

# The Difficulties of Common Security: On the Need for Value Consensus as a Basis for International Security

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**Abstract:** The essence of international security is common security, which relies heavily on basic consensus on security concepts and strategies among nations. However, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such a consensus or value basis has become very “thin” as a result of the following four factors: the inception of the global international system along with its cultural diversity; the great changes in political, economic and military arenas; the rise of nationalism and popular politics; and the emergence of superpowers and their antagonistic ideologies. Within strategic culture, there is juxtaposition between confrontational culture and cooperative culture. In security concepts, people have different preferences for national, international or global security. In terms of security strategies, there exist several competing models such as hegemonic stability, balance of power and institutional cooperation. The primary aims of international security remain: avoiding major wars, maintaining the stability of the international system and safeguarding the integrity of the nations. There are two new challenges: promoting global economic justice to avoid any domestic or international conflicts caused by an imbalanced international economic order; and meeting the challenges of various non-conventional security issues affecting human life on a global scale. In an era of security interdependence, the international community must make joint efforts to rebuild the consensus on security in light of the fundamental values of common security and cooperative security, and to practice a truly “international” security strategy so as to break away from the security dilemmas inflicted by each nation’s reliance on its own self-help and competing “national” security strategy.

**Keywords:** international security; common security; value consensus; security concepts; security strategies

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The current state of international security is improving in comparison with the Cold War era, but the picture is far from rosy. Although there is no imminent total war or formal confrontation between power blocs, there are numerous armed conflicts on domestic as well as international levels, the cause, scale and type of which are becoming more and more diversified, harming the security of the nations concerned and affecting the security of neighboring countries as well as the whole region. When great powers get involved in major armed conflicts, such as the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the impact is far-reaching and of a global scale.<sup>1</sup> Given the rampant international security dilemmas, potential conflicts, and increasing number of non-conventional problems caused by world economic, financial and environmental issues, the prospect of international security is still gloomy and is becoming even more complicated.

The essence of international security, in comparison with national security, is reflected in common security and cooperative security. International security, based on certain power structures and physical conditions, needs certain value consensuses and ideological premises. International security also falls within the influence of the common values, norms and principles of the international community. Currently, the best option is common security and cooperative security, but the consensus on this issue from the international community is very thin, resulting in a very fragile basis for international security and hence an unlikely change for the better in terms of the security situation. New international security cultures and new value consensuses are needed to come out of this dilemma. To elaborate on this theme, the author discusses from the following four logically inter-related dimensions: (1) Cultural values have an impact on security concepts and strategies. (2) International security relies heavily on a basic consensus from the members of the international community on the fundamental targets and approaches in security. (3) There is a severe lack of security consensus among the current international community, resulting in contradiction and conflict in security concepts and strategies. (4) In an era of security interdependence, the international community should, step by step, build common values, norms and principles for both common and cooperative security, so as to tackle all sorts of conventional and non-conventional security challenges.

## 1. The Profound Impact of Cultural Values on Security Concepts and Strategies

Cultural values are a key element in shaping the concept of security, which has a direct impact on national security strategies. The concept of security is, in essence, a value, which can be extrapolated from the following three aspects: the evolution and cultural

1 Li Shaojun, "Major Global Armed Conflicts: Current Status and Future Trends," in Li Shenming and Wang Yizhou, eds., *Global Politics and Security Report 2006*, Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2006, pp. 20-46 (李少军:《全球重大武装冲突:现状与走势》,载李慎明、王逸舟主编:《2006年:全球政治与安全报告》,北京:社会科学文献出版社2006年版,第20-46页)。

connotation of the concept of security; the cultural connotation and impact of political culture, strategic culture and security culture; and the strategic and security orientation contained in major international political theories.

### 1.1 Changes in Human Values as Reflected by the Evolution of “Security” and Related Concepts

In any language or culture, the basic implication of “security” is “free from any threat or danger,” which means that security refers to both objective circumstances and subjective mentality, or in other words, a “sense of security.” According to that well-known definition by Arnold Wolfers, national security objectively means the absence of threats to acquired values and subjectively, the absence of fear that such values will be attacked.<sup>2</sup>

The key word here is value, referring to the valuable materials or interests that the security actor values most and also referring to the abstract values that the actor treasures most, i.e. the sense of value itself, including cultural values, political values, ideological values, and even way of life. In this sense, it is hard to separate interests from values. From both perspectives, interpretation of security is closely related to value systems and value concepts, for values serve as a basic yardstick to gauge right or wrong, good or evil, success or failure. Moreover, values, whether political, diplomatic or security, are a reflection of cultural values with deeper, longer-lasting, farther-reaching ramifications, as the core of culture is value.

With this in mind, we are able to ask a number of questions. Who is the beneficiary of security? Which materials or values are under threat? What kind of threat is it? In other words, who are the actors? What are the contents and the sources of the threats? People have various interpretations and judgments in regards to these questions, hence the diversity of security concepts and ideas. Objectively, security actors are faced with diverse practical security challenges in their own circumstances, leading to different security priorities. For instance, newly-emerging nation states are preoccupied with conventional security issues, such as integrity of sovereignty, and political independence, while developed nations pay more attention to non-conventional security issues as a result of better safeguards for basic security. Subjectively, due to different historical, cultural backgrounds and value orientations, security actors offer various definitions for security. Furthermore, identity factors, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, occupation, may lead to different security concepts. For instance, having once suffered colonial rule, developing countries tend to emphasize equality in sovereignty, hence regarding hegemonic ambitions and international intervention as a security threat, while developed countries that used to pursuing and maintaining dominant roles, tend to view the rise of emerging countries as a challenge to the existing order and a threat to their own advantages.

Owing to these objective and subjective factors, people have diverse views for

2 Roger Carey and Trevor Salmon, *International Security in the Modern World*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992, p. 13.

security regarding its actors, contents, nature of threat, and priorities. According to a quite comprehensive generalization, security actors, in a descending order, encompass: international systems; international sub-systems (the composite units in international systems, such as global and regional organizations); units (various sub-groups, organizations, communities, and actors composed of individuals, such as states, nations, multi-national corporations); sub-units (groups composed of individuals within units, which can have an impact on behaviors of units, such as bureaucracies and lobbies); and individuals (the smallest analytical unit in social science research). Security contents are related to economic, environmental, social, military and political dimensions: coercive relations in military; power, ruling status and recognition in politics; trade, production, and finance in economics; collective identification in society; and human activities in relation to the wider environment.<sup>3</sup>

The term “security” often carries various attributive adjectives, spawning a number of compound concepts, as a result of divergent value preferences with regard to the actors, contents, and approaches of security. In terms of actors, there is national security, international security and human security. In terms of contents, there is conventional security versus non-conventional security, and military (economic, political and cultural) security versus comprehensive security. In terms of approaches, there is common security, cooperative security, collective security and security communities. When it comes to the debate of security issues, “nearly every generation and every civilized person, consciously or unconsciously, reads moral significance into security. They can give their verdict of right or wrong, show their attitude of approval or disapproval, and have respect or disrespect for security.”<sup>4</sup>

This testifies to the importance of cultural and value dimensions in security. Different cultural value orientations not only lead to different security concepts but also affect security strategies, which are the options for strategies, tactics and measures, aiming at safeguarding the security of certain individuals or actors and achieving various security goals and values. For instance, hegemony, balance of power, collective security, security mechanisms, security communities, nuclear deterrence versus nuclear non-proliferation, arms race versus arms control, peace-keeping versus peace-making, and coercive diplomacy versus preventative diplomacy, can all be bestowed with divergent value hierarchies and practical significance in different countries.

Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one important change in human security awareness and value orientation is the shift from national security to international security, from state actors to non-state actors, i.e. human security or global security. Since the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, great powers, like the US and the Soviet Union, and the international community have acquired a brand-new perspective for security: at a nuclear age, the security of one nation is intertwined with that of other nations, and national security hinges largely on the international community. Both the US and

3 Barry Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, pp. 5-7.

4 Shi Yinhong, “Basic Philosophical Norms in International Security,” *Social Sciences in China*, No. 5 (2000), p. 178 (时殷弘: 《国际安全的基本哲理范式》, 载《中国社会科学》, 2000年第5期, 第178页).

the Soviet Union, the two largest nuclear powers at that time, realized that as national security strategy alone cannot prevent nuclear wars, more significance should be attached to international security strategy. Hence both countries paid more attention to arms control and the stability of their global strategy, and the international community also sought security cooperation for the sake of common security. Since the end of the Cold War, with an increasing level of globalization and ever-prominent global issues, the reality of “security inter-dependence” is increasingly clear. Conventional security concepts and security strategies are under attack and all sorts of new security concepts, such as common security, cooperative security and comprehensive security, have begun to emerge.

## 1.2 Impact of Cultural Values as Reflected in Political, Strategic and Security Cultures of a Nation

The impact of cultural values on the external relations of a nation is best reflected in its political, strategic and security cultures. According to scholars of international politics, the most distinctive feature of culture is either “relatively stable behaviors, actions, and customary patterns,”<sup>5</sup> or the “external manifestation of a coherent and consistent opinion of a certain community on core issues, such as the origin of the universe, the nature of society, the unpredictability of brutal natural environments, and the status of human beings in the hierarchy.”<sup>6</sup> However, the cultural core that distinguishes different cultures and civilizations from spiritual essence perspective is values, while languages, religions, and arts only work from a pro forma perspective. Every culture has its own core values and in this sense, the so-called cultural differences and clash of civilizations are in essence the differences and confrontation of values.

Political culture equates to political values, meaning a widely-shared set of fundamental beliefs, values and norms with regard to the relationship between government and politics, citizens and government, and between citizens themselves.<sup>7</sup> It can be expressed in the form of attitudes and beliefs to political mechanisms, colonial traditions, historical heritage, violence and conflict resolution, authoritative or hierarchical social models, and multilateralism versus unilateralism. In these respects, national politics may well interact with international politics.

The practical impact of political cultures on diplomatic policies can be approached from the following two more concrete and more pragmatic perspectives.

Firstly, a concrete manifestation of political cultural influence refers to the impact of specific institutional and legal arrangements on political outcomes. The legalist and contractual bent of American politics, the incorporation of factional and ideological differences within a ruling “consensus” in Japan, and the role of a professional and non-

5 Robert Rubinstein, “Cultural Aspects of Peacekeeping: Notes on the Substance of Symbol,” *Millennium*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Winter 1993), p. 550.

6 Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures: Communication Obstacles in International Diplomacy*, Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1990, p. 8.

7 James M. Burns, *Government by the People*, translated by Lu Zhenlun et al., Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1996, p. 243 ([美]詹姆斯·M·伯恩斯等:《民治政府》,陆震纶等译,北京:中国社会科学出版社1996年版,第243页).

partisan civil service in the British parliamentary system can all have real consequences in the security arena. For example, in the early 1980s, a Congressional revolt imposed several changes on the Reagan administration's position in the INF and START negotiations, which reflected the relative balance of Congress and the President in foreign policy making and treaty-signing. It served, however, to confuse completely the Soviet negotiators, who were uncertain about the value of any negotiating statements or positions. On the other hand, the awareness of the factional nature of Japanese politics allowed Chinese negotiators in the early 1970s to test the extent to which Japanese (and Liberal Democratic Party) policy had really changed as a result of its normalization of relations with China.

Secondly, another manifestation of political cultural elements is the external expressions or projections of these domestic political arrangements and traditions. For instance, strong beliefs in "democracy and peace," and the "promotion of human rights," prompt national leaders to seek partnerships with those nations that cherish the same values in building the international security order accordingly. In the dualistic world outlook of either good or evil, strong animosity towards "the other" can be expected. Self-identification with moral advantage or power advantage leads to either aggressive expansionist behavior or complacent isolation, ignorant of the predicament of others. Taking the USA as an example, at a trivial level, this can lead to diplomatic gaffes and embarrassments. President Lyndon Johnson, schooled in senatorial logrolling,<sup>8</sup> treated Third World leaders as US Senators ... [and] presumed that they were all reasonable men who could be persuaded to compromise on almost any issue if the right combination of threats and incentives was employed.<sup>9</sup> On the national front, this attitude can be seen in the "holy wars for democracy;" the Wilson style, multi-lateral free trade mechanisms employed after WWII; the international version of Roosevelt's New Deal; and the human rights diplomacy of Carter. All of these are external projections of American political cultures.

"Strategic culture" is another related concept to political culture. In 1977, Jack Snyder was among the first to use this term in his RAND report *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.<sup>10</sup> However, terms like "way of warfare" of a nation or "national style" in strategy have been used before to express similar ideas. Strategic culture can be defined in both narrow and broad senses. The former refers to a "set of attitudes and beliefs held within a military establishment concerning the political objective of war and the most effective strategy and operational method of achieving it."<sup>11</sup> The latter, according to the well-known definition given by Alastair Iain Johnston, is an integrated "system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts

8 Logrolling is the trading of favors, or *quid pro quo*, such as vote trading by legislative members to obtain passage of actions of interest to each legislative member.

9 Keith R. Krause, ed., *Culture and Security: Multilateralism, Arms Control and Security Building*, London: Frank Cass, 1999, pp. 9-10.

10 Jack Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, Santa Monica: RAND, 1977, report R-2154-AF.

11 Yitzhak Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Autumn 1991), p. 5.

to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.”<sup>12</sup>

Strategic culture may involve attitudes and beliefs regarding experiences of war and peace, function of the military forces, interpretation of threat, security principles, images of enemies, and unilateral or multi-lateral security situations. The concept of strategic culture as an analytical tool or a strategic cultural source for a nation's external actions is not as difficult to define as some people might otherwise believe. Colin Gray, in his paper “National Style in Strategy,” once argued that American strategic culture is just an objective being, affected by geo-political, historical, economic and other unique factors in the US. It provides a context to debate strategic ideas and defense policies, and to make choices accordingly. It helps to explain why options were so made in the past by American decision-makers. Thanks to the continuity in strategic culture itself, it also helps to interpret the current American strategic options and to predict the future ones.<sup>13</sup>

The impact of strategic culture can also be observed from domestic (social) as well as international (external) dimensions. The domestic social dimension is determined by the following elements: historical experiences that mold attitudes toward wars; the influence of dominant social structures (e.g. class, hierarchy, racial divisions) military-society relations and military organizations; the role of armed forces in society (e.g. size and contact with the society at large) ; and the choice of strategic principles and weapon systems. In certain areas, these elements are, in fact, historical and social elements, which can have an impact on security policies. Categorizing them as culture is to emphasize that these elements should not be reduced to pure “material benefits” or numerical calculations.<sup>14</sup> The huge impact of historical-social elements on the option of national strategy is clearly revealed in the research of the national strategic cultures in Western countries (especially around the WWI era) and Asian countries, such as China, Japan and India.<sup>15</sup> Recent experiences and recollections of the war may decide the way for which a country is inclined to opt in order to ensure security: working alone or seeking cooperation, through coercive or peaceful approach. Certain domestic

12 Alastair Iain Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Spring 1995), p. 46; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 36, ix.

13 Colin Gray, “National Style in Strategy: An American Example,” *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (fall 1981), p. 22.

14 For more detailed debate on these social factors, please see Stephen Peter Rosen, “Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Spring 1995), pp. 5-31.

15 Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*; Thomas U. Berger, “Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany and Japan,” in Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996; Elizabeth Kier, “Culture and French Military Doctrine before World War II,” in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security*; Jack Snyder, “Civil-Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914 and 1984,” *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Summer 1984), pp. 108-146; Stephen van Evera, “Why Cooperation Failed in 1914,” *World Politics*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (October 1985), pp. 80-117; Stephen Peter Rosen, “Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Spring 1995), pp. 5-31.

political arrangements will enhance or hinder participation in the process of building international peace. A country's social attitude toward conflict and violence, and its historical experience in building the nation state, will generate different preferences for unilateral, bilateral or multi-lateral models in diplomacy, or result in different options for mutual security and trust building as well as arms control. For example, the American "gun culture" has a profound impact on the proliferation of light weapons.

The international dimension of the impact of strategic culture can be demonstrated in the relationship between strategy and "ethnocentrism" as well as "identity." The ethnocentric biases of strategy, which include a tendency to adopt crude images of the enemy, to polarize disputes, to misunderstand the impact of one's own actions and to assume a posture of superiority, all represent important sources of mistakes in the theory and practice of strategy. How real rivals and potential opponents that are regarded is connected to deeper questions of identity in a strong sense. It is of great significance to make out whether a potential opponent is considered an equal, an inferior, a barely human barbarian, or a "brother enemy."<sup>16</sup> It is not necessarily true that brothers always enjoy better relations than barbarians; in terms of conflicts, it is sometimes to the contrary, but it still matters to understand perfectly the nature of the adversaries. To what extent the international system and regional system enjoy cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity, and whether there is general cognition for common needs and interdependence in security, will affect the strategic culture (together with security culture) and actual policies. The European Union, ASEAN and even Latin America, in sharp contrast to the Middle East, are quite successful in building strategic and security mutual trust. To a certain extent, it is due to their sense of shared identity.<sup>17</sup>

Security culture is another closely-related and even partly-overlapping concept to strategic culture. According to a widely accepted view, security culture "consists of those enduring and widely-shared beliefs, traditions, attitudes, and symbols that inform the ways in which a state's or a society's interests and values with respect to security, stability and peace are perceived, articulated and advanced by political actors and elites."<sup>18</sup> Obviously, strategic culture, in a narrow sense, is incorporated into security culture, which might even boast a richer connotation than strategic culture in its broader sense. Theoretically speaking, security itself involves security strategy, i.e. the means and ways to ensure security, which partly explains why security studies are proposed to replace or incorporate strategic studies.<sup>19</sup> The author of the above-mentioned definition also points out that although his definition builds upon the work on strategic culture, it moves away from its stricter emphasis on military affairs and the use of force towards broader issues of "security, stability and peace." It also evokes the specific issues

16 Keith R. Krause, ed., *Culture and Security: Multilateralism, Arms Control and Security Building*, p. 13.

17 For more information on ethnocentrism in strategy, please see Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*, London: Croom Helm, 1979, pp. 18-62.

18 Keith R. Krause, ed., *Culture and Security: Multilateralism, Arms Control and Security Building*, p. 14.

19 If the strategy is interpreted as a grand strategy, rather than military strategy in the narrow sense, its connotation can be quite rich. But as for the original meaning of strategy in the sense that it refers to the way to success, it is still a concept with a much narrower connotation.

associated with nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, confidence and security-building agenda, and peace keeping.<sup>20</sup>

As for the origin of the perceptions and behaviors of a nation's external policies, the concepts of political culture, strategic culture and security culture (ignoring for the moment the diplomatic culture which is not dealt with in this paper) reveal and highlight different dimensions of that origin. With intrinsic connections, they do not have clear demarcations, as they are all sub-segregates within that cultural collection, based on shared cultural models and reflecting the core values contained. In short, cultural values, incorporated in history, ethnicity, religions, languages, customs and norms, have a profound impact on a country's attitude toward war, peace and security.

### **1.3 Major International Political Theoretical Traditions with Their Own Security Values and Strategic Orientations**

The conceptual structure in the security of international systems and regional systems is an integral part of international security relations and the security landscape. The germination of new concepts, such as common security, only reflects the extended scope of the vision of security vision and the trend of diversification of security perspectives. It does not mean, however, that these new concepts have replaced or prevailed over traditional concepts. The same goes for the theoretical dimension, where various political philosophies and security values are in a contradictory and competing state, and major international political theoretical traditions advocate different priorities regarding national security, international security and global (human) security, hence different strategic assertions.

In terms of rudimentary value orientations, political realism pays close attention to national security, conventional political military security, with no regard to any non-state security actors or non-conventional security agendas. Except for a very few extreme realists, most classic realists acknowledge that too much unrestricted international power struggle can not only harm certain countries' interests and chances of survival, but also destroy the international system, in which the constituent sovereign states interact with one another. In other words, they fully appreciate that national security depends not only on a security strategy with a self-strengthening, self-helping and competitive nature, but also on an international security system with a necessary basic order for the survival of nations and a relatively peaceful and stable international environment. However, the realpolitik logic of realism, especially its pessimistic views of the grave consequences of anarchy in international systems and the confrontational nature of international relations, renders it unable to rely on other means and mechanisms than the balance of power, military alliances, limited warfare, and conventional diplomacy, when it comes to international security strategies.

As a school of political philosophy, liberalism takes freedom, welfare and dignity of individuals as its value orientation and starting point. Liberalism regards individuals

as the main international actors and states as the most important collective actors. It starts from individuals, attempting to find out how the organizations, composed of individuals, interact with one another. States therefore are diversified actors with more than one dimension. In the context of international politics, most branches of liberalism acknowledge the significant role that international security plays in national security, attach great importance to international institutional cooperation within the constraint of anarchy, follow with greater interest non-conventional issues besides conventional ones, take account of the role other actors play besides state actors, and highlight the multi-channel connection among nations. This is clearly manifested in neoliberal institutionalism.<sup>21</sup>

The rationalist tradition, as defined by Martin Wight, can be taken, to a certain extent, as a more cautious and moderate form of liberalism. In this tradition, international security occupies a more prominent and even central position, for this tradition values lasting peace and the way to achieve it, and takes into account national interests as well as the overall interests of the international community. Out of strong belief in human rationality and social affinity, rationalism realizes that the international system has evolved into an international community, with common interests, rules, institutions and values, though without a supreme authority. It is conducive to the maintenance of international security and to universal lasting peace through a combination of social changes within national borders, improvements in international relations, and a combination of political economic measures and legal ethical construction.<sup>22</sup>

Liberalism, after hundreds of years of evolution, has evolved into a multifarious ideological system. On the one hand, “democratic peace theory,” “commercial peace theory,” and “institutional peace theory,” derived respectively from republican liberalism, commercial liberalism, and institutional liberalism, all take the interests of developed countries and multi-national capital as their major concern, trying to avoid issues regarding ideologies and institutional hegemony. On the other hand, cosmopolitanism and globalism, closely related to liberalism, are main advocates for new ideas, such as human security and global security.

All sorts of radical ideologies, holding high the banners of cosmopolitanism, human security, and the “liberation of humans,” strongly attack the injustice in the current international system and order, and propose to modify the current situations through radical reforms. Moreover, social constructivism, together with other theoretical thoughts with similar sociological approaches in methodology such as postmodernism, neo-Marxism, feminism, critical theories, and historical sociology,<sup>23</sup> though without the theoretical scale and impact level of the mainstream schools, poses a legitimate challenge to these schools through unique perspectives and innovative methodologies.

21 Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, translated by Men Honghua, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002, pp. 24-38 (〔美〕罗伯特·基欧汉、约瑟夫·奈：《权利与相互依赖》，门洪华译，北京：北京大学出版社 2002 年版，第 24-38 页)。

22 Shi Yinhong, “Basic Philosophical Norms in International Security,” *Social Sciences in China*, No. 5 (2000), p. 183 (时殷弘：《国际安全的基本哲理范式》，载《中国社会科学》，2000 年第 5 期，第 183 页)。

23 Alexander Wendt, “Constructing International Politics,” *International Security*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Summer 1995), pp. 71-81。

Social constructivism makes up for an ideological blind spot in mainstream theoretical traditions and political ideologies, and points out that security relations and structures, not to mention security concepts and policies, are natural outcomes of given social historical conditions. If there is any international system, it can only be a social structure modeled after material and conceptual elements in practice. “Anarchy is what states make of it,”<sup>24</sup> as opposed to something pre-destined or immutable. To change the security circumstances, human perceptions have to be changed accordingly.

## 2. Heavy Reliance of International Security on Value Consensus of the International Community

Although it is hard to confirm the etymological origin of international security, it is for certain that awareness of international security has existed since the inception of the nation state system. One of the essential attributes of human beings is their sociality or their strong yearning for social life, whether in the family, village, clan, nation, state, or international community. In Western ideologies, after sufficient discussion and summarization by generations of thinkers from Hugo Grotius to John Locke, the connotation of security has been clearly defined: personal security means a person’s life, liberty, and assets are free from encroachment and deprivation as long as its application does not violate other people’s similar rights; national security means the freedom to enjoy sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and to choose the way of life within the national borders, as long as other countries’ similar rights are also respected; international security implies that the international community enjoys an anarchical state with peace, order and basic moral principles, the premise of which is the universal presence of national security.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of the most elementary goals, international security and international order are highly compatible in connotation. Hence, the “elementary, primary and universal” goals of international order, as generalized by contemporary theorist Hedley Bull, can also be applied to international security. These elementary goals are as follows: (1) To preserve the system and society of states itself. The former means modern states are the principal actors in world politics and the chief bearers of rights and duties within it so as to avert the emergence of hegemonic systems and universal empires. The latter means to prevent any harm to the basic links (common interests, rules, institutions and values), through which the international community is inter-connected. (2) To maintain the independence or external sovereignty of individual states. This is the ultimate goal for the nations to participate in the society of states, and also the cornerstone for modern international systems and international laws, although sometimes in history

24 Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No.1 (Spring 1992), pp. 391-425.

25 Shi Yinhong, “Basic Philosophical Norms in International Security,” *Social Sciences in China*, No. 5 (2000), pp. 179-180 (时殷弘:《国际安全的基本哲理范式》,载《中国社会科学》,2000年第5期,第179-180页)。

the independence of small states was sacrificed by big powers under the excuse of subordinating particular countries' independence to the preservation of international systems and the international community. (3) To preserve peace in the international community. Peace does not necessarily equal security; war is a necessary evil, and thus it is impossible to achieve universal lasting peace. However, no efforts should be spared to maintain "normal conditions" among nations, i.e. the state of being free from wars. (4) Other elementary goals for the international community: to limit violence that might cause loss of life or bodily injuries; to honor promises and agreements; and to stabilize its members' possession of assets, especially sovereignty and jurisdiction. From the practice of modern international relations, to be free from external aggression, to honor international promises and agreements, and to enjoy national sovereignty and territorial integrity, all remain the cornerstones of international order and the yardstick for international security.<sup>26</sup>

It can be surmised that in comparison to "national security," "international security" falls into the domain of "common security." International security reveals the truth that the security or insecurity of nations is interconnected and interacting, and in an interdependent world no nation can guarantee sufficient lasting peace in isolation. The absence of "common security" leads to the absence of "international security," hence the lack of external conditions and basic safeguards for "national security." Therefore, the realization of common goals cannot be parted with collective security, and common security means "cooperative security." The Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, chaired by former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palm, issued a report entitled "Common Security: A Blueprint for Survival," which advocated that common security should be based on such a cognition that "the best safeguard for security is attained through cooperation rather than competing power politics."<sup>27</sup>

What international security, common security and cooperative security have in common is that they all require nations, especially big powers, to have common values and codes of conduct in security concepts and strategies, i.e. some basic consensus on goals and needs, agendas and threats, means and approaches in international security. This is all too obvious. It can be drawn from common sense, without reference to the terms of social constructivism, that if nations are highly suspicious of each other's intentions and always prepare for the worst, they will resort to competing and "self-helping" principles in defending their security interests, hence leading to "security dilemmas." On the contrary, if there is enough common knowledge or consensus to foster mutual trust, they would rather settle disputes through coordination and cooperation than confrontational measures, such as wars, which is conducive to cultivation of awareness for the need of a "security community" and the ultimate

26 Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, translated by Zhang Xiaoming, Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2003, pp. 12-15 (〔美〕赫德利·布尔:《无政府社会》,张小明译,北京:世界知识出版社2003年版,第12-15页); Shi Yinhong, "Basic Philosophical Norms in International Security", *Social Sciences in China*, No. 5 (2000), p. 180 (时殷弘:《国际安全的基本哲理范式》,载《中国社会科学》,2000年第5期,第180页)。

27 Wang Fan and Lu Jing, eds., *An Introduction to International Security*, Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2010, preface, p. 5 (王帆、卢静主编:《国际安全概论》,北京:世界知识出版社2010年版,序言,第5页)。

realization of this community. Therefore, the circumstances of international security are not only decided by the “material structure” and “power allocation” of international systems, but also deeply influenced by the “cultural psychological structure” and “concept distribution” in security.

A basic issue that needs to be addressed in international security is to ensure that widely accepted elementary goals and core values are free from harm or threat in international interaction. It is clearly demonstrated in the history of modern international relations that shared goals and values play a critical role in maintaining international security and order.

Regardless of the nature of international systems and politics, it is in the common interests of all nations to prevent the outburst of destructive and disorderly tendencies within those systems and politics. According to the logic of Hans J. Morgenthau’s political realism, the ultimate approach is to eliminate anarchy, i.e. to create an international community through diplomatic channels so as to build a centrally-authoritative supranational state and thus achieve lasting peace.<sup>28</sup> This is, of course, just a logical inference, without sufficient actual evidence. Under the premise that it is very unlikely and even undesirable to build a prevailing international community and a supranational state, the wisest and probably the most reasonable option is to foster and promote an awareness for the international community; to fully understand the key value of concepts, principles and goals in common security for the survival and development of the nation states in this highly interdependent world; and to regulate and control, if not eliminate, anarchy in international systems through the promotion and improvement of shared rules, institutions and value links in the international community so as to avert extreme consequences. Any approaches other than the above-mentioned ones are a matter of expediency, with only local and short-term security benefits.

When it comes to maintaining international order and security, classic realists, like Morgenthau, never deny the role of cultural values; on the contrary, they deeply regret the loss of once present “moral consensus.” While fully appreciating that the principle of balance of power contributed tremendously to maintaining international systems and national independence at the height of 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Morgenthau also points out the limitations of that principle in its functions. He argues that the stability of international order also hinges on other elements, such as the “constraints of common moral values”: the value consensus on the necessity for big powers to maintain basic international security, i.e. the feasibility of international systems, the stability of international orders, and the survival of sovereign states.

In fact, Edward Gibbon, a renowned historian, already pointed this out in 1781. Against the backdrop of armed conflicts between Britain and its American colonies, France, Spain and the Netherlands, Gibbon proposed:

28 For more information, please see Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, translated by Xu Xin, Hao Wang and Li Baoping, Beijing: CPPSU Press, 1990, chapters 30-32 ([美] 汉斯·摩根索:《国家间政治》, 徐昕、郝望、李保平译, 北京: 中国人民公安大学出版社 1990 年版, 第 30-32 章)。

... to consider Europe as one great republic, whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation. The balance of power will continue to fluctuate... but these events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts, and laws, and manners... The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame; republics have acquired order and stability; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or, at least, of moderation; and some sense of honor and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times. In peace, the process of knowledge and industry is accelerated by the emulation of so many active rivals; in war, the European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests.<sup>29</sup>

In his masterpiece, *A Study of History*, Arnold Joseph Toynbee quotes and affirms that famous judgment of Gibbon.<sup>30</sup> Taking the American Revolution as an example, Toynbee argues that both America and its ally France had limited goals and harbored no intention to upset the Western international system. Fenelon, a great philosopher of the reign of Louis XIV, points out that the attention for the maintenance of a kind of equality and of equilibrium among neighboring nations assures tranquility for all. “Christendom forms a kind of general republic which has its common interests, fears, and precautions.” Emer de Vattel, the most influential writer of the eighteenth century on international law, believes that “Europe forms a political system, a body where the whole is connected by the relations and different interests of nations... the members of which, though independent, unite, through the ties of common interest, for the maintenance of order and liberty.” Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a great thinker, takes up the same theme by stating “the actual system of Europe has exactly that degree of solidarity which maintains it in a state of perpetual agitation without overturning it.” Therefore, Morgenthau writes, “the great political writers of that age were aware of this intellectual and moral unity, upon whose foundations the balance of power reposes and which makes its beneficial operations possible.”<sup>31</sup>

In their co-authored book, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*, Gordon Craig, a well-known American diplomatic historian, and Alexander George, a renowned scholar of political science and strategy, contend that the Western history from the Middle Ages up until now demonstrates that a “feasible international community” is the most effective check on the belligerent inclination among nations. Such an international community should meet the following conditions in terms of goals, structures and procedures: as for aims and goals of the system, major powers reach consensus, reflecting their prevalent values which they attempt to maintain and

29 Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, quoted from Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, pp. 273-275 ([英] 爱德华·吉本:《罗马帝国的衰亡》, 转引自 [美] 汉斯·摩根索:《国家间政治》, 第 273-275 页).

30 Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (Vol. 2), translated by Cao Weifeng et al., Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1997, pp. 51-52 ([英] 阿诺德·汤因比:《历史研究》(中册), 曹未风等译, 上海:上海人民出版社 1997 年版, 第 51-52 页).

31 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, p. 276 ([美] 汉斯·摩根索:《国家间政治》, 第 276 页).

promote by establishing and joining the system; the international system enjoys a structural rationality in its scope, distribution of power, and hierarchy; the international system practices universally accepted procedures, i.e. a set of norms, rules, customs and institutions to realize the aims and goals.<sup>32</sup>

The above-mentioned judgments smack of strong realism and European features, emphasizing the role of Western power consensus and the balance of power in maintaining international security. Since the Napoleonic Wars, this notion of Western consensus has come under attack and is in irrevocable decline. However, its critical logic is not outdated: international security is based on the fact that the international community should share certain common values in security concepts and policies. On this score, liberalism does not diverge from realism; in fact it goes even further: a prevalent liberalist viewpoint is that international cooperation plays a core role in achieving peace, welfare, justice, liberty for all human beings. Real liberalists focus their attention on how to seek and maintain harmony between divergent interests and conceptions. While acknowledging that differences and coercion are part of the reality, they believe that interdependence or homogeneity in interests are becoming more and more prominent in international life. Therefore, the key in international security is how the international community can strike a balance between self-interests and common interests, coercive and non-coercive measures.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, social constructivism points out that both security dilemmas and security community hinge on shared knowledge among nations. Therefore, when it comes to the proposition that international security relies on value consensus in security concepts and strategies, major schools of theoretical traditions have no fundamental differences.

With the great changes in international environment and world situations since the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the question now becomes: how much consensus does the contemporary international community still enjoy in its goals, approaches and institutions regarding international security?

### 3. Severe Lack of Security Consensus in the Current International Community

Despite great changes, the international community is still in a state of anarchy, with the highest principle being the interests and security of individual nation states. There is a lack of sufficient understanding and due respect, on the part of governments and the general public, for the goals, values, and especially the relevance of international security, though it has become a topic often raised in all sorts of international forums. The ideological and value basis for international security is running thin due to a severe

32 Gordon Craig and Alexander George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*, translated by Shi Yinhong, Zhou Guiyin and Shi Bin, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2004, p. 5 ([美]戈登·克雷格、亚历山大·乔治:《武力与治国方略——我们时代的外交问题》,时殷弘、周桂银、石斌译,北京:商务印书馆2004年版,第5页)。

33 Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, chapter 4.

lack of security consensus, the causes and effects of which are shown in the following four aspects.

### 3.1 Loss of Cultural Homogeneity in the International System Once Advocated by Western Thinkers

The relative success of the European balance system in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was based on the premise that the major actors share the same level of responsibility in maintaining the system. They all realize, despite competition and confrontation, the need to constrain and coordinate friction, and acknowledge a set of basic conditions for their own survival, such as cooperation and balance of power among major actors; objection to any attempt for hegemony and overall dominance; formulation of diplomatic policies by career diplomats; framing of war, though a legitimate policy tool, by coordination among big powers; and cultural homogeneity in languages and values for the ruling class and diplomatic elites.<sup>34</sup>

According to Morgenthau, the above-mentioned moral consensus and convergence of culture and morality started to disintegrate in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and thus destroyed the international community.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Craig and George also agree that the revolutionary transformations in diplomatic and strategic environment (which they inappropriately name “diplomatic revolution”), i.e. the complicated changes in politics, economics, military and ideologies from late 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, made the international community become more conflict-oriented and aggravate homogeneity of the diplomatic community, resulting in a total collapse of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century European balance of power in WWI. The transformations after WWI dealt a big blow to the homogeneity and efficacy of the system; it therefore became increasingly difficult to either maintain the old system or create a new one, hence the outbreak of the WWII and the subsequent Cold War. To be more specific, “diplomatic revolution” encroaches upon the conditions and norms that support the classic European system: progress in science and technology fundamentally transforms the art of transportation, communication and war; governments find it hard to implement consistent policies due to the arrival of popular parties and interest groups; diplomatic affairs fall into the hands of elected politicians without any diplomatic backgrounds, who often sacrifice long-term interests for the sake of satisfying the needs of domestic politics and public opinions. All these factors contribute to a diplomatic “degeneration” in the past century. In conclusion, the consensus and value basis to maintain international order and security from the major powers are getting very “thin.” How to accommodate accelerating changes has become a major problem in modern statecraft.<sup>36</sup>

34 Gordon Craig and Alexander George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*, pp. 394-395 ([美] 戈登·克雷格、亚历山大·乔治:《武力与治国方略——我们时代的外交问题》,第 394-395 页)。

35 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, pp. 310-319 ([美] 汉斯·摩根索:《国家间政治》,第 310-319 页)。

36 Gordon Craig and Alexander George, *Force and Statecraft: Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*, pp. 6, 394-397 ([美] 戈登·克雷格、亚历山大·乔治:《武力与治国方略——我们时代的外交问题》,第 6 页、第 394-397 页); Qian Cheng and Shi Bin, “Dimensions of Modern Strategies: the Research Scope and Its Lessons of *Force and Statecraft*,” *Chinese Book Review*, No.7 (2007), pp. 39-47 (钱铨、石斌:《现代战略的维度:〈武力与治国方略〉的研究视野及其启示》,载《博览群书》2007 年第 7 期,第 39-47 页)。

### 3.2 A Split World Aggravated by Ideological Confrontation, such as Nationalism

The impact of ideology on international relations has become ever more prominent since WWI, especially in the Cold War era, the source of which partly derives from its combination with popular politics. Nationalism is a good example. Even in the Western industrialized society, it is still deeply ingrained, cultivating a radical tendency for strategy makers and followers in their goals and means.<sup>37</sup> The “decline in international morality” and the “destruction of international community,” as lamented by Morgenthau, refer to the collapse of the value consensus in international security and order since the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and especially since the WWI era. One of the major reasons is that the cosmopolitan code of conduct was replaced by a nationalist one, nationalism prevails over internationalism, and general and universal moral codes of conduct are replaced by a set of special moral rules assuming an outfit of universality. This historical era begins with Wilson’s “democratic holy war,” the war “to create a safe world for democracy.” In this sense, Morgenthau argues that WWI and the Crusades in the Middle Ages share one thing in common—enabling a dominant role for one group’s moral system. At the same time in Russia another moral and political system emerged. Both political systems, ideologies or values claim to be efficacious on a global scale.<sup>38</sup> The Cold War leaves the world with a divergence in politics and ideologies. Furthermore, the remnants of cold-war mentality are still alive in current international relations, featuring a false dichotomy of either good or evil, either friends or enemies.

### 3.3 Contradiction and Conflict in Strategic Cultures and Security Concepts among Nations

Strategic culture determines the leading strategic preference of a nation, thus playing a decisive role in strategic options as well as in the formulation and implementation of national security policies. Strategic culture can be divided into at least two categories: confrontational and cooperative ones, with divergent positions and even confrontational views for the function of war, conflict and violence. The former argues that war is an inevitable phenomenon that should not be avoided, conflict is a zero-sum game; and violence is effective in protecting one’s interests and eliminating security threats. The latter holds a completely different view.<sup>39</sup> These two strategic cultures cannot be identified with any particular nations; strategic culture changes, after all, in different historical circumstances. It is an indisputable fact that nations and even sub-cultural groups within a nation might have divergent interpretations and preferences for the

37 Williamson Murray et al., eds., *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States and War*, translated by Shi Yinhong et al., Beijing: World Affairs Press, 2004, p. 664 ([美]威廉森·莫里等编:《缔造战略:统治者、国家与战争》,时殷弘等译,北京:世界知识出版社2004年版,第664页)。

38 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, pp. 305, 317, 320-322 ([美]汉斯·摩根索:《国家间政治》,第305、317、320-322页)。

39 Qin Yaqing, “National Identity, Strategic Culture, and Security Interests: Three Hypotheses on the Interaction between China and the International Community,” *World Economics and Politics*, No.1 (2003), p. 12 (秦亚青:《国家身份、战略文化和安全利益——关于中国与国际社会三个关系的假设》,载《世界经济与政治》,2003年第1期,第12页)。

foregoing issues, thus leading to competition and confrontation in security strategies and policies.

American strategic culture has a very typical confrontational element, “reflecting the tradition of conflict and violence in Western strategic culture.”<sup>40</sup> With regard to the main components of this type, American strategic culture has experienced no fundamental changes so far. Since 9/11, unilateralism, pre-emptive strikes, and regime change have become prominent features in American external actions, with an attempt to combine radical diplomatic-military policies with traditional Judo-Christian values to create a world without equal competitors. To achieve that end, America is inclined for military might without forgoing the non-military approach altogether. Belligerent actions have never been excluded from the following actions, such as strikes against “rogue states,” promotion of democracy, or containment of potential strategic competitors.<sup>41</sup> Recent works label the American belligerent tendency as “militarism” or “neo-militarism.”<sup>42</sup> In terms of national security policy, it has both internal and external implications: internally, military readiness occupies a most prominent position in statecraft and security strategy; externally, military might is a key tool in resolving international political and diplomatic issues. On the contrary, the leading strategic culture in China has embarked on a transformation from confrontation to cooperation. Ever since the late 1970s, the most fundamental change in Chinese strategic culture is the shift from struggle-based to cooperation-based strategic values, leading to a new awareness that wars can be avoided, competitors can be partners, and the efficacy of violence can be remarkably reduced.<sup>43</sup>

Security concepts play a key role in defining security interests, as decision-makers judge national security interests in accordance with their views on national security circumstances and security threats. As discussed before, differences in security concepts are mainly reflected in different views of and priorities in the actors (individuals, states, international community), contents (conventional and non-conventional security in politics, military, economics, society, environment, science etc.), strategies and approaches in security. Chinese security concepts have undergone great transformations and on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, China’s “New Thinking on Security” enjoys a systemic and comprehensive formulation. China advocates “mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination” in security, and pursues comprehensive security, common

40 Gong Yuzhen, *An Analysis of the Chinese Strategic Culture*, Beijing: Military Science Publishing House, 2002, p. 49 (宫玉振:《中国战略文化解析》,北京:军事科学出版社2002年版,第49页)。

41 Li Shaojun, “Major Global Armed Conflicts: Current Situations and Future Trends,” in Li Shenming and Wang Yizhou, eds., *Report on Global Politics and Security 2006*, chapter 1 (李少军:《全球重大武装冲突:现状与走势》,载李慎明、王逸舟主编:《2006年:全球政治与安全报告》,第1章)。

42 Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism*, translated by Ge Tengfei, Shanghai: ECNUP, 2008 ([美]安德鲁·巴塞维奇:《美国新军国主义》,葛腾飞译,上海:华东师范大学出版社2008年版); Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire*, London: Verso, 2003; Ismael Hossein-zadeh, *The Political Economy of U.S. Militarism*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006; Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrow of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004。

43 Qin Yaqing, “National Identity, Strategic Culture, and Security Interests: Three Hypotheses on the Interaction between China and the International Community,” *World Economics and Politics*, No.1 (2003), p. 13 (秦亚青:《国家身份、战略文化和安全利益——关于中国与国际社会三个关系的假设》,载《世界经济与政治》,2003年第1期,第13页)。

security and cooperative security.<sup>44</sup> However, recent international strategic and security circumstances indicate that disparity exists in nations' understanding and acceptance of common security and cooperative security. Take the American Asia-Pacific "Rebalancing Strategy" as an example, its core elements, as reflected by its primary measures, are reinforcing military presence, developing ally systems, and maintaining the balance of power. Its concept of "absolute security" seems to be all-inclusive, but in effect it boasts strong political and military connotations as well as intense competition and confrontation, which has an adverse effect on security cooperation in the Asia Pacific and is at odds with the Chinese "New Thinking on Security."

### 3.4 Contradictory Security Strategies and Tactics

On the one hand, nations still continue to follow the principle of "self-help" and competition, which, in essence, falls into the category of national, rather than international, security strategy. In terms of international security, on the other hand, hegemony, balance of power and institutional cooperation are the three models for resolving global and regional security issues, including practical policies of the concerned nations.

The "Hegemonic stability" (domination model), a goal pursued by a very small number of nations, refers to a security regime led or controlled by a super power or a dominating "leader." Hegemony strategy is not compatible with the nation-state system based on the principle of equality in sovereignty. Taking the East Asian countries as an example, hegemonic stability means a hierarchical security structure with either the US (the only possible state outside this region) or China (the only possible state within this region) at the top. However, this model is neither practical nor welcome. China has no inclination for that strategic preference or pursuit, and the emerging powers in a region, such as China and India, will not accept an American hegemonic system. If America chooses to pursue or maintain hegemony in East Asia, the rise of China will certainly be regarded as a major "threat," causing so-called "structural conflicts."

The "Balance of power" (balance model) is a common model, whose approaches and tools include military alliances, alliances and quasi-alliances, nuclear deterrence and conventional deterrence. The traditional function of this model in maintaining international security is to uphold the stability of international system, ensure the survival of major powers, and check hegemony. But history testifies that balance of power itself cannot prevent power fluctuation caused by disparity in political and economic development, nor can it put an end to hegemonic ambition for power advantage, especially when there is a severe lack of consensus for maintaining balance of power in the international community. Balance of power sometimes has to be achieved through wars or at the cost of the independence and survival of small nations. The primary goal of balance of power is to avert hegemony and the difficulty in fulfilling that goal is due to the following reasons: the imbalance in the international

44 The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *China's Peaceful Development*, September 6, 2011 (国务院新闻办公室:《中国的和平发展》白皮书, 2011年9月6日), <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/ghx/tyb/zyxw/t855789.htm>.

power structure; the theoretical basis of hegemonic stability pursued by current and potential hegemonies; the free-riding mentality fueled by the provision of international public products; a heavier reliance on the so-called soft power, such as political, economic, cultural and ideological power, to influence and attract followers while still resorting to military coercion; and accordingly a disparity in the capability and willingness of the check and balance. All in all, balance of power strategy is at most a second best option, never a fundamental guarantee to peace.

“Institutional cooperation” (coordination model), the long-term goal of which is to cultivate a common security community, refers to a multi-national cooperation regime through global or regional collective security institutions such as the United Nations, and different regional and sub-regional security mechanisms. Institutional approaches can be reflected in all sorts of security mechanisms, big or small, including security consultation bodies, forums, institutions and regimes targeted at specific issues. There is little dispute in theory that institutional multi-lateral security cooperation is a more reasonable and universal option with long-term ramifications. Nations pursue their own security concepts and strategies, and the concept of cooperative security has not attained a mainstream status. Hence, the approach of institutional cooperation cannot be widely implemented, nor can it effectively ease the plight of international security. In maintaining international peace and security, the United Nations is the most universal and legitimate international organization. However, its collective security mechanism is often disturbed by power politics and bloc politics, and also largely hampered is its authority and efficacy in mobilizing and promoting international security cooperation.

In reality, the security structures in most parts of the world are a mixture of hegemonic stability, balance of power and institutional cooperation, with a bent towards the first two (together with self-help), resulting in various uncertain and unstable elements.

#### **4. Inter-dependence in Security: Cross-cultural Dialogue and Global Consensus**

The connotation of international security has been greatly extended and security agendas and threats are becoming more diversified. Taking only the major armed conflicts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as an example, many new features can be identified. One of the major sources of conflict is ethnic and tribal issues; terrorism has become a significant component in the contemporary global conflicts; most of the violent activities are accompanied by crimes, such as organized trans-national crimes; issues, like poverty, explosive population growth, degrading environment, competition for land and resources are major contributory factors to conflicts. This is most prominently reflected in Africa where social crisis is the root cause of internal conflicts, reflected in heightened tension and confrontation in government-social relations, as embodied by ethnic (racial) confrontation, the power struggle among political groups, and the lack

of social justice. This has resulted in a large number of so-called “failed states,” such as Cote d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Iraq and Somalia. What needs to be noted is that many internal conflicts have a background of external interventions, related to regime change and “color revolutions” pursued by Western powers under the umbrella of democracy and human rights. The super powers display a strong tendency for unilateralism and militarism.<sup>45</sup>

The contemporary goals of international security have at least three dimensions. The first is basic international security, aimed at keeping the international community in a state of peace and order, with a basic code of conduct, including preserving the international system itself, maintaining the independence and the territorial integrity of nations, avoiding major wars, limiting international violence, and honoring international agreements and treaties. The second is to promote international economic justice, including exchange justice and distributive justice, with an aim to eliminate poverty, narrow the gap between the rich and poor nations, and to avoid international and domestic conflicts caused by a distorted international economic order.<sup>46</sup> The third is related to the “global issues” concerning human survival, such as environment, ecology, climate change, and energy. Theoretically speaking, these issues, well beyond the scope of the international security, fall into the category of either “global security” or “human security,” but in fact due to an interconnected spillover effect, these issues also have an impact on national security and international security, still leaving nations to be the major actors in resolving these issues. These three dimensions, though with divergence in the value hierarchy and realistic possibility, are largely interconnected.

In this regard, China’s New Thinking on Security is an “international” security concept in a real sense. In the new circumstances, it states: as conventional security threats are intertwined with non-conventional ones, the international community should emphasize the concept of “comprehensive security,” and take integrated measures to resolve the problems root and branch; as nations all have a stake in economic globalization, multi-lateral cooperation should be fostered to maintain “common security,” and to prevent conflict and war, with a focus on promoting a leading role for the United Nations in keeping peace and security; as war and conflict only lead to a vicious circle of replacing one tyranny with another, dialogues and negotiations are the most effective and reliable way to settle disputes. Therefore, only cooperation can diffuse tension, achieve harmony, make peace and ensure security.<sup>47</sup> This concept of international security meets the demands of the times and is the emerging new orientation in security values in the international community.

45 Li Shaojun, “Major Global Armed Conflicts: Current Situations and Future Trends,” in Li Shenming and Wang Yizhou, eds., *Report on Global Politics and Security 2006*, chapter 1 (李少军:《全球重大武装冲突:现状与走势》,载李慎明、王逸舟主编:《2006年:全球政治与安全报告》,第1章).

46 For more information, please refer to Shi Bin, “Order Transition, International Distributive Justice and Historical Responsibility of the Emerging Powers,” *World Economics and Politics*, No.12 (2010), pp. 70-99 (石斌:《秩序转型、分配正义与新兴大国的历史责任》,载《世界经济与政治》,2010年第12期,第70-99页).

47 The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, *China’s Peaceful Development*, September 6, 2011 (国务院新闻办公室:《中国的和平发展》白皮书,2011年9月6日), <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/chn/ghx/tyb/zyxw/t855789.htm>.

It is undeniable that the “convergence of culture and morality” in the international system, as first proposed by modern scholars such as Gibbon and Vattel, and later further elucidated by contemporary scholars such as Toynbee and Morgenthau, assumes a strong European-Western outlook. These scholars can neither predict nor face squarely cultural and value diversity as a result of an extended international system.<sup>48</sup> This is really a difficult issue, an issue related to the outcome of hundreds of years of historical evolution, and largely as the result of the global expansion of Western capitalist commercial civilization aided by its overwhelming material and spiritual advantages. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels present thought-provoking exposition on this process of “globalization.” They state that there is “a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country,” replacing material and spiritual isolation with inter-dependence. They also point out that “the intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible.”<sup>49</sup>

The author believes that it is one-sided and narrow-minded to wholly attribute this diversity to the challenge and impact of non-Western countries on the modern international system after attaining national independence. Developed countries tend to insist on a self-centered position, which holds that non-Western countries, trying to “enter” the former Western-dominated system, must show unconditional compliance to the set rules of the game as “late-comers.” In other words, developed countries tend to insist on the dominant role of the West and the universality of their political regimes, economic models and value concepts, ignoring the reasonable demands of developing countries for equal sovereignty, political independence, racial equality, economic justice and cultural liberation.<sup>50</sup> A continuation of that tendency is not only an unhistorical stance choosing to ignore reality but also an “arrogance of power” and a self-conceit in cultural values. Unfortunately, this is exactly what some of the current super powers pursue in their ideological and political logic.

The dissolution of a “moral consensus” or the outbreak of a “diplomatic revolution” is both a natural consequence of the extended international system, and also a result of the great transformations ignited by changes in the world’s political, economic, military and technological arenas over the past century or so. The premises have changed, so will the consequences. Diversity in cultures and values is the biggest reality in today’s world, meaning the most ideal political and cultural pattern can only be unity in diversity, and the most reasonable diplomatic principles can only be seeking common ground while reserving differences, and maintaining harmony but not sameness. Even if there is still a need for the contemporary international community to reach a basic value consensus regarding international security, it should and can only be a new consensus

48 For more information on an extended international system and its diversity, please see Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, pp. 287-424.

49 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Beijing: People’s Press, 1997, pp. 29-34 (〔德〕马克思、恩格斯：《共产党宣言》，北京：人民出版社 1997 年单行本，第 29-34 页)。

50 Hedley Bull, *Justice and International Relations (1983-1984 Hagey Lectures)*, Ontario: University of Waterloo, 1984, pp. 2-5, 32-34; Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, eds., *The Expansion of International Society*, pp. 217-228.

based on coexistence, inter-mingling and complementation of diversified cultures, rather than a simple copy of the Western historical experience and cultural heritage. Moreover, long gone is the so-called “moral consensus,” rooted in the European system and aimed at regulating the relationship among Western powers. Morgenthau acknowledges with lamentation that “a certain level of relativity exists in the relationship between moral principles and foreign policies... This relativity has a double face: it is relative in time and certain principles applicable at one time may not always be applicable at another time; it is also relative in culture, and certain principles observed by some states and political civilizations may not always be observed by others.”<sup>51</sup>

The international community on a global scale should seek and establish a new value consensus regarding international security and order in a more diversified world. It should be noted that with an imbalance in the current “cultural structure” and “rights of discourse,” the cultural bias of major powers and dominating civilizations is simply mistaken as “mainstream” or “universal” value for the international community. Indeed, foreign policies are not decided by national interests in an absolutely objective manner, rather by national interests as perceived by decision makers through their ideological frameworks and observing tools. Therefore, ideological and moral principles, in most cases, are in line with and intertwined with national interests. To super powers like the US, it is the “core values” not just “core interests” that the national security strategy sets out to defend. However, as repeatedly advocated by prudent realist scholars, it is very harmful to have foreign policies decided by ideologies, laws and abstract moral principles. No country is endowed with moral advantages. It is immoral to impose one’s own values on others, or brandish international interventionism with no regard to political consequences at the excuse of upholding moral principles.<sup>52</sup> Sometimes, decision makers actually reduce ideological and moral discourse to an outfit for policy tools, as in Morgenthau’s words, “the power element, as the direct aim of the set policies, is expounded and defended by a moral, legal or biological discourse. The true nature of policies is hidden in ideological deliberation and rationality.”<sup>53</sup>

Absolutist tendencies must be guarded against in seeking and establishing a value consensus for the international community. Different civilizations, in their interaction, should cherish understanding, dialogue, mutual respect and learning from each other. “Only through broad and sustained efforts to create a shared future, based upon our common humanity in all its diversity, can globalization be made fully inclusive and equitable.”<sup>54</sup> This sets out the following requirements for nations, especially big powers in international systems and regional systems: to conduct cross-cultural communications in security; to clarify one’s own value bias and its pros

51 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 1990, p. 325 ([美] 汉斯·摩根索:《国家间政治》, 第 325 页)。

52 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 1990, Introduction (wrote by Wang Jisi), pp. 8-10 ([美] 汉斯·摩根索:《国家间政治》, 导论(王缉思), 第 8-10 页)。

53 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations*, 1990, p. 123 ([美] 汉斯·摩根索:《国家间政治》, 第 123 页)。

54 United Nations, *Millennium Declaration* (passed by Resolution 55/2 at the General Assembly on September 8, 2000), pp. 1-2 (《联合国千年宣言》, 第 1-2 页), <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/559/50/PDF/N0055950.pdf?OpenElement>.

and cons; to understand each other's interests and limits; to seek overlapping areas in values and interests; to construct a new international security culture; to lay an all-inclusive and solid foundation for international security; and hence to develop a more reasonable and effective set of norms, procedures and code of conduct. Although detailed description and prescription cannot be discussed here on the connotation of this value basis, the following characteristics can be expected in terms of its ideals and approaches.

Firstly, emphasis should be placed on seeking common ground while reserving differences, and unity in diversity, rather than absolutism and universalism in ideology and values. Narrow-minded nationalistic egoism and interest groups should be checked and balanced by collective conceptions and common awareness in the international community. Secondly, in terms of strategic cultures, a transition from confrontational strategic cultures to cooperative ones should be highly sought after. Thirdly, in terms of security concepts, a transition from self-help and competition to common security and cooperative security should be facilitated. The concept of absolute national security should be abandoned. Fourthly, in terms of security goals as discussed before, the first level of goals should be ensured while the next two levels should not yet be overlooked. This priority order cannot be taken to the extreme and exceptions under extraordinary circumstances should be tolerated. From a more abstract perspective, national security, international security, global security, and the interests of individual nations, of the international community, and of humanity as a whole, should be taken into consideration and well integrated and coordinated. When it is impossible to achieve that, the priority should be reorganized in accordance with "specific circumstance rather than abstract principles."<sup>55</sup> Fifthly, in terms of security strategy, non-coercive and non-confrontational approaches, such as political dialogues and diplomatic negotiations, should be promoted rather than coercive measures such as use of force and sanctions. Allied and bloc confrontations should be replaced by multi-lateral security mechanisms, with the United Nations playing a leading role in keeping peace and security, organizing and facilitating global security dialogues and multi-lateral cooperation, and building a common security mechanism. Lastly, in terms of international order, the conflict between order and justice, stability and reform, should be moderated with gradual improvement. Special efforts should be made to ease the global political and social problems aggravated by unbalanced development in globalization.

It is obvious that human beings are still far away from those ideals and transformations. But as the very first step, nations ought to gradually change their mindset towards a reality of "mutual reliance in security." The world is changing, as should the human mindset. As Max Weber points out, although action is determined by interests not values, the trajectory of interests is determined by a value-molded

55 Shi Yinhong, "Basic Philosophical Norms in International Security," *Social Sciences in China*, No. 5 (2000), p. 187 (时殷弘:《国际安全的基本哲理范式》,载《中国社会科学》,2000年第5期,第187页)。

“outside imagery of the world” which often plays a connecting role in between.<sup>56</sup> The international community should eradicate the remnant cold-war security concepts and structures, seek new consensus through cross-cultural security dialogue and communication, and pursue a truly “international security strategy” oriented from common security and cooperative security. Otherwise, it is very unlikely to break away from the security dilemma caused by self-help and competitive “national security strategies,” let alone tackle increasingly diversified security challenges.

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56 Shi Bin, “Core Values in Rebuilding a China of the World,” *International Politics Quarterly*, No.3 (2007), p. 12 (石斌:《重建“世界之中国”的核心价值观》,载《国际政治研究》,2007年第3期,第12页)。