PART 2

Deepening and Broadening Security

8 Military Security  129
Eric Herring

9 Regime Security  146
Richard Jackson

10 Societal Security  164
Paul Roe

11 Environmental Security  182
Jon Barnett

12 Economic Security  204
Christopher Dent
Chapter Contents

- Introduction: the scope of the military security agenda
- Military strategy and military security: traditional security studies
- Securitization
- Constructivism
- Debating Colombia
- Conclusion: military security, self and world politics

Reader’s Guide

This chapter begins with a discussion of the scope of the military security agenda, in order to communicate an awareness of some of its salient characteristics. It then examines the evolution of the traditional approach to military security, with its emphasis on the use of organized political violence by states and a new consideration of the dangers of war caused by the arrival of nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems. After that, the securitization perspective is outlined in order to put military security in the context of other sectors of security and to consider how issues get put on and are removed from the military security agenda. Such questions are very much the focus of a variety of constructivist approaches considered in the next section of the chapter. The chapter moves on to a more extended examination of the current armed conflict in Colombia in order to bring together some of the main themes which have been considered in the earlier sections. It concludes with a discussion of what is at stake when one decides how to go about studying military security.
The most frequently used conception of military security is perceived or actual freedom from the threat or use of organized violence for political purposes. It is worth going through the various elements of this definition. It is possible to believe oneself or one’s state to be secure from military threat but actually to be in great danger. In 1941, Stalin assumed that Hitler would not invade the Soviet Union and that assumption proved to be false, at huge cost to the Soviet Union. Similarly, as Yugoslavia began to fall apart in the early 1990s, the United Nations at first based itself in Sarajevo in the belief that, of all the parts of the country, this ethnically diverse and integrated city would be unlikely to be involved in the escalating war. Instead, it was the location of a long and bloody siege. It is also possible to perceive a military threat where there is none or less of a threat. Such perceptions cannot be resolved unambiguously, as it is always possible that the threat was there even if no attack was threatened or launched (the classic study, and still a key resource, is Jervis 1976). Using military threats, avoiding being perceived as a military threat and interpreting the nature of possible military threats are all very challenging and enormously consequential. Not surprisingly, these issues are the subject of a great deal of controversy, and aspects of that controversy are surveyed in this chapter. Military security focuses on organized violence as opposed to the violence of individuals and it usually excludes violence for purposes which are not explicitly political (for a broader analysis of collective violence see Tilly 2003). Hence criminal violence—violence for private purposes such as personal hostility or material gain through robbery—is left out. Large numbers of people are shot dead each year in such acts. Also omitted are domestic violence (that is, within families or relationships), industrial death and injury, and road traffic casualties. Avoidable deaths and suffering caused by poverty, hunger, disease or economic sanctions are also excluded: some within the field of peace studies have sought to draw attention to such deaths and suffering by referring to this as ‘structural’ violence (see Chapter 3). Perhaps the exclusion of these forms of physical insecurity from the category of military security is one that we might choose to endorse, but it is not natural or inevitable. It has its roots in the privileging of concern with the armed threats to and by states, which have the resources to make that privileging appear natural and appropriate. Military security actors can be states or aspirants or challengers to state power such as insurgent groups, and a wide range of actors such as the Campaign Against the Arms Trade, Oxfam and the United Nations attempt to influence military security policy. In order to emphasize legitimacy, there is a tendency to use the words ‘force’ or ‘coercion’ rather than violence for the physical destruction inflicted by states rather than non-state actors such as rebels, usually to imply that their actions are more legitimate. Alternatively, force and coercion are sometimes used as euphemisms, to make violence sound less horrible and more acceptable.

Another basic choice to be made in deciding the scope of military security relates to means and ends. The darkest cell of Figure 8.1 is most clearly within the scope of military security, where military means are used for military goals. More ambiguous are the two lighter shaded cells, where military means are used for non-military goals, or non-military means are used for military goals. The unshaded cell—non-military means for non-military goals—logically
falls outside the scope of the military security agenda.

Military security as defined at the beginning of this chapter has been associated with a whole raft of concepts, theories and debates, generally linked to the efforts of states and empires to protect and extend their control of territory, resources, populations and ideological adherents. There are debates about whether it is better to rely on offence or on defence, and whether these can even be distinguished. Military security has been pursued in myriad ways—through deterrence (making military threats to prevent an action), defence (developing the ability to successfully fight off an armed attack), offence (initiating armed conflict), balancing (internal mobilization of resources or making alliances to offset the power of an opponent), bandwagoning (actively supporting a dominant actor), promotion of particular norms and ideologies and social systems (such as anti-militarism, liberal democracy, socialism and capitalism), creation of positive peace (conflict resolution), treaties, imperial and neo-imperial dominance and even ethnic cleansing and genocide. These concepts and debates are associated with an extremely wide-ranging set of concepts and debates which are themselves framed within wider understandings of the nature of world politics. As the positions one takes on these issues have a powerful effect on one’s analysis, it makes the position that the facts can speak for themselves very difficult to sustain.

### Figure 8.1 The scope of the military security agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military means, military goals</th>
<th>Military means, non-military goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. use of missiles to destroy tanks, or threat of such use to deter attack</td>
<td>e.g. use of military personnel to deliver humanitarian aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-military means, military goals</td>
<td>e.g. use of economic sanctions to weaken an opponent’s military capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-military means, non-military goals</td>
<td>e.g. use of economic sanctions to force the target to make debt repayments</td>
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### KEY POINTS

- Military security usually refers to perceived or actual freedom from the threat or use of organized violence for political purposes.
- Some advocate broadening the definition so that increased attention is given to other forms of violence.
- The topic of military security is associated with an extremely wide-ranging set of concepts and debates which are themselves framed within wider understandings of the nature of world politics.
- As the positions one takes on these issues have a powerful effect on one’s analysis, it makes the position that the facts can speak for themselves very difficult to sustain.
As noted above, the traditional approach to military security starts from a commonsensical approach in which the perspective adopted is presented as objective, normal and natural. It is **objectivist** in the sense that it assumes that one can know what the real threats are to identifiable real interests and how best to deal with them. It is most strongly associated with **realism** and to a lesser extent also **liberalism**. War has shaped the evolution of states and states have shaped the evolution of war (Tilly 1990, Barkawi 2005, Shaw 2005). Traditional security studies developed in the service of the state. Its origins lay in the study of military strategy and the conduct of war by the military rather than civilians. The horrors of World War One—vast number of soldiers’ lives thrown away in seemingly futile offensives as men struggled unprotected across muddy ground through barbed wire and in the face of a hail of machine gun bullets and artillery shells—contributed to an urge to think through how to avoid wars rather than how to fight them. It was in large part a war of attrition, in which winning would come about primarily by chewing through the men and resources of the other side to bring the other side to the brink of collapse first. Revulsion at this process fed into the early beginnings of the study of military security by civilians and academics in particular. However, the culture of militarist nationalism—in which war and military things are glorified as good and noble in themselves in the life of a nation—was by no means exhausted (for more on war as good and noble see Chapter 5). This militarist nationalism was central to the origins of the Second World War. Thinking about war and strategy remained at a premium and thinking about security remained at the margin.

The trend towards thinking about security in terms of avoiding wars as well as fighting them and civilians playing a role in thinking about both of those things was reinforced strongly by the advent of the atomic bomb in 1945 (Kaplan 1991). However, this was a trend which tended to be concentrated in the more industrialized capitalist states and especially the United States. This thinking was funded mainly by the state in order to serve the interests of the state. Prominent amongst the bodies which sprung up to institutionalize this thinking was the Research and Development (RAND) Corporation funded by the US Air Force in Santa Monica, California, where civilians mingled with the military and sometimes came to see themselves as understanding better than the military the new situation facing the United States and its allies. The perceived need to find ways of ensuring that the Cold War between the United States and Soviet Union did not become a hot war (i.e. one involving direct armed combat), due to the potential for catastrophic nuclear escalation, was underlined by the development of the hydrogen bomb and intercontinental ballistic missiles as reliable means of delivering them in the 1950s and 1960s. The hot war aspects of their competition were conducted via regional allies such as North and South Vietnam.

The power of atomic bombs is generally equivalent to thousands of tons of the conventional explosive TNT (kilotons). Hydrogen bombs tend to have the power of millions of tons of TNT (megatons). For the first time ever the United States faced the potential for it to suffer enormous damage without losing a conventional war first: it could be destroyed without being defeated.

Within traditional security thinking, there have always been two divergent responses to the advent of nuclear vulnerability. The first has been to conventionalize them, that is, to treat them as if they were simply bigger bombs which could be used to fight and win wars, or the use of which by an opponent could be survived in the way that
conventional bombs could. After all, more people died in the firebombing of Tokyo by the United States in 1945 than by the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Once the United States became involved in the Korean War in 1950, Mao Zedong, leader of the new Communist government of mainland China, decided that China was going to have to enter the war on the side of North Korea. He also concluded that the Chinese state could survive US atomic bomb attack on its major cities and would not be deterred by this possible outcome because he saw a US armed presence in Korea as intolerably dangerous. As it turned out, China entered the war, the United States did not use its atomic bombs on China, and China was able to live with a divided Korea and with US forces in South Korea. During the Cold War, nuclear weapons were deployed into all branches of the US and Soviet armed forces and integrated into war planning. There was a profusion of nuclear weapons in the arsenals of the two superpowers eventually totalling around 50,000 missile warheads, artillery shells, demolition munitions and even depth charges. Much effort went into reducing the explosive power of nuclear weapons in order to make them more usable and bridge the gap between them and conventional weapons. Conventional thinking about nuclear weapons led to efforts to make nuclear war fightable and winnable or at least survivable. The planning of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)—composed during the Cold War of most of the West European states plus the United States and Canada—presumed that a major challenge for the alliance was convincing the Soviet Union and its East European client states in the Warsaw Treaty Organisation of the credibility of its threat to initiate the use of nuclear weapons should it be losing a conventional war in Europe. The United States also sometimes sought ways of convincing opponents that it might initiate the use of nuclear weapons during conventional crises and conflicts in Korea, Vietnam and the Taiwan Straits between Communist China and Taiwan. In the post Cold War world, there is still a substantial amount of conventionalized thinking about nuclear weapons, especially in the United States, in relation to war planning and miniaturization of them in the hope that they would then be more usable. From this perspective, nuclear deterrence of nuclear attack is difficult and requires constant attention.

The second strand of thinking about nuclear weapons within traditional strategic studies is that they are fundamentally different and revolutionary in their implications for military security due to their potential for escalation to catastrophic levels of destruction. This was present from the very earliest days but has usually not dominated in terms of policy. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev rejected the conventionalization of nuclear weapons as he believed that it was the possibility of nuclear arms competition getting out of control that was the real threat to military security rather than the risk of deliberate initiation of nuclear use. Hence he led the way in initiating dramatic reductions in nuclear warheads and in ending the Cold War, but the political forces he unleashed brought about the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. From this perspective, nuclear deterrence is relatively easy. Some see it as underpinned by a guaranteed ability to absorb a surprise attack and inflict unacceptable damage in retaliation (when shared by both sides, this situation is known as Mutually Assured Destruction or MAD). Others think that nuclear attack against vulnerable nuclear arsenals is very unlikely, either due to the potential for retaliation should the disarming attack fail even partially or due to the huge political costs which might result from launching an attack. Another relevant view here is that there is a nuclear taboo, that is, a strategic cultural prohibition against the use of nuclear weapons which involves the assumption that they should not be used rather than a conscious cost-benefit calculation of the consequences of their use. The fear has always been that a fanatical or irrational decision-maker or a non-state terrorist would not be restrained by the nuclear taboo, and this had fed into concern about the spread of nuclear weapons to more states. Ironically, strategic history thus far points to the United States
as the state which has tried hardest to undermine the nuclear taboo and make nuclear weapons usable. Chemical and biological weapons have increasingly been categorized with nuclear weapons as weapons of mass destruction. However, thus far it has proven difficult to produce chemical and biological weapons which would need only small numbers of them to cause vast amounts of destruction in any targetable way and with high reliability, as is the case with nuclear weapons (for more on WMD see Chapter 15).

**Securitization**

The themes discussed above—the conduct of major conventional wars, political-diplomatic crisis management, the use of threats, and their interaction with nuclear weapons—have been central to traditional security studies. Major debates have occurred about the implications for military security of two relatively recent events. The first was the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s combined with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The second was the al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 and the US announcement of its ‘war on terror’ (see Chapter 16). The most comprehensive and systematic is the securitization approach. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 7: the intention here is to focus on and contextualize its military aspect. Building on Barry Buzan’s earlier work (1983, 1991a), Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde (1998) represented security as having military, economic, environmental, societal and political sectors; and global, non-regional subsystemic, regional and local levels of analysis (see Figure 8.2).

The dark shaded left-hand column in Figure 8.2 indicates the scope of military security, indicating graphically how much is omitted by focusing on it. This column, combined with the lighter shaded columns, represents the much greater scope of a broader notion of security in securitization studies. Buzan et al conclude that military security has become primarily regional since the end of the Cold War, sometimes with positive consequences and sometimes negative ones. They also argue that weak states can produce a very local focus for military security as actors fight for control within a state’s borders, usually with some form of outside involvement. This has clearly been the case in Iraq since the US-led invasion in March 2003 (Herring, Rangwala 2006). Furthermore, in addition to the threats posed by insurgents and terrorists, Iraqi citizens in the centre of the country also worry about the possibility of being killed by US airstrikes and ground offensives or by jumpy soldiers at checkpoints. Throughout the country they fear torture and arbitrary imprisonment by members of the state’s ‘security’ forces. The third dimension of the securitization framework proposes three issue categories—security, political and non-political (illustrated by the third dimension of Figure 8.2). For Buzan et al to categorize something as a security issue, it should threaten survival and requires urgent and exceptional political action. This is a much more restrictive definition than is often the case. Less intensely, a political issue is one which is on state or other policy agendas for resource

**KEY POINTS**

- Traditionally, thinking about military matters was primarily about strategies used especially by states of how to fight and win wars.
- The advent of nuclear weapons and long-range delivery systems produced a new strand of thinking which put much greater emphasis on how to achieve political goals while avoiding war. Nevertheless, the search to make those new capabilities usable in war continued.
allocation, and a non-political issue is one which does not require public debate, resource allocation and action. In the view of Buzan et al, the referent object—that which is being secured—of military security is usually the state, although it can be other political actors, and the armed forces can even see themselves as the referent object and rebel against the state or launch a coup. Military issues can move up or down the security, political and non-political issue ladder.

Traditional approaches tend to focus on the security aspects of military issues. In contrast, Buzan et al argue that advanced industrial states are mostly free from threats which threaten their survival and require exceptional and urgent political action. In their framework, the use of the armed forces by such states for purposes such as peacekeeping or humanitarian intervention is a political rather than a security issue. Realists tend to worry that such an attitude will undermine the need to invest heavily in armed forces to ensure that military security threats do not arise in the first place. Such a concern is at the heart of the national security strategy of the United States published in 2002 (see the ‘Important websites’ for this chapter). States are the main actors in deciding what does and does not go on the military security agenda, and have been the most successful actors at accumulating the capability for organized political violence, though there are major exceptions such as weak states. Organized violence is useful not only for destroying and threatening opponents, but also for taking and holding territory, which in traditional terms is a defining characteristic of states (along with population and political authority over that territory and population). Equally, capturing territory is not sufficient to
produce desired political outcomes, as the United States found out when it invaded and occupied Iraq. The issue of drugs is one over which there is dispute as to whether it is a political or a security issue, and whether or not it is should fall within the military sector. The phrase ‘war on drugs’ could be read as implying both, and armed force and chemical defoliants are being used in Colombia as appropriate ways of dealing with some of the drug traffickers and their crops. For some critics, this securitization and militarization of the issue of drugs does more harm than good. They propose dealing with currently illegal drugs in the same way as alcohol (another drug but legal in most countries)—that is, through legalization, regulation and education for harm reduction. This would aim to simultaneously desecuritize and demilitarize the issue. Even issues such as non-state terrorism directed against states do not necessarily fall within the realm of military security on the grounds that it is difficult for such groups to pose a threat to the existence of that state. In contrast, state terrorism with its vastly greater resources is perfectly capable of wiping out entire communities. Some advocate dropping the ‘war on terror’ in favour of international policing cooperation. At the other end of the spectrum, some on the right are of the view that the issue has not been sufficiently securitized or militarized by the administration of George W. Bush. These neoconservatives, as they are known, argue for campaigns to remove the governments of Syria, Saudi Arabia and especially Iran and replace them with liberal democracies. Their reasoning is that these states are behind anti-US terrorism and can only be stopped by removing them.

According to liberal democratic peace theory, the more that states are liberal democratic, the less they threaten each other’s military security (Maoz, Russett 1983: Russett, O’Neal 1991). This is seen to be due to what Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett, among others, portray as their liberal norms of tolerance and compromise and their democratic procedures of public accountability which they argue make it more difficult for leaders to begin wars. They also portray their use of force against non-liberal states as essentially defensively orientated and reactive. If true, this is potentially of enormous significance because it suggests that, if all states were liberal democratic, there would be no more interstate war, which would be, to non-militarists, a tremendous gain. This view has been challenged in a number of ways. Some have sought to refute it directly, claiming that this positive association between liberal democracy and peace does not exist (Henderson 2002). Another approach has been to accept the underlying proposition that liberal democratic states tend not to threaten each other’s military security but to provide a different explanation. Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey argue that liberal democratic states tend not to go to war with each other ‘because they are embedded in geostrategic and political economic relations that buttress international state and capitalist power in hegemonic, i.e., non-violent ways’ (1999: 419. See also Barkawi, Laffey 2001 and Barkawi 2005). In this approach, liberal democracies are not conceived of as separate states with their own territories, populations and sovereignty (that is, final political authority). Instead, they are part of a set of integrated international state practices—such as economic disciplining through the International Monetary Fund or US-led Coalition invasion and reconstruction—which are increasingly integrating them in an informal imperial hierarchy. The use of force is within this system licensed against non-liberal states in order to integrate them into a global system characterized, they argue, by extreme economic inequality.

The benefit of the securitization approach is that it offers the possibility of comparing the importance of other sectors without privileging the military one above all the others. The possible costs are that, by using the word ‘security’ in relation to non-military things, it could end up militarizing those other sectors, for example, by unintentionally encouraging the idea that armed threats and force should be considered in relation to dealing with actors who are causing environmental problems (for more on this see Chapter 11). Although in the securitization framework, the concepts ‘military’ and ‘security’ are independent categories, in most people’s minds they are still strongly associated.
The securitization framework of Buzan et al is significantly **constructivist** in that it looks at how social reality is produced through human interaction rather than taking the content of social reality for granted. However, the attention it gives to the social construction of military security is quite limited, and numerous versions of constructivism have been applied to this subject (e.g. Katzenstein 1996; Weldes et al 1999). A much deeper constructivism can be seen in the work of Jutta Weldes on a classic case of a crisis in military security, namely, the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. In order to force the Soviet Union to remove nuclear-armed missiles which it had secretly deployed in Cuba, the United States went on conventional and nuclear military alert and set up a naval blockade to prevent the delivery of the remaining missiles which were on their way by ship. In the end, the Soviet Union turned its ships around and agreed to remove its missiles and nuclear weapons from Cuba, much to the fury of Cuban leader Fidel Castro. In Western scholarship, this is usually treated as a victory for rational, well-managed US coercive diplomacy (on coercive diplomacy, see Chapter 13). Some revisionist scholarship argues that the outcome was more of a compromise and that reassurance of the Soviet Union was more important in the outcome than is generally acknowledged (Lebow 1995). Others see it as one of the most dangerous incidents in human history which avoided disastrous escalation at least as much through luck as through good judgement (Sagan 1995).

Those working within the realist approach to military security argue that the national interest can be discerned for what it really is. Some of their critics use the point that realists often disagree strongly with each other in identifying the national interest to argue that the concept of the national interest is so vague and flexible as to be useless. Instead, Weldes argues that one can discern patterns in the understandings of the national interest among decision-makers, that those understandings are not objective and that analysing them in terms of the subjective psychological perception of individuals is not a very effective mode of analysis. She argues that those patterns are most usefully seen as inter-subjective, that is, they are arrived at through a process of mutual interpretation and representation of the world. To arrive at some understanding of what the interests of the state are, officials use or adapt existing cultural and linguistic resources to create an inter-subjective world of particular actors with identities and relationships attributed to them. The construction of the national interest at stake on any specific issue is very heavily conditioned by this prior inter-subjective process: there is more to the creation of meaning than the accumulation of facts. One can deduce a step-by-step constructivist analytical method with

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**KEY POINTS**

- The securitization approach offers a comprehensive framework within which to situate military security, relating it to other sectors, a variety of levels, and types of issue.
- It also offers tools for thinking about how issues become part or cease to be part of the military security agenda.
- Like any other analytical approach, it has built into it implicit and explicit normative and conceptual positions which are inevitably controversial.
- Issues such as drugs, terrorism and democratization are not necessarily part of, or separate from, the military security agenda.
potentially wide applicability. This involves describing how a particular military security (or indeed other) issue has been characterized, specifying the cultural and linguistic resources mobilized in that characterization, mapping out how these elements have been linked to each other to create apparently but not actually natural meaning, and going through the same steps with competing inter-subjective constructions which have been marginalized. Case study 8.1 provides an overview of the application of this method by Weldes (1999) to the Cuban missile crisis.

This kind of constructivist method might be applied to other issues and cases. It might be used to shed significant light on, for example, the current debate on the nature and implications of Iran’s nuclear programme. The dominant narrative in the United States is that Iran is trying to use its civil nuclear programme to acquire nuclear weapons, and that statements such as that by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that ‘Israel must be wiped off the map’ (the usual translation of his comments—for example in Al-Jazeera 2005—originally made in Persian) show that it is too risky to allow Iran to become a nuclear weapon state. This narrative also assumes that US officials have the right to make this assessment and act on it militarily and unilaterally. An alternative narrative is that Iran is hedging its power generation needs against the decline of oil reserves and is not actually pursuing nuclear weapons. Another is that Iran feels the need to become a nuclear state to provide a deterrent to and symbolic equality with US and Israeli nuclear weapons, and that Ahmadinejad’s statement is rhetoric rather than an indicator of an Iranian intention to try to destroy Israel. This last point is underlined by the claim that his words in Persian—‘een rezhim-e ishghalar-e qods bayad az safheh-yeruzgar mahv shavad’—translate more accurately as ‘The Imam [former Iranian revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini] said that this regime occupying Jerusalem must be erased from the page of time’, supposedly indicating a desire to end a particular political situation rather than to eliminate the state of Israel. The limitation of the constructivist approach provided by Weldes and others is that it does not offer a method for choosing between or moving beyond the competing interpretations outlined. Furthermore, one might arrive at the impression that the counter-narratives set out by constructivists are the ones that they actually find more persuasive, and this reluctance to endorse particular overall narratives while still endorsing many specific narrative elements along the way is
one which could be criticized by those of a more objectivist persuasion. It may be that constructivist discourse can be combined with a more social scientific approach as sub-sets of rational inquiry. Hence a discourse analysis of Iran’s nuclear programme might be integrated with a discussion of Scott Sagan’s (1996/97) classic essay on three models of why some states acquire nuclear weapons (for security, domestic politics and to symbolize norms such as modernity and equality) and Etel Solingen’s (1994) argument that some states do not acquire nuclear weapons due to the dominance of some sectors in those states wishing to prioritize integration into the global economy.

In a more post-structuralist version, in which even greater emphasis is put on mapping out discourses, constructivism has been applied by David Campbell to understanding the nature of US foreign and security policy overall, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and its aftermath, and the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s (Campbell 1993, 1998a, 1998b). By taking on such substantial and contemporary military security issues, Campbell was endeavouring to show the relevance of discourse analysis on ground which more traditional military security analysts see as their usual remit. The securitization work of Buzan et al (1998: 205) argues that constructions can be so settled, depoliticized and appear so natural that they can be analysed as if they are ‘inert’, ‘sedimented’ or effectively objective. More thoroughgoing constructivists and especially post-structuralists such as Campbell challenge this head on. They argue that even those supposedly settled, depoliticized and natural constructions only appear to be so through major and, crucially, ongoing discursive practices (for an excellent review of literature on constructivism, identity and violence, see Fearon, Laitin 2000). For example, it is widely though not universally assumed that the war in Bosnia was between Serb, Croats and Muslims, and that such identity markers were so powerful as to be settled (see, for example, Kaufman 1996). In contrast, Campbell (1998b) argues that their settled appearance was made possible only by a powerful set of discursive practices—including the murder in the name of ethnic purity of those who argued that identities are always overlapping and mixed (for an objectivist version of the argument—that ‘ethnic’ wars are often carried out by small groups with most of the population unwilling and fearful bystanders, see Mueller 2000). Indeed, for post-structuralists, identity is always ‘transgressive’ or ‘transversal’, that is, never neatly in separate categories with separate essential elements.

The political ethic which follows from post-structuralism in the field of military security studies is to embrace this insecurity of identity rather than seek to secure what can never exist, that is, wholly separate identity. The humanitarian military intervention debate was framed at the time as ‘Should there be military intervention to protect the Muslims from the Serbs and the Croats, or are they basically all as bad as each other and so one should not pick sides?’ The post-structuralist approach might seem to suggest that the question should have been reframed to: ‘Should there be military intervention to protect those who acknowledge the inescapable diversity of identity?’ The Bosnian government claimed to hold that position and objected vigorously to being labelled, as it usually was in the West, as the ‘Muslim’ government of Bosnia. However, for post-structuralists the problem is an even bigger one, namely, that the potential humanitarian interveners are part of the problem too in that they share the same essentialist notions of identity—be they of Britishness, American-ness—as the ethnic cleansers they would be intervening against. It is the notion of any kind of pure identity that post-structuralists maintain must be challenged. This also extends to wider discourses of the essential goodness and defensiveness of one group and essential evil and aggressiveness of another, as discussed, for example, by Weldes (1999) in relation to the Cuban missile crisis. Such debates are getting under way in relation to the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 and in relation to the claim that Iraq is fundamentally divided between Kurds, Sunni Arabs and Shi’a Arabs (Feldman 2004; Davis 2005; Herring, Rangwala 2006).
All the themes discussed in this chapter thus far could be explored in relation to the conflict in Colombia. In the last fifteen years as the Cold War drew to a close, the civil war in Colombia escalated significantly: in that period nearly three million people have been displaced and tens of thousands killed. Since 1998, the United States has backed the Colombian Government through Plan Colombia and its successor the Andean Regional Initiative and there have been various peace negotiations and military offensives. In understanding the reasons for this death and suffering, competing understandings have been generated of the key actors, their relationships and the nature and meaning of the facts. The roles of the US and Colombian governments, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and smaller National Liberation Army (ELN) left-wing guerrilla groups, and the United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) right-wing paramilitary group have been debated by Russell Crandall, a US academic who is an adviser to the US Department of Defence, and Doug Stokes, a British academic who is a member of the Colombia Solidarity Campaign (Stokes–Crandall correspondence 2002; Crandall 2002; Stokes 2004). The diverging perspectives of the two protagonists are summarized in Key ideas 8.1.

Viewed from a traditional military security studies perspective, the way forward in assessing the relative validity of these positions is to gain a deeper understanding of the empirical aspects of the case study (see the ‘Important web sites’ in this chapter for the Center for International Policy and International Crisis Group, and also Green 2005). The empirical questions are certainly not trivial. If it is the case that the AUC is far more heavily involved in drug trafficking than the FARC or ELN, then it is the AUC that would need to be tackled first and foremost to carry out a war on drugs in Colombia. With regard to the US ‘war on terror’, until recently, the Colombia military used to be responsible for 80% of the killings in Colombia: now the AUC paramilitaries are responsible for that proportion of them. Delving further into the facts would help in working out whether this shows that reform of the Colombia military is working and so US assistance to it should be continued or increased. Alternatively, that additional information may lead one to conclude that the Colombian military is closely allied to the paramilitaries and has delegated the killings to them. In this case, US assistance to the Colombian military is doing, at best, nothing to help the Colombian people and could even intentionally be indirect support for the paramilitaries. Fundamentally, the United States is either contributing to or undermining the military security of the population of Colombia depending on whether one agrees with Crandall or Stokes, and major policy consequences flow from that assessment.
The fact that the Crandall–Stokes debate was premised on the assumption that one can prove or disprove arguments with reference to facts indicates that they share a broad commitment to objectivism. However, testing in relation to facts is made more difficult or even impossible, some would argue, without a common frame of reference. This is only partly shared by Crandall and Stokes, as the former works within the traditions of realism and liberalism whereas the latter’s work has more in common with historical materialism. Important normative differences are related to these differing commitments. For Crandall, the United States has the right both in terms of protecting and promoting US national security interests and in terms of the universal applicability of liberalism to be deeply involved in military security issues in Colombia. For Stokes, the United States does not have this right because it is protecting and promoting only the illegitimate interests of US and Colombian elites.
against the interests of ordinary people in both countries. A constructivist perspective on this debate would involve unpacking how Crandall and Stokes go about presenting their portrayals of the facts, the actors and their relationships, and mapping how widely those portrayals are shared and amongst whom. Crandall paints a picture of a triangular relationship of political struggle between the Colombian government; the FARC and ELN guerrillas; and the AUC paramilitaries and their backers in the Colombian military. In contrast, Stokes argues that Colombian government and military and the AUC paramilitaries are quite closely allied against the FARC and ELN. There seems to be a two-way process here, with narratives about specific facts being used to draw conclusions about the character of the actors involved and their relationships, and the claims about the character of the actors involved and their relationships shaping the interpretation of narratives about more specific facts.

**KEY POINTS**

- There is fundamental dispute over which actors are causing military insecurity for the people of Colombia, and the nature of and relationships between those actors.
- One way to develop a view on such disputes is through in-depth analysis of the facts: another is to explore the fundamental assumptions which give meaning to those facts.

**Conclusion: military security, self and world politics**

In deciding how to study military security, major choices must be made, either explicitly or tacitly. One of the most obvious points of entry is to focus on the empirical aspects of the established military security agenda, looking for patterns and trends. The resources spent directly on the military worldwide are huge—$975 billion in 2004, only 6% per cent lower than the high point of Cold War military spending in 1987–88 (data from SIPRI—see ‘Important web sites’). This equates to $162 per person and 2.6% of world economic activity. The United States alone accounts for 47% of the world total of military spending. One could also survey the principal arms trading states (see Chapter 17). This would show that the trade is heavily dominated by a small number of supplier states—the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, France and Germany—and a larger number of purchasing states in NATO or in areas of tension and conflict (primarily the Middle East and South Asia). In contrast to the popular misconception that the end of the Cold War resulted in an increase in the number of major armed conflicts (and civil wars in particular—that is, wars primarily within individual states), there was a steadily downward trend from 32 in 1990 to 19 in 1997, a rise to 27 in 1998 followed another steadily downward trend to 19 again in 2003.

One can treat these as data to be explained in social scientific terms, or discursive constructions to be examined to see how they were arrived at and to see what they have left out. It is also possible to see the objectivist and discursive approaches as part of an overall toolkit of rational analysis to be deployed at different times or to be combined rather than seeing them as fixed and separate perspectives to which one must commit consistently. The intention of this chapter has been to introduce you to some of the
The subject of military security can be analysed in terms of major empirical patterns and trends. The study of military security, your identity and the practices of world politics are all mutually constitutive (i.e. they shape each other in fundamental ways).

**KEY POINTS**

- The subject of military security can be analysed in terms of major empirical patterns and trends.
- The study of military security, your identity and the practices of world politics are all mutually constitutive (i.e. they shape each other in fundamental ways).

**QUESTIONS**

1. Are civilians better at understanding military security than the military?
2. Why have non-nuclear states not been attacked with nuclear weapons since 1945?
3. Is military security best achieved through non-military means?
4. Is the United States conducting a war on drugs and terror or a war of terror in Colombia?
5. When are states a threat to the military security of their own population?
6. Do liberal democracies tend not to threaten each other’s military security?
7. Is there a liberal imperial order which uses military means to protect and extend its global scope?
8. Can one choose between the competing narratives regarding the military security implications of Iran’s nuclear programme?
9. To what extent is the Iraqi state militarily secure?
10. How have discourses of military insecurity been implicated in constructions of Iraqi identities since the invasion in 2003?

**FURTHER READING**

- Nye, Jr., Joseph S. (2005), *Understanding International Conflicts. An Introduction to Theory and History, 5th edn.*, London: Pearson Longman. Of all the further reading suggested here, this is easily the most wide-ranging of those within a social scientific approach and is a good, broad starting point. It explores whether there is an enduring logic of conflict in world politics and considers the origins of the First and Second World Wars and Cold War. It then surveys intervention, institutions and regional and ethnic conflicts (including a heroically brief 12-page overview of conflicts in the Middle East); globalization and interdependence; the information revolution and transnational politics. Written as a textbook, it has useful chronologies, study questions, maps, diagrams and a glossary of key terms.

- Barkawi, Tarak (2005), *Globalization and War*, London: Rowman & Littlefield. Some scholars argue that globalization is producing military security and peace while others argue that it is...
causing military insecurity and war. In contrast to both, Barkawi suggests that war should not be seen as a separate thing caused or prevented by globalization. Instead, his view is that war is a major aspect of globalization itself (in terms of bringing about the movement of people, goods and ideas around the world) and has been so for longer than is usually thought.

- **Baylis, John, Cohen, Elliot, Gray, Colin, and Wirtz, James (eds.) (2002), Strategy in the Contemporary World: Introduction to Strategic Studies, Oxford: Oxford University Press.** This volume provides an excellent introduction to traditional perspectives on military security. It covers strategic theory; the history of war; the role of law; origins of war and peace; land, sea and air power; deterrence, arms control and disarmament; terrorism and irregular warfare; weapons of mass destruction; technology and war; and humanitarian intervention and peace operations.

- **Herring, Eric, and Rangwala, Glen (2006), Iraq in Fragments: The Occupation and its Legacy, London: Hurst and Cornell University Press.** The invasion of Iraq was presented by its advocates as an important means of dealing with Iraq as a military security threat and by some of them as a means of creating a wave of reform that would usher in an unprecedented positive era of military security in the Middle East more widely. Instead, the weapons of mass destruction Iraq was supposed to have did not exist and much of Iraq has plunged into military insecurity. This study provides an in-depth assessment of events in Iraq in the three years since the US-led invasion. Military security issues are analysed in the broader context of the argument that political authority in Iraq has fragmented.

- **Buzan, Barry, and Herring, Eric (1998), The Arms Dynamic in World Politics, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.** This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of military security from the perspective of revolutions in and the global spread of modern military technology. It explains those patterns in relation to arms racing, action-reaction and domestic structures. It considers the use of force, threats and symbolic politics and the meaning and implications of arms control, non-offensive defence and disarmament.

- **Weldes, Jutta, Laffey, Mark, Gusterson, Hugh, and Duvall, Raymond (eds.) (1999), Cultures of Insecurity. States, Communities and the Production of Danger, London: University of Minneapolis Press.** This challenging constructivist volume brings together scholars of sociocultural anthropology and international relations to explore discourses of insecurity among states and other communities. Although the themes are deeply theorized, the chapters also explore them in relation to diverse cases and places such as Korea, the Middle East, the genocide in Rwanda, US-Indian relations, post-Mao China and the politics of the internet. Whereas traditional security studies assumes the identities of political groups and asks how those groups can be made militarily secure, this study looks at how the construction of discourses of insecurity produce the identities of political actors and vice versa.

### IMPORTANT WEB SITES

- **http://www.sipri.org/** Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. SIPRI conducts research on conflict and cooperation in order to promote understanding of how international conflicts can be resolved peacefully and how stable peace can be established. It has very extensive empirical and conceptual research programmes on many aspects of military security and especially in relation to military spending and arms transfers and attempts to control the transfer of militarily significant technologies. A massive amount of data is provided free on this site.
National Security Archive. Studying military security usually involves reading material like this chapter—someone’s else’s interpretation of someone else’s interpretation of important events. The internet is a wonderful resource to allow students now to spend at least some time looking at original documents and raw data for themselves, and can trigger the desire to do original research. The National Security Archive at George Washington University in Washington D.C. uses the US Freedom of Information Act to declassify and make available vast numbers of documents on US military security policy, and selections can be accessed for free. By this indirect means, one also has access to intimate details of military security policy-making of many other countries as well.

International Crisis Group. The ICG is an NGO with over one hundred staff located worldwide. It seeks to prevent and resolve armed conflict across the world by means of field-based analysis and high-level advocacy. Its many reports on Iraq, Indonesia, Nepal, Colombia, Kosovo, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, Darfur and other actual or potential crisis and conflict locations are free. Its in-depth yet up-to-date, locally researched reports are superb at putting military security issues into political context.

Michael McClintock, Instruments of Statecraft. This web site is a free online version of McClintock’s book of the same name published in 2002 and subtitled U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counterterrorism, 1940–1990. This valuable critical overview of this extensive military involvement worldwide can be usefully supplemented by more recent insider studies such as Nagl (2002) and Hammes (2004) and by wider understandings of the nature of contemporary war such as Kaldor (1999) and Shaw (2005).

Visit the Online Resource Centre that accompanies this book for lots of interesting additional material: www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/collins/