CHAPTER – III

THREATS TO PEACE AND SECURITY

Across time and space, virtually every society has sought to recognize threats to its way of life, to determine which ones are of the greatest importance, and to manage them successfully. Identifying and prioritizing threat have always been fundamental to security, and this is particularly so in an anarchic world. How is threat framed “it drives a wide variety of behaviours, from alliance formation and defense spending to trade relations and regime membership.”¹ Indeed, only with reasonable understanding of the nature of threat (and associated vulnerabilities) “can one begin to make sense of security as a policy problem,”² for “when threat is not perceived, even in the face of apparently objective evidence, there can hardly be a mobilization of defense resources.”³ However, global threat is decidedly not an area where just knowing its importance to security and throwing considerable resources at it are sufficient to make dangers go away.⁴

Despite significant expenditure of time, energy and

³ Cohen, Raymond, Threat Perception in International Crisis (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press), 1979, p. 3.
money, according to every conceivable measure, most parties that feel subject to threat just cannot get a handle on the nature of today’s complex dangers and the manner how to deal with them. They remain overwhelmed by a kind of debilitating insecurity where they feel relatively helpless and unable to cope with perils that they find to be largely inscrutable. Although much current security analysis identifies the primary problem as threat targets not having sufficient resources to monitor and address threat effectively, in reality the greater problem is not having a concrete comprehension of the dynamics of modern threat.

**CONFUSION SURROUNDING GLOBAL THREAT**

The confusion about global threat begins with its basic meaning. Dictionary definitions usually emphasize the expression of intent to cause harm or, more specifically, to inflict pain, injury, or punishment. However, not all of the most pressing international dangers involve an expression of such intent – for example, natural disasters, pandemic disease, and human trafficking threats would be excluded by this narrow definition. Analyses strongly disagree about whether terrorism, global warming, or rogue states’ nuclear weapons development constitutes the most severe threat today, and no way exists to resolve these differences. With commonly held meanings for threat excluding many of the most widely acknowledged global dangers, it is not surprising that in recent years recognizing and responding to threat have become so muddled.
Definitional confusion revolves around the most basic question about whether or not threat really exists. Does threat constitute a tangible phenomenon – one objectively provable to be present or absent through examining material elements such as dance of military power? Or instead does it represent simply a perceived or even live phenomenon that is simply a mental construct composed of ethereal images and ideas? Threat analysis differ sharply in terms of how danger is characterized, with psychologists leaning towards subjective notions and political scientists tilting towards objective notions. The differences here prove to be pivotal in deciding how to respond to threat, with those seeing it as imagined and subjective, focusing on reducing fear and hatred, while those seeing it as concrete and objective, focusing on deterring or containing a threat source and limiting vulnerability to damage. Deciding to follow an "either-or" approach in dealing with this controversy poses problems, as real threats may not be perceived and perceived threats may not be real.

Confusion about global threat continues with difficulties in pinpointing threat sources and threat targets. Regarding threat sources, how is it possible to isolate instigators if a threat is embedded—as it often is—in a threat-counter threat cycle between two or more parties (with each side seeing the other as

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the instigator and seeing itself as just responding to a threat)? Determining who is ultimately responsible for triggering existing tensions is often difficult in multifaceted international predicaments involving multiple parties engaging in diverse types of interactions over time especially where information on the dangers is scarce or unreliable. Regarding threat targets, how is it possible to isolate the direction of threat when often there is no clearly enunciated target? Target identification is also complicated because the impact of a threat may not be just on those directly affected but also on those physically distant who become aware of existing dangers.7

This confusion proceeds further when attempting to determine and defend threat prioritization. Is there any systematic way to determine the relative severity of threats? How does one rank low-probability, high-impact threats? How should one evaluate threats about which there are conflicting or low-quality intelligence reports among those responsible within a target? How does one evaluate severe threats about which one can do nothing in response? Should the public trust identification of key threats by government and what responsibility do governments have to inform their citizens fully about existing or impending threats? What should happen if leaders from various states who are allies have gaping differences about the importance of threats? No simple formula seems to suffice in determining which threats are the most significant.

This confusion culminates in the ways targets choose to respond to threats. Because threat responses deal with what might happen in the future, they never rest on the kind of rock-solid foundation that undergirds responses to proven ongoing misconduct, and, as a result, subjective perceptual predispositions often enter the picture. Many targets do not link their threat responses tightly to their threat assessment. Faced with outside dangers, some targets undertake minor cosmetic countermeasures—such as increasing security checks at airports—that do not really address underlying tensions, hoping somehow the threats will just go away. Other targets spend a lot of time, effort, and money floundering about in implementing different strategies of threat management that have little or no positive payoff—such as indiscriminately increasing defense expenditures—with the sense of satisfaction only being that at least they tried really hard. Some targets seem to undertake threat responses simply as symbolic measures, full of hope that onlookers will be impressed but at the same time devoid of any real expectation that anything will change for the better. Overall, most targets just rely on the same ineffective standard operating procedures used in the past (such as the application of overwhelming military force) to confront threat, regardless of changes in current circumstances. For a wide variety of reasons, serious reconsideration of either threat assessment or threat management strategies usually faces strong resistance.

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Despite the significant transformation and diversification of post-Cold War foreign threats, presenting a distinctive set of challenges surrounding new ominous developments, policy makers have unfortunately persisted in carrying over outmoded Cold War concepts of threat and ways of addressing incoming dangers. As a result, heated controversy both within and among threat targets has surrounded as to how leaders identify foreign dangers, prioritize them, and respond to them. Widespread sentiment persists that these decisions are quite arbitrary, and the absence of unambiguous successes in the eyes of both domestic and foreign onlookers—has not helped to dispel this worry.

Moreover, international relations scholars have not refined existing theory concerning the broad range of incoming threats in a manner tuned to the distinctive tensions embedded in the post-Cold War security context. Despite significant advances in understanding other key dimensions of security, international threat theory has remained relatively stagnant for the past 30 years, as if past insights were sufficient to explain patterns in the current global setting. Indeed, given the text how fundamental threat is to national security, and how significantly the global security setting has transformed, it is remarkable that it has not recently received the critical conceptual scrutiny it so richly deserves. A thorough review of recent literature on global threat reveals a surprising paucity of analysis that looks at the overarching conceptual controversies surrounding post-Cold War threat. Although there has been some conceptual movement from emphasizing the strict tenets
of realism in the direction of postmodern or critical security studies yet from focusing on an opposing power to considering rogue states and terrorist groups, and from concentrating on traditional instability to addressing asymmetrical fears, none of these changes represents a fundamental conceptual shift of the ways in which threat is assessed or managed.

In particular, post-9/11 scholarly discussions have largely focused on analyzing specific perils emerging from rogue states and terrorist groups involving Islamic extremists. This discussion did little for raising more fundamental questions about the changing analytical challenges posed by a significantly transformed global security environment. The underlying threat posed by the 9/11 attacks has only rarely been placed within a broader interpretive threat context to facilitate the formulation of strategies that would in the future not only forestall this particular type of terrorist disruption but also aid the early detection and effective treatment of other dangers as well. As was the case with the Pearl Harbour attack, unexpected devastating foreign-initiated trauma can lead to a narrowing of security concerns rather than a more fundamental reconsideration of the entire framework for analysis.

During the post—Cold War era, international coercion has gone well beyond formal threats of direct military attack from states and often has taken on the guise of far more subtle and varied modes of "informal penetration" by nonstate

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groups. Emerging threats have been typically covert, dispersed, decentralized, adaptable and fluid, with threat sources relatively difficult to identify. Similarly, monitoring sources and identifying target and destroying tactics are inadequate. With the past actions of sources are not necessarily a sound guide to their future behaviour.\textsuperscript{10} This pattern reflects "the 'de-massification' of threats in the world, where "a single giant threat of war... is replaced by a multitude of 'niche threats.'"\textsuperscript{11} As this trend spreads, "war will not be waged by armies but by groups we today call terrorists, guerrillas, bandits, and robbers":\textsuperscript{12} "their organizations are likely to be constructed on the charismatic lines rather than institutional ones,"\textsuperscript{13} "to be motivated less by 'professionalism' than by fanatical, ideologically-based, loyalties,"\textsuperscript{14} and to involve patient and politically astute insurgent, guerrilla, or terrorist groups utilizing elaborate political, economic, social, and military communications networks to demoralize and undermine superior military power.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Primary Threat Instigators}

These distinct international instigators are responsible

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
for much of the threat to the West in today’s world—rogue states, terrorist groups, and criminal organizations.

**Figure 2.1**

**Cold War versus Post-Cold War Threat**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cold War Threat</th>
<th>Post-Cold War Threat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>THREAT SOURCES</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rival Superpower (Soviet Union)</td>
<td>Rogue States and Transnational Terrorists and Criminals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposing Bipolar Bloc</td>
<td>Global Warming, Natural Disasters, Disease, and Illegal Migrants</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THREAT STYLES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually Static, Overt, and Symmetrical</td>
<td>Usually Dispersed, Fluid, and Asymmetric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Threat Sources Self-Evident</td>
<td>Covert Deadly Transfers of Illicit Commodities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THREAT TARGETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Antagonistic Governments across States</td>
<td>Innocent People and Critical Infrastructure across Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those with Contrasting Cultural Beliefs</td>
<td>Those with Contrasting Religious Beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political-Economic Beliefs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM CONTEXT OF THREAT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictable Dual Hierarchy</td>
<td>Unpredictable Open Anarchy</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Sovereignty Largely Intact</td>
<td>National Sovereignty Overshadowed by Globalization</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THREAT DETERRENCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Assured Destruction</td>
<td>Threat of Counterforce Usually Ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generally Effective</td>
<td>Nuclear Weapons Stalemate Stable Weapons Stalemate Nonexistent</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
There are Rogue and failed states, commonly identified as countries that shun civil participation in the international community. These are North Korea and Pakistan etc. They, seek to ignore any existing rules, to expand their own power, and to undermine the influence of the major powers; the threat from these states, with their military bullying and support for antigovernment groups, is increasing. Terrorist groups, composed of desperate forces arrayed across national boundaries alienated from the dominant system, seek to achieve a variety of disruptive political ends through violence and threats of violence, and these groups appear to have a bright future. Their destructive potential increases due to the increased availability of weaponry and to their expanding appeal to more diverse disaffected parties who within their own societies face the absence of constructive opportunities and frustration in achieving progressive goals. Transnational criminal organizations, coordinated more than ever as unified forces operating across states and refusing to follow existing regulations, seek illegal economic gain through a variety of coercive and salacious business activities. Transnational organized crime is growing rapidly and represents a global phenomenon that is penetrating political institutions, undermining legitimate economic growth, threatening democracy and the rule of law, and contributing to the post-Soviet problem of the eruption of small, regionally contained.

The explanation for the rise of these unruly instigators is that each cannot fit into prevailing society or operate under its rule. They become angry and frustrated, and, rather than separated from the situation, undertake disruptive activities that wreck global havoc. Recognizing the dominance of a system that they reject, and lacking legitimate means to cause significant change, they perceive the need to go outside the bounds of civilized behavior and utilize every tool at their disposal—including weapons of mass destruction when available—to achieve their ends. Given the world’s open structure, each can continue and even expand these activities due to the low-profile nature of the unacceptable behavior or to the lack of effective international sanctions associated with global anarchy. Either way, a kind of immunity from prosecution prevails, serving to increase both the threat from these sources and fear among potential threat targets.

Unorthodox Threat Sources

The above described three perpetrators are prominent. Today’s incoming threat has broader roots. Significant dangers may emerge from accidents or natural calamities as well as from intentional acts to cause harm. Since the Cold War ended, concerns have risen about a type of danger—sometimes termed “threats without threatners”—lacking intentional initiation by hostile parties and not usually covered by either conventional

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threat theory or defense policy analysis: "If they are a threat, the threat results from the cumulative effects of actions taken for other reasons, not from an intent that is purposive and hostile. Those who burn the Amazon rain forests or try to migrate here or who spread pandemics here, or even those who traffic drugs to the United States, do not necessarily wish American harm; they simply want to survive or get rich. Their self-interest becomes a threat to us.\textsuperscript{19} This threat cluster differs from traditional perils in that it tends not to be acute and short-term, zero-sum, reversible, susceptible to unilateral responses, controllable under national government jurisdiction, unity-promoting, or inexpensive.\textsuperscript{20}

These are undesired mass migration waves—including illegal human trafficking operations run by transnational criminal organizations insensitivity of multinationals particularly in developing countries (December 1984 Bhopal Gas Tragedy)—and devastating nuclear accidents (such as the April 1986 Chernobyl disaster), much of this emerging threat originates from states or even humans, but rather from natural phenomena.\textsuperscript{21} Examples of these nontraditional dangers include pandemic diseases such as SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome), a contagious respiratory illness that in November 2002 appeared in the southern China and spread to 32 countries and killed 800 people before being stained in

\textsuperscript{19} Treverton, Gregory F., Reshaping National Intelligence in an Age of Information (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2001, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{20} Prins, Gwyn, Threats without Enemies: Facing Environmental Insecurity (London: Earthscan), 1993, pp. 43-45.

July 2003; and natural cataclysmic disasters such as hurricanes, volcanoes, floods, and earthquakes. Natural disasters and infectious diseases have recently killed far more people than civil strife,22 as evidenced by comparing after the Cold War the staggering human devastation from floods and AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) to the far smaller loss of life from domestic and international violence. While the frequency of natural disasters has remained relatively stable over the centuries, the toll of human death and property damage has dramatically increased,23 far outstripping the coping capacities of the local, national and even global assistance efforts; during the 1990s, ironically designated by the United Nations as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Prevention, the world witnessed the "most costly spate of storms, floods, and fires in history."24 Similarly, with respect to infectious diseases, since the early 1980s "both the medical establishment and the general public were shocked to discover that the microbial adaptation was outstripping the ability of the scientific community to remedial treatments," with old diseases (such as tuberculosis) resurfacing recently in more drug-resistant forms.25

Receiving special attention of late has been global

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warming, which may cause devastation in the world's food crops, extinction of many plant and animal species, intensification of hurricanes and droughts, human illness or death from heat stress, global proliferation of tropical disease, and severe flooding in coastal cities and low-lying islands.\textsuperscript{26} Besides environmental, energy, and economic impacts, a group of retired American generals and admirals recently warned that global warming "presents significant national security challenges to the United States"\textsuperscript{27} and is a "threat multiplier" that intensifies instability around the world by worsening water shortages, food insecurity, disease, and flooding that lead to forced migration; these concerns are so great that the United States Congress is currently considering a bipartisan bill requiring a National Intelligence Estimate by all federal intelligence agencies to assess the security threats posed by global climate change.\textsuperscript{28} The resulting chaos "can be an incubator of civil strife, genocide, and the growth of terrorism," with the possibility that "global warming's impacts on natural resources and climate systems may create the fiercest battle our world has ever seen."\textsuperscript{29} Even with the massive damage generated and its destabilizing impact on governments as well as mass populations, unorthodox catastrophes—

unsanctioned mass illegal migration, nuclear accidents, global warming, and pandemic disease—tend to be more neglected by the security establishment compared to orthodox human-initiated threats.\textsuperscript{30} This widespread tendency to attend most to traditional threat sources, especially military invasion from hostile states, reflects a deep-seated reluctance to grapple with the new set of dangers that do not involve an identifiable enemy and are far more difficult to address.

**CHANGES IN THREAT STYLES**

In place of superpower rivalry, a variety of "lesser" threats has emerged after the Cold War, including terrorism, extremist Islamic fundamentalism, nuclear proliferation, biological and chemical weapon-stockpiles, renewed nationalist self-assertion among some newly industrial societies, and disintegration of some developing states into warring tribal factions.\textsuperscript{31} Overall, global security threats are "more varied in nature, more numerous in terms of the countries able to project them, above all more capable of being delivered from one side of the globe to another, than at any time in history."\textsuperscript{32} These changes in threat styles have so far thwarted any centralized and coherent monitoring of dangers.

**Asymmetric Threat**

The World now confronts asymmetric threat on a regular


\textsuperscript{31} Harvey, Robert, Global Disorder: America and the Threat of World Conflict (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers), 2003, p. xiii.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 91
basis, involving the threat of "violent action undertaken by the have-nots, be they state or sub-state across, seek to generate profound effects ... by employing their own specific relative advantages against the vulnerabilities of much stronger opponents."^{33}

With new constantly evolving tactics and a threat style that seems endless, obtuse, and nearly impossible to counter, the possibilities for spread of this kind of unruly behaviour appear to be limitless. Many enemies of the World today "make up for their lack of raw power in their capacity to fight smart — and — avoid fighting at all, preferring corruption and co-optation to confrontation and conflict": these foes are often network based, transnational, and highly flexible and adaptable to learn from their mistakes, to embed themselves undetectably in key political, social, and financial institutions, and to regenerate resiliently after setbacks.\textsuperscript{34} Buoyed by the apparent successes of much smaller forces with staunch commitment to their causes against the West’s vastly superior weapons technology, the credibility of this modern threat is extremely high, and the results are often lethal. Any military power advantage the West has over an individual foe may be "somewhat nullified by the fact that the powerful armed forces of the Western liberal democracies are being used more than ever


Most enemies of India fully knowing that they cannot win in a direct, conventional military confrontation, due to its overwhelming superiority, adopt unconventional techniques that exploit areas where it is underprepared. For example, insurgents, often attempt to blend in with locals and thwart counterinsurgency operations. While nation states “today are more hamstrung by the laws of war than they ever were,” “not only are asymmetric adversaries unrestrained in their use of violence, but also there is actually a great incentive for them to use or threaten to use violence in a different, illegal way that stands outside the norms of accepted behaviour.”

**Deadly Transfers**

Along with posing asymmetric threat, rogue states, terrorist groups, and transnational criminal organizations engage in ominous covert activities that often go unnoticed by conventional threat analysis. These “deadly transfers” include clandestine conventional arms, illicit psychoactive drugs, illegal human migrants (including the most demeaning forms of human trafficking), unsanctioned hazardous materials (including both toxic waste and nuclear materials), lethal infectious diseases (including spreading unintentionally deadly microbes and intentionally lethal biological agents),

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36 Ibid., p. 17.
37 Mandel, Robert, Deadly Transfers and the Global Playground, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
and incapacitating "cyber-warfare" information disruptions. Rogue states, terrorist groups, and transnational criminal organizations often work together in undertaking nefarious activities, and the various deadly transfers are often tightly intertwined, making it difficult for country-specific Western sanctions to prevent these ominous flows from moving freely without harassment around the world. Exemplifying the cross-instigator coordination, rogue states are often major state sponsors of terrorism, transnational criminal organizations regularly sell weapons to terrorist groups, and many terrorists are funded through illegal enterprises such as narcotics, extortion, and kidnapping. Illustrating the cross-transfer coordination, profits made from the sale of illicit drugs have often fueled the purchase of covert arms and facilitated the cross-national flow of illegal migrants. Together, these ominous transnational flows pose huge threats to Western states in a manner they find difficult to control.

In many ways, these unruly forces of fragmentation appear to be very astute in assessing the global security environment. They harbour no illusions that they are functioning in an orderly, civilized setting and reasonably assume

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that many others—including seemingly respectable and legitimate parties—will choose to collude with them for private gain or ignore these disruptive parties' behaviour as long as it does not have a direct negative impact on the security interests of regimes, turning a blind eye to this activity. Disruptive forces have been quick to adjust to the new tools now at their disposal and seem more at home in the current security environment than they were during the Cold War. Illustrating their savvy and sophisticated approach is the reality that "today's terrorist masterminds know that the main benefits of attacks on critical infrastructure is not in terms of the immediate damage they inflict, but the collateral consequences of eroding the public's trust in services on which it depends.\footnote{Flynn, Stephen E., "The Brittle Superpower," in Seeds of Disaster, Roots of Response: How Private Action Can Reduce Public Vulnerability, eds. Philip E. Auerswald, Lewis M. Branscomb, Todd M. La Porte, and Erwann O. Michel-Kerjan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2006, p. 32.} While the unruly players are not themselves responsible for the creation of global anarchy, they appear to be cleverer in exploiting it than existing authority structures are in managing it.

**Failed State and Advanced Technology Facilitators**

The effectiveness of these new styles of threat is enhanced by the growing number of failing states. During the Cold War, substantial aid and occasionally coercive intervention from a superpower through an established patron-client relationship often kept shaky regimes in power and gave them some level of control over their societies; but after the Cold
War ended, this aid has often dried up and this intervention has become rare, and as a result subnational and transnational violent insurgent movements have felt freer to operate, causing more fragile governments to wilt under the pressure when left to their own devices. Collapsing, imploding, or "black hole" states, where "central authority has largely disintegrated in the face of local warlord-ism, ethnic groups, crime syndicates, or terrorist groups" can suck in outsiders to back rival factions in a civil war and export unwanted refugees.\textsuperscript{43} The growing global rich-poor gap\textsuperscript{44} can exacerbate these problems. In addition, failed states can provide a safe haven for destabilizing elements\textsuperscript{45} such as criminals and terrorists and, through their governments' declining capacity to meet basic human needs and enforce the rule of law, can serve as fertile training ground for operatives eager to engage in globally disruptive activities.\textsuperscript{46} Due to the chaos when weak states are unable to control their territory to provide for their people, the proliferation of failed states poses an indirect threat to the West.

The wide availability of advanced technologies also facilitates the expansion and new styles of threat:

“The time when a few states had monopolies over the most

\textsuperscript{43} Harvey, Robert, Global Disorder: America and the Threat of World Conflict, op. cit., p. 196.

\textsuperscript{44} Paul Rogers, Losing Control: Global Security in the Twenty-First Century, op. cit., pp. 85-86.


\textsuperscript{46} Kay, Global Security in the Twenty-First Century, op. cit., pp. 241-42.
dangerous technologies has been over for many years. Moreover, our adversaries have more access to acquire and more opportunities to deliver such weapons than in the past. Technologies, often with dual-use, move freely in our globalized economy, as do the scientific personnel who design them. So, it is more difficult for us to track efforts to acquire those components and production technologies that are so widely available. The potential dangers of proliferation are so grave that we must do everything possible to discover and disrupt attempts by those who seek to acquire materials and weapons.\footnote{Negroponte, John D., Annual Threat Assessment of the Director of National Intelligence for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence), 2006, p. 10.}

The threat of weapons of mass destruction disseminating to these unruly threat sources is perhaps the greatest concern of Western security organizations—indeed, many observers believe that the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons “is the most serious threat to the national security of the United States and other nations.”\footnote{Cirinone, Joseph, Jon B. Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar, Deadly Arsenals - Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), 2005, p. 3.}

Through such technology “power of the image can be used not only to undermine the strong, but also to encourage the weak; the effects of any small attack carried out by asymmetric

\footnote{Kay, Sean, Global Security in the Twenty-First Century: The Quest for Power and the Search for Peace, op. cit., pp. 239-40.}
players can be leveraged into something with far greater propaganda impact through the help of media outlets, notably Internet sites.\textsuperscript{50}

The current global security setting has created a more even playing field in terms of access to the instruments of power and influence, providing a direct advantage to disruptive forces that otherwise would have a lot more difficulty obtaining or utilizing them and thus would be relegated to far less disruptive international operations.

\textbf{CHANGES IN THREAT TARGETS}

During the Cold War, the traditional threat target was the opposing government and its political ideology, and carrying out threats involved a top-down approach in which a state regime was usually the first target of attack. In this mode, mass populations were mostly spectators to foreign dangers even when a threat was actually carried out. In contrast, after the Cold War, the target pattern shifted significantly: contemporary security threats often "do not target states, but societies and individuals,"\textsuperscript{51} with innocent civilians suffering the bulk of the dire consequences from actualized threat. When global threat is carried out and cross-national violence occurs, these bystanders usually bear the brunt of deaths and injuries, with even uniformed soldiers playing a much

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more peripheral role in the carnage than in the past.

**Undermining Public Confidence and Civilized Infrastructure**

Thanks in part to improved communication and transportation technology, recent threats have often been more over the “hearts and minds” of the people rather than over who is in power or what kind of territory one can acquire. Instead of coercively attempting to overthrow a head of state, enemies have been prone to undertake activities to reduce public confidence in its political leadership or to subvert the ability of political leaders to govern effectively. With the spread of democracy increasing the casualty sensitivity among Western states, this change in primary threat targets has ironically made the fear associated with formally or informally issued threats more profound and widespread.

In contrast to Cold War threats reflecting political-ideological splits, in focusing on the mass population, post—Cold War threat sources select targets based more on cultural-religious divides, involving a mind-set even more divergent from traditional Western thought than was previously Soviet communism. The end of restraining influence by the superpower blocs during the Cold War opened up the opportunity for ethnic antagonisms that had simmered for centuries once again to erupt into open violent conflict. The West frequently identifies those holding extreme fanatical religious views as especially dangerous, but does not understand these threat sources or know how effectively to contain, thwart, or neutralize them. Demographic shifts
have caused those populations and countries with belief systems most different from those of the West, to be growing the fastest. This kind of destabilizing threat is particularly resistant to compromise and outside intervention and thus poses a major challenge for threat assessment and management.

Rogue states target advanced industrial societies—the so-called "civilized" states—and indirectly the integrity of the entire international system. Terrorist groups also choose developed states as their primary targets, where the shock value of their politically motivated violence is highest, as well as multinational corporations that symbolize the oppressive status quo power structure. Both the rogue states and terrorist groups support and inflame local insurgent groups seeking to disrupt government stability. Transnational criminal organizations, operating under the radar, are more indiscriminate in their choice of targets and go anywhere in the world where underhanded profit can be made. These crime syndicates attempt to seduce influential government officials and wealthy corporate executives and prey on vulnerable volatile groups seeking quick escape from unfortunate situations (such as urban gangs, drug addicts, and undocumented aliens). Thus targets tend to be either those who represent the prevailing establishment and its norms or who are disenfranchised elements of society and are highly vulnerable to the seductive appeal of the unruly players.

In particular, critical elements of societal infrastructure are emerging as threat targets. In many threat
targets, rendering energy grids ineffective, destroying food or water supplies, damaging means of communication or transportation, or the stock market or banking system, are the potential targets to be far more devastating than just assassinating a political leader: "social and economic activities depend more and more on large-scale services, many of the industries providing these services face increasing vulnerability to disasters, and the very competitive pressures that give rise to higher risk also reduce incentives for firms to invest in measures that mitigate those risks." \(^{52}\) Washington Post article published in 1995 proved alarmist in that it warned of the threat of an "electronic Pearl Harbour" emanating from the spread of information disruption capabilities, where "if the civilian computers stopped working, America's armed forces couldn't eat, talk, move or shoot," with "no ability to protect themselves from cyber attacks and no legal or political authority to protect commercial phone lines, the electric power grid and vast databases against hackers, saboteurs and terrorists." \(^{53}\) As early as 1996, the United States government recognized that cyber disruption was at the core of this selection of nontraditional threat targets, calling for an interconnected "cyber system" that would provide early warning and minimize damage of attacks on computers controlling the stock market, banking, utilities, air traffic, and other "critical

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The random and sporadic nature of these information break-ins, along with their confidentiality, makes it difficult to estimate precisely the aggregate global frequency and impact of this ominous transnational activity.

**Increasing Vulnerability of Threat Targets**

Potential threat targets today appear to face a higher level of danger than they faced during the Cold War. In particular, "the Western perception that the status quo can be maintained... by military means if need be, is not sustainable, given the vulnerabilities of advanced wealthy states to paramilitary action and asymmetric warfare." The vulnerability is due to not only changes in threat sources, but also changes in threat targets:

"natural disasters, technological risks, and terrorism threats have always existed in one form or another; but society faces a new scale of these events today and ... even more so tomorrow, because of increased aggregation of people and assets exposed to risks, along with the emergence of new forms of threat."

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So, targets need urgently to become aware of this increased level of their vulnerability and adjust to this change, bringing in counter measures.

Unlike the threat sources, threat targets generally appear to have an inadequate understanding of the security setting in which they function. These targets express surprise and sometimes genuine shock when they end up being victims of unsanctioned behaviour, even though an increasing number of those around them have been similarly victimized in the past. These targets are also astonished to see unruly instigators violating international norms and defying international agreement in their behaviour towards others. Advanced industrial society threat targets often operate in a "wishful-thinking" world in which they believe everyone else thinks as they do and accepts the virtues of their values. The establishment targets express anger and resentment that law-enforcement institutions, both national and international, are not capable of preventing the abuses or, at the very least, immediately tracking down and apprehending the perpetrators, even though knowing that the success record in this prevention and apprehension has historically been consistently quite low. The last thing many of these targets consider is the possibility that some of their own values and behavior — including their own rash unilateral actions that may fly in the face of widespread global opinion—may have inadvertently contributed to their selection as targets, making them at least partially accountable for their plight. So, these targets cling at least initially (this may change over
time) to an ideal notion of how everything should function, rejecting and refusing to adjust to the stark realities of the post-Cold War world – little realizing that there is wide gap between ideals and realities.

**Changes in the International System Context of Threat**

Considering international organization as a starting point for how the changing international system affects threat, the United Nations possesses the most comprehensive global scope in its legitimate purview to deal with international threat, but it lacks any semblance of enforcement capabilities (notwithstanding the largely symbolic UN peacekeeping forces) and is constantly thwarted by national sovereignty concerns. In the post-Cold War security setting, international organizations have been handicapped in being able to help contain global threat both by the growing diversity of global values and the growing ambiguity of international threat. Even the United Nations Security Council—the organ tasked with managing global threat—has often been paralyzed by these changes.

**Clash of Anarchy, Sovereignty, and Globalization**

Much of the chaos in the global threat environment is due to the clash among the competing pressures of anarchy, sovereignty, and globalization. The state of anarchy reflects the absence of overarching common norms and common meaningful authority structures on the international level,
fostering a kind of "every-state-for-itself" mentality. The perpetuation of the notion of national sovereignty involves a continuing belief by states that they should be able to have complete jurisdiction over what goes on within their boundaries and that they should not have to undertake significant compromise in these state rights (being sovereign) for the common good. Increasingly, trans-national and sub-national groups—especially separatist and nationalist movements - want similar levels of autonomy over their own affairs, complicating jurisdictional issues tremendously. The global societal fabric is composed of culture and sub-culture variations, apart from ethnicity

Globalization implies that, due to growing cross-linkages among states, each party's actions will increasingly have international repercussions and that, as a result, it makes the most sense to approach issues on a broad multilateral basis. Globalization unwittingly aids the global spread of unsavory threats, highlighting Western states' considerable vulnerability to disruption in the post—Cold War world:

“When markets quake in Indonesia or Mexico, they send tremors from Main Street to Wall Street. When political unrest racks Central America, southern California's social services feel the aftershock. When our allies are struggling with economic recession, they are, either unwillingly or otherwise unable to pull their weight on the global stage – leaving us irresponsibly to shoulder more of the burdens. When new democracies lack the means or experience to enforce their domestic laws, international criminals can easily set up shop –
and stretch their tentacles beyond our doorstep.”

An open interdependent world magnifies the impact of any localized disruption and prevents states from selectively sanctioning certain types of dangerous cross-national activities. Effort is made to search for concerted approach

Major tensions develop when anarchy, sovereignty, and globalization collide in the present (post-Cold War) setting. When globalized threats emerge, national sovereignty can stage a stubborn refusal to confront them cooperatively as cooperation is understood to compromise sovereignty. Like virginity, there cannot be less or more of it – either you have it or not at all. The prevailing sense of anarchy thus creates a fatalistic expectation that efforts enabled jointly are doomed to fail. Sovereignty concerns can provoke an unwillingness to allow foreign officials to track down the perpetrators or to establish common punishments for threat sources no matter where they operate. As a result, threat sources can move across possible targets, finding the ones with the most distracted, inept, or corruptible authority structures in which to operate. These threat sources can then thrive and expand into effective international operations because of their ability to benefit from the rigidities of sovereignty and take advantage of anarchy and mirror a kind of interdependent efficiency that may be far greater than that of most status-quo-supporting Western states.

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Post Cold War Global Rules of the Game

The old Cold War rules have largely gone. There appears to be little understanding of – or compliance to—a new set of rules. In the absence of a uniform and universal rule-set that is consistently voiced and followed, each party is free to behave according to its own idiosyncratic premises. The West generally assumes that its rules are universal and the West either projects its rule-set in a misleading way on to others (interpreting others’ behavior in terms of its own rules) or attempts to impose directly its rule set onto others and force compliance. Unlike in the past systems, core powers do not seem to be able to set by themselves the rules of the game, at least in part due to their lack of widespread legitimacy in the global arena, a deficiency that can also increase their vulnerability to threat. The West tends to operate unrealistically thinking as if a mix of military coercion, economic dependence, legal prohibition, and moral outrage will suffice to quell violations of its conception of the rules of the game.

With the major powers still clinging to a largely outmoded set of rules, weaker states are able to ignore them undercover of accepted norm of sovereignty and non-state groups can subvert them. The increasing popularity of moral relativism, with its premium placed on non-judgmental multicultural patterns of diversity, can cause any discussion of

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establishing a more coherent set of rules of the game—especially by the West—to run the risk of comparison to the most virulent forms of cultural imperialism; to establish more universal rules in this way of thinking seems to be the equivalent of an antidemocratic squashing of each global party’s ability to experience independent empowerment by defining its own mode of behaviour. For disenfranchised states, the very notion of rules of the game in today’s world is reminiscent of an era where they sacrificed autonomy in their foreign policy for what they perceived to be a quite arbitrary world order.

Moreover, for many disadvantaged states and groups that seem permanently unable to be upwardly mobile in the global hierarchy, violating the rules of the game may be a primary means for escaping from a stifling and humiliating status quo, a system whose premises they feel powerless to influence.59 Those who do not want to play by the rules, including rogue states, terrorist groups, and criminal organizations, know that in today’s international system, it is extremely difficult for major powers to exert effective pressure on them over the long haul to change their behaviour. Indeed, a significant component of these noncompliant parties’ status appears to derive from their ability to thwart in a flagrant way the major powers’ rules of the game and to get away with it without suffering devastating consequences. Thus it is actually useful to these unruly parties for the West to continue to portray its rules as universal so that their

59 Zeev Maoz, Paradoxes of War (Boston: Unwin Hyman), 1990, p. 327.
defiant power can be ever more visible to international observers.

**System-Level Threat Unpredictability**

Within such a global system fraught with frustration and misunderstanding, threat flourishes. Those who use it do not also necessarily achieve the desired ends. When an instigator issues a threat, a threat target may not completely comprehend the terms of the threat. It may, therefore, unknowingly violate the threat terms (unknown) and cause the threat to be carried out. Even after a danger is actualized, the target may not exhibit compliance in terms of the desired changes in behaviour because of its perception that what is expected is ambiguous.

Therefore, unpredictability associates with today's global threats. Specifically, "the problem is that demonstrable, quantifiable, and clear threats of global war are fewer; whereas fuzzy, fragmented, and less quantifiable—hence, less 'visible'—threats are legion."60 This change demands adaptation by the intelligence community, which unfortunately has become "mired in the conceptual uncertainties of defining threats in post—Cold War world politics:

"at the level of threat recognition, the end of the Cold War also meant a shift in intelligence’s stock and trade from puzzles or questions that could be answered definitively given the

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necessary information to mysteries or questions that cannot be answered with certainty no matter what information is received."61

Because the sources of modern threat are so multifaceted and dispersed, threat targets may remain uncertain about whether or not a threat will be carried out, and even after being carried out, the primary purpose and exact origin of dangers may remain obscure—this is "an era of multiple but unpredictable threats to US and other Western interests."62 This threat ambiguity is more likely to be so. The smaller the number of powerful elites who know the enemy well, the lower the capacity to empathize with the adversary, and the fewer the communication channels among contending parties.63 Overall, the more ambiguous the threat, due to either contradictory or imprecise information, the more likely will target leaders' distorting perceptual pre-dispositions play a dominant role. A minimum level of uncertainty seems inevitable as threats interact with countermeasures.64 for it is common place for a response to threat to cause a major shift in the nature of the threat itself. Indeed, a certain level of subjectivity is inherent in all threat assessment since the process inescapably involves attempting to predict the future.

61 Ibid., pp. 262-63.
Part of the uncertainty derives from difficulties in obtaining timely valid and reliable information about foreign dangers, as often data are insufficient to make useful predictions at any level of security classification. This information gap often seems insurmountable. The uncertainty surrounding which incoming dangers are really important makes it extremely difficult to allocate intelligence resources in such a way as to obtain sufficient data on all major threats.

**CHANGES IN THREAT DETERRENCE**

There are changes of late in threat sources, threat style, threat targets, and the international system context, deterrence appears far less effective in responding to post-Cold War threat than it was in addressing Cold War dangers, and specially in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the American government recognized a "profound transformation" in the global security setting, requiring it to move away from "deterrence of the enemy's use of force, producing a grim strategy of mutual assured destruction," because "traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents." Bilateral nuclear deterrence of a single state foe proved to be far easier than multilateral conventional deterrence of multiple state and non-state foes possessing differing agendas:

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"Tactically, success in our efforts to prevent attacks and control the spread of non-state actors like Al Qaeda requires us to set aside policies traditionally used against our enemies. Deterrence will not work against the radical extremist core of terrorist networks. The United States cannot strike them at their territory. They are elusive and hydra-headed, growing new branches even as we cut off others. They appear infinitely patient."

Traditions such as proportionality of response "have little value when carrying out military operations against insurgents and terrorists."

Causes of Deterrence Ineffectiveness

Several explanations account for the recent decreased effectiveness of deterrence. Asymmetric threat is inherently difficult to deter due to instigators' deep passions and willingness to die. Deterrent "retribution cannot be inflicted upon opponents who cannot be identified and located" and who have little to lose. More generally, classic deterrence faces difficulties. The reason is that the West's primary threat sources do not rely on the cost-benefit analysis. The West uses cost-benefit analysis to define rationally and, therefore, do not spend

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time calculating that if they launch an attack, the retaliation might be speedy and massive. More to the point, even if these unruly threat sources did perform this calculation and believed its implications, the results may not matter to them. Indeed, paradoxically, they might see the escalation of counterforce against them as an invitation to instigate a violent disruption, if only to demonstrate their imperviousness to any such restraining efforts.

Infact, functioning deterrence presumes a counter-threat that is credible to the threat source. Post—Cold War threat sources know well that the West will respond to their provocative violent acts. Still, they are not at all convinced that the West can respond effectively. The ease and speed with which cross-cultural misperception, loss of control, and sizable arms transfers can occur in today’s international system. These serve to impede any significant movement towards a credible deterrent.

Consequences of Deterrence Ineffectiveness

The consequences of deterrence’s declining utility are wide-ranging. First, in responding to incoming threat, threat targets would be unwise to rely exclusively on countermeasures that attempt to intimidate threat sources. First, such intimidation would be exceedingly difficult. Second, attempting to acquire overwhelming force as a means to protect one’s regime, territory, citizens, and way of life may be futile; possessing such capabilities would probably not restrain outside threat. Third, it would usually be erroneous to
assume that successful countermeasures against one threat source would restrain other potential threat sources. In other words, the dismal post—Cold War record of deterrence, particularly regarding asymmetric threat, means that something beyond fear of reprisal ought to be used to deal with foreign dangers.

The declining effectiveness and value of traditional deterrence in containing the new array of post—Cold War dangers is particularly troublesome for the United States, which has been used to employing counter-threats involving its superior military power as a primary means for the protection of its interests and maintaining international stability. Faced with a predicament in which accumulation of force does not readily achieve a deterrent payoff, the United States and its Western allies have floundered in attempting to discover new ways to translate their power into security against today's elusive threats, which seep over national borders in ways that cannot be readily stopped through the application of military force. The West's armed forces are "fundamentally flawed," with some analysts arguing that "deterrence as a concept is useless for today's challenges" because of the Western focus on conventional combat rather than more contemporary "savage" modes of confrontation.71

CHANGES IN THREAT WROUGHT BY THE 9/11 TERRORIST ATTACKS

The September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, destroying the World Trade Center towers in New York and damaging the Pentagon in Washington D.C., decisively altered Western threat perception. Armed only with box cutters, the terrorists destroyed four aircraft, killed almost 3,000 people, and caused direct damage estimated at $18 billion, bringing the most powerful state in the world to a halt for a few days.72 American citizens responded with uncertainty and fear,73 and a mix of shock, pride, and anger: they hung American flags everywhere, attended large prayer vigils, and, listened approvingly to Toby Keith's country song "Angry American" promising swift and decisive retaliation. Many Americans (both in and out of government) turned from wishful thinking to worst-case thinking about dire national security dangers: prior to 9/11, within the United States “the political difficulties of persuading a complacent electorate that major changes would be required to keep the nation safe and secure were daunting”;74 however, the “galvanizing moral”, evolved from the terrorist attacks created at least temporarily a sense of unity of purpose against a threat that those on both sides of the

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73 Caldwell, Dan and Robert E. Williams, Jr., Seeking Security in an Insecure World, op. cit., p. 170.
political spectrum found to be heinous.75

President George W. Bush immediately announced that his top priority would be a war on terrorism, beginning with a drive to eliminate Al-Qaeda (the organization responsible for the 9/11 attack), and stated specifically that the United States would target not just the terrorists, but also any foreign government supporting them. Fanning the flames of fear and hatred involved in this response was the consensus among the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Homeland Security that Al-Qaeda's next strategic objective was to attack the United States even more shockingly with a weapon of mass destruction (WMD).76 More than any other type, of threat; the potential emotional panic surrounding an imminent WMD attack is off the charts.

**High Threat Attentiveness**

As a result of the 9/11 attack, federal, local, and state government agencies elevated the priority of national security issues, particularly those, protecting United States Sovereign territory against foreign threat. President George W. Bush established in October 2001 the Office of Homeland Security in the White House to coordinate the work of over 40 federal agencies in defending the United States, and later in November 2002 authorized a Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security. Alarmed about the free movement without detection

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of the 9/11 terrorists within the United States, in October 2001 the United States Congress passed the Patriot Act, expanding government police powers to snoop on citizens and reducing the rights of those suspected of terrorists activities. For Americans, identity checks proliferated, particularly during air travel where they encountered armed National wild troops at many airports and armed federal marshals on many flights. Other advanced industrial societies to some degree quickly followed suit.

In many ways, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have created an atmosphere where it seems as if no new security precaution or security expenditure to protect against it could be too great. Few questions emerged about the cost-benefit value of each new step, and indeed after new safeguards were implemented there was little rigorous scrutiny of evaluation about whether or not each accomplished its designated objective or had any positive security payoff. It has appeared almost as if both the government and the mass public in the West have tacitly understood that mainly these initiatives were simply symbolic, designed to show everyone the strong desire to increase protection without necessarily actually dramatically doing so. Unfortunately, the net result—by general consensus—has been that the United States today is far less secure than it should be.  

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**Low Security Expectations**

In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, uncertainty has surfaced especially within the United States about the exact nature of the minimal levels of required protection against threat:

“Everyone understands instinctively that we can’t do everything - 100 percent security is impossible to achieve, especially in a nation like ours, which rightly places a premium on civil rights and civil liberties—and everyone agrees that for all we’ve already done, we need to do even more. But how much more? How much is enough? How little is too little? Exactly how secure are we? How much more secure do we need to be, or can we be? These are the key questions, yet no one inside or outside government seems to have the answer to them.”

Indeed, confusion has reigned about such central issues as how one would know the actual severity of the dangers posed to the American people, how one would come up with appropriate responses to such dangers, how one would determine whether or not efforts undertaken are sufficient to meet a challenge, particularly when one would judge that such threat has been sufficiently contained. Most generally one would look for to know whether or not security goals had been achieved. After the United States took defensive measures in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, “the risk of further large-
scale attacks on the U.S. mainland fell," but no one knows by how much";79 this indeterminate outcome has led to a widespread "better-safe-than-sorry" attitude about national security protection, very much fitting the tendencies of worst-case analysis.

For both Americans and many others living in the West, a new realization dawaned that emerging kinds of threat—against which governments could not provide secure protection—meant an inevitable acceptance of certain constant fears and sacrifice of certain civil liberties, recognizing that "the world has changed fundamentally and that there is a new security environment populated by smart enemies."80 Thus a major irony was evident in the post-9/11 security environment, involving more sacrifice for lower payoffs. The citizens in the West witnessed dramatically increased expenditure on security, they simultaneously had to deal with the reality that they could never realistically expect to feel truly safe. Indeed, the consistent tone of the then President George W. Bush's official assessments of American security from foreign threat is that great efforts are being made, but goals are not yet achieved: "we have kept on the offensive against terror networks, leaving our enemy weakened, but not yet defeated," and "we have focused the attention of the world on the proliferation of dangerous weapons - although great

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challenges in this area remain."

The net result of this decidedly odd security predicament is that recently there has been a certain suspension—admittedly temporary—of the kinds of healthy skepticism and demands for "bang-for-the-buck" that usually accompany major new government security expenditures. Threat represented by 9/11 attacks was unanticipated. The public has been willing to operate on a sort of blind trust that virtually any counterterrorist step being undertaken would turn out to be helpful. Often when one suddenly becomes aware of one's vulnerability to external disruption, a kind of "doing-anything-is-better-than-doing-nothing" mentality prevails. The responses may neither be well thought out or ultimately effective to cope with threat. While emotionally understandable, this kind of desperate thinking cries out for more systematic ways to assess threat in order to guide responses to possible incoming dangers in any tactical manner.

Often, the threat identification is highly distorted. Threat coverage is overly narrow, and threat assessment is quite misleading. There is a pressing need for a different mode of threat analysis. Such an alternative approach would need to follow customary risk assessment practices—guiding the collection of data to gauge the probability of risks occurring, the consequences if risks materialize, and the feasibility of various measures for reducing either the risks or the magnitude of the

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consequences.82 There is need to smoothen process of pinpointing threat, expand the incorporated range of threat, increase the validity and reliability of threat assessment, methodology and ultimately help and prepare threat targets to respond more effectively to incoming threat.

Several underlying premises form a foundation for developing a sound alternative approach to threat assessment. First, global threat is comprised of both objective and subjective components, as most threats represent a combination of real dangers that genuinely pose the prospect of harm to a target and contrived dangers that involve a threat target’s distorted sense of peril. Second, threat behavior is considered to be part of an influence process, not a discrete random event, so it seems essential to investigate the threat context and probe for relevant overarching patterns.83 Third, threat assessment needs to be examined holistically as a function of several elements, avoiding the temptation to narrow analysis down to just one or two measures. There is need to incorporate many dimensions of incoming danger considered relevant. Fourth, evaluating threat deals with the potential for not only overt acts of violence but also a wider variety of statements and actions that foster intimidation or deep psychological distress in

Fifth, the focal point for threat assessment ought to be potential victims. They would suffer the ensuing devastation if a threat is carried out. Different groups of victims could evaluate dangers differently; because “identity plays a central role in the assessment of threat,” there is need for understanding the context and perspective of those most affected appears to be a vital prerequisite for gauging threat severity. Reluctantly, there is a pressing need to reject the typical international relations focus exclusively on initiator capabilities and intentions in favor of a risk analysis focusing on direct target susceptibility to damage or loss, common in many other areas such as theft insurance and medical, particularly contagious disease management. Prioritization of threat would thus rest less on threat source attributes than on threat target exposure to incoming dangers.

With the before mentioned premises kept in mind, this chapter presents an alternative target-centered approach to global threat assessment. Figure 3.1 displays the five elements of this new framework: (1) the vital interests or

85 Rousseau, David L., Identifying Threats and Threatening Identities: The Social Construction of Realism and Liberalism, op. cit., p. 188.
87 For theft insurance, risk assessment heavily emphasizes target vulnerability (presence or absence of a safe neighborhood and security systems) rather than just looking at the capabilities and intentions of criminal groups operating in the area; and for contagious disease outbreaks risk assessment heavily emphasizes the susceptibility of each potential victim (presence or absence of overall health and immunities) rather than just looking at the potential lethality and spread rate of the infection.
protection priorities, reflecting the importance of risked assets within threat targets; (2) the dangerous instigators or harmful events, reflecting the risk sources' capacity to disrupt threat targets; (3) the vulnerability to damage or loss, reflecting the threat targets' risk anticipation and preparation; (4) the

**Figure 3.1**

**Target-Centered Global Threat Assessment**

- Vital Interests/Protection Priorities
  - Importance of Risked Assets within Threat Target
- Dangerous Instigators Harmful Events
  - Capacity of Risk Sources to Disrupt Threat Target
- Vulnerability to Damage/Loss
  - Threat Target's Risk Anticipation and Preparation
- Probability of Damage/Loss
  - Chances of Risks Occurring within Threat Target
- Magnitude of Damage/Loss
  - Impact of Actualized Risks on Threat Target
probability of damage or loss, reflecting the likelihood of risks occurring within a threat target; and (5) the magnitude of damage or loss, reflecting the impact of actualized risks on a threat target.

From a national security perspective, one could easily imagine that otherwise ominous perils might be perceived as trivial if the dangers did not pertain to a state's vital interests (such as an impending natural disaster in a part of the country where the government did not care about the welfare of the people and their personal property. If dangerous instigators lacked the capacity to disrupt a target (such as a small state without sophisticated weaponry threatening to attack a large well-armed state). If a target is not vulnerable because it is fully prepared with countermeasures to forestall any damage should the threat be realized (such as the presence of an effective antiballistic missile system to counter an impending missile attack). If the probability of a threat being carried out against a target was low (such as an instigator that either was highly constrained or lacked the will to engage in internationally aggressive action) or if the magnitude of damage to a target was low if the threat was carried out (such as a mild threat with negligible impact if executed on a target), countermeasures work well. In view of what is stated before, threat priority would be the highest when the most crucial target interests are threatened by a highly capable source, when the target has not anticipated or is not prepared for the threat, and the threat has a high probability of being carried out in the near future with a potentially massive devastating
impact on the target.

This alternative threat assessment approach specifically gauges threat severity\textsuperscript{88}, facilitating systematic prioritization of incoming dangers. The purpose behind developing this approach is to determine the relative\textsuperscript{89}—not absolute—levels of threat severity to be able to compare different types of dangers and to develop appropriate means of responding to them. In today’s world, facing multiple kinds of threat from multiple kinds of threat sources, what appears to be most critical is the ability to discriminate systematically among incoming dangers in such a way as to be able to distinguish between those deserving immediate attention and significant security expenditures and those that can be placed on the back burner because they are of lesser importance. This prioritization is designed to prevent arbitrary determination of which threats are important and which of the threats are unimportant, as well as of what constitutes a severe threat in the first place.

\textsuperscript{88} A brief note seems useful on the distinctions among the interrelated concepts of threat severity, threat credibility, and threat effectiveness: threat severity, which constitutes the focus on this study’s alternative threat assessment approach and is the broadest of the three concepts, represents the overall degree of danger a threat poses to a threat target, incorporating risked vital interests or assets within threat targets, dangerous instigators or harmful events’ capacity to disrupt threat targets, target vulnerability to damage or loss, and the probability and magnitude of target damage or loss; in contrast, threat credibility represents the likelihood of a threat source carrying out an issued threat, and threat effectiveness represents the likelihood of a threat producing the result its source intended.

In a broad sense, this alternative approach to threat assessment is evaluating the level of control\textsuperscript{90} by a threat target over adverse external ominous circumstances forced by it. Specifically, the focus is on evaluating the ratio of a threat source's coercive ability in marshaling resources to disrupt a target, compared to a threat target's ability to resist that effort and manage its own affairs as it sees fit. Traditionally such control issues are considered a simple direct function of the overall military, economic, and political power of contending parties. The transformed nature of incoming threat in the post—Cold War security setting makes such framing of control between threat source and threat target decidedly inappropriate.