IJMTST | Volume: 2 | Issue: 07 | July 2016 | ISSN: 2455-3778

The Changing Nature of War

Dr. Kanchan Mishra

Associate Professor, Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, V.S.S.D. College, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

ABSTRACT

War is changing in ways that we have yet to fully apprehend. Yet some of the changes are less new than they seem. In many respects, what are new are the cyber or digital realm, a combination of modes, some of them not new but in new ways, and, perhaps, a greater difficult in attributing actions to their perpetrators. At the beginning of the 21st century it seems that warfare and armed conflict get messier and more chaotic than ever before. The phenomenon of weak and fragile statehood destabilizes whole regions and makes intra-state conflict to a constant feature with spill-over character in many areas of the world. At the same time do non-state armed actors, from warlords to armed militias to terrorists to private military firms, re-enter the international conflict scene. The globalized character of contemporary organized violence, especially the phenomenon of transnational terrorism, does challenge the international security structure. While symmetric inter-state conflicts are constantly decreasing and less likely to appear, the dominant form of contemporary armed conflict is intra-state and asymmetric by nature. One of the most striking features within contemporary armed violence is the increasingly important role of civilians, as victims but also as perpetrators and participants in hostilities. The year 2009 begins, much as 2008 ended, with hundreds and thousands of civilians killed in international and intra-state wars around the globe. Since World War II and, much more, since the end of the Cold War, it seems that there is a development towards a 're-victimization' of civilians in global armed conflict. The last two to three centuries were marked by efforts to regulate and to institutionalize war as such.Private conflict entrepreneurs, like e.g. well-known mercenaries in the Thirty Years' War, became banned and the modern state developed a monopoly on violence. In the nineteenth century, a comprehensive body of laws of war became established and efforts to protect civilians and prisoners of war (POWs) in armed conflict became somehow and at least partially successful. Although the laws of war do not demand no civilian casualties in armed conflict, they do hold them on low level due to their balance between military necessity and humanity.

Keywords: *nature, war, military, civilians, violence, conflict, cyber, cold, international, security*

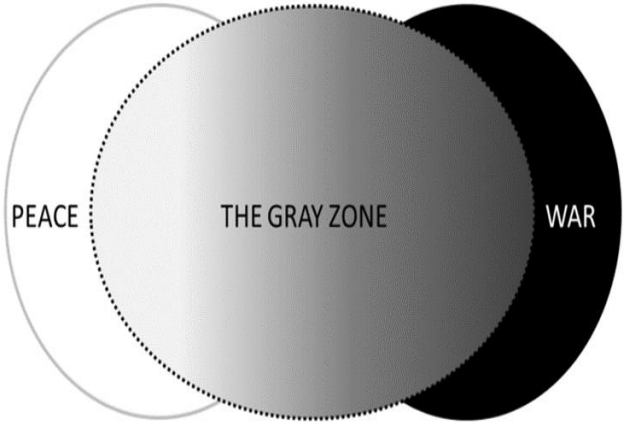
I. INTRODUCTION

The rise of cyber warfare today challenges Clausewitz's notion of the centrality of violence to the nature of war. It does so because the evolution of technology has enabled the potential for non-violent forms of conflict. The distinguishing feature of violence is its physicality, or the ability to produce an outcome through physical force, and this contrasts with cyber warfare which produces outcomes, physical or non-physical, through the application of digital effect.[1,2]

This questions whether the nature of war is still primarily reliant on the physical destruction of enemy forces or if it encompasses more. It is increasingly critical to engage with this idea as grey zone actions and information operations become more prevalent.Major power war produces serious consequences, such as degrading the international order and risking, in the absolute worst-case-scenario, the extinction of humanity in the event weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are employed. In order to prevent such an event happening, most nations subscribe to using WMD

as a deterrent to prevent an enemy from attacking them or from attempting to coerce them. This means that, in a general sense, conflicts between major states prefer not to be resolved by traditional warfare as the likelihood of escalation, and thus the use of WMD, becomes too great to risk. This leads to 'softer' methods of coercion and shaping, such as cyber warfare.[3,4]

The cyber domain is a man-made operating domain that is comprised of networks of interconnected devices, sensors and interfaces. Largely due to its emerging nature, the technology is driving capability at a pace far outstripping governance and control. The result is growing dependence partnered with growing vulnerability.



This exposes the networks and internal systems to a wide variety of threats as well as creating opportunities for offensive manoeuvre. In this respect, the emergence of the cyber domain adds an additional dimension complementing traditional warfare, but it is also increasingly separate to traditional clashes between military forces. Cyber warfare is seen as having the potential to shape, disrupt and disable conventional military and civilian capabilities (most notably infrastructure). Cyber warfare occurs continuously across the cyberspace domain. This results in a wide range of effects: from minor disruptions (website defacement; theft of national defence information and intellectual property) up to strategic impacts (such as the use of the StuxNet virus to disable Iran's nuclear fuel processing plants).[5,6]

This is best done through the creation of alternative futures. The alternatives the NIC has suggested include:

1. Pax Americana. This would be unilateral at the beginning, but how can the United States function in it over the long term? It will take lots of trade-offs and deals. The demands on the U.S. military would be substantial: the U.S. would be the regional sheriff.
2. Davos world. This is the most benign alternative future. It involves unfettered globalization. China and India would play by the rules. China would be the biggest country in sheer volume. The U.S. would prosper, but would be one of many. The unipolar moment would pass. The world would be benign as far as security goes, so there would not be too much conflict or military efforts by countries.
3. New world disorder. Conflicts would grow and spread. Clashes of civilizations could take place. The International institutions that have otherwise been trying to regulate globalization and world peace would fray, or collapse, or would be eroded in their effectiveness.[7,8]

II. Observations

By enormously increasing information flow around the world, the Internet, small satellites, drones, improved sensors, cell phone video cameras and broadband connectivity, are transforming both war and politics. These technologies allow military forces to find targets and strike them with great precision from long distances. They open the way for cyber warfare, hacking and manipulation of foreign political systems. They allow individuals to broadcast not just text but also photos and videos instantaneously and globally in ways that many states cannot control.

Risk group

Information operations can be far more potent than ever before. They are not just technical. They do not simply facilitate war by functioning as "force multipliers." Rather, substantive information operations – propaganda, arguments, images, and "narratives" – can serve as primary instruments for

achieving war aims, especially against democratic countries.[9,10]

Table 1: Top sources of refugees in 2016

1.	Syria
2.	Afghanistan
3.	South Sudan
4.	Somalia
5.	Sudan
6.	Democratic Republic of Congo
7.	Central African Republic
8.	Myanmar
9.	Eritrea
10.	Burundi

Refugees

Examining armed conflicts involves the study of not only the different stages of conflict, but the nature of the peace. Post-conflict societies face many difficult tasks, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants; reconstruction of destroyed physical infrastructure and institutions; and addressing human rights violations.An important indicator of true peace is the successful reintegration of refugee returnees. Consider, for example, the case of Colombia, where a peace agreement between the Colombian government and the leftist FARC guerrillas was signed in November 2016. Just before the ultimate agreement was reached, the director of the government agency responsible for assisting war victims acknowledged that "for the displaced and others who bear the war's worst scars, the peace deal is a beginning, not an end[11,12]

III. Discussion

In contrast to that point of view, modern science rests on the conviction that our knowledge is incomplete, tentative — and uncertain. Scientific method is nothing more than the rules by which we challenge our existing explanations of how the world behaves.Learning must involve a willingness to change — and that willingness is absent if we are certain of our correctness.It is this philosophy of doubt that explains the scientific and economic advancement of the West.[13,14]

IV. Results

After declining for much of the 1990s, the number of major civil wars has almost tripled in the past decade. The number of minor civil wars have also risen in recent years, largely due to the expansion of the Islamic State and its affiliates.From 2011 to today, there has been a six-fold increase in battle deaths, with 2014 and 2015 being the deadliest years on the battlefield since the end of the Cold War.

With a decline in civil wars ending in military victory, the conflict relapse rate has increased. 60% of conflicts in the early 2000s relapsed within five years.Some forms of violence against civilian populations in wartime are increasing, posing challenges to the protection of civilians. Among the key trends we see is that: a larger share of today's mass atrocities takes place in the context of civil wars; rebel groups have become increasingly responsible for the majority of civilian deaths; and the number of displaced people due to violence is at an all-time high.[19,20]

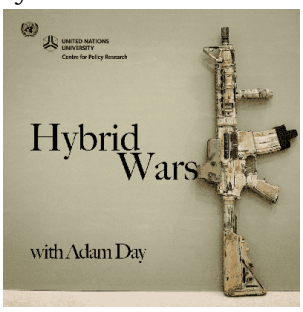
Conflicts are becoming more intractable and less conducive to traditional political settlements mainly due to three developments:

- Organised crime has emerged as a major stress factor that exacerbates state fragility, undermines state legitimacy, and often lowers the incentives of armed groups to enter political settlements;

- The internationalization of civil wars tends to make them deadlier and longer;
- The growing presence of jihadist groups in conflict settings complicates peacemaking and fosters a "hunker down and bunker up" mentality among international actors, especially UN peace operations, on the ground.

V. ICONCLUSION

War used to be easy to define. Once, we could say with confidence whether we were at war or peace. If the former, we could identify with whom we were fighting and where the front was. Americans in particular have for a long time had the good fortune of being able to say that the war—any war—was "over there."



These concepts have deep roots—in the West, anyway. In ancient Rome, for example, a particular class of priests called fetiales officiated the onset of war by throwing a ceremonial spear into an enemy's territory and opening the doors of the temple of Janus. Bringing war to an end has traditionally been just as ceremonial—think of Vercingetorix laying his sword at Caesar's feet, Lee and Grant's meeting at Appomattox, or Emperor Hirohito's representatives signing documents of unconditional surrender on board the USS Missouri in 1945.

Things are certainly more complicated today. The United States and its allies have been "at war" for almost two decades, yet it is difficult at times to explain the who, the why, or at times even the where. [21,22]

There seems to be widespread agreement that the character of war is changing but little consensus as to exactly how. New terms have proliferated. Some of these focus on speed, like "hyperwar." Others allude to the odd co-mingling of old and new tactics: "'hybrid war." War today can be nonlinear, fourth-generation, next-generation, even contactless. Some add "meme wars" and "like wars" to the mélange. Which, if any of these concepts have merit?

Like Janus, war has many faces. Though its nature or, if you prefer, logic, has been consistent since the dawn of time, its character—or grammar—is always adapting itself to the environment in which it is expressed. Carl von Clausewitz, the doyen of contemporary war, recognized that it was practically limitless in variety, describing it as "complex and changeable," noting that every age has its particular kind of war with "its own limiting conditions and its own particular preconceptions."[23,24]

Sadly, many military thinkers have fixated on Clausewitz's contemporaneous observations of the character of nineteenth-century warfare and confused them with the unchanging nature of war itself. The result is that a single paradigm has monopolized how we conceive of war and warfare for over a century. But there are other, older models of conflict and competition now resurfacing as a hitherto dominant West dilutes, and other powers cohere. In classical Islamic jurisprudence, for example, there is only the house of Islam and the house of war. Ancient Chinese traditions of legalism and Confucianism diverge in other ways from the more familiar Western construct, framing war as rebellion from the rightful order under the mandate of heaven.[25,26]

Strip away its modern trappings—nation-states and international laws, for instance—and war is at its core organized violence waged for political purpose. Politics is the competition between rivals for power and influence. War, then, is organized violence to gain power and influence. If humans are naturally political animals, then war is the proverbial state of nature and peace the aberration. To turn Clausewitz on his head, politics may be the continuation of war by other means—and warriors are politicians. Today by contrast, these have been replaced with ambient forms of physical and nonphysical violence—sniping, roadside bombs, and lethal drones on the one hand, electronic attack, spoofing, and disinformation on the other. War is always likely to require some amount of sacrifice on the part of men and women required to fight for and control territory. But the problem posed by our moment in history has broadened in both time and space, increasing the opportunity for myriad actors to produce tactical effects.[27,28]

REFERENCES

[1] "How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?" (PDF). International Committee of the Red Cross. March 2008.
[2] "Warfare". Cambridge Dictionary.

[3] Šmihula, Daniel (2013): The Use of Force in International Relations, p. 67, ISBN 978-80-224-1341-1.
[4] James, Paul; Friedman, Jonathan (2006). Globalization and Violence, Vol. 3: Globalizing War and Intervention. London: Sage Publications.
[5] "war". Online Etymology Dictionary. 2010. Retrieved 24 April 2011.
[6] Keeley, Lawrence H: War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage. p. 37.
[7] Diamond, Jared, Guns, Germs and Steel
[8] Conway W. Henderson (9 February 2010). Understanding International Law. John Wiley & Sons. pp. 212–. ISBN 978-1-4051-9764-9. Retrieved 31 May 2012.
[9] B. Jongman & J.M.G. van der Dennen, 'The Great "War Figures" Hoax: an investigation in polemomythology'
[10] Roberto Muehlenkamp, 'Germs vs. guns, or death from mass violence in perspective'
[11] Matthew White, Atrocitology: Humanity's 100 Deadliest Achievements, Canongate Books Ltd. (20 October 2011), ISBN 0857861220
[12] Matthew White, 'Primitive War'
[13] David McCandless, '20th Century Death'
[14] "Review: War Before Civilization". Brneurosci.org. 4 September 2006. Archived from the original on 21 November 2010. Retrieved 24 January 2011.
[15] Spengler (4 July 2006). "The fraud of primitive authenticity". Asia Times Online. Archived from the original on 6 July 2006. Retrieved 8 June 2009.
[16] Martin, Debra L., Ryan P. Harrod, and Ventura R. Pérez, eds. 2012. The Bioarchaeology of Violence. Gainesville: University Press of Florida. http://www.upf.com/book.asp?id=MARTI002
[17] Keeley, Lawrence H: War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage. p. 55.
[18] W. D. Rubinstein (2004). Genocide: A History. Pearson Longman. pp. 22–50. ISBN 978-0-582-50601-5. Retrieved 31 May 2012.
[19] World War One – A New Kind of War | Part II Archived 27 February 2010 at the Wayback Machine, From 14 – 18 Understanding the Great War, by Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, Annette Becker
[20] Kolko 1994, p. xvii–xviii: "War in this century became an essential precondition for the emergence of a numerically powerful Left, moving it from the margins to the very center of European politics during 1917–18 and of all world affairs after 1941".
[21] "Albert Einstein: Man of Imagination". 1947. Archived from the original on 4 June 2010. Retrieved 3 February 2010. Nuclear Age Peace Foundation paper
[22] "Instant Wisdom: Beyond the Little Red Book". Time. 20 September 1976. Retrieved 14 April 2013.
[23] Robert J. Bunker and Pamela Ligouri Bunker, "The modern state in epochal transition: The significance of irregular warfare, state deconstruction, and the rise of new warfighting entities beyond neo-medievalism." Small Wars & Insurgencies 27.2 (2011): 325–344.
[24] Hewitt, Joseph, J. Wilkenfield and T. Gurr Peace and Conflict 2008, Paradigm Publishers, 2007
[25] D. Hank Ellison (24 August 2007). Handbook of Chemical and Biological Warfare Agents, Second Edition. CRC Press. pp. 567–70. ISBN 978-0-8493-1434-6.
[26] Lewis, Brian C. "Information Warfare". Federation of American Scientist. Archived from the original on 17 June 1997. Retrieved 27 February 2010.
[27] Sullivan, Patricia (16 July 2012). "War Aims and War Outcomes". Who Wins?: Predicting Strategic Success and Failure in Armed Conflict. Oxford University Press, USA (published 2012). in wars with 'total' war aims—the p. 17.
[28] Fried, Marvin Benjamin (1 July 2014). Austro-Hungarian War Aims in the Balkans During World War I. Palgrave Macmillan (published 2014). p. 4. ISBN 9781137359018. Retrieved 24 August 2015. War aims are the desired territorial, economic, military or other benefits expected following successful conclusion of a war.