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H-Diplo/ISSF Journal Origins Essay on “The Genesis of JoGSS (*the Journal of Global Security Studies*).”

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Essay by **Deborah Avant**, *JoGSS* Editor, University of Denver

J*oGSS* is a new security journal in the International Studies Association's (ISA) stable of journals. Frank Gavin asked me to write a brief essay for ISSF on the origins and foundation of this new journal, which aims “to publish first-rate work addressing the variety of methodological, epistemological, theoretical, normative, and empirical concerns reflected in the field of global security studies. More importantly, it encourages dialogue, engagement, and conversation between different parts of the field.”¹

Why this new journal?

The need for this journal goes back into the Cold War, when academic journals focused on different concerns relevant to security. The *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (established in 1957) and the *Journal of Peace Research* (established in 1964) focused on “peace” – what caused it and what interrupted it. This was something that the founders of *International Security* (in the mid-1970s) saw as distinct from “security” – or how to better manage violence in order to protect a nation's interests. Over the

¹ <http://jogss.oxfordjournals.org/>.

course of time the peace journals also developed a reputation for publishing more quantitative work while *International Security* focused on more historical and qualitative work.

The security field was further divided by a debate in the 1990s about how to define security. The real-world back drop, of course, was the end of the Cold War and a shift in what many people were concerned about. But the battle over how (or whether) these changes should influence how we think about security was fierce. Among the most noted of the disputes was whether the environment constituted a security issue. Jessica Matthews on one side touted the need to re-define security, Daniel Deudney claimed that represented “muddled thinking”, and Stephen Walt argued that including topics such as environmental hazards in security was excessive expansion that would destroy the intellectual coherence of the field.² Similarly, the concept of “human security”, introduced in the middle of the decade, focused on the individual as referent of security rather than the state and linked the security of individuals to a variety of economic and social conditions in ways that traditional security advocates saw as misguided at best.³ To make a long story short, this debate over the definition of “security” was not resolved. Its various protagonists continued to analyze “security” – but with different meanings and in different ways. The word “security” appeared in analyses of many different issues: environmental security, economic security, human security, national security, international security, collective security – I could go on. European scholars also began analyzing the process by which something became a security issue, or was “securitized”.⁴

In the 1990s the security field blossomed – or at least grew much larger – because of these differences. The International Security Studies Section (ISSS) of ISA took a very open approach to what counted as security and in so doing grew dramatically. It consistently received the largest number of paper submissions (by far) for the annual conference each year, co-sponsored panels with an ever wider array of other ISA sections, and grew from 347 members in 2005 to 1,252 in 2012.

Journals responded to the growth in research in different ways. Some tended to re-double their focus. For instance, *International Security* sought to maintain fairly firm and traditional boundaries over what constituted security and retained the bias toward more qualitative and historical analysis. The *Journal of Peace Research* widened its view of “peace” but continued to be an outlet for more quantitative analysis of peace and conflict. Others like *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* took advantage of the new environment to change their name (to *Security Dialogue*) and encourage new approaches to

² See Jessica Matthews, “Redefining Security,” *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1999); Daniel Deudney, Muddled Thinking. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 47:3 (1991), 22; Stephen Walt. “The Renaissance of Security Studies,” *International Studies Quarterly* 35:2 (1991): 211-239.

³ See The United Nations Development Program (UNDP). *Human Development Report 1994: New Dimensions of Human Security* (1994), available at: <http://hdrnet.org/426/>. For a summary and analysis of critiques see Roland Paris, “Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?” *International Security* 26:2 (2001): 87-102.

⁴ See Rens van Munster, “Securitization,” Oxford Bibliographies, available at: <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0091.xml>.

an expansive definition of security. And new journals were launched. *Security Studies*, for instance, which focused on relatively traditional issues of war and peace, began in 1991. But there were also others examining particular dimensions of security – such as *Civil Wars* (established in 1999) or the *Journal of Human Security* (established in 2004). Articles describing themselves as security appeared not only in these journals but also in a wide range of others.

While the many different definitions of security, approaches to studying it, and publication outlets facilitated growth in the field, there was little substantive interaction among the growing, disparate parts of the field. After the initial debate over how to define security, different communities became committed to different definitions or approaches and largely ignored the others. Each journal published strong research but aimed to serve only a part of this large and varied security studies community and the specific audience that its readership represented.

For a quick illustration of how this matters, consider Ashley Leeds's contribution to the *JoGSS* first issue.⁵ Leeds reflects on how scholars from two different ISA sections (the Scientific Study of International Politics, SSIP, and ISSS) summed up the state of the literature on alliances for the ISA Compendium. She finds remarkably little overlap in which works the entries by Patricia Weitsman ("Alliances and War") and Ashley Leeds and Cliff Morgan ("Alliances and Arms: the Quest for Security") cite.⁶ "The two share twenty-nine citations in common—19 percent of the Weitsman citations and 30 percent of the Leeds and Morgan citations" (107) And the two literatures come to different conclusions about the role that balancing plays in alliance formation. Weitsman argued that it is fundamental while Leeds and Morgan found little empirical support for its role. One might imagine that this would drive research that seeks to understand and analyze this disparity. But that can only happen if authors are aware of these differences.

That is why we need this new journal. *The Journal of Global Security Studies* seeks to encourage interaction between different perspectives to spur just such research. By remaining open to the entire range of methodological, epistemological, theoretical and empirical concerns reflected in the security-studies field, we hope to generate conversations among these various parts of the field that will produce awareness of both commonalities and differences, and open the way for both stronger arguments where different approaches agree and new research in areas where they do not. There is no existing journal that not only represents different parts of the field but encourages the parts to share different perspectives on similar concerns.

⁵ Ashley Leeds, "A Brief Reflection on Conversations About Security," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 1:1 (2016): 107-109.

⁶ Brett Ashley Leeds and T. Clifton Morgan, "Alliances and Arms: The Quest for Security," in Robert A. Denmark, ed., *The International Studies Encyclopedia*, 1 (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010): 66-81; Patricia A. Weitsman, "Alliances and War," in *The International Studies Encyclopedia* 1: 82-98.

The idea for the journal came from the International Security Studies Section (ISSS) of ISA. The section had grown larger and more vibrant with the expansion of the field and developed into a big tent under which many different definitions of security, styles of analysis, and normative frameworks coexisted. At the same time, a host of ISA sections also increasingly addressed security issues (Peace Studies, Intelligence Studies, International Political Sociology, Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Migration Studies, Foreign Policy Analysis, Feminist Theory and Gender Studies, Scientific Study of International Politics, and many others). ISSS increasingly co-sponsored panels with all these sections at the annual meeting. When T.V. Paul was section chair of ISSS he first broached the idea that the section should propose a new security journal that would be an outlet for the growing field. The idea did not gain approval at ISA but the powers that be encouraged ISSS to continue thinking about the way a new journal might be different from other security journals. When Patricia Weitsman became ISSS chair she took up the charge and appointed a committee to develop the proposal. The committee (Stuart Kaufmann, Keith Krause, Patricia Weitsman, and me) opted to focus on the journal not only as a big tent in which all perspectives on security were welcome – but to explicitly encourage these perspectives to interact, challenge, and engage with one another. This mission attracted more interest from ISSS members, from scholars in other sections (including those on the editorial team and board), and from ISA as a whole. The *Journal of Global Security Studies* was further developed and ultimately approved by the ISA in 2014.

What are we doing to make JoGSS different?

The *JoGSS* editorial team (Felix Berenskoetter, Erica Chenoweth, Stuart Kaufmann, Kimberly Marten, and myself) purposefully represents a variety of perspectives on the security field. The team also chose a large and diverse editorial board with particular attention to scholars who were open to alternative approaches in their own work. And we thought hard about what kinds of submissions could facilitate interaction. We settled on four types: [research articles](#): long-form submissions that set out well-researched and fully-developed arguments and analysis on an issue related to global security; [review essays](#): article-length reviews of new scholarship in global security that makes novel empirical or theoretical points; [forums](#): compilations of shorter essays arranged around theoretical or empirical questions or themes related to global security; [research innovations](#): short essays that provide new perspectives on research, identify new directions for the field, and/or make novel and focused contributions to empirical knowledge of significance to global security studies.

We were fortunate that the ISSS section offered us financial support to develop our first issue so that we could cultivate the kind of contributions we hoped for. We entertained many possibilities—including offering invitations (and payment) to key scholars whose work already engaged different parts of the field. But as we reflected on the journal’s aims, we opted for a more open process and sent out a call for proposals on the future of the global security studies field. The call invited attention to the meaning of “global,” of “security,” and of “studies” while encouraging broad thinking drawing on different parts of the field. The specific wording is as follows:

The editors hope to receive proposals creatively addressing some of the following questions: (1) How should we think of *security*? Whose security and what kind of security should we focus on? Should we be segmenting off different perspectives or exploring the links between them (or both)? (2) How should we think about *global* security? What are, or will be, the most pressing global security concerns and issues, and can we separate them from national or regional ones? How might we engage with all that *global* entails? (3) How should we *study* global security? What are the most promising approaches and theories, and what are the shortcomings of existing approaches in the field of security studies? How can we assemble the knowledge we have accumulated in the field to formulate and address questions in ways that do service to the wide variety of approaches?

Over one hundred scholars submitted proposals – a good indication, we think, of the interest in the journal’s mission. We asked twenty-five to develop their proposals into papers, and we subsequently invited eleven authors – with different perspectives, at different stages in their careers, and based on three different continents – to a workshop at the University of Denver. We turned to the chair of our editorial board, Charli Carpenter, to organize discussants for the workshop. Charli invited Joshua Goldstein, Alex Montgomery, Jon Western, and Stephen Walt to both discuss the papers and write reflections on the workshop and the questions that motivated it. These reflections constitute our first “forum.” The workshop demonstrated just the sort of conversation we hoped for – it was lively and spirited, there was a lot of debate, but there also was respect for alternative perspectives and everyone left with somewhat different views than they came with. Following a peer-review process, the six papers ultimately selected for this special issue address different elements of our initial call for papers. They all have a strong conceptual frame, advance arguments that cut across intellectual camps, and provoke the kind of conversations we hope will animate this journal.

We cannot have a workshop for every issue (though we will apply for ISA funds to do at least one more). But we have developed other processes to encourage attention to different parts of the field. We invite reviewers from different perspectives. We ask our reviewers to pay particular attention to whether there are relevant alternative perspectives authors might attend to. And we give authors (a lot of) editorial advice on taking account of these alternatives. We are open to competition between approaches when that makes sense, but also require analysis of why different approaches come to alternate conclusions – revealing the different questions asked in various parts of the field – and arguments about the ways in which different approaches may be complementary.

Thus far, we are also continuing to put out calls on issues we think have particular promise for our mission either by ourselves as we did with our call for papers on Censorship and Security Studies or in concert with special issue guest editors (see our recent call for papers on Nonviolent Civil Resistance). And we encourage people to send in proposals for special issues or forums. We have a special-issue committee made up of *JoGSS* editorial board members that advises the editorial team on the quality of the proposals and ways they could improve with particular attention to our mission.

We think it is working and are particularly proud of the first special issue of *JoGSS*.

The ‘global’ of the journal’s title informs three of the papers. Stacie Goddard and Daniel Nexon argue that the concept of ‘global’ challenges us to think beyond states, but that thinking beyond states does not require us to throw out the focus on power politics.⁷ Both traditional and alternative approaches actually agree on the importance of studying power. If we put (or keep) “power politics” at the center of security studies but relax our assumptions of who wields power and the form that it takes, we can both open conversations between traditional and heterodox approaches and better understand contemporary issues. Their call to focus on the mechanisms, processes, and logics of collective mobilization as the heart of power politics builds bridges between security studies and the literature on contentious politics – as well as between security studies and research on the psychological and sociological processes that underlie mobilization.

In her article, Fiona Adamson suggests that global connectedness should lead us to rethink space.⁸ Privileging ‘national’ security ignores other spatial arenas in which people have security concerns. She examines three different spaces that animate recent security claims—global cities, cyberspace, and the global polity—but pushes us to think of many other possibilities. Her point: security studies scholars should attend to the various spaces that inform contemporary security problems as a means of envisioning more appropriate solutions. Doing so engenders conversations between traditional and human security scholars and extends dialogues with geography and sociology analysts.

The article by Anthony Burke, Matt McDonald, and Katrina Lee-Koo argues that if security is going global, so too should the ethics that inform security behavior.⁹ The relationship between security and ethics has long been contested, and these authors critique this contest. They argue that all analyses have at least implicit ethical referents. For traditional analyses this has been the nation-state. They claim that we should both make our ethical referent more explicit, but also that we should cast it at the global (rather than national) level. A cosmopolitan ethic, they propose, is one way of doing that.

Making implicit assumptions and claims about security explicit animates two papers: one by Jessica Auchter and the other by Laura Sjoberg. Jessica Auchter says we should make our implicit assumptions about dead bodies explicit.¹⁰ The recent zombie literature aside, there is scant analysis of the global dead in our field. She explains how the global dead are implicitly fundamental to both traditional approaches (which determine whether there is a war or not based on the number of battlefield dead) and human security approaches (which see the dead as evidence of human security failure). She argues that an explicit focus on the role of the dead can yield new insights about how

⁷ Stacie E. Goddard and Daniel H. Nexon, “The Dynamics of Global Power Politics: A Framework for Analysis.” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 1:1 (2016) [hereafter *JoGSS*]: 4-18.

⁸ Fiona Adamson. “Spaces of Global Security Studies: Beyond Methodological Nationalism,” *JoGSS*: 19-35.

⁹ Anthony Burke, Katrina Lee-Koo, Matt McDonald, “An Ethics of Global Security,” *JoGSS*: 64-79.

¹⁰ Jessica Auchter, “Paying attention to Dead Bodies: the Future of Global Security Studies,” *JoGSS*: 36-50.

our concern with the dead affects policy decisions and can exacerbate violence. As she points out, states and other organizations do a lot to provide security to the dead, such as by retrieving bodies from battlegrounds and retaliating for desecration of cemeteries. Understanding the dead as part of our politics promises new insights into what we secure, how, and why.

Laura Sjoberg pushes us to consider the effect of gender beyond highlighting the role of women.¹¹ Recent efforts to be more sensitive to gender in-betweenness have highlighted just how profoundly gendered our language and very beings are. Sjoberg argues that as gendered beings, our gender conceptions have ubiquitous effects on who and what we wish to secure, who participates in securing, and what effects we feel from various security behavior. She argues that focusing on “security as felt” opens avenues for understanding the everyday effects of security practices and the profound effect that gender has in shaping them. Her technique in the essay is to demonstrate how gender matters for “felt” security through the eyes of a white, male, U.S. soldier.

Michael Ward provokes us to reconsider how we ‘study’ security.¹² He urges attention to prediction. In our era of big data, prediction is likely to become only more important. Though he daringly recommends less attention to theory, incorporating prediction more systematically may lead us to different kinds of theory. Theory that adds up insights (rather than privileging the simplest answer) may generate better predictions and insights that have more productive policy effects.

Interventions by Carpenter Goldstein, Western, and Montgomery make up our first “forum” on the Future of Global Security Studies.¹³ They bring up a range of issues that are absent or underplayed in the articles, from an explicit treatment of the future (Carpenter) to global climate change (Goldstein) to bounds on the global (Western) to escaping the field’s Newtonian bias (Montgomery).

I mentioned above the final contribution by Ashley Leeds, which makes the case that we need more of the conversations *JoGSS* is designed to inspire. This contribution is particularly meaningful, because it focuses on Patricia Weitsman’s scholarship. Patricia was a tireless advocate for *JoGSS*. She revived the proposal, she pushed the committee to develop a unique vision, and she was a master of working through the politics in ISA, sometimes from her hospital bed. Patty was too ill to attend ISA’s 2014 annual meeting where the executive committee approved *JoGSS*. We were thrilled to

¹¹ Laura Sjoberg, “Centering Security Studies around Gendered, Felt Insecurities,” *JoGSS*: 51-63.

¹² Michael Ward, “Can we Predict Politics? Toward What End?” *JoGSS*: 80-91.

¹³ Charli Carpenter. 2016. The Future of Global Security Studies, *JoGSS*: 92-94; Joshua Goldstein, “Climate Change as a Global Security Issue,” *JoGSS*: 95-98; Jon Western, “What is Global in Global Security Studies?” *JoGSS*: 99-101; Alexander Montgomery, “Quantum Mechanisms: Expanding the Boundaries of Power, Space, and Time in Global Security Studies,” *JoGSS*: 102-106.

report its approval to her – but devastated when she passed away just a few days later. We dedicated the first issue to her.

Our first issue includes just a fraction of the perspectives we expect will animate the journal. We particularly hope for contributions from the Global South, explicitly historical analysis, and policy-oriented research. Some of these are set to appear in the first year's issues, but we are eager to expand the range of work submitted to *JoGSS*. We believe that scholars focused on problem-driven research will be especially attracted to the journal because they are often less committed to one or another theoretical approach and more willing to pose questions decided by evidence. We also expect contributions from those interested in informing policy because policy makers are eager for an array of potential strategies. But we are committed to serving all parts of the security field – and look forward to cultivating interesting conversations between them.

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