Robert Jervis – "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma"

The lack of an international sovereign makes it difficult even for status quo states to arrive at goals they perceive to be in their common interest, for if others do not cooperate the results may be disasterous. This is, as the title suggests focused on cooperation in areas of security, not economics.

Jervis uses the analogy of the game derived from Rousseau's stag hunt in the *Second Discourse* to demonstrate how states that would attain their first preference from cooperation may choose to abandon their fellows out of fear that they will be abandoned, and thus left in a doubly bad situation.

These standard incentives to defect are compounded because:

1. A state may fear that other states may cease to support the status quo in the future.
2. The desire to control resources or land outside their territory in order to protect what the have through self-sufficiency, buffer zones, or preemptive attacks on ideologically hostile states.
3. Many methods of increasing ones security (e.g. making big guns) decrease the security of others.

Despite the fact that the Stag Hunt is uncertain and the Prisoner's Dilemma even less amenable to cooperation, cooperation does occur. Cooperation is aided by:

1. Anything that increases the gains of mutual cooperation (CC), like trade, or decreases the harm of cooperating while the other defects (CD), like the ability to withstand a surprise attack.
2. Anything that decreases incentive for defecting, decreases the gains of taking advantage of the other (DC), like an inability to use an advantage in arms, or increases the costs of mutual defection (DD).
3. Anything that increases each side's expectation that the other will cooperate. This involves altering the payoffs for your opponent to make cooperation more attractive (or defection less so) and making it seem likely that you will cooperate by suggesting your incentives are all for cooperation. Being to convincing, however, can make the threat of defection seem less convincing. Inspection devices and the division of one issue into smaller ones can also help.

Likelihood of conflict is also affected by geography, commitments and beliefs. The United states could long remain secure without threatening anyone [well, other than Canada and Latin America] while Germany could not. Commitments to help others and to defend areas (like colonies) that are outside the borders can also cause states to develop forces that seem threatening to others. Commitment to defend of non-territorial interests, such as beliefs or the international structure, also can lead to greater probability of conflict. Finally, this can lead to the view that expansion is necessary to prevent defeat by hostile powers.

Two other crucial factors are whether defensive weapons can be distinguished from offensive ones and whether defense or offense has the advantage.

When the offense has the advantage, more money must be spent on defense to offset each dollar spent on offense, so even status quo states are more likely to built offensive forces. This will make both sides feel that it is better to strike first, thus increasing the chances that any given conflict will lead to war. With offensive advantage: war profitable to the winner (short and cheap); expectation of war will lead states to maintain high levels of arms and match any increase in others' armament; states must recruit allies in advance; and statesmen will be quick to perceive ambiguous evidence as indicating aggression.

When the Defensive has the advantage reverses all of the above. Status quo powers can expect to absorb an attack, can build a level of force that will protect themselves but not threaten others, war will be long and costly, and therefore infrequent. The game becomes Chicken, in which everyone's least desired outcome is mutual defection (war). Geography can affect which will be dominant in a given situation, and borders often expand or contract to reach geographic frontiers. Technology is the dominant determinant of advantage, with fortifications dominating some eras and mobile weapons others. Nuclear weapons prevent a different scenario, in which defense is impossible, but the destruction of the attacker is assured. Thus both sides can have the security of second-strike capabilities while neither has the incentive to attack first. The key becomes convincing the other that one is willing to risk mutual annihilation in defense of ones vital interests.
High differentiation of offensive and defensive weapons, at least when combined with defensive advantage, nearly abolishes the security dilemma. States can defend themselves without threatening others. Still, a status-quo power

may want some offensive arms if it feels that the offense has the advantage, that it may need to reconquer territory lost early in a war, or that an enemy may only make peace if it has lost territory. Further, there is seldom a clear distinction between offensive and defensive weapons, an aggressor will likely first build defenses, an a state with commitments outside its territory may require offensive weapons to make these commitments credible.

Nuclear deterrence creates a paradoxical situation where defensive weapons (ABM's) are offensive, because they could make the use of nuclear weapons an option in non-dire circumstances. Similarly, MIRV's that make eliminating enemy weapons in a first strike possible are also offensive weapons. Sea-launched ballistic missiles, because of their lower accuracy, are suitable only for mass murder, and are not designed to take out other submarines that would carry out mass murder, and are therefore entirely defensive.

The idea of limited nuclear war would eliminate this offensive-defensive distinction, but it can occur only if both sides agree to play by the rules, so American mockery of the idea can help prevent it from occurring.

Jervis suggests four worlds based on whether offense or defense has the advantage and whether offensive and defensive postures are distinguishable from one another.

1. Offensive advantage, offense not differentiated from defense. This is the worst world for status quo states. They will behave like aggressors, arms races are likely, states will grow and shrink rapidly, cooperation will be difficult.
2. Defensive advantage, offense not differentiated from defense. The security dilemma operates, but is reduced. Status quo states can cooperate, and arms races will be limited.
3. Offensive advantage, offense differentiated from defense. No security dilemma exists, but it is a dangerous world where even status quo states may take the offensive in order to prevent possible defeat. Cooperation of status quo states possible, but difficult and chance of defection is high.
4. Defensive advantage, offense differentiated from defense. This is that happy place with fuzzy bunny-rabbits and all the candy you can imagine. At least if one is a status quo power, because borders and values tend to freeze. So if you have no fuzzy bunny-rabbits or candy, you are unlikely to get them. There is no security dilemma, aggressors are easily spotted and stopped, and cooperation is possible.