



# THE LEGACY OF THE COLD WAR

PERSPECTIVES ON SECURITY, COOPERATION, AND CONFLICT

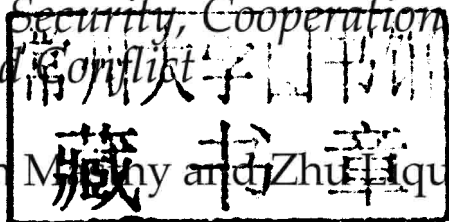
Edited by **VOJTECH MASTNY** and **ZHU LIQUN** Preface by Mark Kramer



# The Legacy of the Cold War

*Perspectives on Security, Cooperation  
and Conflict*

Edited by Wojciech Masiński and Zhu Liqun



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# The Legacy of the Cold War

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# Preface

Mark Kramer

Previous books in the Harvard Cold War Studies book series have looked at Europe or Asia or North America, but this latest book, edited by Vojtech Mastny and Zhu Liqun, covers Europe and Asia in equal measure. The contributors discuss the alliances and other security arrangements that existed in these regions during the Cold War, and they seek to determine whether the earlier experiences can help us understand key security challenges in Europe and Asia in the twenty-first century.

Political scientists, scholars of international relations, and historians have offered varying explanations of why states form alliances. Kenneth Waltz's structural theory of international relations depicts alliances as a means of "external balancing" for states, as opposed to the "internal balancing" of military spending and defense preparations. Waltz argues that states are most inclined to balance against more powerful states, aiming to achieve a balance of power. Stephen Walt has offered a significant modification of Waltz's argument, arguing that states seek alliances against other states they perceive as most threatening, regardless of how powerful they are. Powerful states that are seen as friendly are deemed to be good candidates as allies. For Walt, the dynamic of alliance formation is a balance of threat, not a balance of power, as suggested by Waltz. Walt and Waltz agree, however, that alliances are usually transitory, and both of them predicted in the early 1990s that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) would soon cease to exist.

The chapters in this book bear out Walt's argument about the balance of threat, but they contravene his (and Waltz's) notion that alliances are inherently evanescent. Not only has NATO continued to exist, it has nearly doubled in size since the end of the Cold War. The U.S. alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand have been similar to NATO in their longevity. All these cases suggest that liberal and constructivist theories of international relations, emphasizing the importance of domestic political arrangements and the collective identities of allied leaders, have considerable merit. In addition to serving as a military alliance, NATO gradually evolved into a community of democratic states (a "pluralistic security community," as Karl Deutsch called it more than fifty-five years ago), and much the same is true about U.S. alliances with

East Asian and Pacific countries. Even though a few of these allies experienced periods of authoritarianism during the Cold War (South Korea, Turkey, and Greece), all U.S. allies in Europe and East Asia in the post-Cold War era have been democratic, and a democratic polity has been mandatory for all new members of NATO. The alliances that have been most transitory are those between authoritarian states, such as the Soviet Union and China, whose brief "fraternal" alliance in the 1950s is discussed below.

Larger and more amorphous international bodies, such as the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), both of which are covered in chapters here, have never been effective as collective security mechanisms. The UN and CSCE (which in 1992 was renamed the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE) have had a role in peace-keeping operations and sundry nonmilitary activities, but neither the UN nor the OSCE is a substitute for the alliances and other security arrangements sponsored by the United States in both Europe and East Asia. Some fledgling regional security institutions in East Asia and the Pacific may eventually reduce the importance of the U.S. alliances there (and perhaps ultimately replace them altogether), but that seems unlikely in the near future. Only if the regional institutions become robust and reliable, and acquire effective military content will the *raison d'être* of the U.S. alliances come into question. Until then, U.S. allies in East Asia and the Pacific will undoubtedly be averse to changing their security relations with the United States.

Europe is now free of war (at least for the foreseeable future), but the situation in East Asia is much more problematic. The Cold War divide on the Korean Peninsula remains as stark as ever, and most of the territorial disputes between China and its neighbors that began during the Cold War have persisted and indeed increased in the post-Cold War era. The security challenges that lie ahead in East Asia are of keen interest for both scholars and policy makers. Everyone who wants to understand those problems in historical perspective, comparing them with similar issues that arose during the Cold War, will benefit from this book.

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# Introduction

Vojtech Mastny

As the Cold War continues to recede into the past, understanding its enduring legacy becomes ever more elusive. The period's historically anomalous bipolar order, which nevertheless lasted more than forty years, makes generalizations about it difficult and drawing lessons from it perilous. Predictions about the nature of the new international order that would follow it have been repeatedly proven wrong and policy prescriptions derived from the reading of the Cold War experience have often been misguided.

The unexpected end of the protracted conflict has been a sobering experience for scholars. No theory had anticipated how the Cold War would be terminated, and none should also be relied upon to explicate its legacy. But instead of relying on preconceived formulas to project past developments, taking a historical perspective to explain their causes and consequences allows one to better understand trends and their long-term significance. The present book takes such perspective, focusing on the evolution of security, its substance as well as its perception, the concurrent development of alliances and other cooperative structures for security, and their effectiveness in managing conflicts.

Within this context, security is to be understood in the broadest sense, referring to both military and "nontraditional" threats. Similarly, alliances are to be defined broadly as any "collaborative agreement[s] between two or more states to join together . . . to pursue common political, economic or security interests" within the "general context of cooperative behavior among states," aimed to reduce conflicts as they persist in an international system based on the principle of sovereignty.<sup>1</sup>

This volume brings together several contributions prepared originally for a conference held in Beijing in 2009 and additional chapters written specifically for the book. At the conference, organized by the Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security and hosted by China Foreign Affairs University, papers prepared by Western and Chinese scholars were presented for discussion by both academics and policy practitioners.<sup>2</sup> The selected papers were subsequently revised to take into account recent events and the results of the latest scholarly research.

Of the two introductory chapters, the first provides the historical perspective for explaining the Cold War's impact on international security, and the second examines the conceptualization of cooperative security by theorists of international relations and its implementation in practice, with particular attention to differences between Europe and Asia. The alliances and other cooperative structures selected for discussion in the book's first part are the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and its Cold War counterpart, the Warsaw Pact, and the institutions of Europe's common security policy, as well as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as a model, analyzed with regard to its applicability in other regions. In the second part, America's Cold War experience with its Asian alliances is juxtaposed with China's experience with its Soviet alliance. The two final chapters consider the conclusions to be drawn from the Chinese experience—the first from China's use of force in its foreign policy during the Cold War, the second from the evolution of its security concept. In the postscript, the editors assess the contributors' findings in the light of recent international developments.

In chapter 1, Vojtech Mastny's overview of the legacy of the Cold War for international security sets the main theme of the book within the context of the global U.S.-Soviet confrontation and the diverse interests of both their allies and the nonaligned nations. Introducing topics that are discussed in further detail in other chapters, the author considers the origins of those developments that remained relevant beyond the time-frame of the Cold War. They include the evolution of security structures created in its early years, the enduring consequences of the Korean War and of the nuclear arms race, the impact of East-West détente and incipient globalization, and the catalytic effect of the end of the Cold War on its legacy.

The chapter argues that only the Cold War's unexpectedly peaceful outcome determined the nature of its legacy, which proved particularly beneficial to the security of those regions that had been most affected by the East-West confrontation and that had also established durable cooperative structures—Europe and to a lesser extent the Asia-Pacific region. International security improved because of new developments that have not been reversed since the Cold War, such as the obsolescence of war as an instrument of policy, the containment of nuclear proliferation, the acceptance of human rights as an international security issue, and the interconnectedness of globalized market economy. Mastny concludes that, despite the emergence of new threats of nonmilitary nature, the Cold War left the world more secure than it had been before, even though not secure enough because of a wider range of security requirements and greater sensitivity to their deficit.

In chapter 2, Vincent Keating and Nicholas Wheeler relate the conceptualization of security by political scientists, which has been a product of

the Cold War, to the imperative of building trust in the international system. They explain the differences between common, collective, and cooperative security, as well as between security regimes, complexes, and communities. Highlighting the concept of the security dilemma as one of the Cold War's abiding legacies, they advance the notion of "security dilemma sensibility" in elaborating on the ways and means of overcoming the barriers to trust that are inherent in the dilemma. They compare the results achieved in Europe and in Southeast Asia.

The Cold War stimulated Western European integration by means of "embedded trust building" among liberal democratic states and their societies, leading to the emergence of a "mature security community" in the region. By comparison, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) remains an "emergent security community," dependent on "an incremental process of trust building" among nonliberal states, which has not yet extended to their societies. The authors conclude that for the process to advance, political leaders need to either engage in "graduated reciprocation of tension reduction" or undertake a "leap of trust." Neither is sufficient, however, without political pluralism, which would allow trusting relationships between national leaders to be adopted by their peoples as well.

The record of the UN as the guardian of global security is found seriously wanting in chapter 3, by William R. Keylor. Comparing the record with that of its predecessor, the League of Nations, he finds some of the same congenital defects, which are perhaps inevitable in a world of sovereign states—great power dominance, deference to regional alliances, and an incapacity to raise military force in support of collective security, as illustrated particularly by the fate of the stillborn Military Staff Committee. The two instances of providing such support—the interventions under UN auspices in the 1950–1953 Korean War and the 1990 Gulf War—were deceptive in serving as a cover for intervention by the United States.

Keylor does not see the performance of the world organization as a guardian of security as having substantially improved since the Cold War. He describes the peacekeeping role that has become the UN's pre-eminent activity as mainly "abysmal failure," citing Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda as the prime examples. The relatively successful missions, such as those in Cambodia, Sierra Leone, and Timor Leste, have been those undertaken after local strife had already ended. Because of the nature of the UN as an international organization, the author considers it structurally incapable of fulfilling the global security tasks it had originally claimed to assume. Its specialized agencies, however, have proved more effective than had been expected in responding to the nontraditional threats that may turn out to be more important to human security than aggression by states against one another.

In discussing the West's foremost security organization inherited from the Cold War, in chapter 4 Lawrence S. Kaplan analyzes the three-stage trajectory of NATO as an atypical alliance, different from yet more durable than any historical predecessor. Originally a European rather than American creation, it was different especially because of the American ability and willingness to exercise the dominant, but not domineering, role in an alliance remarkably capable of accommodating the diverse interests of its unequal members once it became institutionalized as a military structure in response to the Korean War. At the next stage, NATO managed in the 1960s to overcome the crisis of confidence between the United States and its European dependents by transforming itself from a military to a military-political alliance. Though unprepared for the eventual exit of its Soviet adversary, it reinvented itself after 1991 during the third stage when it found its primary new purpose in international crisis management, not confined to its original geographical boundaries.

Regardless of perennial discord among the allies, Kaplan finds the NATO model not obsolete but in need of refinement. He considers the alliance's military capabilities and its experience in military cooperation assets that make it uniquely qualified to serve as an international peace keeper in conjunction with the UN. With the passing of the inhibitions imposed by the Cold War, NATO might conceivably assume the function initially envisaged for the UN's Military Staff Committee, namely, "to act against breaches of peace" with UN authorization. NATO, having successfully used its military component to also facilitate transnational political integration in Europe, proved capable of performing a role "no other alliance, present or past, can claim."

In chapter 5, Malcolm Byrne examines the deficiencies of a hegemonic alliance by analyzing the trajectory of NATO's defunct rival—the Warsaw Pact. Created by the Soviet Union at a time of diminishing East-West tension as part of Soviet leader Nikita S. Khrushchev's plan to negotiate away both alliances to Soviet advantage, the alliance remained an empty shell after the plan's failure, and never found a clear mission. Though controlled more tightly by Moscow than NATO was by Washington, it was used by the Soviet Union with much less dexterity. Following the internal crisis of both alliances in the 1960s, the Warsaw Pact's transformation into a military counterpart of NATO did not give the Soviet alliance an important security function. Only under Mikhail S. Gorbachev's reformist leadership did the organization perform such a function by providing, together with NATO, the framework for the dismantling of the military confrontation in Europe, before disintegrating in the process of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and its empire.

Apart from the Warsaw Pact's basic redundancy, Byrne concludes that the lack of agreement among its members about the nature of the threat they were facing and the lack of domestic legitimacy of their re-

gimes were the alliance's fatal flaws. An excessively ideological approach to security matters blinded its managers to the true intentions of its adversaries, coming at the cost of realism and objectivity in strategic planning. The history of the Warsaw Pact lends support to the conclusion that security cannot be defined in strictly military terms and that an alliance as a military machine cannot survive without the economic vitality, as well as political and social legitimacy, conferred on it by the systems it is intended to sustain.

In chapter 6, Willem K. van Eekelen discusses the evolution of the distinctive European security policy, different from traditional alliances. From his perspective as an insider, he underlines the particular role of the Western European Union in shaping Europe's security policy in conjunction with both NATO and the process of European integration at points in time that were critical for both. Although efforts to reach a common policy started already during the Cold War within the framework of the European Political Cooperation mechanism, only the prospect of the unification of the divided continent did allow the policy to mature. The chapter analyzes the convoluted and cumbersome process that led to the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, which institutionalized the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) as a function of the European Union.

Van Eekelen considers the integration of the formerly communist countries in Eastern Europe by means of the enlargement of the European Union (EU) its greatest success in terms of security. By comparison, the ESDP has been lagging behind, though with significant accomplishments to its credit, especially in the numerous "joint actions" undertaken to maintain peace and stability in trouble spots around the world. "Exaggerated notions of sovereignty and misconceived interpretations of national interests," however, have been inhibiting Europe's more active role. The author nevertheless remains confident about the effectiveness of the EU's incremental step-by-step approach and its advantage in being better equipped than NATO to deal with the nontraditional threats that are becoming more relevant than military ones.

The CSCE was arguably the Cold War's most influential conceptual and procedural innovation in security matters. In chapter 7, Andreas Wenger and Daniel Möckli analyze first the run-up to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act that determined the ensuing "Helsinki process," and then the applicability of the CSCE model in Europe and beyond. Although the process started with the acceptance of the political status quo, the CSCE became a dynamic rather than static construct, mainly thanks to the redefinition of security by its Western European participants. While this is not what later caused the Soviet Union to collapse, the "Helsinki effect" helped ensure that the Cold War would end peacefully. Afterward, however, the CSCE failed to serve as model for Europe's new security architecture, and once institutionalized as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, it became politically marginalized.

Wenger and Möckli understand the CSCE's concept of cooperative security as an exercise in "antagonistic cooperation," which complements rather than substitutes for balance of power politics while calling for reassurance and engagement rather than deterrence and containment. They regard as the key principles of the process its long-term perspective, ambivalence in formulating issues, trade-offs between issues, political rather than legal commitment, and sovereign equality. They single out as the principal dimensions of a CSCE-modeled process a collective definition of the rules governing interstate relations, the avoidance of conflict through confidence building measures, and a comprehensive understanding of security beyond its military aspects. Assessing the model's applicability in the Middle East and East Asia, the authors find the differences between the two regions and Cold War Europe far outweighing similarities. But a selective application of the CSCE principles may be more promising in East Asia because of China's turn toward multilateralism and the presence in the region of the ASEAN variant of cooperative security.

Since the termination of the Europe-centered Cold War, threats to international security have been coming mainly from the developing world, yet its most rapidly developing part—the Asia-Pacific region—has been more peaceful than many observers predicted. In presenting the contrast between the Cold War era and its aftermath, all four chapters in the second part of the book emphasize change and development, while the first two use the historical methodology and the other two that of political science.

The American alliance building in Asia during the early Cold War, examined by Robert J. McMahon in chapter 8, differed substantially from that in Europe. Unlike there, in Asia Washington's global interests clashed with the disparate security and political needs of the different states in the region. The results were, unlike in the case of NATO, asymmetrical partnerships resembling patron-client relationships, most of which did not last. Multilateral arrangements, exemplified by SEATO, did not survive U.S. disengagement from the Vietnam War and Sino-American rapprochement. The alternative hub-and-spokes system of bilateral alliances did not seem to fare much better, except for those with Japan and South Korea.

In suggesting historical lessons that can be drawn despite the change of the security environment, McMahon cites the case of ASEAN, which was formed at the height of the Vietnam War in opposition to SEATO as an indigenous alternative to American hegemony, was then embraced reluctantly by the United States, and eventually emerged as America's putative security partner in the region. At the same time, U.S. partnerships with such long-time clients as Japan and South Korea, as well as Australia, have become less asymmetrical. If it is true "that in the absence of genuine mutuality of need and interest alliances will not long survive,"

it follows that with the presence of such need and interest, old partnerships may become invigorated and even new ones may be formed.

Compared with the fragile U.S. alliances in Asia, the Sino-Soviet alliance may have “looked great from the outside” but, as Lorenz Lüthi shows in chapter 9, it was “more scaffolding than concrete” because of Beijing’s unwillingness to support institutional integration and because of the two partners’ divergent military and political needs. The Chinese communists first sought the alliance for perceived security reasons and, once their Soviet ideological patron, Iosif V. Stalin, reluctantly agreed, China benefited from the relationship more than the Soviet Union did. Subordination to Moscow, however, brought the country into the Korean War, resulting in a costly involvement that was more protracted than Beijing wanted.

After Sino-Soviet security cooperation had peaked during the few years that followed Stalin’s death, it started breaking down because of China’s ideological radicalization and emphasis on self-reliance under the leadership of Mao Zedong, whose reassertion of Chinese sovereignty impeded military collaboration. Lüthi regards Chinese-driven ideological disagreements, aggravated by competition in assisting the Vietnamese communists in their war against the United States, as the main reason for the demise of the alliance by 1965. He concludes that the partnership with the Soviet Union had served primarily as “a means to restore the country to a position of power and influence in the world,” whereas for the Soviet Union it had never attained such an overriding purpose—a mismatch of needs and expectations that was ultimately bound to doom the alliance.

In chapter 10, Huang Yuxing addresses the Chinese quest for security under Mao’s rule and in its immediate aftermath by exploring the reasons for China resorting to force in its foreign policy during the Cold War more often than any other power. He explains the motives, goals, and results of its use of force on five occasions—the Korean War, the 1955–1958 Taiwan Strait crises, the 1962 war with India, the 1969 clashes on the Soviet border, and the war against Vietnam in 1979. Reviewing both historical and political science scholarship on these subjects in the light of extensive new evidence that has recently become available from Chinese sources, he considers the lessons that may be drawn from the experience for policy.

The author finds more differences than similarities between the five cases. His findings challenge the notion that China’s behavior could be sufficiently explained by any single factor—whether external security interests or domestic politics or ideological imperatives. He breaks new ground in explaining Mao’s calculated, if futile, strategy to achieve Taiwan’s unification with the mainland by selective use of force against the Nationalist-held offshore islands and in attributing the war with India mainly to Beijing’s misperceptions of Indian support to Tibetan resistance to Chinese rule. If self-perception of vulnerability continued to provide



incentive for China's use of force during the Cold War, Huang concludes, its persisting sense of vulnerability despite its economic accomplishments also does not rule out its resort to force in the future as well.

In chapter 11, Zhu Liquan reaches a different conclusion. Applying a conceptual framework widely accepted by both Western and Chinese scholars, she considers the concept of security as being subject to change in response to the changing international environment. In tracing the evolution of the Chinese concept, as reflected in authoritative policy pronouncements, the chapter draws a sharp distinction between the period preceding and following the adoption of the policy of reform and opening to the outside world under Deng Xiaoping in 1979. Afterward, the evolution proceeded in stages toward "comprehensive integration" by the early twenty-first century. The author perceives the continuity of a "gradual learning process of China's socialization into surrounding international society" since the end of the Cold War, regardless of the 1989 Tiananmen crisis.

Zhu argues that China's adoption of its "New Security Concept" in 2002 has been misinterpreted in "realist" terms as being directed against the United States and its allies. She explains the transition from revisionist to integrationist and from confrontational to cooperative approaches to security in terms of internal developments, particularly the country's domestic crises, identity change, and leadership-driven dynamics. The crises shaped a security strategy aimed primarily at promoting social and political stability. The identity change, reflecting improvement in the international environment, economic prosperity, and integration into the global economic system, resulted in a diminishing perception of the utility of force, confidence in the New Security Concept, and a growing sense of responsibility within the international community. The author underlines the enduring influence of Deng's legacy on the "basic Chinese understanding of the surrounding world."

Although the contributors differ in their particular conclusions, the book as a whole supports the overall conclusion that the Cold War's legacy for security has been positive in the sense of encouraging international cooperation and mitigating rather than exacerbating interstate conflict. As the legacy recedes into the past while new security threats keep intruding, however, this conclusion needs to be reviewed in the light of current events. From both Western and Chinese perspectives, Vojtech Mastny and Zhu Liquan undertake such a review in the postscript.

## NOTES

1. Jacob Bercovitch, "Alliances in International Relations: Aspects of Performance and Problems of Management," in *ANZUS in Crisis: Alliance Management in International Affairs*, edited by Jacob Bercovitch (London: Macmillan, 1988), 6–28, at 8, 25.