

ROLE OF SECURITY AND STRATEGIC STUDIES WITHIN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS STUDIES

PhDr. Petr SUCHÝ, Ph.D.

Abstract:

This article is focused on discussions concerning the future role of security and strategic studies in the Post-Cold War Era. It outlines positions and goals of various opinion groups participating in these discussions. It analyses development and aiming of these sub-branches within international relations in the last decade of the twentieth century. The author also argues that fears of various experts pointing out that strategic and security studies would lose their importance after the end of the Cold War, did not materialize. On the contrary, strategic studies played an important role because of highlighting many issues of growing importance, such as the Post-Cold War deterrence, role of nuclear weapons in the second nuclear age, aspects of arms control, irregular warfare, RMA and etc.

Cold War Era

During the Cold War, strategic studies became one of the most important sub-discipline within the international relations branch of study. This development was caused by quite new, untouched and unacknowledged issues related to a transformation of international system and security environment induced at the beginning of this era. In addition, the two superpowers dominating the bipolar international system got on to dispose of weapons with destructive potential incomparable with any other in the past. The given situation meant an impulse for many experts who started to analyse particularly these various phenomena, concepts and issues like role of nuclear weapons, deterrence, massive retaliation etc. Political relevance of gained knowledge and equally important political demand supported this advancement and growing importance of strategic studies as well. During the Cold War, strategic studies passed through substantial progression which was considerably affected by events and developments in international system and security environment. Similarly as many other branches of scientific research, the

strategic studies also went through their golden age era, consequential temporary decay and specious descent of their importance. However again, it was followed by a period of further intense development.

It is evident that the Cold War itself substantially supported the accelerated establishment of the strategic studies and their development both within the framework of think-tanks and universities. It is also important to notice that many experts focused on strategy even before the Cold War. Nevertheless, certain controversial opinions appeared after the end of the Cold War saying that due to the dissolution of their background, strategic studies logically lose their importance and it is necessary to consider their future role in the post-bipolar world.

90's of the 20th Century

The intensity of considerations embracing further role of strategic studies was rather high mainly at the beginning of the 90's of the last century. I regard it as useful to continue in these discussions after certain time has passed. So, this article will try to assess the current situation and review whether, due to the Cold War end, experts in the strategic studies area within international relations really did not have enough substantial topics to study during the recent thirteen years. In case of a negative answer to this question, it is also important to outline those subjects that are of primary importance in the present-day strategic studies and eventually can be used for delineation of reasons for further independent existence of strategic studies and demonstration of spuriousness of efforts aimed at a dissolution of strategic studies within too broadly defined security studies. As a matter of fact, what is the difference between these two study branches?

Differences between Security and Strategic Studies

For instance in the Penguin Dictionary of International Relations (Evans, Newnham 1998: 496), security studies are defined as a "sub-branch of international relations dealing with explanation of security concepts, their implementation when developing foreign policy and their consequential effect on structures and processes in world politics." Further lexical interpretation describes security studies as a field of study, during the Cold War aimed mainly at issues related to military security. It also observes that security and strategic studies mutually overlapped in the Cold War times.

Strategic studies are defined by the same dictionary as a "research field dealing with procedures through which actors utilize their military assets to achieve given political objectives." (Evans, Newnham 1998: 518)

The relatively substantial overlapping of security and strategic studies during the Cold War was caused mainly by a relatively limited scope of security studies. In his outstanding study from the beginning of the 90's of the 20th century, Stephen Walt sees the key target of security studies in the phenomenon of war. He has further defined security studies as "study of threat, employment and control of military power." (Walt 1991: 212)

This overlapping led to occasional confusions of these research branches. Some authors often mixed up both terms regarding them as equivalent with their application defined on geographical bases (Buzan, Waver, de Wilde 1998: 1). Helga Haftendorn also points out the fact that in the USA, security and strategic studies were considered to be identical, observing that the scope of security studies was considerably limited due to an excessive focusing on technical aspects (Haftendorn 1991: 15).

In this context, we can say that if the role and importance of strategic and security studies was certainly questioned after the Cold War End, from today's point of view, these discussions seem to be relatively useful thanks to some of their final outcomes.

Security Studies after the Cold War

The essential issue discussed in relation to security studies was the aiming of their further development under new international conditions. **Three variants** were outlined (Baldwin 1995: 133—134):

- change nothing in their form and scope;
- carry out a moderate reform;
- carry out a radical reform.

Regardless of views held by individual authors, it seems that there existed a relatively strong consensus consisting in usefulness or even necessity to clarify the scope and content of security studies as an academic branch of study (Haftendorn 1991: 15).

Stephen Walt presumed that the end of the Cold War and termination of the rivalry between the USA and the USSR should substantially affect the nature of security studies. As a very important aspect, he considered mainly concentrating on research within the grand strategy and further issues, which increasing significance he anticipated. It referred primarily to issues including a redefinition of interests and use of force to protect these interests, armed forces reductions, behaviour of other, especially regional actors, etc. As further important research areas, he regarded the role of domestic policy, causes for peace and cooperation, interactions between economy and security (Walt 1991: 224—227). Although Walt admits the possibility to include further subjects, as e.g. AIDS and poverty, into the framework of security studies, he also cautions against an excessive expansion of their scope which could result in a disruption of the branch coherence and make searching and suggesting of important issues solutions more difficult (Walt 1991: 213). Also for this reason, Walt is considered to be an author who does not deem the reform of security studies necessary (Baldwin 1995: 133). It seems that he sees no necessity for any intervention from the top. Anyway, such interventions can not be carried out by anybody else but involved experts. However, they select subjects for their analyses based on political order, their specialization and nature of existing security environment as well. Therefore, Walt outlines the potential subjects but does not define them normatively. Consequent developments indicated themselves that this was even unnecessary. Authors managed to identify the burning issues established by the actual development within the scope of international relations and international security.

Supporters of the moderate reform considered beneficial to further define the framework of security studies as a study of threat of a use of military power. The reform of the branch was supposed to involve an extension of the spectrum of studied phenomena. Thus higher attention should be paid to some so far disregarded areas, especially the Third World or Asia at the cost of the so far dominant subjects of nuclear deterrence and the conflict between the East and West. The scope of security studies would remain rather the same as in the Cold War. For instance, Edward Kolodziej, Charles Kegley, Barry Buzan or Helga Haftendorn belong to the leading supporters of the radical reform of security studies. Some of their opinions have been well outlined in the 992 Walt Study Review by Edward Kolodziej. Kolodziej's reservations include a disagreement with a restricted understanding of security studies, disregarding of other important and fundamental subjects, their state-centric aiming or prevailing unrealistic paradigm (Kolodziej 1992a: 422—423). As the Kolodziej's article indicates as well, supporters of the radical reform of security studies considered necessary to pay a substantial attention within this branch to non-military security aspects. These subjects include mainly the issues of human rights, crime, epidemics and environment. Baldwin argues that this effort to extend the scope of issues covered by security studies can not be connected with the era after the end of the Cold War. However, he states that exactly this period brought increasing requirements on such a procedure (Baldwin 1995: 134—135). Baldwin regards this requirement of experts and this development trend as a legitimate one but then he studies their potential negative impacts, especially on academicians. He makes use of this extension of the scope of security studies to demonstrate potential developments caused by such a procedure. However in my view, such a development would be detrimental both to security studies and international relations. Baldwin highlights the possibility that the extension of the spectrum of issues of security studies interests will cause further obscuration of the imaginary border between international relations and security studies, which is from his point of view very obscure already today (Baldwin 1995: 135). Although this Baldwin's remark can be accepted, his subsequent suggestion is rather controversial, considering a dissolution of the sub-branch of security studies and its reverse integration in international relations. Baldwin's reflections can be hardly acceptable although he justifies possible grounds of such a development with several arguments, weighty in his view. According to Baldwin, security studies overlap excessively with the field of international relationships and foreign politics. These often deal with similar or identical issues, such as national security or military power. Baldwin further states that the fundamental concepts of security studies, such as power, balance of power, security dilemma, limited war and various concepts based on deterrence theory are included in standard international policy courses. Baldwin further states that it is "difficult to argue for the study of a use of military power when nobody believes that this subject should be the focal point of the main branch. Sub-branches deal with sub-subjects." (Baldwin 1995: 136)

The second Baldwin's argument is the fact that the separation of security studies creates an obstruction of their political relevance. Security studies are supposedly handi-

capped in terms of this branch capabilities to contribute to broader discussions emerging in the post-bipolar world. Since their objective is to study the military power threat, use and control, thanks to their certain unidimensionality they are unable to assess adequately the importance and role or effectiveness of other than military means which can be also used for a sufficient and relevant solution of certain problems. Baldwin states that “politicians need a help when assessing usefulness of all available instruments, including diplomacy, information, economic and military statecraft.” (Baldwin 1995: 136) In his view, a reintegration of studies of military power threat, use and control with the traditional foreign policy analysis could have beneficial consequences enabling both to assess the military statecraft usefulness and to compare security with other political goals (Baldwin 1995: 139).

The third Baldwin’s argument consists in a statement that the term of security studies is an inappropriate denomination if we do not suppose that military threats are the only relevant ones. If we consider the existence of other threats, studies of military power threat, use and control can not be indicated by the term of security studies. His last argument is based on an observation that security represents a too broad theoretical concept for a sub-branch definition. Baldwin argues that analytical concepts like power, interdependence, cooperation, conflict and security are relevant for all sub-branches of international relationships and should not be exclusive area of only one sub-branch. Baldwin follows Buzan’s opinion that the concept of security is broad enough to integrate areas of international relations theory, international political economy, regional studies, peace studies, human rights, development studies, international history etc. (Baldwin 1995: 139). Based on this argument, he states that for this reason, security concept should not serve to define just one sub-branch.

Baldwin concludes his four arguments for reintegration of security studies with an observation that the third and fourth arguments are based on the assumption that the definition of the branch and its concept is very important for all security study experts. Applicability of these reservations would be disaffirmed if these experts abandoned the above mentioned terminology and entitlement to a special expertise in security issues. Baldwin closes the problem with the remark that a renaming of the sub-branch to for instance, military studies or war studies would not solve the first two mentioned reasons for the reintegration of security studies in international relations (Baldwin 1995: 140).

The significance of Baldwin’s observations consists mainly in further discussions, they opened within the expert public, aimed at the role and position of security studies and helped to clarify their definitions and frameworks. We can say **that security and strategic studies and their position within international relations were clearly defined in this period**. It was also the end of the “era of disorientation” as it was indicated by Buzan, Waver and de Wilde (Buzan, Waver, de Wilde 1998: 3). Should we understand security studies as a synonym of strategic studies we can still distinguish two dominant opinion courses – supporters of a more restricted specialization of security studies, indicated as traditionalists; and supporters of an extension of the spectrum of

issues studied within this branch – the so called wideners (Buzan, Waver, de Wilde 1998: 2—3). If we abandon any substitution of the two terms of security and strategic studies, the distinct interpretation of these terms can be used for a different perceiving of their different contents as they progressed during recent years.

In this sense today, **security studies are viewed** in their broader sense **as an area focusing on a variety of threats and security aspects, not solely military ones**. On the contrary, strategic studies are defined as a considerably military-oriented sub-discipline of the broader security studies. It is interesting that not only traditionalists agree upon this differentiation (Baylis, Wirtz, Cohen, Gray 2002: 11—12) but some supporters of the extended security studies as well, e.g. Barry Buzan (Buzan, Waver, de Wilde 1998: 2).

I regard this achievement of the consensus and its acceptance by experts from the both opinion courses as an substantial one and a valuable result of discussions from the 90's of the 20th century.

Post-Cold War Strategic Studies

An acceptance of the above mentioned differentiation also helps to a relatively apposite definition of the position of security and strategic studies within international relations. Richard K. Betts outlines it excellently in his article “Should Strategic Studies Survive?” from the year 1997. He **defines strategic studies** exemplified by three concentric circles. **Military science** lies in the center (combining technologies, organization and tactics to win battles); the outer circle represents **security studies** (everything related to security of the entire society) and strategic studies are in between (**mutual interaction of political goals and military assets influenced by social, economic and other limitations**). Considering the middle circle – strategic studies, Betts points out that this area should become the most important sub-branch of international relations, for it has a broader content than solely military issues. On the other hand, this content is more specific than security studies that are in fact unlimited. Betts also highlights the practical reality when he concludes that these distinctions play just insufficient role, for the outlined distinctions are not institutionally accepted and borders between individual branches are rather unclear. Another Betts's remark is uniquely accepted by the scientific community saying that only security studies are in the position of an academic branch. That is why the position of strategic studies depends on definition of security. Discussions on the content of security studies open here again as they were mentioned above. In this connection, further Betts's view is also interesting, that “most security experts define it on strategic studies but most of their agenda seems to be too close to the military science to some [experts] in other sub-branches [of international relations].” (Betts 1997: 9) This opinion then led to requirements to extend the scope of security strategies. However, Betts as well as Walt fear for their excessive range. His subsequent observation, that “intellectual coherence of strategic studies enhances with its linkage to the military core but institutional status and legitimacy increases with their separation”, is highly apposite from my point of view (Betts 1997: 9).

Although I regard the discussion over the current position of strategic studies as a beneficial one I would not overestimate its importance. If the authors in the field of strategic studies prove that they have enough issues and subjects, which they are able to analyze successfully, this is for them more important than any problems solved by their colleagues in the field of security studies. The present-day situation in security and strategic studies gives an evidence that their separate existence is to a great extent possible as well as their symbiosis within the theory of international relations.

Present and Future Prospects of Security and Strategic Studies

Most discussions over the present and future prospects of security and strategic studies in last decade of the 20th century were accompanied with doubts of further purpose and benefits of these branches in considerably changed nature of the international system. It was mainly **the decrease of the nuclear subjects relevance** in the context of declining superpower rivalry and the opinion widely spread in the beginning of the 90's that force assets were losing their importance under the new conditions, for the end of the Cold War caused a alleviation of the probability of armed conflict outbreaks which will reflect in a decrease of **the armed forces importance for national security**. Kolodziej mentions in his analysis of the role and content of security studies another reason for this strange situation, consisting in an inability of security experts to predict or anticipate the end of the Cold War. He sees a possible reason for this in a the excessively specific range of subjects dominating in security studies (Kolodziej 1992b: 1). Although security experts were unable to anticipate the end of the Cold War, I see this argument quite misleading, for in this context, not only the security studies failed but also the branch of international relations with its much broader focus and content.

From today's point of view, it is evident how unreasonable these expectations were. It was even naive to anticipate any remarkable decrease of armed conflicts. Conflicts in the Balkans, Persian Gulf, terrorist attacks in the USA a further, not only American targets all over the world still confirm the great importance of military force for national or coalition security. We can find more **reasons for further development of strategic studies**. Betts outlines following ones:

- It is beneficial to be prepared for a **possibility of a new conflict between great powers**. In relation to the USA, the author mentions that nearly every generation of this nation has been in a conflict or in some kind of crisis.
- He points out the necessity to **maintain conditions for strategic analyses** with high explanatory value, integrating political, economical and military thinking. This is the only way to assure that no decisions on use of force will be unsubstantiated or unaccountable.
- He highlights the importance and influence of **the U.S. defence budget volume and structure** on budgetary, social and foreign policy. Its reasonable delimitation requires an analysis of the importance of individual services in the armed forces and their role when implementing objectives defined by political represen-

tation. Betts remarks that if these issues “will not be decided by civilian strategists in conjunction with professional soldiers, it will be done by unqualified civilians separating the political and military logic or by military officials themselves.” (Betts 1997: 8)

- The last Betts’s argument concerns **the advantageous role which the strategy studies could play in relationships between the civilians and members of the armed forces**. However, this role could not be seen in the extent eliminating all the problems in their mutual attitudes but rather for the fact that mutual understanding of the problems can play a positive role within the armed forces control (checks and balances) (Betts 1997: 8).

The inherent political relevance is a very important component of the strategic studies, which must be preserved if this branch shall retain its significance. It is evident that the Clausewitz’s emphasis on the role of power as a reasonable political instrument has to be further considered. Both Betts and Baldwin (however, he uses this argument to support the idea of integration of security studies in international relations) render this instrument as a crucial one (Betts 1997: 8; Baldwin 1995: 136—137).

Betts’s states that today, the strategic studies focus on a wider range of issues than during the Cold War. He does not see any complication when none of these issues are dominant (Betts 1997: 21). On the contrary, such developments clearly refute objections of those who argue that today, this area of international relations research is no more that well-founded as it used to be.

As I mentioned above, it is evident that the strategic studies and their development are enormously influenced by processes occurring within the entire international system. Although the state-centric aiming of the strategic studies deteriorated at the end of the 90’s of the last century even so oriented analyses present highly valuable contents. It is also interesting that attention has been paid to subjects which many authors of the 90’s rendered as absolutely unfounded and invaluable. I mainly mean the issue of **deterrence** and the area of **the role of nuclear weapons**. The issue of deterrence in the Post-Cold War period has been analyzed by Keith Payne in his book “The Fallacies of Cold War Deterrence and a New Direction” (2001). As the title indicates, this excellent analysis deals with the deterrence theory during the Cold War and confronts it with the current situation. He highlights the necessity to conform the theory to the new situation when more actors are to be deterred on one hand and the probability of a deterrence measure failing is higher on the other hand. He views **the difference between the rational and reasonable behavior of an adversary** as absolutely essential. It is quite usual that besides the expectations of a rational behavior of some actors, there exists also an assumption that his behavior will be also reasonable but this does not have to be true. Payne describes the rational behavior and decision-making that logically combines objectives with decisions how to achieve defined goals. A rational politician selects such a particular course of action that based on the information available, he thinks is optimum to achieve given goals. Behavior is reasonable when an observer understands the

decision-making process and views it as a process based on shared values. It can be adverse to expect rational actions and on its bases also reasonable behavior. Rational decisioning can create a basis for a behavior that is described as an unreasonable one, for it absents from recognized norms (Payne 2001: 7—15).

Research of Colin Gray, one of the most outstanding present authors in the field of strategic studies is interesting similarly as the mentioned Payne's publication. I render his "Modern Strategy" (1999) as the most significant publication of the last decade where Gray perfectly outlines the whole variety of strategic studies and their individual dimensions that are to be constantly concerned. This demonstrates that **strategic studies do not have to be fused with international relations to increase relevancy and value of their analyses**. Another Gray's publication worth to be noticed is "The Second Nuclear Age" (1999) proving that the end of the Cold War can not mean any ultimate wind-up of focusing on the importance of nuclear weapons. Disrespecting and underestimating their existence and significance can cause considerable problems. "Deterrence Now" (2003) by Patrick Morgan belongs to further studies supporting the lasting relevance of the deterrence issue. However today, there are more issues and subjects requiring attention of strategic studies. Besides the mentioned deterrence and role of nuclear weapons, special attention should be paid to problems of Anti-Ballistic Defence Systems, to conservative analyses of benefits and risks connected with arms control, proliferation of mass destruction weapons and their carriers, revolution in the military or to the issues of terrorism and irregular war.

Conclusion

Based on the opinions presented above, I think we can conclude that **neither the security or strategic studies reached their "shutdown point"**. On the contrary, the current international system and security environment form new challenges and questions that must be answered and supported with satisfactory arguments. Although I personally think that the time is already over to present doubts relating to the sense of strategic studies I unambiguously agree with Betts's statement that "shall the strategic studies survive, they need to be established at universities" (Betts: 24). Without any doubts, preservation of an appropriate community is a prerequisite for retention of significance and development of any branch. This is the sphere where universities should play their primary role.

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