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THE PATH TO SECURITY: MODELS AND MECHANISMS FOR MAINTAINING EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Security is a central theme in international relations and modern political science, particularly given the evolving security landscape in Europe and globally. Traditional mechanisms for maintaining stability, such as the balance of power, defense alliances, and collective security, have demonstrated limitations. European integration offers a potential alternative, capable of transforming international interactions and mitigating the risk of conflict. This study aims to identify the characteristics of different security models and assess their effectiveness within the current international system. It focuses on the correlation between traditional security approaches (balance of power, defensive alliances) and newer models based on integration and international institutionalization.
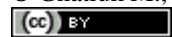
The research employs a comparative analysis of international security concepts, a historical method to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches retrospectively, and a structural analysis of international security systems. An institutional approach is also utilized to assess the role of international organizations in shaping security policy.

The study reveals that traditional security mechanisms, such as defense alliances and the balance of power, remain relevant but pose significant risks, including conflict escalation and heightened security dilemma. While joining forces enhances participants' defense capabilities, forming a basis for deterrence – a key condition for avoiding aggression – these alliances can also create rivalries and instability. Collective security, despite its international legitimacy, often struggles with implementation due to a lack of unified member-state positions. The difficulty of establishing a truly universal collective security system, coupled with the prominent role of great powers in world politics, suggests a simpler system: collective action by great powers interested in maintaining the status quo, even without formal obligations to counter aggression as seen in collective defense systems. The modern international security system, anchored by the United Nations (UN), blends elements of collective security and a concert of nations (requiring unanimity among the Security Council's permanent members), incorporating functional cooperation to address conflict sources. A more effective approach to security combines traditional models with deepened interdependence. This mitigates the structural causes of conflict and fosters a new kind of international interaction. The European Union provides a successful example of this synergistic approach to security.

Keywords: *foreign policy, political transformation, balance of power, security, hegemony, alliances, collective security system, defense, integration, cooperation, policy theories, defense*

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For a time, Europe's relative peace seemed to relegate security concerns to a secondary position. Peripheral conflicts did not challenge the perceived strength of the European security architecture. However, the events in Ukraine have forced a reassessment of regional security (Börzel 2023), casting a far more pessimistic light. The ongoing war demonstrates that the European security system retains many of the very characteristics Europeans had hoped to overcome in their efforts to transcend a history of conflict (Claude 1988; Fiott 2023).

European integration has a significant security dimension and represents an attempt to transcend traditional power politics. A key achievement of this process is the establishment of peace among European states. European integration has proven an effective means of transforming the European regional security complex and altering the foreign policies of states that traditionally relied on military instruments for security. EU membership offers a compelling alternative: the creation of a community of peace and prosperity founded on compromise, tolerance, and respect for partners' interests. This post-World War II paradigm shift in how security is pursued is what has allowed Europe to experience a period of relative peace.

While the EU's success as a «peace project» is significant, addressing contemporary European security challenges requires a broader approach, potentially including an evolution of the EU's own security model. This article aims to summarize various approaches to resolving security issues, outlining their core principles, key differences, and the characteristics of the modern collective security model exemplified by the United Nations.

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Security logic of international cooperation

Despite the success of the European integration project, integration is conceded as a counterintuitive approach to achieving security (Zwolski 2024) and, in the case of the EU, requires additional conditions, including the removal of the «security dilemma» (Gnatiuk 2022).

The nature of modern international relations, which is based on the sovereign equality of states and the primacy of national interest, prevents the formation of sustainable communities of states. States can cooperate, but such interaction is short- lived and aimed at achieving national interests. Craig Snyder, for example, argues that states form temporary alliances when they seek to gain relative advantages – economic, political, or military (Snyder 1997). From this point of view, the participation of states in an integration project is only appropriate if it allows them to achieve a certain goal (Holsti 1973: 341).

Two factors hinder cooperation between states: the issue of relative advantages and concerns about the motives of partners (Grieco 1988). The focus of states on gaining relative advantages, usually defined in terms of the ratio of military and economic potential, is a motivating factor that determines the feasibility or inappropriateness of participating in an integrative entity. Relative advantages, among other things, mean that states try to make sure that other members do not use their participation in the alliance to their advantage, for example, by increasing asymmetric interdependence. In alliances formed in response to a threat, states also seek to ensure that their level of commitment is commensurate with the threat they perceive.

The example of European integration shows that the mechanism to overcome this dilemma is the US guarantees (Gnatiuk 2022). It was the security guarantees from the superpower that allowed to solve the key issues of the security dilemma and move towards the creation of a «stronger union» of European countries and transform the traditional confrontation of European states, which resulted in two world wars.

At the same time, despite the obstacles to cooperation between states, the same logic of the security dilemma pushes states to form and aintain other mechanisms for achieving security, in particular through such forms as ing stability in the international system or even forming

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alliances to counter a common enemy or joining existing ones.

In the modern system of international relations with its horizontal distribution of power (Waltz 1979), the preservation of peaceful relations between states in the regional or global system is achieved through mechanisms of balance of power or hegemony. Balancing the power of another state is possible through alliances and coalitions. The formation of alliances makes it possible to distribute forces in the international system more evenly to deter other states (alliances) from changing the status quo. In the regional or international system, a state or alliance can emerge as a hegemon and act as an organizing factor, structuring the international or regional order.

Mechanisms of the balance of power

Historically, European states viewed each other as potential security threats, seeking protection through alliances. The most common security strategy was forming collective defense agreements or alliances. Stephen Walt defines a defense alliance as a formal agreement that commits states to combine their military forces against a particular state or states (Walt 1987: 2). From a threatened state's perspective, aligning with another similarly threatened state is the most effective way to bolster defense capabilities and, ultimately, enhance deterrence.

Membership in a collective defense system entails a commitment to use military force under specific circumstances, typically an act of aggression against a member state. Because the primary security threat is external, these alliances generally lack mechanisms for resolving internal disputes among members. However, the shared perception of an external threat often overshadows internal disagree-ments, minimizing the perceived need for such mechanisms.

Military-political alliances are formed to counter a perceived military threat. Their primary purpose is to deter and prevent attacks from states seeking to unilaterally alter the existing status quo. Combining the military resources of alliance members is crucial for effective deterrence. While a shared perception of a common threat provides a basis for converging security policies, member states retain their independence and autonomy.

Defensive alliances are often temporary, contingent on the perceived threat. This threat typically arises from either the growing strength of a particular international actor (e.g., increased military capabilities) or a radical shift in its priorities (e.g., a change in domestic political regime) (Walt 1987). If the threatening state cannot be deterred by a single state's power, it often triggers a balancing of influence and the formation of a counter-alliance.

A successful defense alliance can, however, outlive the initial threat and evolve into a political alliance, as demonstrated by NATO's trajectory after the Cold War. Unlike defense alliances, political alliances often rely on hegemonic power to maintain stability. NATO stands as a prime example of a modern alliance with both defense and political dimensions. U.S. nuclear guarantees to European allies were central to deterring the USSR and its allies. Even after the primary threat dissipated, NATO continued to function, maintaining nuclear deterrence against Russia and broadening its definition of security threats beyond armed attack.

In general, however, European states' historical experience with defense alliances as a means of achieving security is largely disappointing. The two World Wars illustrate how forming a defense alliance can escalate the security dilemma, prompting the creation of a counter-alliance. The increased security of one side inevitably leads to a heightened sense of insecurity for the other.

Collective security systems

In terms of threat identification and response, a collective security system stands in contrast to a defense alliance. Members of the collective security system pledge not to use force to resolve disputes and commit to collective action should this pledge be violated. Unlike collective defense systems, which respond to external threats from potential adversaries, collective security systems are designed to address internal challenges.

This security mechanism rests on the principle that peaceful relations are in every participant's interest, and that aggression against one is considered aggression against all. This shared interest in peace motivates states to maintain peaceful relations. Furthermore, collective security systems emphasize the central role of international institutions, which develop and implement mechanisms for preserving peace.

International institutions contribute to transforming states' perceptions of national interest by promoting peaceful interaction. International institutionalization helps mitigate the negative effects of international anarchy by shaping behavior, transforming expectations,

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and making interstate relations more predictable. This fosters increased trust among participants, which directly correlates with a greater sense of security and, consequently, system stability.

Unlike collective defense, which relies on balancing a specific threat, collective security aims to create maximum deterrence by mobilizing the combined potential of all participants against aggression. Furthermore, by transforming interstate interactions and fostering trust, collective security systems can lessen the impact of the security dilemma and encourage peaceful dispute resolution.

In a collective security system, security is treated as a collective good, requiring the participation of all members in countering aggression. In practice, however, this can be challenging, as assessments of conflict situations often vary significantly. The League of Nations' experience illustrates the practical difficulty of member states defining security as a common good and, consequently, acting consistently to achieve it.

In their article «Concerts, Collective Security, and the Future of Europe», Charles and Clifford Kupchan argue that while collective security is theoretically the most reliable approach compared to capacity building and balance-of-power strategies (like defense alliances), achieving unanimous agreement, particularly with universal membership, is challenging. A large number of participants can hinder effective collective responses, even when states agree on a definition of aggression. They suggest that a concert-based system offers a more practical approach to maintaining international peace (Kupchan 1991: 119-20, 138).

Concert of nations

Like collective security, a concert of nations relies on collective action. However, unlike collective security, it involves only a select group of powerful states acting together to counter aggression. In this system, great powers play a leading role, often exerting influence over smaller states. While the concert system requires unanimity among these great powers, their interactions focus on problem-solving and don't necessarily involve formal obligations to counter aggression, as seen in collective defense or security systems.

The Concert of Europe, established in 1815 by Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria (later joined by France in 1818), serves as a prototype for this system. Unlike the League of Nations and the United Nations, the Concert of Europe was regionally focused, with its members primarily concerned with resolving their own differences and collaborating to maintain peace within Europe.

The Concert was based on the recognition of the territorial status quo among its members and allowed changes only if a compromise was reached among the members. Collective action to maintain security is the result of informal negotiations, not a pre-determined mechanism like the League of Nations charter. The mechanisms for collective action also remain subject to agreement between the great powers. The nature of the concert requires consensus in decision-making, as the system is based on the primacy of joint action and the impossibility of imposing will on the great powers.

The concert system is effective in maintaining peace, provided that there is no clear hegemon among the great powers. No state can be so large that other participants, by joining forces, cannot surpass its power potential (Claude 1988). In addition to the composition of the concert, the priorities of the participants are also important, including the lack of intentions to change the status quo and the interest in preserving the existing international order.

In post-Napoleonic Europe, the Concert was formed on the basis of a strong anti-revolutionary consensus, so the political consequences of the 1848 revolutions made it less effective. Crises that had previously been resolved at the negotiating table escalated into military confrontation, such as the Crimean War, which broke out in 1853 between Russia on the one hand and Great Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire on the other.

The formation of a concert of great powers, of course, does not mean that they have similar interests or do not compete for power. On the contrary, their relations can be extremely conflictual. However, the task of the concert is to maintain stability, not to eliminate conflicts. The stability of international order is one of the key interests of the great powers, so any changes to the status quo require the consent of all participants in the system.

The UN and the modern peacekeeping system

The modern system of international security maintenance based on the United Nations (UN) combines elements of collective security and the concert of nations. Established after World War II, the UN is a global security system both in terms of its reach and activities. The UN Charter enshrines the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force (Article 2.4) and a collective response to a

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threat to the peace (Article 2.5) (Charter of the United Nations).

Unlike the League of Nations Covenant, the UN Charter doesn't mandate automatic economic and diplomatic sanctions in response to aggression. However, it does establish a mechanism for collective response in the event of a breach of peace. Article 42 empowers the Security Council to take necessary measures to maintain or restore international peace and security. Article 43 obligates member states to provide the Security Council, upon request and in accordance with special agreements, with armed forces, assistance, and related facilities necessary for maintaining international peace and security (Charter of the United Nations).

The UN's founders recognized the need for great power leadership (a concert of nations) to ensure the system's effectiveness (Woolner 2009). Consequently, the UN Charter stipulates that any collective action to maintain peace requires the consent of the five permanent members of the Security Council: the Republic of China, France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America (Charter of the United Nations).

Integration as security

These strategies for maintaining peaceful relations rely on the threat of punishing aggressors to ensure international stability. Since World War II, Europe has demonstrated a more successful approach (at least thus far) to preventing war and achieving peace. The European Union exemplifies the creation of a community of sovereign states that resolve disputes peacefully. In stark contrast to the previous century, when intra-European conflicts triggered two world wars, war among EU members is now considered highly improbable.

From an institutional perspective, forming cooperative structures like the EU helps mitigate the negative effects of international anarchy and influences how states define their interests, thereby altering their security behavior (Keohane 2011). Full integration eliminates the possibility of war among participating states, but it also fundamentally changes the political landscape of their interaction (Ramírez 2020), effectively dissolving international politics in that specific context, whether regional or global.

Although other regions have turned to integration, the example of Europe is the most successful. Integration has transformed the most conflict-prone region in the world, and the classic problems of balance of power and alliances have disappeared from the agenda. Integration as an approach to security is a long-term strategy that is difficult to replace, but as the example of the UK, namely, withdrawal from the EU shows, it is also possible.

The experience of the European Union, which emerges as a result of the integration process at its early stage and remains in the realm of international politics, is extremely relevant for considering practices of solving security problems. The EU member states, as well as those seeking to join, such as Ukraine, remain sovereign, but form a special security dynamic among themselves, not considering each other as possible enemies. However, integration alone cannot fully resolve the security dilemma; other mechanisms are also necessary.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals two primary paradigms for achieving security in the anarchic international system, where states ultimately rely on self-help. The most innovative and, in the long run, most effective approach is integration as a security mechanism. This approach posits that economic, political, and legal interconnectedness among states eliminates the root causes of conflict and fosters a stable international environment. The European Union, where former rivals have achieved peaceful coexistence through integration, serves as a prime example.

However, the success of this model depends on external conditions, particularly mitigating or overcoming the security dilemma. European integration demonstrates that U.S. security guarantees played a crucial role in this process. These guarantees from a superpower enabled the resolution of key security dilemma issues, paving the way for a «stronger union» of European countries and transforming traditional European state rivalries.

The balance of power (or hegemony) and collective action remain key security mechanisms. Forming collective defense agreements or alliances allows states to enhance their defense capabilities through combined strength, which serves as the foundation for deterrence. Deterrence is essential for preventing aggression. While defensive military-political alliances help maintain a desired status quo, they are often temporary. NATO is a prominent example of a modern defense and political alliance.

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Collective security systems offer greater potential for guaranteeing security for all participants, as they are based on a commitment to non-use of force in dispute resolution and collective action in response to violations. The institutional aspect of such interactions is also important, helping to reduce the negative impacts of anarchy by shaping behavior and transforming expectations.

The difficulty of implementing a truly universal collective security system, coupled with the prominence of great powers in world politics, suggests a more pragmatic approach: collective action by great powers interested in maintaining the status quo, even without formal obligations to counter aggression (as in collective defense systems). The current international security system, anchored by the United Nations, combines elements of collective security and a concert of nations, while also promoting functional cooperation and joint problem-solving.

In conclusion, global security can be pursued through various mechanisms, from military and political alliances to diplomacy and economic integration. However, history demonstrates that long-term stability is achieved not only through military deterrence, but also through shared institutions, interdependence, and political cooperation.

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ШЛЯХ ДО БЕЗПЕКИ: МОДЕЛІ ТА МЕХАНІЗМИ ПІДТРИМАННЯ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ ТА МІЖНАРОДНОЇ БЕЗПЕКИ

Проблематика безпеки в міжнародних відносинах є однією з ключових у сучасному політологічному дискурсі, особливо з огляду на зміну безпекового середовища в Європі та світі. Традиційні механізми підтримання стабільності, зокрема баланс сил, оборонні союзи та колективна безпека, не завжди виправдовують очікування. Альтернативою може слугувати досвід інтеграційних процесів в Європі, який дозволяє трансформувати міжнародну взаємодію та знижувати ризики конфліктів.

Мета дослідження полягає в визначені характеристик різних моделей забезпечення безпеки та їхньої ефективності в умовах сучасної міжнародної системи. Особливу увагу приділено питанню співвідношення між традиційними підходами до безпеки, такими як баланс сил і оборонні альянси, та новітніми моделями, заснованими на інтеграції та міжнародній інституціоналізації. Методи дослідження включають компаративний аналіз концепцій міжнародної безпеки, історичний метод для оцінки ефективності різних підходів у ретроспективі, а також структурний аналіз міжнародних систем безпеки. Застосовується також інституційний підхід, який дозволяє оцінити роль міжнародних організацій у формуванні безпекової політики. Основні результати дослідження демонструють, що традиційні механізми безпеки, такі як оборонні альянси та баланс сил, залишаються актуальними, однак мають значні ризики, зокрема загрозу ескалації конфліктів та посилення дилеми безпеки. Об'єднання зусилля збільшує оборонну спроможність учасників, що слугує основою стримання. Саме здатність стримувати є основною умовою не стати жертвою агресії. Колективна безпека, хоч і має перевагу у вигляді міжнародної легітимності, часто стикається з труднощами реалізації через відсутність єдиної позиції держав-учасниць. Складність із реалізацією такої системи безпеки для всіх і провідна роль у світовій політиці великих держав пропонують більш спрощену систему – колективну дію великих держав, які зацікавлені у наявному статусі-кво, проте не несуть формальних зобов'язань протидії агресії як в системах колективної оборони. Сучасна система підтримання міжнародної безпеки на основі Організації Об'єднаних Націй (ООН) поєднує елементи колективної безпеки та концерту націй, що потребує одностайності постійних членів Ради Безпеки, а також включає елементи функціональної співпраці для усунення джерел конфліктів.

Більш дієвим підходом до досягнення безпеки є поєднання традиційних моделей із збільшенням взаємозалежності, яка усуває структурні передумови конфліктів та формує новий тип міжнародної взаємодії. Європейський Союз демонструє успішний досвід такої синергії безпекових підходів.

Ключові слова: зовнішня політика, політична трансформація, баланс сил, безпека, гегемонія, альянси, система колективної безпеки, оборона, європейська інтеграція, співпраці, теорії політики, оборона.