

Introduction

Images of famine, debt, economic stagnation and decay in the Southern hemisphere, coupled with an uneasy acknowledgement of the interdependence of military and economic security, have made a revaluation of the security relations between North and South urgent. In March 1987, an international conference took place in Guernsey, in the UK Channels Islands, under the auspices of the Ford Foundation funded project on North/South security relations conducted by members of the Politics Department of Southampton University. The objective was to bring together academics with differing perceptions of security, in order to explore the areas of convergence and divergence between what can broadly be described as ‘Southern’ and ‘Northern’ views. Contrasting perceptions of justice, order, norms of international behaviour, events and priorities are core problems facing the international security analyst and national policy makers intent on decreasing the gap between their assessment of security requirements and their perception of the international environment. An examination of different perspectives with regard to the security equation – especially the relative importance of economic, social, political and military elements – thus forms a vital backdrop to an understanding of international security issues in general.

The purpose of the Southampton project has been to explore the sources, past and present, of security and insecurity in the South, and to assess alternative forms of crisis prevention regimes and crisis management techniques for the Southern areas of the world. Projections were to be made about a likely international security agenda for the 1990s, based on assessments of possible future sources of security and insecurity in the South and appropriate Northern responses. In order to tackle these questions with any degree of balance, legitimacy and credibility, it was imperative that the obvious Northern bias of the group undertaking the research had to be tempered by the involvement of scholars from and in the Southern states. From the outset several Indian

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academics became closely involved with the work, and this has resulted in a fruitful and enduring series of exchanges. Apart from these strong links with the sub-continent, several individuals from a wide range of Latin American, African, Asian, Arab and Far Eastern states have participated in the project on an *ad hoc* basis, attending conferences and study groups and so forth.

It was largely as a result of the early involvement of these Southern scholars that the pressing need for a study of the very nature of security became evident to all concerned. For not only were there widely divergent attitudes towards the security process – that is, the mechanisms outlined in the initial project for the attainment and maintenance of security – but at an even more fundamental level there was profound disagreement about the actual structure of security which was being aimed at. What constituted security, and for what political unit? Without a consensus on this, then it would be impossible to agree on legitimate and appropriate techniques for the attainment and management of security.

The initial project outline was based on Northern perceptions of what constituted a threat to security. Thus most of the causes for concern over the South involved the activities of the two superpowers or perceived repercussions of these activities on each other: the possibility of symmetrical superpower intervention; the problem of reverse influence as a few Southern states acquired leverage *vis-à-vis* a superpower; strategic and resource rivalry by the superpowers; the effects of nuclear weapon acquisition by Southern states and their access to the most modern conventional weaponry; the activities of proxy states and so forth.

The involvement of Southern scholars quickly showed that the hierarchy of concerns from their point of view was different. While superpower rivalry and direct or indirect military intervention was a constant threat, exogenous economic factors were equally threatening and in some ways more of a constant problem. Moreover, indigenous factors contributed crucially to the generally insecure environment in the South. The lack of domestic consensus evident in the very slow progress of state and nation building was a major security problem. The arbitrary nature of territorial boundaries continues to pose intrastate and interstate difficulties. The formidable challenge of modernisation places massive strains on these young polities and repercussions on the security of the international system. The current transfer of capital from South to North via debt and interest repayments, coupled with the fact that many of the least developed states are actively regressing in terms of GNP per capita, adds to the tensions within and between societies. The challenge of fulfilling basic needs and keeping pace with population growth seems insurmountable in the contemporary international economic environment. On top of all these socio-economic problems, and to some extent interwoven with them, are the military ones of

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regional arms races and the dilemma of guns or butter. Moreover, many of the problems with indigenous roots in the South are exacerbated by superpower insensitivity, ignorance or even intention. Many of the Northern actions perceived as most insidious and detrimental to Southern security by Southern leaders, being of an economic nature, barely feature in the Northern security equation and the consequent calculation of priorities. Above all, the burden of certain of these economic features, such as floating interest rates, is something which Southern leaders often feel to be within the power and responsibility of the North to change, and not the product of the operation of an autonomous market.

Given these differing perceptions, what criteria can be used to assess remedial measures for the problems of insecurity in the South outlined in the original project? Moreover, are competition-free zones, self-regulating 'no go' zones, free competition but crisis controlled zones, arms limitation techniques, third party mediation, superpower codes of conduct and so forth, adequate or even appropriate given the lack of consensus on the fundamental structure of security being aimed at? A whole new avenue of concerns was opened up for investigation and debate by questioning the basic assumption that there could exist a common perception of security. While the establishment of free competition but crisis controlled zones might seem pragmatic and even legitimate in the eyes of Northern statesmen, to their Southern counterparts they might appear illegitimate, illegal, imprudent and counterproductive; increasing insecurity rather than reinforcing security.

A great gulf exists over the basic issue of what constitutes security, and therefore over what constitute the most legitimate, desirable and appropriate methods of pursuing the goal of creating a more secure international environment and more security for each individual and state within it. Indeed controversy exists even at the level of determining what the appropriate targets are for security policies (the system, the region, the state, the individual or some combination of these) and how, if at all, they can be rank ordered.

In the case of the Guernsey Conference, it became apparent that there were, very broadly, two reflections of these concerns and sets of answers to them. First, there were those who saw security mainly in terms of stability. For them the elaboration of a reliable regulatory order to govern the existing international system of theoretically sovereign states, underpinned primarily by military sanctions, was the foremost concern. Secondly, in contrast, there were those who adopted a holistic approach, seeing social and economic change not as a threat to, but as an integral part of, security, and for whom the security of the individual was a prerequisite for the security of states and indeed of the international system. Again at a broad level, the basic tension was in the relative importance given to military and socio-economic factors, and the necessity for change. This

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seemed to stem directly from competing notions of justice and order and the relationship between the two, and this in turn was in part the product of different historical experiences of state-building and development in which the changing character of the international environment has played a critical role. In a nutshell, one conception of security was basically top down, while the other was bottom up.

The conference was convened under the title 'Conflict and Consensus in the *South/North* Security Debate'. The order here is important, for almost invariably in security debates it is the positions of the Western states or the superpowers (all these developed states being categorised for our purposes as Northern), which are given prominence and priority, while the concerns of states in the developing world are regarded as secondary or derivative. It is usual for security to be assessed in an East/West framework, and for scant regard to be given to the indigenous developments, concerns and priorities of the developing states. The conference was consciously structured in such a way as to redress this imbalance. This concern is reflected in the organisation and content of the current volume, which highlights the fact that another important dimension exists in the security debate. For analyses which stress the East/West context and fail to adequately address the South/North dimension will fall short of the academic goal of the pursuit of objectivity and relevance, and will fail to serve the policy-maker in the developed and the developing worlds well.

The topics chosen for debate at the conference reflected the mutual and the competing concerns which became evident in discussions during the earlier stages of the project. Thus, the economic dimension of security, which is prominent in the perspectives of many Southerners but rarely enters the formulation of Northern security analysts, had a prominent role, as did the traditional concerns of the North grounded in physical territoriality, violations thereof and military relationships. Terrorism, a mutual concern, also featured.

The aim of the conference was to cover the main areas of agreement and disagreement in the current security debate, either in the papers or in the discussions; the current volume attempts to offer a flavour of these proceedings. The papers are organised into six pairs. Each pair addresses a major element of the security problem from the point of view of a Southern and a Northern perspective, thereby highlighting similarities and differences in approach and identifying areas where constructive engagement may take place and areas where it is unlikely. Just as it is possible to identify a multiplicity of 'Western' and 'Northern' perspectives on particular elements of the security debate, it is also possible to identify numerous approaches emanating from the developing countries. There may be differences both within and between states, resulting from the varying perceptions of interest groups within the state and of national

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interest between states on particular issues. However, this volume is based on the premise that, while there may be differences in detail, in broad terms it is possible to distinguish common concerns and priorities both between the 'Southern' states and between the 'Western' states and also to a certain extent between the 'superpowers'. Hence a thematic approach is adopted here, with broad general issues being discussed, rather than a particularist approach which would highlight divergences within these groups of states. There is no intention to suggest that any such grouping is a homogeneous unit; indeed, it is vital, especially in the case of developing states which are all too often collectively labelled 'Third World' within Northern literature, to recognise the heterogeneity of their individual strengths and weaknesses. Yet states have discernible common positions in the security debate which are borne of common challenges, vulnerabilities and perceptions of justice. It is at this most basic, yet in many respects most difficult level, of the highest common denominator that the editors feel the contested concept of security can be addressed most usefully.

The first pair of essays addresses the question of the position and role of the Third World in the international political system. Aswini Ray, noticeably titling his paper 'A View from the *Periphery*', presents a picture of a structurally hierarchical international political system which is morally unjust and ultimately unstable. He argues that stability has been bought for the Northern hemisphere in the post-World War Two period at the expense of instability in the so-called 'Third World', and indeed, the 'Third World' itself is the product of rivalry between East and West. The hegemony of the East-West Cold War, with its clearly Eurocentric concerns, has created a hierarchy of beneficiaries of the international political system in both economic and geopolitical terms. 'Third World' countries find themselves at the base of a pyramidal structure, while the Northern states occupy varying positions towards the apex. There is little chance of upward mobility within this rigid structure. Ray warns that the continuity of the international political system should not be taken as evidence of its stability.

The Northern view on the position and role of the 'Third World' in the international political system offered by John Simpson stresses the difference between what exists 'out there' and is observable in that system, and what is part of a non-observable cognitive structure which assists us as we try to understand what is going on in the world. Simpson explains how developing states of the South have been faced with the choice of accepting an interpretation of the international system based on either realism or idealism, both of which pre-dated the existence of the 'Third World', or of formulating an entirely new approach. He maintains that the majority of Third World elites have been coopted into the realist tradition. Thus, while they call for changes in the international economic

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order and so forth based on egalitarianism and ideas of a community of mankind, they realise that these will not be attained unless the North wills it so. The Western tradition of realism, accepted by Southern elites for whom Western intellectual dominance exists in the mind, has played a crucial role in preventing attempts at revolutionary change in the international system as much as has the existence of a power hierarchy 'out there'. Yet Simpson argues that the lack of an alternative vision of the nature of the international system makes possible a dialogue on North/South security, for a consensus exists on how the system functions, even if there is no uniform acceptance of the consequences of that functioning. As far as he is concerned, the evolution of the international system over the past three decades has been 'dominated by the cooption of the Southern political and security elites into an international consensus on the nature of that system'. They have accepted the agenda on security issues set by the North, rather than taking radical initiatives. Many of the positions taken by these elites are the result of a desire to increase their relative power position rather than a desire to attain other specific objectives per se. They suffer from a lack of indigenous alternatives and priorities.

The second group of papers considers how far the international economic order has addressed the developmental needs of the South. Marc Williams, presenting a Southern perspective, argues that this must be assessed in terms of the development of post-war capitalism. The hegemony of the United States at the close of World War Two allowed that state to create a liberal international economic order which advanced US business and security interests, but which also resulted in growth within developing countries. However, growth and development in the latter has been very uneven. Instability in the international monetary system, higher oil prices, falling commodity prices, global recession and fluctuating interest rates have increased uncertainty and added to the imperfections already existing in the operation of the liberal economic order because of differential political power, bargaining strength and unequal access to information.

In proscribing interventionist policies to correct this bias, the economic order contributes to the continuation of inequality. Williams examines the performance of the major international economic organisations – the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) – through the criteria of efficiency, stability and economic justice. He concludes that, although a Southern coalition favouring reform of the international economic order has been created and maintained because of a general feeling of powerlessness in the shaping of economic decisions, below this global level a variety of postures are evident deriving from local elites' calculation of interest.

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Graham Bird's Northern view of the international economic order and the developmental interests of Third World states concentrates specifically on the international monetary arrangements, and this emphasis is itself important because it reveals a hierarchy of priorities. Bird stresses that the 'South' is not a homogeneous grouping in financial terms and should not be treated as such, and hence the North/South division is far too simplistic a categorisation to be useful for policy-makers; indeed it may be very misleading. Bird outlines alternative reform plans and concludes that in the present circumstances only piecemeal reform is viable, for example in areas where developing countries can identify shared concerns with the developed countries such as over debt. He concludes that, while international arrangements may be important, it is essential not to lose sight of the fact that domestic arrangements can have a profound impact on the economic health of developing states too. Thus persistently over-valued exchange rates will impinge on development, irrespective of the international economic environment.

The third set of essays deals with the question of alliances and bases in the South. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu maintains that this question cannot be separated from the wider one of intervention in the South and the Northern belief that the primary demand of international order legitimises it. Bases attest that, decolonisation notwithstanding, the modes of thought characterising great power behaviour are little different from those prominent in the days of empires. Saravanamuttu outlines how basing policy is changing to meet contemporary technological and political conditions. Bases are called technical facilities, and they come under the sovereignty of the host country which may in theory restrict access, though this happens infrequently. He argues that, far from enhancing international security, bases compound the problem, since they are in direct conflict with core elements of the Southern perspective of security: non-alignment; the desire of host governments not to be 'short-changed' in their security relations with the superpowers; and their desire not to have social and political change overseen or directed by an outside power.

In his Northern perspective on bases and alliances, Christopher Coker concentrates on the role of the US since it has a far more extensive network of bases and communications facilities in the Third World than the USSR. He argues that many of the issues raised by the South are common property to all who regard association with the US as a threat to regional security, and he is thinking here particularly of the West Europeans. Coker maintains that the strategic recoupling of the Third World and the West represents less a threat to the security of any particular region and more a threat to the self-image of the Non-Aligned Movement. The US has found its freedom of action severely constrained in three areas: its ability to intervene in the domestic affairs of the

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host nation; its right to use bases for military operations against other Third World states; and its right to compromise the essential non-aligned status of those countries which have been willing to provide base facilities. With the massive diversity existing within the Third World, Coker suggests that, while the base issue may be relevant to the image the Third World has of itself, it is entirely irrelevant to its future. He stresses that, apart from Diego Garcia, the only overseas base outside Europe which is vital to US security interests is Subic Bay.

The fourth section addresses the problem of the debt crisis. Stephany Griffiths-Jones reiterates that one of the effects of the debt crises in the 1980s has been to reduce the amount of new private capital flows to the South; yet solutions to the debt crisis are hindered by the lack of such flows. She argues, however, that the present 'vicious circle' type of situation could potentially be transformed into a 'virtuous circle'. This would require several conditions to be met, and Jones advocates a clear technical and bargaining strategy by several major debtor governments, a willingness by them to use 'bargaining strength' which negative net transfers give them, and a sympathetic response from industrial governments and private financial institutions. The paper examines the main elements which give bargaining strength to major debtors, outlines how the debt crisis has been managed until now, and concludes with suggestions about how to move from short-term crisis-management techniques to a system of international financial mediation more in tune with the developmental needs of the developing countries and of world economic growth.

The Northern view offered by Stephen Thomas stresses that the international debt crisis, which in common usage refers to the difficulties faced by developing states in repaying loans to international banks, forms but one aspect of a larger – indeed global – debt crisis being played out in the North as well. The North is affected not only because its banks are over-exposed to the South, but because of domestic strains within the Northern financial system. He cites the enormous proliferation of household debt in the US due partly to the massive proliferation in credit cards. Thomas suggests that financial deregulation and lender of last resort facilities have led to a *global* debt explosion; this is a problem both for the South and for the North. He maintains that case-by-case rescheduling of Southern debt has done nothing to tackle the fundamental problems in the international monetary system. He criticises as untenable the implicit Northern position that neither banks nor governments must lose and praises the recent Citicorp decision to increase its loan loss provisions massively and take an operating loss as a step in the right direction. Moreover this has been repeated by other banks, including some concerned with domestic US debt such as First Interstate.

The fifth pair of essays tackles the issue of intervention. Matin Zuberi offers a

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Southern view. He maintains that the novelty of the present international situation with respect to intervention lies in the fact that, unlike the old imperial systems which were territorially confined and constrained by technology, there are now two overlapping global military powers which are pursuing conflicting global policies in the dynamic setting of change and turmoil in the peripheries. The era of risk-free intervention is over. He argues that the premium placed on pre-emption leads to spiralling interventions, and that this is made worse by the invitations given by certain fragile polities suffering from the disorientations of the development process. The consequences could be catastrophic for both North and South.

Phil Williams offers a Northern view which is territorially and militarily based, and which sees great power intervention in weaker states as a result of the anarchy and hierarchy within the international system that has a respectable history in the Hobbesian view of the relations of states. There is an inherent tension between the norms of international society and the reality of international politics, and the attempts of superpowers to offer justifications for their transgressions of the non-intervention rule suggest that these norms are not unimportant. Williams examines why superpowers intervene militarily in other states, and points particularly to the bipolar structure of the international system, the self-images of the two superpowers which give their competition a Manichean quality, and the geopolitical mind-sets. He draws attention to certain characteristics of the Third World state and of interstate relations which encourage superpower intervention. Williams highlights also the justifications offered for intervention; national security is frequently used, and he argues that it is the only one necessary in an anarchic international system. Given the ideological dimension of superpower rivalry, justifications also often take on an ideological dimension. Thus the US points to the need to uphold freedom and democracy, while the USSR stresses the importance of national liberation. The superpowers do not see their own interventions as violations of established norms but rather as specific responses to problems and challenges in particular geographic areas. Reducing incentives for intervention will depend on the state of superpower relations, and Third World states have little control over this. However, they may be able to reduce the opportunities for such intervention if they can strengthen the institutions of their states and establish effective regional mechanisms for crisis management and conflict resolution in the Third World. The superpowers cannot be relied upon to stop acting as such.

The final set of essays addresses the question of terrorism. A Southern view, offered by George Joffé, uses the Middle East as an illustrative case study. Joffé stresses that neither terrorism nor fundamentalism sprang *ex nihilo*, and that there are objective circumstances which explain their existence and suggest more

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appropriate solutions than the use of the armed force of the state currently in vogue. Attitudes in the West, dismissive of attempts to understand causality, lead to a hardening of attitudes in the Middle East among the very groups on which future hopes of cooperation, peace and stability must be based. If this continues, violent confrontation between the Islamic Middle East and the secular West will be accepted by both as the norm for dialogue. Joffé argues that the profound changes taking place in Middle Eastern societies are being misrepresented in the West, to the detriment of Western relations with that area of the world. If a reduction in terrorism is to be achieved, then the West must address the issue of the Palestinian people in a more constructive manner than it has done to date, and it must learn to live with Islamic revival and accept notions of cultural diversity and equality. Greater understanding of the problems and changes besetting Middle Eastern societies could help release some of the tensions in the area that stimulate a terrorist response. A massive policy shift in Washington is vital.

In his Northern perspective on terrorism Paul Wilkinson begins by discussing problems of definition and he suggests a basic typology of international terror perpetrators: nationalist terrorists, ideological terrorists, religious fanatics, single issue fanatics and state-sponsored international terrorism. Next, Wilkinson offers an outline of Northern perceptions of the underlying causes of the growth in terrorism since the late 1960s. He highlights the general strategic situation which favours unconventional war, weaknesses in the response to terrorism of the international community and particular states, the military defeat of the Arab states in the June 1967 war with Israel and the resurgence of the neo-Marxist and Trotskyist left among the student populations of the advanced industrial states of the West. He outlines also specific reasons in Southern states, such as regime terror by military dictatorships, ethnic and religious divisions within the states, economic weakness and urbanisation. Special attention is given to state-sponsored terrorism, with reference to Iran under Khomeini. Finally Wilkinson addresses the issue of countering state-sponsored terrorism in the South.

The concluding chapter by Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu highlights the areas of convergence and divergence that became evident from the conference papers and discussions, and thus indicates likely areas where progress in the security debate may be made and others where it is less hopeful. The conclusion provides a statement of where the debate has reached and possible future scenarios.