

WAR, POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF WAR

by

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War, as father of all things, and king, names few to serve as gods, and of the rest makes these men slaves, those free.

–Heraclitus

War made the state and the state made war.

–Charles Tilly

Introduction: The Study of War and Political Science

War is a subject that has generated a vast body of literature. Novels of war; scholarly works on the history of warfare and the sociology of the military; books on the causes of war; books on decisive battles that changed the course of history; writing on strategy and tactics; memoirs of soldiers of all ranks; and works opposing war and arguing for peace weigh down library shelves.

Courses in American colleges and universities on war invariably focus on the causes of war or the causes of particular wars, such as the First World War, the Second World War, and America's Vietnam War. The fervent hope of those who teach these courses is that by studying the causes of particular wars, students as citizens will be able to avoid the mistakes that led to them and avert future wars.¹

Despite the existence of a huge volume of literature on the subject of war, political science in general has not seriously examined the problem of war, although there are exceptions to this rule to be mentioned below. This is surprising given the fact that war has been ubiquitous in human history.² It can be said that political science (and the other social science) have “side stepped the phenomenon of war either completely or to a great extent.”³ There are several reasons for this state of affairs. First and foremost is because American institutions of higher learning have been strongly shaped by the pacific and rational principles of the Enlightenment. Many Enlightenment thinkers saw violence and war as pathologies of unenlightened peoples and

saw rational inquiry and debate as the chief instruments of progress to civilization.⁴ According to Joas and Knöbl, a “substantial number of social scientists are still caught up in the peaceful utopian mood of the European Enlightenment and continue to dream the dream of non-violent modernity.”⁵ Wars are dismissed as “extreme exceptions, as temporary disturbances in the civilizational equilibrium.”⁶

A second reason is the fact that the war has never been a central topic within the social science disciplines. During the formative years of economics, sociology, and anthropology, far more attention was paid to “economic, social, and political inequalities than to the phenomenon of violence in general and war in particular.”⁷ Much attention was devoted to *individual* violence rather than *collective* or *state* violence. Violence was seen as a collapse of the social order or the loss of normative individual rationality.

A third reason for sidestepping the phenomenon of war is the strong attachment of Western social sciences to the world view of liberalism. The liberal world view regards war as a relic of the pre-liberal era. Those philosophers who formulated the classical liberal interpretation of war (Kant, Montesquieu, Condorcet, Adam Smith, and Tom Paine) were motivated by the idea of liberation from royalty, feudal aristocracy, and military castes. According to these thinkers war was an unnatural condition of society, and peace was its natural condition. War was caused by the martial spirit of the aristocracy and the lack of free trade (mercantilism) which “interfered with people’s ability to pursue their natural inclination to peaceful intercourse.”⁸ Liberal government and free trade were the solutions to war. This view of the causes of war still obtains among the vast majority of American academics who view globalized free trade and democratization as promoting global peace.

A fourth reason for the sidestepping of war as an object of study was the entry into many American and European universities of a generation of anti-Vietnam war activists who brought with them strong anti-war sentiments garnered from the anti-nuclear weapons (Ban the Bomb) protests and anti-Vietnam war movements that sprang up during the 1950s and 1960s. Many of this generation were critical of the role of American universities and the fact that certain disciplines, such as international relations, political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology and sociology, were receiving government funding to do studies that helped what were seen as unjust colonial wars.⁹ They were also highly critical of cooperation between the academy and conservative think-tanks and foundations that were funding research aimed at perpetuating the military-industrial complex.¹⁰

One does find ample works by American military sociologists and military historians, however, who have produced studies of ethnic or class compositions of armed forces,¹¹ the factors that make for good generalship,¹² civil military relations,¹³ or landmark battles.¹⁴ One also finds “security studies” programs at certain universities, which are concerned with various aspects of national defense. None of these exceptions is sensitive to war as a social/political/economic phenomenon that deserves concentrated study as a normal, unexceptional aspect of politics that is a “social activity related to the whole complex of social life and organization. . .”¹⁵

This paper has been inspired by what has come to be called the “war and society” approach to war. This approach is not interested in the causes of war but, rather, the dialectics of war; that is, the way that war has impacted and changed political organization and the way that political organization has changed war. This literature argues that the reciprocal impact of war on the development of political organization and political organization on the development of

war can be seen only if both are studied together historically; that is, over many centuries. A long historical perspective shows that war is not exceptional. Human groups have been fighting each other for millennia. The history of *Homo sapiens* on planet Earth shows that social and political organization have been deeply affected by war and, in turn, war has been deeply affected by social and political organization. As Vivienne Jabri has written “[w]ar is hence not some extra-social element that takes place outside society, but is rather both its product and implicated in its formation and transformation.”¹⁶ Essentially, “[w]ar and society stand in a dynamic inter-relationship with one another. Changes in warfare affect society, while changes in society affect warfare.”¹⁷

This paper is concerned with the dialectics of one of these effects: the complex interplay between war and political development. It will show that historically war and political organization have been mutually constitutive and reinforcing. It will show how war built the modern nation-state and how the modern nation-state transformed and is transforming modes of warfare. It will reveal the extent to which war “has been a meaningful and dynamic activity, in its own right, exerting profound and complex effects on politics and culture. . .”¹⁸ In doing so, it will reveal the extent to which war “lurks at the heart of . . . [all] modern state[s].”¹⁹ It argues against the prevailing liberal view that war is “an aberration, a virus that afflicts societies” and in favor of the view that “it is part of potential [political] development.”²⁰

War and Political Development

The relationship between war and political development was first articulated by two European scholars working at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the Cambridge historian John Robert Seeley, and the German constitutional

historian, Otto Hintze. Seeley and Hintze argued that political development cannot be conceived of as a dynamic completely internal to the state. Seeley wrote that one should “[n]ever be content with looking at states purely from within; always remember that they have another aspect which is wholly different; their relations with foreign states.”²¹ Hintze wrote more than 50 monographs and articles attacking the work of scholars of his day who sought to understand political development purely in terms of internal factors. He argued that his contemporaries had failed to understand the importance of external factors in the political development of states, especially the threat of war by powerful neighbors. Political development cannot be understood, he wrote, by examining single states in isolation “from the context in which it was formed . . . exclusive in itself, without raising the question whether its particular character is co-determined by its relation to its surroundings.”²²

The connection between the internal political development of a state and its external threat environment was conceptualized by Seeley and Hintze in the following law-like way: “the degree of government will be directly proportional, and that means that the degree of liberty will be inversely proportional, to the degree of [external] pressure.” And, “intense government is the reaction against intense pressure, and on the other hand liberty, or relaxed government, is the effect of relaxed pressure.”²³ The evidence for their proposition was the intensity of government in France and Prussia in contrast to the slackness of government in Britain and the United States.

Drawing on Seeley’s observation, Hintze wrote two essays in 1913 and 1914 in which he showed how the constant threat of war affected the political development of European states with respect to three major aspects of the state, its armed forces, its government, and its parliament. He pointed out in these essays that Europe had two basic types of states, the British and the Continental European. He noted that by the seventeenth century states on the continent were

becoming increasingly centralized, bureaucratic, and absolutist while in Britain the monarchy was being weakened and Parliament strengthened. Hintze argued that the cause of this difference in political development was the different threat environments in which the states were situated. The British monarchy was isolated from the monarchies on the continent by the English Channel. In contrast, the monarchies on the continent were in immediate proximity to one another. Consequently, their external environments were highly threatening, in military terms, which required them to develop large and expensive standing armies, powerful and efficient bureaucracies to maintain them, and absolute monarchies to control them. The British monarchy did not have to build a large standing army, a powerful bureaucracy and an absolute monarchy to control it because it did not have powerful threatening neighbors immediately adjacent, thanks to the separation provided by the English Channel.²⁴

Between the First and Second World Wars, the discipline's early focus on the development of the state and war were increasingly criticized and gradually replaced by the pluralist theory of society.²⁵ Pluralist argued that the focus on the state missed the real politics that lay beneath the state's formal-legal structures. Pluralist argued that the state, now called "the government," was no more important than other groups in society, such as labor unions and civic associations. An unfortunate result of this shift in paradigm was that "... many of the important insights of our forebears [were]. . . erased from memory."²⁶ The Seeley-Hintze law of political development was all but forgotten. The state was replaced by the "political system."²⁷

The decolonization's that followed the Second World War that brought forth a plethora of variously called "new," "emerging," "developing" states in what came to be called the "Third World," reinforced the shift away from the state and generated a new paradigm called "modernization theory." Modernization theory was based on the functionalist assumption that

the subsystem of a society are interdependent such that economic modernization (i.e. industrialization) would, in the fullness of time, bring about modern forms in other subsystems (i.e., democratic government). Gradually, these “less developed” states would come to resemble the industrial democracies of the “First World,” Europe and the United States. Modernization theory saw political development as a linear progression from tradition to modernity in which all societies faced a common set of internal problems that had to be solved in order to become modern: national identity, legitimacy, participation, penetration, and distribution.²⁸ The sequencing and timing of these problems was seen as critical to the developmental process. As Joas and Knöbel point out, like pluralist theory, “. . . modernization theory was particularly neglectful of the topic of violence. . . it clung to the Enlightenment faith in progress.”²⁹ Violence and war were seen as signs of political decay³⁰ and external factors, such as the global context were completely ignored.

The discipline’s collective amnesia regarding the role of war in political development was eventually challenged by scholars who saw development as being conflictual in nature and that power and coercion were part of the process of modernization. According to Joas and Knöbel, the first challenge came from Reinhard Bendix who saw modernization theory as ahistorical and was skeptical about its assumption of linearity and equilibrium among the “political system” and other social systems. For Bendix, the use or threat of violence always play a central role in politics. He showed that modernization was by no means linear and demonstrated how different uses of force will induce different forms of the state.³¹

Bendix’s work caused some scholars to wonder if the European pathway to political development would shed light on the problems and prospects of political development in the new states of the Third World. In 1975, Charles Tilly, who had become one of the leading scholars of

protest, edited a volume (the ninth and last book of a series of works produced by the Social Science Research Council [SSRC] on the subject of political development), which examined the European history of state making. This volume showed that the making of European states was a brutal process that involved much violence as monarchical power was increasingly centralized. Tilly, like Seeley and Hintze, realized that the key factor in the development of Europe's states was military rivalry and incessant warfare that produced a state-building dynamic. Tilly sums up this dynamic as follows:

taxation was the chief means by which the builders of states in the sixteenth century and later supported their expanding armies, which were in turn their principle instrument in establishing control of their frontiers, pushing them out, defending them against external incursions, and assuming their own priority in the use of force within those frontiers. . . So turned the tight circle connecting state-making, military institutions, and the extraction of scarce resources from a reluctant population³²

In the years following the publications of the final volume of the SSRC series, Tilly elaborated the conflict theory of European political development. In several subsequent books he showed in great detail how the “organizational and technological innovations in warfare of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. . .” gave European monarchies with “access to large volumes of men and capital a clear advantage [and the ability] to draw mass armies from their citizens and give them the means to defeat smaller units.”³³

A number of scholars followed Tilly's lead. Hendrick Spryut showed how Europe's threatening environment encouraged monarchs to use their territorial authority to build uniform, centrally-administered, territorially-wide systems of law, taxation, weights and measures, coinage, tariffs, which regularized the realm and made the extraction of men, money, and matériel to make war more efficiently and effectively.³⁴ Basing his work on that of Seeley and Hintze, Brian Downing showed how war influenced the development of both democratic and

autocratic government in Europe. He argued that late medieval Europe had certain “constitutional arrangements” that “if combined with light amounts of domestic mobilization of human and economic resources for war, provided the basis for democracy in ensuing centuries.”³⁵ Conversely, he argued monarchies confronted by a highly threatening environment that required extensive resource mobilization produced military-bureaucratic absolutism in subsequent centuries.

These works, when taken together, constitute what has come to be called the the “bellicist” theory of political development, which can be summarized as follows:

First, states survived, defeated other states and incorporated their territory, grew and prospered by mobilizing the resources, weaponry, and men to fight wars. The institutional apparatus of the modern state grew out of this war-making function, as cycles of extraction and coercion succeeded one another. Second, in order to mobilize the resources and men for war, the rulers of states had to offer inducements to subjects who gradually acquired the rights of modern citizenship, including those of equality before the law, universal suffrage, and parliamentary representation, as well as (in some cases) universal education and the social rights of the welfare state. Third, in developing its “warfighting” capacity, the state gradually developed a near monopoly on legitimate violence, disarming its civilian population and gradually accumulating an overwhelming superiority of force vis-à-vis social actors. Fourth, military power was gradually “caged” by civilian institutions, and the state’s coercive forces came to be divided between specialists in fighting external war (the military) and uniformed but civilian forces responsible for domestic order (the police).³⁶

War and Political Development Beyond Europe

The bellicist approach to political development assumes that the dialectical relationship between war and state making in early modern Europe is applicable to other areas of the world; that is, the European process of state-making-through-war is universally and globally applicable. Does it apply to areas outside of Europe, or is it a unique, not replicable pattern?

With respect to Latin America, Miguel Angel Centano has shown that the states of the region “do not appear to have enjoyed the structural boosts offered by warfare because the wars that Latin American states have fought against one another were few in number and limited in scope. Latin American inter-state war, such as the Chaco War (1832-35) and the War of the Triple Alliance (1864-70) were too limited to “produce powerful states or help consolidate national identity.”³⁷ Limited wars produced limited states. In addition, Cameron Thies has suggested that Latin American states borrowed money on the world market to fight their wars. Hence, warfare among Latin American states did not produce the internal state structure to extract the financial resources necessary to make war. War in Latin America did not produce states with the same extractive and regulation capacities as European states.³⁸

With respect to Africa, Jeffrey Herbst has shown that the bellicist theory of state making is not applicable to Africa which has a much different history of state formation. In Africa (and much of Asia) states were imposed by Europeans in the form of colonies. The leaders of these states accepted the boundaries of their states as laid down by Europeans at the Berlin Conference in 1884-85. Moreover, they were recognized by the international community, the United Nations (U.N.), and the African Union (A.U.), which guaranteed their survival.³⁹ This meant that the newly independent states were born into a non-threatening environment in which they did not have to worry about survival. Therefore, unlike Europe, where dysfunctional states disappeared, African states are kept alive by the global system of states. Without strong threats from neighboring states, the new political elites have not had to build up state capacities to extract the resources necessary to defend the state nor to weld the many ethnic groups within their states into a single people willing to give of itself to defend the nation.⁴⁰ This has created incentives to seize power over the state and focused violence to the interior of the states. Thies has shown

that the many wars that have been fought in Africa since independence have been *internal* wars among various types of groups (ethnic, political, religious) not *external* wars between states.⁴¹ Hence, African states have not built up the same extractive and regulative capacity as Latin American states much less as European ones.

While war has not had the same state building effects in states in Latin American and Africa, it has made a difference in some regions of the world but not in others. Brian Taylor and Roxana Botea found that war built a strong state in Vietnam. The French/American war in Vietnam had the effect of transforming a homogeneous, non-European people (Vietnamese) with a history of being a political community before being colonized by the French, into a modern national state with considerable capacity to extract the resources to make war. In contrast, war in Afghanistan has been state destroying and has exacerbated the differences among its many ethnic groups. Taylor and Botea conclude that “relative homogeneity” is the key variable.⁴² The more a state is ethnically homogeneous, the more war will have positive state-building effects. The more a state is ethnically heterogeneous, the more war will have state-breaking effects. Anthony Pereira concludes that war outside of Europe has not resulted in the development of strong states as it did in early modern Europe. Instead, it has led to “weak states presiding over segmented societies... and collapsed states and warlordism . . .”⁴³ The question is, why does war not have the same state-building effects in the developing states of the Third World?

War and Political Development in the Current Global Order

The answer to this question lies in the difference between the current global order and the global order before 1945. The most important difference between the current global order and the pre-1945 epoch is the coming to the fore of strong global anti-war norms that are reflected in

international law and behavior. The pre-war norm of an unrestricted right to wage war to conquer foes and acquire territory has been repudiated and replaced with the norm that war may be engaged in by a state only in self-defense or to uphold international peace under the authorization of the U.N.⁴⁴ Moreover, the idea of war as a heroic and virtuous endeavor or as a regenerative tonic for states has been replaced by a strong global anti-war ethic.⁴⁵ In the current global order *all* forms of war are strongly condemned by states. According to Martin Shaw, the “idea that war is justified only as a response to a manifest threat is now deeply ingrained.”⁴⁶

Another difference between the current global order and the pre-1945 epoch is that, today, the nation-state as a form of politico-military rule has been globalized. No other form of rule is considered legitimate and permitted on planet Earth. Every square kilometer of Earth’s terrestrial surface (except Antarctica) is under the politico-military jurisdiction of one state or another. In the period before the Second World War other forms of politico-military rule, such as empire, existed and were regarded as legitimate forms of governance.⁴⁷ Beginning in the early twentieth century, empire as a legitimate form of politico-military rule, began to be challenged and replaced by the sovereign nation-state.⁴⁸ The current global order in a “closed system” in which the state is an “independent, isolated unit possessing a freedom of will to do as it pleased.”⁴⁹

After the First World War, a war that pitted the nation-states of Western Europe (France, Britain, etc.) against the empires of central and eastern Europe (German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman), the victorious Western states (Allies) applied the principle of “self-determination of peoples” to break up the multi-ethnic Eastern empires and replace them with independent nation-states. After the Second World War the principle of self-determination further delegitimized colonialism, which eventually resulted in the break up of the overseas empires that European

states had acquired over the previous centuries. By 1975 nearly all of these empires had been dismantled and replaced by nominally sovereign nation-states. The last empire to disappear was that of the Russians, in the guise of the USSR, which collapsed in 1991 into 15 sovereign states. This means that the sovereign nation-state has now been universalized to all regions of the globe, although some argue that China is an empire in nation-state form. According to Kalevi Holsti, “[w]e are witnessing the creation of a genuinely global international system whose essential and primary units are states constructed upon distinct social communities.”⁵⁰

Moreover, Robert Latham has shown that the current global order is unique in that after the Second World War, under United States “overlordship,” the Western powers were able to make the liberal form of the state the only form of politico-military rule “through which just political outcomes can be pursued.”⁵¹ Thus, the current global order has increasingly become a world of liberal states. As will be shown below, one form of war in the current world is about “liberal order making.”⁵²

The compartmentalization of the globe into more than 200 nominally sovereign nation-states is reinforced in several ways: (1) sovereignty is reciprocally shared and recognized by the states of the current global system; (2) international organizations, such as the U.N., uphold and respect the sovereignty of members states; and (3) violations of sovereignty are universally condemned by the states of the system.⁵³

The current global order of sovereign nation-states and the strong norms present within it in support of territorial integrity, and norms against violations of sovereignty, have created what Michael Desch has called a “threat trough – a period of significantly reduced international security competition [which] may reduce the scope and cohesion of many states.”⁵⁴ Thus, each

of the states extant in the present global system has an “insurance policy against mortal danger.”⁵⁵

The strong anti-war ethic in the current global order makes states reluctant to use military force to settle disputes among themselves, has had two consequences. One is the waning of inter-state war.⁵⁶ John Mueller has famously argued that such Clausewitzian war has become “obsolete.” He writes,

war lacks the romantic appeal it once enjoyed, and . . . has been substantially discredited as a method. Moreover, there has been a major shift in values: prosperity has become something of an overriding goal, and war – even inexpensive war – is almost universally seen as an especially counterproductive method for advancing this goal. Finally, prosperity and economic growth have been enshrined as major status, and even power symbols in the international arena, occupying much of the turf previously claimed by military powers and by success in war.⁵⁷

Even General Charles Krulak, former commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, has claimed that “the days of armed conflict between nation-states are ending.”⁵⁸ Thus, the traditional view of war no longer describes war in the current global order. War has been transformed from “pitched battles between organized forces into more fragmented, uncontrolled, and indeterminate series of military events.”⁵⁹

According to Mueller, there are now two types of “military events” in the current global order. One of these, and the most common, is low-intensity localized internal wars being fought within the Third World’s poorest states. The other is what he calls “policing wars,” that is “militarized efforts . . . by developed countries to bring order to civil conflicts . . .”⁶⁰

Internal wars, according to General Rupert Smith, former commander of UNPROFOR in Bosnia in 1995, are fought “amongst the people, not on the battlefield.”⁶¹ In other words,

internal “wars have blurred and dissolved conventional distinctions between peoples, armies, and governments.”⁶²

There are two interpretations of the significance of these internal wars relevant to political development in the current global order. One is that they are necessary for the imposition and/or maintenance of a new political order not unlike the kinds of “primitive power accumulation” struggles that took place within the monarchies of early modern Europe.⁶³ Along these lines, Stathis Kalyvas has argued that civil wars of the contemporary world are not fundamentally different from those of the past. For Kalyvas, warlords are never merely criminals or bandits. He sees them as “primitive state builders” who levy taxes, administer justice, maintain order, and generally assume the burdens of government in the areas they control.⁶⁴

The other interpretation is that these wars are not state-building wars nor are they even civil wars. According to Christopher Cramer they are “not repeating what European states underwent hundreds of years ago.”⁶⁵ Mark Duffield has argued that internal wars in the current global order are a new kind of war, “network war;” that is, war that “works through and around states. Instead of conventional armies, the new [network] wars typically oppose and ally the transborder resources networks of state incumbents, social groups, diasporas, strongmen, and so on.”⁶⁶

Thus, in many cases internal wars are kept alive by outside powers, remittances from diaspora communities, international aid projects, and even humanitarian intervention. In such wars “[t]he political and . . . economic support of the masses becomes superfluous; the resources vital to waging war can be requisitioned without mass support, resulting in an endless spiral of violence.”⁶⁷

Of these two interpretations, the latter is a more accurate rendition of the current relationships between war and political development. History is not repeating itself. Ann Hironaka has shown that there has been a dramatic increase in the number and length of internal wars. For her, this increase is primarily the result of the way in which states were formed in the current global order. She says:

. . .the population of states before 1945 was composed of strong battle-scarred states that had proven their capability to withstand both interstate and civil war. Since 1945, most colonies achieved independence and sovereign statehood not through victory in war but through the encouragement and support of the international system. Furthermore, international norms and laws increasingly discourage territorial reshuffling through wars of annexation or secession.⁶⁸

The current “threat-trough” means that state builders are deprived of the external threats necessary to build and maintain viable states. The elites in new states tend to face “internal threats in the form of attempted *coups d’état*, secession, ethnic, language, and religious violence, and subversion . . .”⁶⁹ Therefore, William Reno argues elites in the new states have “abjured state-building strategies” that would build up the extractive and regulative capacities of their states. Instead, rulers buy loyalty to themselves, not the state, by using state assets and patronage that diverts scarce resources away from state-building projects and into private bank accounts. Moreover, because the army is deprived of external enemies, it tends to look inward and frequently becomes drawn into internal power struggles among contending groups. Frequently, the army becomes a player in internal power struggles and seizes governing power for itself. Warlordism and predatory politics prevail.⁷⁰

The abjuring of state-building strategies has resulted in a plethora of “weak,” “fragile,” “failed,” and “collapsed” states in the current global order.⁷¹ Some of these states, such as Somalia, are mere “geographic expressions.” Their governments do not have a monopoly over the legitimate means of coercion and, therefore, do not exercise jurisdiction over their territories

and people. Moreover, the societies within many failed states to “varying degrees are fractured into more meaningful and effective political communities based on tribal, ethnic, religious, and bases. State and nation do not coincide . . .”⁷²

Thus, political development in the current global order has come to be seen as *liberal state* building; that is, constructing political institutions in failed or collapsed states “through long-term efforts by outside powers to rebuild indigenous state institutions.”⁷³ Essentially, political development in the current global order is about assisting new, failing, and collapsed states to build/restore “the state’s monopoly over the means of coercion” by reestablishing its “political institutions (governments, ministries, local administration, national armies, police forces, judiciaries, etc.), the promotion of political participation (e.g., the holding of elections) and human rights, the provision of social services, and economic recovery.”⁷⁴ Political development has become “post-conflict reconstruction” of state institutions.

Post-conflict reconstruction has not been a very successful strategy for strengthening the nation-state. Outside powers can insinuate themselves between warring parties and enforce ceasefires, but they cannot make the warring parties understand that they belong to a common “nation.” Moreover, aid from outside in the form of monetary and technical assistance (from the U.N. and donor states) does little to strengthen the state. All too often such assistance has been used by domestic elites to strengthen their grip on power and is used against internal enemies rather than to build state capacity.

In sum, the new states of the Third World were brought forth from a

process of state formation which is qualitatively different from the trajectories of the modern states of Europe, North American, and elsewhere. They are fragile entities mainly as a result of the power of self-seeking elites in combination with a history of external domination. Most fragile states came about because colonialism was no longer acceptable. They survive because the international community has been willing to accept their claims to sovereignty.⁷⁵

In the current global order the historical notion of international society as being anarchical and the state as a zone of peace and security has been turned around: “there is an international system of relative order with fairly secure protection of the borders and territories of fragile states, and there is a domestic realm with a high degree of insecurity and conflict.”⁷⁶

Mueller’s second type of war, “policing wars”, are wars fought by developed states in the name of the liberal global order, democratic governance, and universal human rights. According to Jabri, policing wars reconstitute war

so that there are no longer enemies as such; rather war is fought against “concepts” or sets of practices as is the case in the so-called “war against terrorism.” In this context, it is no longer possible to distinguish war from policing activity conducted in the name of humanity as a whole and legitimised in the name of human rights . . .⁷⁷

In the age of perpetual policing war, there are no enemy states to be defeated decisively, only “bad guys” (terrorists, criminal syndicates, drug cartels, pirates) who are everywhere and nowhere. The distinction between “peacetime” and “wartime” disappears. As Dudziak has written: “Wartime has become the only kind of time we have . . .”⁷⁸

As the territorial integrity of states is no longer at stake, “war has become risk management in all but name.”⁷⁹ Increasingly, war resembles policing. The United States Army and Marine Corps have adopted policing models of military operations and are restructuring their forces to act as a global constabulary.⁸⁰ Increasingly, police argot is used to describe a state’s enemies, as in Osama bin Laden as American’s “public enemy number one.” Shaw calls policing war “risk-transfer war,” by which he means wars undertaken by the developed states of the West that (1) “respond to plausible perceptions of risk to Western interests, norms, and values;” (2) “must be limited in the risks they create for Western politics, economies and

societies”; and (3) “must minimize electoral risk for governments and (if possible) maximize their gains.”⁸¹

Furthermore, such wars must be time-limited; limited to distinct zones of war; must minimize casualties to Western troops; should rely heavily on airpower; must kill the “bad guys” efficiently, quickly, and discreetly; minimize the “accidental” killing of civilians; be waged with “precision” weapons; hide the suffering and death caused by the war; spread the post-war costs as widely as possible among the interstate system; annex “humanitarian” organizations in order to compensate for the violence and destruction caused; and manage the mass media in order to maintain the “narrative” that explains the reasons for the war.⁸²

Policing wars transfer the risks of war from states to their own militaries, which, in turn, make strenuous efforts to minimize risks to their soldiers and air crews and seek to impose life-risks on enemy combatants and minimize those for civilians. In order to reduce risks the developed states consistently adopt methods of war that effectively transfer risk from its own personnel to civilian non-combatants so that far more civilians are killed and injured than their own personnel.

Risk-transfer war has widened the gap between the military and society.⁸³ A major development in recent years has been the rise of private military contractors (PMCs) as states seek to transfer the risk of policing wars away from their general populations. Conscripted armies have been replaced with all-volunteer professional ones. Raising an army now depends on market forces to recruit what amounts to military labor usually from the less educated and poor within the state. Policing wars become a kind of “jobs program” for the poor and PMCs who recruit demobilized military personnel who form the manpower for the privatized military industry. According to Joas and Knöbel, the use of PMCs

shields the hiring states from questions about the legitimacy of a given war. The civilians casualties caused by these private firms are not ascribed to the hiring state, and the dead staff members are not fallen soldiers requiring public remembrance. . . [which] enable Western states to wage (potentially more vigorous) wars, in what ever parts of the world, and usher in. . . military violence as a more or less normal instrument of policy.⁸⁴

It should be noted that PMCs have played a major role in many Third World states where certain local actors employ PMCs to achieve short term military advantage in the struggle for control of the state. More and more, armed force will be wielded by non-state actors who will hire the services of mercenary companies such as DynCorp, Brown and Root, Executive Outcomes, Saladin Security, and Blackwater to put troops in the field, build and maintain military bases, train security forces, and conduct air surveillance.⁸⁵

Shaw sees risk-transfer war as a new form of militarism he writes:

Classical (total-war) militarism influenced society by mobilizing it (through conscription) directly into the army and into war-industries and pro-war political organizations. New 'post-militarist' militarism does not mobilize directly, but only indirectly to achieve passive political support: it is measured in opinion-poll ratings for military ventures and for leaders and parties that carry them out . . . minimizing . . . casualties is considered the bottom line of domestic political support that . . . becomes the modus operandi of war itself.⁸⁶

According to Jabri and others, risk-transfer policing wars are also a new form of imperialism.

For her, they

function as an element, a tool, or a technology in the government of populations, and specifically their disciplining into societies more amenable to management [by] the [states] of the liberal democratic West. [They are] twenty-first century forms of colonial war now expressed in terms of state building and peace building.⁸⁷

In sum, as Cramer has written, the purpose of risk-transfer policing war is to “rebuild a nation-state in the self-image of the Western liberal state. [This involves] transplanting Western models of social, political, and economic organization into war shattered states in order to

control civil conflict: In other words, pacification through political and economic liberalization.”⁸⁸

All risk-transfer wars have been directed against Third World states or non-state actors by the developed states of the West. Therefore, no sharp distinction can be made between policing and internal wars. They occupy a “single frame.”⁸⁹ Increasingly, policing wars and internal wars connect, overlap and intersect in what David Keen has called “resource wars.” According to Keen internal wars create large financial opportunities fueled by international financial and military assistance. Policing wars of the Western states create financial opportunities for their military-industrial complexes. The arms industries of Western states and the factions in Third World states are frequently interconnected. Both benefit from the idea of permanent war. Keen suggests that the financial incentives are so strong that many favor the prolongation of the war. The object of resource war is not to win but keep the war going.⁹⁰

Conclusion: The Transformation of War and the State

It is too early to say with confidence that the “threat trough” that exists in the current global order is a historical anomaly, a long-term trend, or a permanent condition. Inter-state war may be cyclical, its frequency waxing and waning rather than gradually declining and eventually disappearing.⁹¹ At best it can be said that inter-state war is waning in all regions of the world but remains a distinct possibility in a few places on the planet where states still directly oppose one another with conventional massed armed force, such as on the Korean peninsula and the Indian sub-continent.

Nonetheless, in general, war in the current era is quite different from war in the pre-1945 period. Internal wars and global policing wars have replaced Clausewitzian inter-state war in the

current global order. Policing wars by advanced Western states are not about defending the national territory against the armies of other states or winning territory. Rather, they are about managing the liberal global order, advancing free trade, and rebuilding so-called “failed states” into the Western image of the successful liberal state. In the advanced Western states the armed forces are increasingly being reconstituted into a global constabulary.

A gap is widening between the military and people in Western states. Risk-transfer policing wars are detached, decoupled, and insulated from the general population who are no longer obligated to serve in the armed forces and who increasingly become “spectators” of wars conducted by all-volunteer military “teams,” some of which are constituted by private military contractors. Rather than being asked to sacrifice for the war effort, people are encouraged to go about their daily lives.⁹² Increasingly, war is becoming the state’s task with little citizen involvement. One could say that the Clausewitzian relationship between the state, the army, and the people has become increasingly meaningless.

Internal wars in Third World states are not civil wars as such but are power struggles among domestic elite factions, aided and abetted by outside forces, for control of the state, usually for private gain. Like policing wars, internal wars in Third World states are also decoupled and detached from the general population of the state. The people are ignored, abused, exploited, victimized, and killed by the factions as they struggle to gain control of the state. Internal wars do nothing to build the relationship between the state, the army, and the people.

Essentially, war in the current global order, decoupled as it is from national communities, has created new forms of the state that are increasingly denationalized and deterritorialized. The state is not withering away but being transformed into post-national, liberal states within which

war fighting has become increasingly privatized and transglobal in scope. As such, it operates according to its own logic, not unlike transnational corporations. Its connection to the state and people has become increasingly tenuous. War has become increasingly marketized as have so many state functions in the current liberal global order.

Notes

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24. *Ibid.*, p. 269.
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