Wars since 1945: An Introduction

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While most Europeans lived through an exceptionally peaceful period of history, termed 'The Long Peace' by John Lewis Gaddis,[2] the populations of other continents were decidedly less fortunate. What was a 'Cold War' for the Europeans was anything but 'cold' for the Koreans, Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians, for most Arab peoples, the Afghans, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Indians, the populations of the Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea, and of most of Latin America. How, then, can one be so sanguine as to characterise this period as that of a 'Cold War' or a 'long peace'? The reason is that the long-expected Third World War has not (yet?) taken place. It was the prospect of such a Third World War, a 'total' and in all probability nuclear war, that attracted the attention of concerned minds in Europe and North America, the cultures that over centuries produced most publications on the subjects of war, strategy, military affairs and international relations.

1. An overview

Admittedly, Americans, Britons, Frenchmen, Belgians, Portuguese and the Dutch were soon reminded of the existence of a world outside the Europe-centric East-West conflict. Almost immediately after the end of the Second World War, Britain and France became involved in decolonisation wars in Asia and Africa, and America woke up to the enduring reality of lesser wars with Korea. American strategists like Robert Osgood turned to Clausewitzian concepts to define these: they called them 'limited wars', since no nuclear weapons were used, and because they did not escalate to global war.[3] While many of them recognised the continuing occurrence of such non-nuclear, non-global wars, Americans (and indeed Britons and Frenchmen) tended to see them as part of the larger framework of the Cold War. Thus most hot conflicts of the Cold War contained a dimension of superpower and great power intervention

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[2] John Lewis Gaddis, *The Long Peace: Inquiries into the History of the Cold War*, New York 1987.

[3] Robert Osgood, *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy*, Chicago 1957; idem, *Limited War Revisited*, Boulder 1979.

and negotiation, the superpowers being not only the USA and the USSR, but also China (another factor often overlooked from a 'Western' viewpoint – think of all those who claim today in the West that Communism is 'dead' and the Cold War 'over', an Occidento-centric notion that cannot be shared by any East or Southeast Asian!).

The Germans, by contrast, still in a state of shock and introversion between 1945 and 1955, totally missed the experience and significance of France's Indochina war, Britain's Malayan experience, and of Korea. The Bundeswehr was formed only in 1955, followed by the formalisation of the East German army in 1956, and both were given one exclusive task: the defence of their respective German territories. To a greater degree than anybody else in the West, the general public in the Federal Republic, but also its strategists, foreign policy experts and military planners focused on the spectre of World War III, for anything more limited seemed unthinkable to them, at least for the European 'theatre'. And without any extra-European links or obligations, it was logical for them to focus all their attention exclusively on this region and its security.

In most Western countries, especially those that had lost all their colonies by 1945, the study of and involvement in wars outside Europe was left to a limited number of experts – regional specialists, professional soldiers. American, British and French military journals also carried a high proportion of articles on such wars, and their armed forces were obliged to give this matter considerable attention, since this is where they saw actual bloody operations, not just the virtual war of NATO's exercises. But even in the US, in the course of two decades of involvement in wars outside Europe, the military practice of warfare was long subordinated to considerations about major East-West war. Most notably the Vietnam War was fought, not as a function of what was necessary to produce an American success in Vietnam, but according to arcane theories about US-Soviet negotiations in a (potentially nuclear) crisis.[4] In other countries, notably the Federal Republic of Germany, real shooting wars outside Europe were so remote that leading German politicians and military men could indulge in the luxury of claiming that war could no longer be an instrument of politics – although it blatantly was, from Latin America to Asia's Far East.

Not surprisingly, Israeli historians, military and strategists always focused on real wars.[5] Israel in particular, from its troubled birth as an independent state in the midst of armed conflict, had never been allowed the luxury to lower its guard and indulge in metaphysical speculations. The study of major

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[4] Colonel Harry G. Summers Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, Novato 1982.
[5] See for example Jehuda L. Wallach, *The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation: The Theories of Clausewitz and Schlieffen and their Effect on the German Conduct of Two World Wars*, Westport 1988. See also the works of Azar Gat and Martin van Creveld.

campaigns of the Second World War continued unabated and was not dismissed (as in most of the NATO member states between the mid-1950s and the early 1980s) as irrelevant and belonging to a previous age. The successive Arab-Israeli conflicts (treated in this volume by Motti Golani) acquired a nuclear dimension (and thus the potential of escalating to war with mass civilian as well as military casualties) once Israel acquired such weapons. And yet the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 have been among the most 'classical' since 1945, with tank battles, air raids on purely military targets – all that professional armies had been training for in the first half of the century. These wars were almost entirely nationalistic rather than driven by struggle between Communism and Western Liberal-Democratic ideals, and shared many features with the mobile warfare of the Second World War, using air power in support of military operations, as opposed to the demoralisation of the adversary by targeting cities and civilians. 'Classical' nationalist rivalry also characterises the relationship between India and Pakistan, whose armed clashes throughout the Cold War over the mutually coveted province of Kashmir were again very 'classical'. Despite its bilaterally nuclear dimension (since the Indian test in 1974 and the Pakistani test in 1998), this relationship has continued to involve armed clashes, teetering on the brink of open war.

Many other wars of this period, by contrast, were characterised by ideology[6] and elements of civil war. The attempt by Communist North Korea to reunify Korea by invading the South in mid-1950 was both an ideological and a nationalist issue, and resulted primarily in a civil war into which foreign forces were drawn.[7] The same basic pattern of a nationalist attempt to reunite a divided country, of ideology, civil war with superpower intervention, can be found in France's Indochina War and America's Vietnam War, as Marc Frey explains in his contribution to this volume. The pattern has much in common with the Wars of Religion in Early Modern European history, with ideology replacing religion as main line of division, and indeed with the ideological dimension of the European Civil War of 1917–1945.[8] Ideological patterns also characterised

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[6] Nationalism, or the glorification of any group, whether it may be identified by ethnic, social, economic, or religious criteria, is of course also an ideology. But genetic group appurtenances, genetically-determined group identity, as a criterion of 'friend/foe identification', seems to go back further in history than many other human constructs of 'we-ness', as testified by the etymological origins of words like *natio* and *gens*. The same is true for 'ethnic' criteria for group-appurtenance (and the conflicts between 'ethnic' groups), although they differ from genetic determinants in so far as they can largely be acquired. See Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, London 1971, and also Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity*, Oxford 1999.

[7] For recent literature, see Jeffrey Grey, Review Article The Korean War, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004), pp. 667-676.

[8] Edward Hallett Carr, *International Relations between the Two World Wars, 1919–1939*, London 1947.

the wars in Africa during the Cold War. The anti-colonial wars that pushed the French out of Algeria and other African possessions, and the conflicts following British relinquishment of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) had ideological dimensions. In the 1970s Angola, Guinea and Mozambique were battlefields of superpower wars-by-proxy.

Latin America experienced a few inter-state wars over (mineral-rich, or strategically important) border regions, with an almost exclusively local dimension. These included the armed clashes between Nicaragua and Costa Rica (1985/86), Peru and Ecuador, Venezuela and Guyana, El Salvador and Honduras (the 'Football War' of 1969), Argentina and Chile, and Britain's last colonial war, the Falklands/Malvinas War with Argentina. But there were Communist guerrilla movements in almost all countries. These incarnated ideological conflicts about the government of each country and the nature of its society. Argentina entered the Cold War under the military regime of Juan Domingo Perón (1943–1955, and again 1973/74). Further military regimes followed, which came to the end only with the defeat in the war over the Falklands/Malvinas in 1983. These authoritarian regimes, which were guilty of thousands of political murders, drew popular support or toleration from the fear of terrorism, which was rife especially in the early 1970s. In 1952/53, Bolivia underwent a nationalist-cum-Socialist revolution with imposed state ownership of key resources (tin mines) and sweeping agrarian reforms. But the leading forces quarrelled and fell out, and were ousted by the military dictatorship of General René Barrientos Ortuño. The guerrilla movement that fought his regime included, most famously, Ernesto 'Ché' Guevara, who was killed in 1967. A series of further military regimes followed, ending only in 1982. Brazil, Argentina's rival for predominance in Latin America, also fell under military regimes that felt called upon to contain political instability with the potential of a greater drift towards Communism. Under one of these authoritarian regimes, that of General Emilio Garrastazu Medici, state-sponsored genocide against large numbers of Indios could be carried out unchecked in the mid-1970s.

Chile, too, lived through periods of extreme polarisation of politics, akin to the situation in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1973, General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte seized power in an army coup, and held on to government until 1988. Particularly in the early part of his regime, repressions of opponents were bloody, including arrests, deportations and executions. But overall numbers of casualties in this intra-state conflict were small compared with Columbia. This was the first Latin American country after the Second War to be plunged into civil war (1948), which was ended with a military dictatorship (1953–56), leaving 200,000 dead. The mid-1980s and the mid-1990s produced new guerrilla movements in Columbia, but more important by then was the inability of the state organs to check enormous drugs-based criminal activities.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Ecuador saw a series of virtual, mostly military, dictatorships. El Salvador's political health never recovered from the crisis of 1977, and the country was plunged into civil war from 1981–92. Guatemala's fights between guerrilla movements and repressive governments from 1966 to 1970 were followed by a massive terror campaign in 1970/71; effectively the country suffered a 36-year-long civil war, which was only ended in 1996. Honduras teetered on the brink of civil war in the late 1970s, followed by a military regime in 1978–82. In 1978/79 Nicaragua also experienced a civil war between political opponents from the left-wing and right-wing, repressive governments, resulting in about 40,000 dead. In 1981 the US supported an invasion by counter-revolutionaries based in Honduras. The Nicaraguan conflict had a pronounced ethnic dimension: tribes of Indios became involved, as the guerrilla movements supported them against expropriation; the right-wing government in 1982 'ethnically cleansed' border areas of Miskito Indians, transferring 8,500 of them into central parts of the country. But about ten thousand fled to Honduras, resisting this resettlement. This civil war was only declared formally terminated with the disarmament of the 'Contras' in 1990. Paraguay went through a civil war in 1947, and acquired its Cold War military regime in 1954 when General Alfredo Stroessner seized power, himself overthrown only in 1989 by a military coup. In Peru, internal tensions were suppressed by a series of police dictatorships in the 1970s and early 1980s. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Maoist group 'Sendero Luminoso' (shining path) fought the state with guerrilla tactics, with its main leader, Oscar Ramirez Durand a.k.a. Feliciano, arrested only in 1999. In Uruguay, an urban guerrilla movement called the Tupamaros came into being in 1963, and remained active for two decades. It furnished the excuse for several repressive, in part military, regimes.

Cuba was the main mediator of Soviet support for the Communist movements in Latin America, with the Soviet military stationed there 1961–1993. But Cuba also invested its own resources, human and other, from 1959 onwards when Fidel Castro seized power. 20,000 Cubans fought in the Angolan civil war in 1975/76 on the side of the Communists (its troops were only withdrawn 1989). Cuba also intervened in the civil war in Mozambique, sent military personnel to Liberia, and in 1978 Cuban soldiers fought alongside Ethiopia in the conflict with Somalia over Oganden.

Most of these intra-state conflicts in Latin American countries between 1945 and the end of the 20th century had an element of guerrilla or small war, of long, drawn-out low intensity conflict. Typical of all guerrilla warfare, they contained elements of terrorism (the manifestation of organised violence at the lowest end of low intensity conflict). They lacked the large-scale clashes on a designated battlefield which is usually taken to be a key characteristic of 'classical', or high intensity war. Almost all state-organised repressions and perse-

cutions of opponents of the respective regimes involved a degree of democide[9] and occasional genocide (persecution of tribes of Indios, notably in Brazil and Nicaragua). During the Cold War, virtually all these Latin American conflicts had a pronounced inter-state, indeed a global dimension. They were variations on the world-wide ideological dispute between Communists/Socialists on the one hand and conservatives, authoritarians and militarists on the other, with a wide spectrum of views between these two poles. Because the USA on the one side, and the USSR and China in alliance or in rivalry on the other, incarnated the two poles of this debate, they respectively tended to back the sides they found more congenial. Weapons, military advisers and other forms of support poured into South America, feeding the flames of conflict; arms embargoes were also practised, but often with effects on one side only.

Another continent rife with war during the time of military stand-off in Europe was Africa, from where one example has been selected for a special study in this volume, Kenya (see Dierk Walter's paper). In Africa, too, external intervention and the global ideological contest played an important role. One international dimension which was far more pronounced than on the American Continent was the involvement of the colonial powers in a series of wars of liberation, or in conflicts that turned violent immediately after independence. Britain and France, but also Belgium, Spain, and very notably Portugal, partly became embroiled by resisting independence, or by feeling sufficiently responsible towards the regimes and systems they had established to intervene again even after independence. This European dimension was extremely important in Algeria, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Kenya, Nigeria, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial (Spanish) Guinea, Liberia and Rwanda. Military regimes seized power at various times in Mauretania, Dahomey (Benin), Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Niger, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Lesotho, and Somalia; moreover military coups were attempted in Ivory Coast. While several large-scale civil wars flared up only in the 1990s, all of them followed troubled years which had seen endemic violence and casualties, albeit on a smaller scale. For example, the Liberian civil war that got under way in 1990 came after decades of strikes ending in violence and state-organised repressions including numerous executions.

Africa also saw many inter-state disputes about borders, most of which had been drawn by Europeans and Americans in the 20th century. Among these were disputes between Tanzania and Uganda, between Uganda and Kenya, between Morocco and Spain over Spanish Sahara. Several wars, both before

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[9] Rudolph J. Rummel, *Democide: Nazi Genocide and Mass Murder*, New Brunswick 1992; idem, *Statistics of Democide: Genocide and Mass Murder since 1900*, Charlottesville 1997. Democide is defined by Rummel as the systematic killing (or starving etc.) of a population by its own state's government.

and after the supposed 1990 divide, were wars of secession, in which parts of states, often richer in minerals than the rest of the state, aspired to independence. These included the long-standing conflicts between Somalia and Ethiopia over Ogaden, and the attempt of Biafra to achieve independence from Nigeria in 1967–70 (estimated to have cost the lives of up to a million Ibos who were mainly starved to death). There was no profound difference underlying the causes of Eritrean secession from Ethiopia in 1993, which was followed by bloody border conflicts in 1998 with some of the most extensive tank battles since the Second World War. All these conflicts had a pronounced quality of ethnic antagonism, most stunningly shown in the Rwandan civil war of 1994–99: during the period of May until September 1994 alone, about one million people were killed, mainly Tutsi, which amounts to a number of deaths comparable over time to that achieved by the Germans in the gas chambers during the Second World War. In Rwanda, however, the sophisticated element of the 'industrialisation' of killing was missing: the deaths were dealt out by blows of the most basic weapon of all, the machete.

In Asia, too, the genocidal or democidal element was overwhelmingly present during the Cold War, quantified by the peerless research of Rudolph Rummel.[10] In the famous instances of democide in China (with perhaps 35 million victims killed in the Cultural Revolution in 1964–75 alone), Cambodia (leaving almost four million dead), Vietnam (leaving 3.8 million dead), and Indonesia in 1965, the rationale for the killing was clearly ideologically driven: groups of people were persecuted on account of particular criteria defined by ideology. These and other figures lead Rummel to conclude that more people were killed by their own governments ('democide') in the 20th century than by the militaries of other states. And the death figures of the second half of the 20th century are, if at all, not much lower than those incurred during the two world wars, another stunning fact that puts an end to any comforting notion of a Long Peace.

The groups defined as enemies to be fought, persecuted or exterminated, might be identified as such on (real or imputed) ethnic, ideological or religious grounds. The ethnic element is almost always present in conflicts in Africa and many conflicts in Asia, from the oppression of (Muslim) Kurds as an ethnic minority by the three (Muslim, but ethnically very different) states in which they live, to the occupation of (partly Christian, partly animist) East Timor by the military of Muslim Indonesia. As this second case suggests, the dividing lines of religion are at least as important as purely 'ethnic' ones.

The religious pattern is found in Nigeria, where the Christian Ibos tried to establish their own state with Biafra, where the north is Islamic and in tension with the non-Islamic, non-Sharia south. Religion is the principal dividing line

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[10] Ibid.

in the Middle East conflict, and was the test that sent at least one and a half million citizens of East Pakistan/Bangladesh to their deaths in the early 1970s. However many other factors are invoked, from economic to ideological, religion has been the dividing line in the Northern Ireland conflict (a conflict of such low intensity compared with the others mentioned here that one hardly dares mention it in this overview). The religious line also divided the warring factions in Yugoslavia, and was seen as the central factor determining ethnicity among the Slav speaking Yugoslavs (see Marie-Janine Calic's contribution to this volume).

Focusing on political structures, one also finds a pattern of state-creation wars and wars of contested statehood (including secession, or the wrestling of several groups to dominate within such a state), along the lines identified by Johannes Burkhardt for the Thirty Years War in Europe.[11] Very little of classical, state-centred international relations theory ever applied to Africa, most of which had never known statehood in the European sense before entering its post-colonial phase. Examples of state-creation wars are not only the wars of anti-colonial independence, such as that of Algeria against France, or Mozambique, Guinea and Angola against Portugal (ending in their respective independence in 1974 and 1975), the insurrections in Rhodesia in the following years against white rule (ending in independence of Zimbabwe in 1980). Conflicts that contest the power of existing, local states include the endemic violence in Algeria in the 1980s and 1990s, the civil war in Congo 1960–65, the violence between the Ibo and the Nigerian government in the late 1960s, the war in the late 1990s between Ethiopia and secessionist Eritrea, and, on a different continent, the Chechens' ongoing attempt to achieve independence from the Russian Federation since the 1990s.

2. Some observations

The second half of the 20th century was not a period of peace for most parts of the world outside Europe; indeed, if anything, after 1945 human fatality through organised violence dramatically increased in Africa, large parts of Asia, and Latin America. Moreover, the language and concepts used by writers on war and security (writers who, as we have noted, are predominantly 'Westerners'[12]), distorted this bloody fact. As they focused on the prospect of a Third World War, a war they imagined to be total, of the greatest possible magnitude (global) and highest possible intensity (nuclear), they tended to think of anything short of this as limited, local, and of low intensity. The

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[11] Johannes Burkhardt, *Der Dreißigjährige Krieg*, Frankfurt a.M. 1992.
[12] Here taken to mean Europeans, and English-speakers from the rest of the world.

Korean and Vietnam Wars were thus seen by Western commentators as local wars, and the dearth of pitched battles during most of the Vietnam War made them describe it as a low intensity conflict, even though it certainly was not a low intensity conflict for the Vietnamese. Moreover, classical definitions of war were utterly state-centric, as the state alone was defined as having the right to exercise violence, and thus monopolised it. 'Civil war' is therefore often discounted from any list of 'wars', because by definition, one side at least is not a recognised state, but (mostly) a group challenging it (or the regime that controls the recognised state).

Since the 17th century, war was waged in Europe within increasingly defined legal contexts, included formal declarations of war, armistices and peace treaties. Precisely because Western notions of a just war and legitimate recourse to violence were increasingly circumscribed by international and state law, warring groups in the more recent past have tended to shun formal declarations of war and adherence to both *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*. Accordingly, many 'wars' in the popular sense of large-scale, organised human violence were not referred to as such, even by parties to the conflict. Instead, they were called 'crises' (such as the Suez Crisis), 'emergencies' (the Malay emergency), 'events' ('les évènements de l'Algérie' was the official French term for the War of 1954–62 until the French National Assembly decided to call a spade a spade in 1997), 'insurrections' or 'insurgencies' (implying the right of a 'legitimate' state to crush them), guerrilla (or, nicely tautologically, 'guerrilla warfare' with its connotation – in the West – of being pro-Communist, challenging a legitimate – state – order enshrined in the state's monopoly of violence). 'Operations other than war', a term that came into use in the US in the 1990s, can involve thousands of casualties, and simply revolve around the fact that in order to engage in them, according to the political practice based on the US constitution, no formal declaration of war (and thus, vote in Congress) is needed.

The retreat since 1945 of what Westerners would term 'war' in its classical form (i.e. fought by states, according to a set of laws, rules and conventions) has led Martin van Creveld to argue at the end of the Cold War that 'Clausewitzian' (i.e. inter-state) war was dying out. With wars taking place within states rather than between them, he argued, the world was moving forward to the past, namely to the sorts of war Europe had experienced in the Middle Ages, when 'states' according to the classical definition of the term (with the state holding the monopoly of the use of force) did not yet exist.[13] While it does Clausewitz injustice to identify his writing only with 'classical' inter-state war, van Creveld had a point. It applied not only to the end of the Cold War,

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[13] Martin van Creveld, *On Future War*, London 1991 (published in the US under the title *The Transformation of War*, New York 1991).

but to most of the 20th century, and particularly to most armed conflicts between organised groups of human beings, *vulgo*, wars, which have taken place since 1945.

Mary Kaldor's argument, which she made in 1999, that we are witnessing 'new' wars, or new forms of war now that the Cold War is over, is therefore not very convincing.[14] She described these as being about 'identity politics in contrast to the geo-political or ideological goals of earlier wars', where 'identity politics' refers to 'the claim to power on the basis of a particular identity – be it national, clan, religious or linguistic'. Yet this criterion can be readily applied to the German National Socialists or the Japanese in the 1930s and early 1940s, who claimed superiority for racial reasons, to all post-colonial warfare in Africa which focused on tribal or religious dividing lines, to the partly violent persecutions of cultural minorities and the suppression of their languages in Turkey since the 1920s, to name but a few old 'new' examples.

The second characteristic Mary Kaldor ascribed to her 'new' wars is the involvement of significant diaspora communities (and their funding) in wars, again something that calls to mind old 'new' examples. These include the role of Communists worldwide as a 'fifth column' for the Soviet Union since the Russian Revolution, the parts played by Greek expatriate communities in the US and Australia during the Greek Civil War, and by Chinese expatriate communities all over Asia in the struggle between Chinese Nationalists and Chinese Communists in the late 1940s, the Jewish lobby in the US and Arab funding for the Palestinians and their respective roles (direct and indirect) in the Middle East conflict, again, to name but a few.

Kaldor went on to point to the 'changed mode of warfare', meaning the use of guerrilla and counterinsurgency, as opposed to pitched battles and decisive encounters and the clear and immediate aim of capturing territory. Again, this represents a form of war that was practised throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, either in isolation or alongside 'major war' (for the latter we can invoke examples from the Napoleonic Wars, when the term 'guerrilla' was coined, to the Second World War with its widespread partisan warfare side-shows). Guerrilla and counterinsurgency are certainly the main forms of war in most of the instances of real wars since 1945 that we have listed above. The supposedly different aim of guerrilla in new wars, no longer to 'capture the

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[14] Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*, 2nd edn. Cambridge 2001, pp. 6-9. In Germany, Kaldor's and van Creveld's arguments were taken up and popularised for a non-English-reading audience by Herfried Münkler, *Die neuen Kriege*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 2002. For a critical discussion, see Martin Kahl & Ulrich Teusch, Sind die "neuen Kriege" wirklich neu?; Sven Chojnacki, Wandel der Kriegsformen? – Ein kritischer Literaturbericht, both in: *Leviathan* 32 (2004), pp. 382-401 resp. pp. 402-424; Monika Heupel/Bernhard Zangl, Von „alten" und „neuen" Kriegen – Zum Gestaltwandel kriegerischer Gewalt, in: *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 45 (2004), S. 346-369.

hearts and minds' of the populations, but to sow 'fear and terror', both coexisted horribly in all the Cold War conflicts we have sketched. The involvement of 'paramilitary units, local warlords, criminal gangs, police forces, mercenary groups and also regular armies including breakaway units of regular armies' can be found just about everywhere. Earlier examples of such heterogeneous forces go back to the Spanish Civil War and beyond. And it is worth recalling that just as one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter, one man's smugglers of vital supplies for a resistance movement are another man's criminal gang.

Even Kaldor's last criterion, the 'globalized war economy' in which indigenous participation in the war is numerically low while unemployment is high, resources come from outside the war zone in the form of 'remittances from the diaspora, "taxation" of humanitarian assistance, support from neighbouring government or illegal trade in arms, drugs or valuable commodities', evokes just so many 'Cold War' examples of war in Latin America, Africa and Asia. However, there seems to be a rising tendency of criminal trade that both feeds war and feeds off war. Drugs enter into it, as do arms, but also human beings, and it is here that criminal economies need the social instability and the chaos or poverty of war zones to obtain fresh supplies of victims.

Common to all the hot wars of the Cold War was the real, hand-to-hand killing; not the abstract, long-distance reflections of statesmen in 'deterrence' and 'crisis management' which are at the focus of most writing on strategy and conflict dating from the Cold War. Nor were they primarily a function of state systems, international relations, international regimes which have been at the centre of so much literature on diplomatic history and international relations. Economic issues certainly played an important part, but probably more in the form of abject poverty and indeed mass starvation or competition for vital water, rather than the cunning machinations of military-industrial complexes or great power economic expansionism carried out under the guise of development aid.

This should lead us to refocus our attention on the actual dynamics of war, the breakdown of the taboo of killing in societies which otherwise recognise this taboo – for indeed, respect for this taboo is the mainstay of any society. No longer mesmerised by the arcane mental arabesques of nuclear strategy, deterrence theories, concepts of crisis management, arms control, military balances and game theory, about which scores of books have been written but which now gather dust, we should recast our research agenda. A subject of continuing interest is one which was studied extensively during the Cold War, namely the role of armed forces in any society, but especially in politically and economically unstable societies. The armed forces are central to almost all conflicts since 1945 because these combine the worlds of violence and killing on the one hand, and of the disciplining of violence on the other. Armed forces

train those who later use force, they organise them, they are themselves regularly involved in civil wars, and they are the chief instrument of power in any regime. The many military coups in Latin America during the Cold War attracted the attention of notable American political scientists.[15] But the problem continues to exist, and never applied only to Latin America, as our above list of military coups in Africa shows. It is not long since Portugal, Spain, Greece and Turkey were governed by military dictatorships or at least ones that enjoyed military support, a feature characteristic also of Southeast Asia.

But after all that has been written about the macrocosm of superpower conflicts and states locked into wrangling over the pursuit of 'national interests', it is well worth looking again at the microcosm of violence born from the individual human psyche and from group dynamics, resulting in the collective violent interaction of humans. It is appalling that so little research has been done in social and biological anthropology on human violence since the 1970s, when Martin Nettleship, R. Dalegivens and Anderson Nettleship published their famous edited volume on 'War, Its Causes and Correlates' (The Hague 1975). Margaret Mead's interest in pacific societies seems to have gone unnoticed among the universal cynicism towards the mere possibility of any society living without war.[16]

Within the research agenda which so clearly exists in these disciplines, one would do well to focus both on violent clashes between groups of equals and on the breakdown of the taboo of killing the weak and unprotected. The former case is endemic in most societies, usually involves young males, and ranges from the disciplined form of violence in sports via hooliganism to warrior societies, where adulthood (at least for males) is associated with being warriors, having gone to war. The killing of the weak and unprotected, by contrast, has grown significantly over the last 100 years. Mary Kaldor claims that at the beginning of the 20th century, the ratio of military to civilian deaths in war was 8:1; at the beginning of the 21st century, this ratio has been inverted.[17] Rudolph Rummel's findings suggest that she is right in this point. This is a phenomenon which is particularly difficult to understand, because all forms of human society are organised around principles of a taboo on the killing of members of one's own society. While the taboo has also been broken in most human societies, this normally happens only in individual cases, is considered a crime, or accepted only after rites of dispensation (sacrificial rites, or trials in combination with elaborate rituals). I know of no society where the

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[15] Especially the great classic Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: the Theory and Practice of Civil-military Relations*, Cambridge 1957.

[16] Margaret Mead, Warfare is only an invention – not a biological necessity [1940], in: Leon Bramson/George W. Goethals (eds.), *War: Studies from Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology*, New York 1964, pp. 269-274.

[17] Kaldor, *New and Old Wars* (fn. 14), p. 8.

killing of unarmed humans by armed humans is not seen as 'unfair' or despicable in some way, or where the killing of old people, women and children is not seen as particularly unacceptable, dishonourable, and if enjoyed by the killers, as perverse. Moreover, Joanna Bourke's pathbreaking study of killing suggests that most people find it difficult to kill, even in war, and that many of those who do kill cannot come to terms with having done so afterwards.[18]

Why has this taboo been breached so often since 1945, even in non-totalitarian societies? What makes this possible? The majority of wars since 1945 were not, like the First World War, the result of the interaction of some fifty decision-makers or, like the Second World War, ultimately the result of the policies of one man. The remote killing that started with guns and is now best symbolised by precision-targeted missiles played a part in the wars since 1945, a form of killing which protects the killer from fully seeing the effect of his actions (and helps to overlook taboos). But remote killing (which could be defined as including man-made famines and mass Biafra-style starvation) has constituted only one element of this process; massacres (Bangladesh- or Rwanda-style), in which the killers touched, beat, slashed and directly wrestled with the victims, have also characterised a large proportion of these wars.

The dynamics which make this possible, which turned Christopher Browning's 'ordinary men',[19] men with wives and children, into killers of women and children, and which in Bosnia-Hercegovina turned yesterday's good neighbours into today's killers or victims, deserves far more attention in future research. The dynamics of peer group pressure, hierarchies of authority, the interplay of mentality, propaganda, fear and hormones (adrenaline, testosterone or serontine) need to be examined. These factors should be at the top of any agenda of research about the causes and nature of war.

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[18] Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing*, London 1998.
[19] Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, New York 1992.