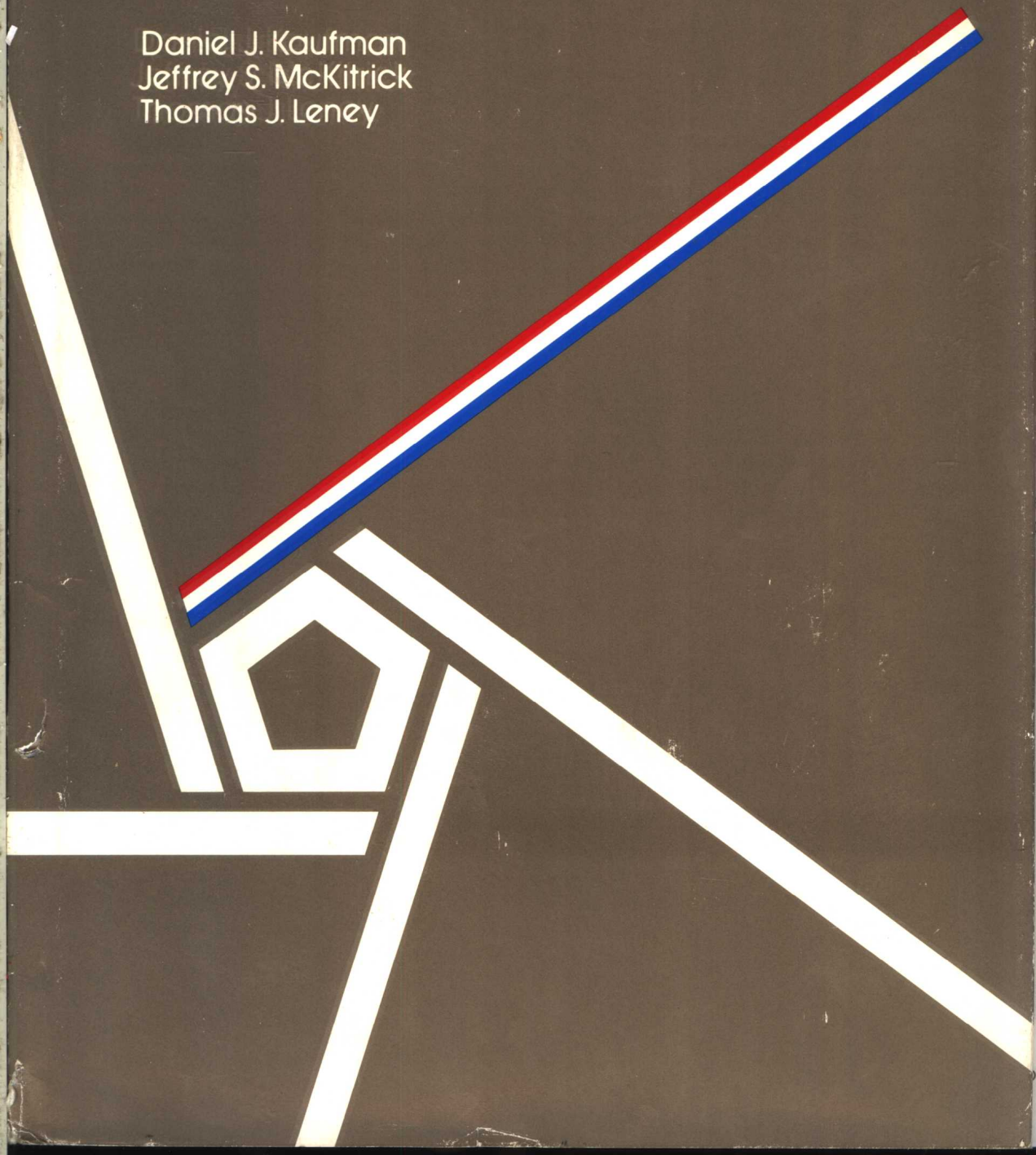


U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

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U.S. National Security

(*A Framework for Analysis*)

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For Kathryn, Myra, and Wendy

Foreword

Richard K. Betts

A modest renaissance in national security studies has occurred in the past half-dozen years. After turning their attention to economic interdependence and transnational relations for some time, many scholars have rediscovered the central importance of war, strategy, and deterrence in international politics. With the death of detente, the waning of trauma from the disaster in Vietnam, and increasing tensions in trouble spots around the world, citizens are also more conscious of how tenuous their safety may be.

Where do novices go to get a sense of the shape of the old general nature of the problem, its new specific manifestations, and the connections among them? This book is one good place to start. It fills a space in the literature available to students, educators, and general observers of international relations and foreign policy. Despite the importance of defense policy and the multitude of studies on its particular aspects, the range of comprehensive surveys in print is surprisingly limited compared to texts on other subjects. Of those that exist, many surveys are too superficial, too narrow, too broad, or too idiosyncratic to provide a sufficient foundation for someone entering the unfamiliar terrain of questions about why, how, when, and where the United States should use its power to protect its values and interests. This book avoids these limitations remarkably well and is marked by a balanced approach to analysis.

First, the book puts the complexity of the problem in appropriate focus. Many conceive of security in strictly military terms: the use of force or the threat to use it. This approach is common among professional strategists and was prevalent early in the cold war, before oil embargoes and ambiguous but crucial shifts in alliance relations (such as the U.S. rapprochement with China) highlighted the multifaceted nature of strategy. Others, in contrast, define security so inclusively that it becomes indistinguishable from foreign policy in general. The latter approach, which came into vogue in the 1970s, sometimes reflected the reluctance of academics to confront the continuing importance of force in the post-Vietnam era. Without resorting to a lengthy and indiscriminate compilation and commentary that could daunt all but the most compulsive of students, this book puts the relationship between essential and contextual elements of U.S. security in clear perspective.

Second, most literature on security tends to fall under two approaches that are seldom well integrated. Many analysts address security policy in terms of determinants that are either external and strategic or internal and political. Those who concentrate on the former often seem to see the relationships between threats and responses and between ends and means as clear and objectively calculable. This approach can convey an excessively rationalistic impression of how a nation operates strategically. Some who concentrate on the latter approach, on the other hand, sometimes overstate the impact of parochial interests and organizational games, as if policy were nothing but the residue of intragovernmental turf fights. Of course, it is impossible to appreciate the development of security policy without focusing on the international forest and the domestic trees. The book surveys both the forest and trees in a straightforward and coherent fashion.

This collection also avoids an overemphasis on novel ideas and new literature. Times change and new events or research do invalidate some old interpretations. What is remarkable when one looks back over the postwar era of U.S. policy, however, is how much continuity there is in the basic issues that have driven U.S. strategy and programs and how much wisdom is still to be found in earlier writings. The editors of this book have marshaled a representative array of essays from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, as well as the current decade. The selection combines insights from trained analysts and academicians, experienced practitioners, and authors who—like the editors—hold both sorts of credentials.

Finally, neither the selected readings nor the editors' lucid essays that link them and place them in perspective will tell students what positions they should take on national security policy. This is as it should be but is no mean feat. Defense policy has always been contentious, but it has been especially so since the Vietnam war fractured the cold war consensus and the enterprise of arms control negotiations faltered. This book will not appeal to pacifists, isolationists, or radicals of any stripe (including ardent militarists), but it presents the broad mainstream of thinking on U.S. options for war and peace. Education about security is too important to be left to the polemicists. This book will not indoctrinate readers as to whether missile throw-weight, more or fewer aircraft carriers, or cuts in the defense budget are the most critical issues facing the body politic. It will, however, take them a long way toward learning how to think about the dimensions of security and the choices involved. Since so much debate about security reflects distressingly little serious thought, that alone establishes the worth of this volume.

Preface

For over twenty years, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point has offered a senior seminar in national security studies as part of its curriculum. Since no adequate textbook dealing with national security studies has been available, the professors in charge of that course have collected a set of readings from journals and books for students. That approach, however, has proved to be time-consuming and time sensitive, requiring annual updates. Further, such an approach left it up to each professor to develop a larger conceptual framework into which the readings would fit.

As a result, we undertook a project to develop a conceptual framework for analyzing national security and to identify the relevant literature that best elaborated on and clarified that framework. The articles sought were to be timeless (not trendy), analytical (not merely descriptive), and balanced (not biased). The aim was to develop an edited work that could serve as a textbook, not only in West Point's national security seminar but in courses of this nature at undergraduate institutions across the country. Additionally, we hoped that because of its uniqueness and utility, the conceptual framework would be of interest to practitioners in the national security field. To the degree that we were successful in these endeavors, *U.S. National Security: A Framework for Analysis* will fill an important void in the study and understanding of U.S. national security policy.

Chapter 1 describes in detail the analytical framework we developed. Each part is introduced by an original essay designed to set the readings in a larger context and to provide additional information on the issues. Finally, we provide an appraisal of U.S. national security policy since World War II to help students understand how it evolved and as an example of how to apply the analytical framework.

This book in no way represents an official policy position of either the U.S. Military Academy or any other agency of the U.S. government. The views expressed in it are those of the authors and do not purport to reflect the position of the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

We owe many thanks to the members of the Department of Social Sciences at the U.S. Military Academy for their help and encouragement as the project evolved.

The office staff, ably led by Barbara Thomas, provided outstanding support. Special thanks are due to Jacqueline Murphy for her skilled work on the word processor, her patience with our innumerable changes, and the expeditious way in which she implemented those changes. Finally, we would like to thank Jaime Welch of Lexington Books for guiding us through the publication maze and for her sincere commitment to this project.

All royalties from this book will be deposited in a fund for faculty research and development at West Point in order to provide additional opportunities for future efforts of this kind.

U.S. National Security

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Part I

How to Analyze National Security

1

A Conceptual Framework

The Editors

Every year the secretary of defense sends a report commonly known as the posture statement to the Congress. This annual report outlines in several hundred pages the secretary's assessment of U.S. interests around the world and the security threats facing the nation. It also identifies the policies and forces that the United States has, as well as those it needs, to protect itself against those threats. To the uninitiated, the discussion of strategy, programs, budgets, and weapons systems can be confusing. It is filled with new vocabulary terms—*counterforce*, *MIRV*, *triad*, *Backfire*, *START*—that roll strangely off the tongue. Though these words may have little meaning at first, students of national security affairs cannot help but be staggered by the resources and the costs involved and thus sense the significance of the subject being addressed. Even if an administration does not demonstrate adequately the importance of its requests for billions of defense dollars, the nation's national security is clearly at stake in the face of conditions such as assured destruction (the possibility that the United States could be totally destroyed).

Although most people concede the importance of national security and the need to establish an adequate security posture, a number of questions remain. How do we know our security policies effectively meet our needs? How can we best address the threats to our interests at the least cost? Before one can address these issues, even more fundamental questions must be answered: What are our interests? What are the threats to these interests? Often the government is accused of generating policies and forces that do not seem to achieve these interests effectively or efficiently. Newspapers and journals are filled with accusations concerning wasteful programs or charges that government policies have resulted in missile gaps, interest-capability gaps, or other shortcomings that degrade security. If we are to be able to judge the validity of these charges, we must have some method of analyzing national security policy and determining how well it meets national interests. Our objective in this book is to identify the important variables that shape national security posture and assist in understanding the relationship between ends and means.

Defining National Security

In spite of its wide usage, *national security* is a term that is ambiguous and thus has come to mean different things to different people. Traditionally national security

has been defined as protection from external attack; consequently it has been viewed primarily in terms of military defenses against military threats. This view has proved to be too narrow, however; national security involves more than the procurement and application of military forces. Furthermore, such a view can delude one into believing that the way to increase security is merely to increase military power. Although military power is a very important component of security, it is only one facet; indeed history is filled with examples of arms races that resulted in less, rather than more, of this elusive commodity. Such races were often started by a nation strengthening its military power for defensive reasons in order to feel more secure. This action caused neighboring states to feel threatened and to respond by increasing their military establishments, which in turn made the original state feel less secure—and the race was on.

Today a much broader definition of national security is needed, one that includes economic, diplomatic, and social dimensions, in addition to the military dimension. Arnold Wolfers gives such a description: "Security, in an objective sense, measures the absence of threats to acquired values, in a subjective sense the absence of fear that such values will be attacked."¹ An analysis of this definition reveals important ideas that serve as a backdrop for the study of national security policy.

First, although security is directly related to values, it is not a value in its own right. It is a condition that allows a nation to maintain its values. Actions that make a nation more secure yet degrade its values are of little utility. Second, it is extremely difficult to measure security in any objective fashion. Therefore security becomes an evaluation based on perceptions of not only strengths and weaknesses but also the capabilities and intentions of perceived threats. Uncertainty about the true level of threat leads us to plan for the worst case, due to the drastic consequences of a security failure. Even if perceptions are accurate, security defies absolute measurement because it is a relative condition. We measure security relative to existing and potential threats, and since we cannot achieve absolute security against all possible threats, we must determine what levels of insecurity are acceptable. Last, it is important to realize that national security is not a static condition that exists in a vacuum. It is determined in the context of both the international and domestic environments, both of which are changing constantly.

National security policy is also a difficult concept to define. Frank Trager and Frank Simone have described it as "that part of government policy having as its objective the creation of national and international political conditions favorable to the protection and extension of vital national values against existing and potential adversaries."² Although this definition is not precise, it enables us to identify those actions that should be included in the study of national security. It also identifies some of the key elements (values, government, and the domestic and international environments) that must be examined in order to understand and evaluate policy. By organizing those elements into a conceptual framework that orders the relationship among variables, it is possible to explain and evaluate national security policy. Figure 1-1 outlines a framework that will enable students to understand these variables and to