• Is War still a Rational Option for Conflict Resolution?

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Is WAR still a rational option for conflict resolution?
Let these panels never be filled
Sir Wilfrid Laurier (Debate in the House of Commons on Louis Riel’s expulsion, 15 April 1874):

• “But such is the state of human nature and of all that is human: good and evil are constantly intermingled; the most glorious cause is not free from impurity and the vilest many have its noble side.”
For this fortunate generation, peace is the normal state of humanity. Yet this impression is belied by all of human history. War and armed conflict have been an inescapable part of the human condition. For most of recorded history, peace has been seen as little more than a brief punctuation point in a narrative shaped by violence.

(Nigel Inkster, *The IISS Armed Conflict Survey 2015*)
“War has been throughout history a normal way of conducting disputes between political groups.”

(Michael Howard, *The Causes of War*)
What is War?

War is “the pursuit of politics by other means,” which specifically means that it is the resort to “a violent action whose aim is to force the adversary to submit to our will.... It is a clash between major interests that is resolved by bloodshed – that is the only way in which it differs from other conflicts.” - Carl von Clausewitz (Vom Kriege – On War)
When did humans begin to kill humans?

“Around 5 millions years ago, our chimpanzee-like ancestor became a woodland ape and spawned a family of descendant species. Around 2 million years ago, the early signs of humanness emerged... until modern humans evolved 100,000 to 200,000 years ago. But not until after agriculture began, a mere 8,000 to 10,000 years ago, did human societies begin to unveil their habit clearly. Evidence of real war comes soon after that unveiling.”

(Wrangham and Petersen, *Demonic Males*)
Waging War: Human Resources

• Recruitment
• Military Academies
• Military curriculum
• Decision-making process
• General Staff
• Forces Strength
Royal Military College of Canada
U.S. Military Academies
West Point, Annapolis
École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr
Waging War: Weaponry

To wage war successfully your fighting forces need:

- **Mobility** – means of transportation;
- **Lethality** – weaponry;
- **Protection** – defences;
- **Communication** – inventions.

All four have benefitted and continue to benefit from technology and technological advancements.
Modern Missiles
Nuclear Bombs 1945 AD
Modern Defences
Communications

RADAR IN 1904
Why War?

• War is a major component of human culture – *The Culture of War* (Martin van Creveld)

• War is a rational option in the resolution of social conflict that, however, brings about unintended results from the fog of violence (*aka* the fog of war) and the fog of consequences

• War fascinates us (the survivors) because of its organisation, outcome, and consequences.
“it is not through what armies are but by what they do that the lives of nations and of individuals are changed. In either case, the engine of change is the same: the infliction of human suffering through violence. And the right to inflict suffering must always be purchased by, or at the risk of, combat – ultimately of combat corps à corps.”

(John Keegan, *The Face of Battle*)
German Air Force
Areas of Operation

- Basic Air Fleet Boundaries
- Extended Air Fleet Boundaries

2 Air Fleets
V Fliegerkorps

100 50 0 100 miles

North Sea
United Kingdom
England Channel

Norway
X

France
Switz.
Modern Combat

The idea that there are rules in warfare and that combatants kill each other according to basic concepts of fairness probably ended for good with the machine gun [see the film *Samurai* starring Tom Cruise]. . . Machine guns forced infantry to disperse, to camouflage themselves, and to fight in small independent units. All that promoted stealth over honor and squad loyalty over blind obedience.
• “War is a lot of things and it’s useless to pretend that exciting isn’t one of them. It’s insanely exciting. The machinery of war and the sound it makes and the urgency of its use and the consequences of almost everything about it are the most exciting things anyone engaged in war will ever know. . . . Combat isn’t where you might die – though that does happen – it’s where you find out whether you get to keep on living. Don’t underestimate the power of that revelation.”

• (Sebastian Junger, War)
“The obvious reason why war is supremely exciting is because it is a life-and-death struggle. It is one of the very few activities in which humans, almost all of them men, deliberately court death, and the only one in which they do so while taking on an opponent who is as strong and as intelligent as themselves. . . These facts are reflected in its culture.”

(Martin van Creveld, The Culture of War)
The Meaning of War

“As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity – composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone.” (Carl von Clausewitz, Vom Kriege)
“War is an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force. Each side, therefore, compels its opponent to follow suit: a reciprocal action is started which must lead, in theory, to extremes.”

“of all the possible aims in war, the destruction of the enemy’s armed forces always appears as the highest.”

(Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*)
• Winston Churchill:
• “The statesman who yields to war fever must realize that once the signal is given, he is no longer the master of policy but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events.”
Reasons for the outbreak of war

Sun Tsu (ca 500 BC): “War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin.”

Antoine-Henri, baron Jomini (1779-1869): ideological, economic, popular, to defend the balance of power, to assist allies, to defend rights;

Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831): “Two different motives make men fight one another: hostile feelings and hostile intentions. Our definition is based on the latter, since it is the universal element.”
Quincy Wright (1890-1970): idealistic, psychological, political, and juridical;

Raymond Aron (1905-1983): “The stakes of war are the existence, the creation or the elimination of states."

Sir Michael Howard (1922-): “The causes of war remain rooted, as much as they were in the pre-industrial age, in perceptions by statesmen of the growth of hostile power and the fears for the restriction, if not the extinction of their own.”

Geoffrey Blainey (1930-): conflicting aims of rival nations.
The initiator

(1) Success: (a) conquest
  - Alexander the Great; Julius Cesar; Napoleon
  (b) Objectives achieved
    - Henry V (1386-1422); UN Gulf War I; USA Gulf War II;

(2) Partial success
(3) Stalemate

• War of the Eight Saints (1375-1378): a war between Pope Gregory XI and a coalition of Italian city-states led by Florence;
• World War I;
• Korean War;
• Iraq-Iran War.
(4) Defeat

- Darius– Marathon
- Xerxes – Salamis
- Napoleon – Waterloo
- Second Empire (France) – Sedan
- Confederate States of American in Civil War
- Imperial Japan
- Nazi Germany
- France and the USA in Vietnam
- Argentina in the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
The defender

(1) Successful defence

- Syracuse (431 BC) – Peloponnesian War
- Britain against the Spanish Armada in 1588
- Texians at the Alamo (1836) – Republic of Texas (1836-1846)
- Croats in Dubrovnik in May 1992
(2) Compromise

• Second Dutch war of 1665-1667 – Treaty of Breda (1667) allowed the English to keep factual possession of New Netherland (renamed New York), while the Dutch kept control over Paulu Run and the valuable sugar plantations of Suriname which they had conquered in 1667.
• Arab-Israeli war of 1948: Israelis in Jerusalem while Arabs retain East Jerusalem
(3) Defeat

- Troy in the Trojan War (c. 1200 BC)
- Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431 BC)
- Carthage in the Third Punic War (149-146 BC)
- England in the Hundred Years’ War (1346-1347)
- Irish in Drogheda in the 1649 Cromwell conquest of Ireland
- French in North American in the Seven Year’s War (1754-63)
- Boers in the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)
The International system

(1) Status Quo

• Roman-Persian War 602-629;
• Seven Years’ War between Prussia and Austria (1756–1763);
• War of 1812 in North America
• Falklands War (1982);
• Kargil War (1999) between India and Pakistan.
(2) New balance of power

- Peloponnesian War – Sparta is victorious but the weakening of Athens led to the conquest of Greece by Philip of Macedon *circa* 354 BC;
- Byzantine-Ottoman Wars (1265-1453)
- Seven Year’s War in North America
- World War I;
- World War II.
(3) Recovery and growth

- **Slow and costly:**
  - Europe after WW I;
  - USSR & Eastern Europe after WW II

- **Rapid and prosperous:**
  - Athens after the Peloponnesian War;
  - Western Europe after WW II.
10 Deadliest conflicts

1. World War II (1939-45) – 58 million.
2. World War I (1914-18) – 37.5 million.
3. Three Kingdoms in China (184-280) – 37 million.
5. Taiping Rebellion (China) (1821-1864) – 32 million.
10. Russian Civil War (1917-21) – 6 million.
Global patterns of conflict

Fig. 9.5. Global patterns of conflict, 1946–2006
Cost of Combat

• **Distorted thinking** – Stephen Crane in *The Red Badge of Courage* seemed to believe that a soldier could *think sensibly* in the midst of war; he was wrong, as a contemporary critic pointed out: when you are in that much danger, the standard rules of human psychology fall apart. No one is “normal” under fire.

• **Fear** – acknowledged by the U.S. military in WW II in the handbooks given to recruits; not so by the British.
• **Unit breakdown** – three groups: the “fighters,” the “sheep,” and the “panickers” according to Lionel Wigram in a 1943 British study – report buried by Gen. Montgomery (Taylor Clark, *Nerve*).

• **Blood lust** – “The slaughter once started could not be stopped. [Lt] Millsap tried to regain control but his men paid no heed. Having slaughtered every German in sight, they ran on into the barns of the French farmhouses where they killed the hogs, cows, and sheep. The orgy ended when the last beast was dead.” (S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire*)
Operational Stress Injury

• Operational Stress Injury (OSI) is best described as any persistent psychological difficulty resulting from operational duties performed while serving during combat duties, after serving in a war zone, in peacekeeping missions, or following other traumatic events not specific to combat.

• Common OSIs include anxiety disorders, depression, substance use disorders and other conditions that may interfere with daily functioning; the most important is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
• Although this condition has likely existed since human beings have endured trauma, PTSD has only been recognized as a formal diagnosis since 1980.

• Symptoms of PTSD include “re-experiencing” the event (in the form of nightmares, flashbacks, or intrusive thoughts), avoiding thoughts, feelings, or situations that serve as reminders of the event, feeling ‘numb’ or cut off from others, being easily startled and being vigilant for signs of danger. These symptoms may appear years later.

• In 2012, 349 US active soldiers took their lives, more than died in combat; among US combat veterans it is currently 22 suicides a day.
Figure 5.1 Combat efficiency over time in the 1944 Normandy campaign. [From R. L. Swank and W. E. Marchand, “Combat Neurosis: Development of Combat Exhaustion.” Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry 55, 1946. By permission of the American Medical Association.]
Social Costs

• Populations losses:
  fatalities – direct, disease, hunger;
  wounded;
  missing.
• Changing gender relations;
• Orphans;
• Child soldiers;
• Cost of combat.
Economic Costs

• “War has influenced economic history profoundly across time and space. Winners of war have shaped economic institutions and trade patterns. Above all, recurring war has drained wealth, disrupted markets, and depressed economic growth.”
• Wars are expensive (in money and other resources), destructive (of capital and human capital), and disruptive (of trade, resources availability, labour management). Large wars constitute severe shocks to the economies of participating countries. (Joshua Goldstein, War and Economic History).
“For the United States the pre-1914 growth also slows down in the 1914-1945 period (and again, not just after 1929). In the World War II years, U.S. production surges but by 1947 has dropped back to where it would have been without the war. Since 1947, U.S. production follows roughly the same growth curve as held from 1933 to 1940, a lower curve than prevailed before 1914. So even in World War II, which shaped the American belief in the economic ‘benefits’ of war, war appears to have played a significant role not in sustained economic growth but only in the short boom of 1939-1944.”
“Despite the popular American belief that ‘war is good for the economy,’ common sense as well as historical experience indicate that war is not, on balance, good for the economy. Resources allocated to war are not available for productive economic purposes (including both consumption and investment), and economic assets destroyed by war (houses, factories, farms, and so forth) no longer contribute to production. For the twentieth century, in which data are fairly good, war has clearly acted to set back economic growth.”
Specific Economic Effects

- **inflation** – push up prices and reduce living standards. Sun Tsu: “Where the army is, prices are high; when prices rise the wealth of the people is exhausted.” – short wars & money.

- **capital depletion** – destruction of capital such as farms, factories, and cities.

- “Kondratieff waves’ in the world economy – relationship between war and military spending on the one hand and inflation and economic growth on the other. – USSR & USA
War! What Is It Good For?

• War is mass murder, and yet, in perhaps the greatest paradox in history, war has nevertheless been the undertaker’s worst enemy. Contrary to what the song says, war has been good for something: over the long run, it has made humanity safer and richer. (Ian Morris, War! What Is It Good For?)
Morris’s 4 arguments

• (1) – by fighting wars, people have created larger, more organized societies that have reduced the risk that their members will die violently;

• (2) – while war is the worst imaginable way to create larger, more peaceful societies, it is pretty much the only way humans have found;
• (3) – the larger societies created by war have also – again, over the long run – made us richer;

• (4) – war (over the long run) has created peace, and destruction has created wealth, but in our own age humanity has gotten so good at fighting – our weapons so destructive, our organizations so efficient – that war is beginning to make further war of this kind impossible.
Is there hope?

The empathy argument

• Jeremy Rifkin (*The Empathic Civilization* – 2009) proposes that humans are an empathic species; at various times in history new energy regimes have converged with new communications and, as a result, more technologically advanced cultures have heightened empathic sensitivity and expanded human consciousness;

➤ Climate change offers the possibility of an empathic embrace to the whole of humanity.
The development argument:

- **Steven Pinker** (*The Better Angels of Our Nature. Why Violence Has Declined* – 2011) argues that the past was much more violent than the present; and that

  - thanks to the *spread of government, literacy, trade, and cosmopolitanism*, we increasingly control our impulses, empathize with others, debunk toxic ideologies, and deploy our powers of reason to *reduce the temptations of violence*. 
• “Though I am relieved that making myself a hostage to fortune eight years ago has not turned out badly, needless to say my greatest relief is for the state of humanity. Despite the headlines, and with circumscribed exceptions, the world has continued its retreat from violence.”