморальність