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CHANGING CONCEPTS OF RISK, SECURITY AND WAR

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Foreword

The concepts of risk, security and war are all fundamental categories of contemporary discourse, and at the same time terms whose meaning, to say the least, are shifting. They are neither obvious nor agreed-upon. This working paper aims at probing their changing meaning and some of the consequences of that change.

Kristian Soby Kristensen focuses for his part on time and space in the context of comprehending warfare and in particular the argument that time has now been liberated from the constraints of space. War is thus essentially about trading time for space. That configuration, however, makes only sense if space is still part of the configuration, he contends. Notably, space is no longer its old self but precisely because time is increasingly capable of transcending space, space attains new importance in the current practices of warfare. This occurs either through moves of liberation or limitation with time thus being used to make space.

Kristensen further notes that the pre-eminence of time in recent military thinking corresponds to similar trends on the civilian side and that there is a blurring of the borderline between the current military logic and that applied in the sphere of business. Both spheres perceive themselves as operating globally in a setting characterized by instantaneous information and organized in networks.

Karen Lund Petersen probes into similar matters but does so by probing changes to be traced in the concepts of risk and security after 9-11. She notes that essential borderlines are shifting in the sense that the state is no longer viewed as the main security provider. With the field of security policies being relocated and expanded into a number of previously civilian fields, it is also extended to private companies. This is particularly to be noted in the sphere of insurance. Companies are not only obliged to protect themselves, but also furnished with a duty to appear as protectors and guardians of national security. This entails, in fact, a rewriting of the relationship between the insurable and the non-insurable as well as risk and danger. Overall, it is not only the military sector of the state drawing increasingly on the logic of business and private companies; also private companies are leveled with responsibilities in the sphere of statist affairs in accordance with shifts to be observed both as to the concepts of risk and security.

Pertti Joenniemi adds to the picture regarding shifts in the sphere of fundamental concepts by exploring changes in the case of war. He examines in particular the critical argument that war, as a concept, is increasingly out of touch with the essence of contemporary conflicts. Clearly, the previous self-evidence of the concept is gone and there is much more doubt to be traced in the debate. The question is raised whether the changes in train are merely to be seen as a regular cyclical phenomenon observed from time to time, i.e. moves representing a renewal needed for the concept to stay in tune and to remain as a meaningful communicate devise or if the increasing end-of-war talk is a sign of something more serious. Numerous efforts of redefining and rescuing the concept of war are pinpointed, although the various moves of rescue do not seem to work in the way intended with war having become part of an extending list of what W. B. Gallie has labeled ‘essentially contested concepts’.

The three papers are part of an EU-financed COST Action A24-project on “The Evolving Social Construction of Threats”. Previous versions have been presented in seminars organized by the project in Oslo 11-12 September 2006 and Copenhagen 7 December 2006.

Pertti Joenniemi, Editor

Tourists or Vagabonds: Space and Mobility in the War on Terror

Kristian Sjøby Kristensen

ABSTRACT

It is commonplace to argue speed as the defining element in modern day warfare. Whether one looks to the manuals and concepts of the US military or to critical thinkers like Virilio the analysis is the same. Speed and time, not mass and space, are the essentials of warfare. This is the case in the analysis of both the Western high-tech militaries and their asymmetrical terrorist opponents. This paper argues, by heuristically applying Zygmunt Baumann's concepts of tourist and vagabond, that exactly the making of space can be seen as the centre of gravity in the 'Global War on Terror'. Whether you are able to act as a detached and forever moving tourist or as a vagabond limited by imposed space and boundaries will define success or failure in this global war. Space has thus not lost its importance; conditioned by its relationship to time it has become a weapon that wins wars.

INTRODUCTION

In 1904 the British geographer Harold J. Mackinder argued before the Royal Geographical Society that the world had become one political system in which "Every explosion of social forces... will be sharply re-echoed from the far side of the globe".¹ Exploration, colonisation and new means of communication and transportation had shrunk the world creating a new relationship between space and time with immense consequences for both politics and warfare. What Mackinder was arguing was in fact globalization. And indeed, that explosions of social forces will be re-echoed from the far side of the globe fits equally well with the present as with Mackinder's own time. Continued changes in the relationship between time and space are today of central importance as the United States – today's equivalent to the British Empire – is engaged in what has recently changed from "The Global

¹ Harold J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *The Geographical Journal*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1904): p. 422.

War on Terror' to become merely 'The Long War'. How to understand these changes in the meaning and function of time and space?

This paper will try to investigate the current relationship between time and space as conceptualized and practiced by the US in its apparently long war against global terror. The current orthodoxy in US military thought as well as in more critical academic circles is that space in general has been conquered by time, and alas, lost both its importance and meaning. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has for instance claimed that September 11 was 'a symbolic end to the era of space'.² Although Bauman is certainly right to point to changes in the meaning of space, I will argue that we are not encountering the end of the era of space. Its meaning – and relationship with time – is changing, not leaving it unimportantly in the past, neither in symbolic nor in actual sense.

The following question is; how can we analyze and understand the changing role of space as it unfolds in the US war on terror? The first part of the question requires an investigation into the practice and discourse of the US military. Secondly, heuristic tools capable of grasping more broadly the interrelated meaning of both space and time in current warfare are required. Somewhat paradoxically, I propose to borrow two terms of Zygmunt Bauman to qualify his above claim about the meaning of space. In a small book 'Globalization: The Human Consequences' Bauman introduces the terms 'tourist' and 'vagabond'. These concepts are employed by Baumann in order to present a – not very optimistic – picture of individual life in a globalized world.³ I use the concepts to illustrate how space still has important consequences for actual warfare, grand strategy as well as international politics in a world otherwise conceived as dominated by time.

The fundamental claim of the paper is that how one views the relationship between time and space is pivotal to how to act. Conceptions of space and time, and especially their relationship, function as means to both construct and justify particular lines of action. This is strategy in a military vocabulary. However, the formulation of strategy is necessarily preceded by thoughts about both oneself and ones place in the world as well as of the opponent. Action requires, in other words, a rationalised

² Zygmunt Bauman, "Reconnaissance Wars of the Planetary Frontierland," *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 19, no. 4 (2002): p. 81.

³ Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, 1998) pp. 96-7.

conception of how the world is. It requires a theory of both ontology and action, or what Rasmussen calls a 'praxeology'.⁴

In the current strategies underlying US military action, both in the war on terror and in general, a pre-eminence is given to speed. The same is true to much strategic thought in general. This means that, although space still plays some part, its precise function is left under-conceptualized. Space is something that can be overrun by operations in time. Therefore focus in these praxeologies is on the characteristics of speed and movement rather than on space and boundaries. In the following I will show how the centrality of time in the praxeology of the US military functions in the way the war on terror is conducted, and how this theory of the world constructs the US military, its strategies for action and its asymmetrical opponent in a very particular way. All are measured primarily according to their ability to function in time. Speed, instantaneous movement and virtuality are seen as the most important characteristics. Acting in time is pivotal. Space is left behind as it is effortlessly traversed by email messages in the case of al-Qa'ida, or B2 bombers with global reach in the case of the US. Time is the centre of gravity.

This is followed by a critique of this particular praxeology. Undeniably the state of globalization is today different than on the time of Mackinder as the relationship between space and time has changed dramatically. Indeed, means of conducting warfare independently of geographical limitations have exploded, creating many new possibilities for military action. Nevertheless, space still plays a fundamental role, and by applying Bauman's concepts of 'tourist' and 'vagabond', I hope to conceptualize that role. To Bauman the tourist is the winner in globalization, effortlessly surfing around the world and changing location at his or hers leisure. The alter ego of the tourist is the vagabond, also on the move because movement is a fundamental condition of globalization. The vagabond is not, however, moving out of desire, but out of necessity, and his movement is limited by a plethora of fences, boundaries, and rules. The vagabond lives in space, whereas the tourist is detached completely from spatial limitations. Bluntly put, success in war depends on being tourist. Which – and this is a crucial point by Bauman – will be a constant struggle.⁵ The centre of gravity will thus not only be time but equally space: warfare is won by imposing space on the opponent, thus

⁴ Mikkel V. Rasmussen, "Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Relations*, vol. 30, no. 3 (2001): p. 287.

⁵ Bauman, note 3, p. 96-7.

making him the vagabond, while maintaining one's status as tourist. The consequences of this relationship between time and space for current warfare might very well be a 'Long War', but fought in and about global space, not time.

THE WAR ON TERROR AND THE ECONOMY OF SPEED

'Unmanned weapon makes its mark in Yemeni sea of sand'. This was a Financial Times headline in the fall of 2002. The story presented there and in other news services show us a near-perfect picture of the importance of time over space in American warfare. A Predator UAV fired a missile at a car killing six presumed terrorists, including one suspected of being involved in the attack on the USS Cole.⁶ It shows how the US capacity for conducting military operations independently of space apparently provides new means and possibilities for warfare. The pilot actually flying the plane by remote control was, according to GlobalSecurity.org, physically in Djibouti, while his commanding officers were in Saudi Arabia. Accordingly, the actual decision to fire the missile could have been taken at either of these locations or, as the Financial Time piece hints at, back at the White House in Washington and be transmitted in real-time to the pilot pulling the trigger.

Space is – as shown in the above story – no longer any hindrance for applying military power. A decision to use military force could be taken over 11000 km away and executed immediately. Global action without any time-lag and even without any actual human presence in the physical space where the action took place is the ideal expression of time over space in war. Furthermore the UAV attack is an illustration of the elements the US military view as providing unparalleled advantages in war; how important speed, time and communication is in the practice of the US military. In the following I, in some detail, analyse how thoughts and strategic thinking about time is at the basis of the praxeology of the US military. How the primacy of time can be seen throughout the story the US military tells about itself, its actions and their justifications, and about its enemy.

Constructing the US Military in Time

Speculating on the changes of warfare in the fin de circle of the 18th century Carl von Clausewitz came to the conclusion that these, most fundamental changes, were brought about by the

⁶ Financial Times, "Unmanned Weapon Makes its Mark in Yemeni Sea of Sand," November 6, 1st Section (2002) p. 24.

consequences of the French Revolution on French society.⁷ Warfare then was not a realm of its own, but a reflection of society. And to Clausewitz this meant that policy in general was primary to war. As warfare to him was a continuation of politics, war was fundamentally dominated by how society worked. This is the basic argument which is echoed in the Tofflers' postulate that the way war is conducted is a reflection of how wealth is created in society.⁸ These insights are crucial to understanding the way the US military sees itself. War is a reflection of economy, and when the conditions for economy change so do conditions for warfare. Bluntly put, in the industrial society we saw industrialized war, now; in the global information society we will see globalized information at the centre of warfare. This is the fundamental argument motivating the long-lasting centrality of the 'Military Transformation' concept. An effective military should reflect effective business strategies and harness the technical or cultural elements of society which create wealth. From the time of Andrew Marshall as Director of Net Assessment in the Pentagon – or as James Der Derian calls him: 'the Yoda of the Revolution in Military Affairs'⁹ – in the beginning of the 1990s, business has very consciously been the model of the US military. Because business, we are told, is 'at the forefront of developing and thinking about the uses and implications of new technologies'.¹⁰ The military should model itself accordingly, and apply the same technologies. This means utilizing the potential for speedy communication and increased surveillance in information technologies in the organization of warfare.

The importance of information technology cannot be understated in this theory of the world and of the role and identity of the US military in it. Information technology has brought with it immense consequences for how societies function, consequences often argued as so revolutionary that we are witnessing a new kind of society. A societal revolution comparable with both the French and the

⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated by J. Graham, (Hertfordshire, United Kingdom: Wordsworth, 1997[1832]), pp. 361-2.

⁸ Alvin Toffler & Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century*, (New York: Warner Books, 1993).

⁹ James Der Derian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2001).

¹⁰ Andrew Marshall, *Some Thoughts on Military Revolutions – Second Version*, Memorandum for the Record, (Washington DC.: Office of Net Assessment, Department of Defense, 1993), p. 7.

Industrial Revolution has taken place, fundamentally changing the conditions for waging warfare.¹¹ The US military is thus in its own self-perception, by structural necessity, driven to follow the dictates of this new kind of society, to become ‘an information age military’.¹² As the railroad changed the means of war in the world of Mackinder, so have virtual communication networks today. The relationship between time and space has changed again. Instantaneous communication and other technologies provide multiple methods for transcending space. Just as the Predator attack in Yemen demonstrated. The attack was an expression of strategy and warfare in a world conceived in time.

Conducting Warfare in Time

What does this basic condition mean for how you make warfare and strategy in general? What does warfare look like in a world where time transcends space? The basic ‘Strategic Imperative’ defined by the US military is that ‘the battlefield appears to have no boundaries’.¹³ This is a clear consequence of the reduced importance of space. Geographical distances are no longer able to make a difference in warfare; they are something of the past.¹⁴ Accordingly, warfare can potentially be everywhere. This sets the premises for how to conduct warfare.

Speed and the reduced importance of space is the theme around which US strategy revolves. The concept of Net Centric Warfare (NCW) captures much of this, and is pivotal for how strategic thought is applied in practice. NCW is about:

“the ability of widely dispersed forces to attain a high level shared battlespace awareness... This linking of people, platforms, weapons, sensors, and decision aids into a single network creates a whole that is clearly greater than the sum of the parts. The result is networked forces that operate with increased speed and synchronization and are

¹¹ A lot has been written about the information revolution and information society as well as the consequences of both for warfare. That literature is as such not of interest in the present paper. The focus here is the worldview of the US military, and how that particular organization conceives revolutionary changes in the world. For some further thoughts on both present and past revolutionary changes in warfare see: Freedman, 1998; Knox & Murray, 2001.

¹² Department of Defense, *Elements of Defense Transformation*, (Washington DC.: US Department of Defense, 2004), p. 14, accessed at: http://www.oft.osd.mil/library/library_files/document_383_ElementsOfTransformation_LR.pdf.

¹³ *Elements of Defense Transformation*, note 12, p. 4.

¹⁴ *Elements of Defense Transformation*, note 12, p. 4.

capable of achieving massed effects, in many situations without the physical massing of forces required in the past”.¹⁵

The goal of NCW is, from this quote, clear. Through creating a network encompassing the totality of the elements employed in combat, a system is put in place that is, in its end-state, capable of delivering effects at a location without being there physically. Instead of laboriously deploying a large amount of troops ‘Harnessing the power of information connectivity’ in this network will provide the US military with the means to operate at such speed that the effects are of an order of magnitude higher than what could be imagined ‘just a decade ago’.¹⁶ This network of high-tech military capabilities, and warfare conducted according to the principles of NCW provides, in US strategic thinking, almost instant global reach.

A second central concept, and closely associated with NCW, is ‘Dominant Battlespace Awareness’, which is another effect of ‘harnessing information connectivity’. The possibilities for increased surveillance following from new information technologies present the US military with unprecedented capacities for gaining knowledge. Integrating an endless number of sensors, drones, satellites etc. in a virtual network promises to abolish the fog of war. The goal is, in the words of the latest Quadrennial Defense Review, ‘to establish an “unblinking eye” over the battlespace through persistent surveillance [which] will support operations against any target, day or night, in any weather, and in denied or contested areas. The aim is to integrate global awareness with local precision’.¹⁷

With no space imposing itself on warfare, warfare is potentially everywhere. This is reflected in the main points of the US strategy on how to conceive and conduct warfare. The loss of the bounded battlefield has the effect of making time the essential element in warfare. Getting close to instantaneous information through virtual communication networks provides the basis for near-instant military action everywhere. When space no longer has any importance, then one cannot know where to expect war; therefore one has to be potentially everywhere, and know things as they happen everywhere as well. The ‘unblinking eye’ provides the basis for action in no time. And this is central,

¹⁵ *Elements of Defense Transformation*, note 12, p. 8.

¹⁶ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, (Washington DC: US Department of Defense, 2006), p58, accessed at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/qdr2001.pdf>.

¹⁷ *Quadrennial Defense Review*, note 16, p. 55.

success is guaranteed by speed, acting too late is the same as defeat. You, in fact, should act before your opponent. Pre-emption is the ultimate action in war governed by time.

Taken to its extreme this strategy for how to make war in time is a quest for omnipotence. The end goal – seen this way – is to have knowledge of events, and act upon that knowledge with so much speed that you act actually before they happen. In the words of the former Director of Force Transformation, the quest is to create an ‘inevitable military Leviathan’.¹⁸ By already being everywhere, and through the ‘unblinking eye’ being able to act at any time a sort of pre-emptive deterrence is the goal. Future events will not happen because the opponent will know the Leviathan will know and act before his action can have effect. The event will never materialize. This is what ‘detering forward’ is about.¹⁹ Time is the essential element of US strategy.

Although an omnipotent Leviathan may not be the result, striving for instant knowledge and instant action is still – according to this vision – what warfare is about, and which effective strategy should reflect. War is of course still a dynamic and imitative affair, and omnipotence will remain a quest. Others will compete with the US attempting to negate US advantages. Conceiving strategies for action in time has consequences not only for the military itself. It has consequences for how the threat from terrorists is seen as well.

Seeing the Enemy

Who is the enemy, what makes him what he is, what are his characteristics? These questions are an equally important part of how the world is conceived and understood and for how action is rationalized.

The fundamental characteristic of the terrorist enemy, according to the US military, is that he is different. He is not a reflection of the US military. In essence he is different, his actions, behaviour and goals are antithetical to that of the US. America stands as a force of good for maintaining order, whereas the terrorist is evil, and his goal is chaos. On all accounts the opponent is argued as asymmetrical. Not being equal is the enemy’s defining characteristic. Webster’s Dictionary defines

¹⁸ Arthur Cebrowski, “The American Way of War,” *Proceedings*, (January 2003): p. 42.

¹⁹ *Elements of Defense Transformation*, note 12, p. 15.

asymmetrical as a geometrical term meaning ‘not identical on both sides of a central line’.²⁰ And indeed the negation is important in how the opponent is defined. The opponent is not regular but irregular; neither is he a state but a non-state,²¹ who ‘employs unconventional methods’.²² What the opponent is, is difficult to define as he can be anything from insurgents to criminals.²³ His ‘specific functions, processes, and resources’ are various as well.²⁴ The identity and the actions of the opponent are conceptualized almost entirely by negation. They are defined by what they are not: the US military. Asymmetry fits very well with how the opponent is defined by the US. Not much is identical on both sides of the line dividing the opponents. Or so it seems. There is actually some symmetry in this otherwise asymmetrical relationship. The asymmetry is limited to the identity of the opponent and his actual actions; they are everything which the US is not. By defining them as terrorists, their practice is by default terrorist practice, which is again essentially the opposite of US practice. Still, on the question of *how* these different actions are executed, and how the terrorists are actually able to terrify, the answer remains rather symmetrical. That which makes the US military successful makes terrorists successful as well.

From the perspective of the US military the fundamental reason for the terrorist opponent successes is that he functions as a globalized network, even a ‘complex and ever-shifting networks of networks’.²⁵ Networks, we are told, provide terrorists with survivability through secrecy and redundancy; it further makes them adaptive, and able to spread themselves globally.²⁶ This network of networks complicates the US mission as its nature is complicated, as the network is dispersed, as it is decentralized and as it franchises its business to local actors.²⁷ A key advantage of this network is that it is able to harness ‘the very instruments of globalization’²⁸ to conduct warfare globally. Cell

²⁰ Webster’s Unabridged Encyclopaedic Dictionary of the English Language, (New York: Portland House 1989), p. 93.

²¹ Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington DC: US Department of Defense, 2005), pp. 3-4, accessed at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/2006-01-25-Strategic-Plan.pdf>.

²² Department of Defense, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, (Washington DC: US Department of Defense, 2006), p. 13, accessed at: <http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/2006-01-25-Strategic-Plan.pdf>.

²³ *Plan for the War on Terrorism*, note 22, p. 4.

²⁴ *National Defense Strategy*, note 21, p. 6.

²⁵ *Plan for the War on Terrorism*, note 22, p. 5.

²⁶ *Plan for the War on Terrorism*, note 22, p. 13.

²⁷ *Plan for the War on Terrorism*, note 22, p. 13.

²⁸ *Quadrennial Defense Review*, note 16, p. 21.

phones and the Internet are used to communicate with geographically isolated cells, and to plan attacks ‘from safe houses half a world away’.²⁹ Further, telecommunication in general is capable of allowing ‘worldwide dissemination of data, information and knowledge in real-time.’³⁰ In sum: ‘The nature of free and open societies enable terrorists to take advantage of freedom of movement, communications, financial systems, and logistics support’.³¹ Globalization is what makes global terror possible.

The story the US military tells about terrorist effectiveness is almost identical with the story it tells about itself and its own efficiency. Both are organized the same way; network is the model of both actors, and it has the same effect in both cases. Widely dispersed parts of the network are able to connect globally in real-time, making quick decisions and thus deliver immediate destructive effects vast distances away. Both have transcended space by using the potential of the information age in warfare, and both acquire their strength from being able to do exactly that. Even though the two opponents are conceptualized as fundamentally different, the primacy given to time means that on the question of how, the two are in fact symmetrical. Terrorists are conceptualized in time as well. Every time terrorists are successful, it is because they, in their strategy, have been able to triumph space; to transcend it and make their presence felt globally.

The Economy of Speed as a Structural Condition for Warfare

Paul Virilio has stated that ‘Wealth is the hidden side of speed and speed the hidden side of wealth. The two form an absolute couple’.³² Both are absolutely important to how warfare is conceived, their relationship is however not hidden at all. On the contrary, as the above has shown, the relationship between time, economy and war occupies a central place in the praxeology of the US military.

Time is fundamental in warfare. ‘Move it or lose it’, more than ‘stand your ground’, is what defines current strategic thought. War has, as Virilio argued ‘moved from space into time’.³³ Warfare has been liberated from the constraints of space by new information technology. Space is of no importance as it, in principle, incurs no constraints on the global panopticon of the ‘unblinking eye’

²⁹ *Quadrennial Defense Review*, note 16, p. 21.

³⁰ *Plan for the War on Terrorism*, note 22, p. 11.

³¹ *Plan for the War on Terrorism*, note 22, p. 12.

³² Paul Virilio, & Lotringer, S., *Pure War*, (New York: Semiotext(e) 1997[1983]), p 36.

³³ Virilio, note 32, p. 75.

and on the global reach of the US military network. The same is true for the terrorists, they too, are able to transcend space by the use of information technologies in order to reach their goals. The centrality of time is what makes the two opponents symmetric. This symmetry is indeed a clear expression of how central time and speed are to US conceptualization of warfare. If you do not act in time, you are not at all competitive. That is what for instance sets the terrorist opponent apart from Saddam Hussein, he thought statically about war and space, and in no time lost that space. If you want to do warfare you have to do it in time, do it quickly; that is the only viable line of action. Therefore the terrorists are argued as asymmetrical on all accounts except on their ability to conduct warfare in time. The pre-eminence of time and speed over space, in the praxeology of the US military, is a structural condition for how to make war today. This structure in the relationship between time and space is determining the nature of warfare. As stated by the military themselves, a precondition in order to act successfully in this world is 'a culture that is characterized by the information age'.³⁴ The military has to be in unison with 'the information age', because this is what both sets the conditions for warfare and provides the means to success: speed and time.

What the military should be like, and how to make warfare is deduced from how society functions in general and the economy in particular. Society has changed from 'the industrial age to the information age'.³⁵ So must the military, and following the Tofflers, this is done by looking at companies successfully implementing new technologies and business practices. For instance Dell Computers reorganization of sales and distribution, delivering PC's directly to customers, by a 'direct sales and build-to-order model'³⁶ is one of the inspirations for reorganizing the logistics required for immediate global presence of the US military; it increases speed. Both organisations see themselves as operating globally in a setting characterized by instantaneous information and organized in networks. The US military conceive itself as a global company engaged in an environment conceptualized as a market. Concepts like 'competitive space', 'innovation', 'creativity', 'customers', and 'future competitors' are all used to describe the military through an economic lens.³⁷ This economy is an economy of speed. Wealth is, like stated by Virilio, created by speed. This is the case

³⁴ *Elements of Defense Transformation*, note 12, p. 6.

³⁵ *Elements of Defense Transformation*, note 12, p. i.

³⁶ Kenneth Kraemer. & Jason Dedrick, *Dell Computer: Organization of a Global Production Network*, (Irvine, CA: Center for Research on Information Technology and Organizations, University of California, Irvine, 2002), p.1, accessed at: <http://www.crito.uci.edu/GIT/publications/pdf/dell.pdf>.

³⁷ *Elements of Defense Transformation*, note 12, p. 14.

for both Dell and the US military. Whether delivering a custom-made PC or a Predator missile, time is of essential importance. The 'competitive space' is defined by time, and acting fast will be the key comparative advantage keeping you in business, no matter whether that business is PC's or war.

The world the US military act in is a world defined as a global information age market. An economy of speed. By taking departure in the Toffler's argument and actual business practices of global firms, the US military, bolstered by its own experiences, construct very distinct structures both limiting and facilitating meaningful practice. In an economy of speed, time is the essential parameter. The structural conditions dictate a very unidirectional competition on this market. You have to be quicker, to act faster in order to be successful, there are no alternatives; there are no asymmetrical strategies. Even the most asymmetrical of opponents is acting symmetrically. You have to act in time or you will not even be in the market. This narrow conception of the world, absolutely dominated by time, will focus military actions and strategies more and more on time. Military thinking, I argue, is inclined to emphasize time, movement and speed.

Instead of limiting the way one sees the world to how firms conduct their business in a global world dominated by time and speed, maybe exploring other conceptions of how globalization makes itself felt might be useful. By seeing warfare as an economy of speed, particular aspects are highlighted and others downplayed. As the above has shown, this world view prioritizes time and makes its supremacy of space a structural fact in both action and strategy. But space is obviously still out there. The boundaries of the battlefield may have disintegrated, but that is not the same as the disintegration of space. Similarly, the capacity for global real-time surveillance and instant global actions does not mean that there are no global spaces. It means that the meaning of space has changed; that the relationship between space and time is different today than before. Therefore tools are needed that are capable of reintegrating space in a meaningful way in order to understand the current practice of warfare, without, however just overemphasizing the role of space.

How can we understand changes in the relationship between space and time in current warfare, without merely overstating the importance of one over the other? Maybe our understanding of the practice of warfare would be expanded by taking into account, and using, more sociologically inspired conceptions of how globalization is felt on actors' identity and capacity for action, including

the US military. Through this, we can get as sense of how not only time but time and space both functions in setting conditions for the practice of warfare today.

THE TOURISTS AND VAGABONDS OF WAR: REINTEGRATING SPACE

In his book *Globalization: The Human Consequences*, Zygmunt Bauman circles around many of the same issues that preoccupy the US military. What are the consequences of developments like virtual information technology and improved means of transport? Or in other words, what are the consequences of globalization? His answers, to a large degree, have their centre of attention on changes in the relationship between time and space. These answers are in the following used as tools to understand, in a broader fashion, the consequences of globalization for current warfare.

The War of Independence from Space

The starting point of Bauman is parallel to the US military; that a time/space compression has lead to 'a new quality; to a total annihilation of spatial constraints'.³⁸ However, contrary to the worldview of the US military, Bauman's deduction is not a unidirectional structural limitation on possible action, neither is this 'new quality' absent any spatial constraints as a universal condition. On the contrary, 'the uses of time and space are sharply differentiated as well as differentiating' because 'Alongside the planetary dimensions of business, finance, trade and information flow, a 'localizing' space-fixing process is set in motion'.³⁹ The same I will argue is true for warfare. The consequence of the liberation of time from spatial constraints is paradoxically that space attains new meaning. The central passage in the quote from Bauman is 'uses of time'; time becomes a possibility, not a structural constraint. And this is what sets his worldview apart from the US military. Time can be used to make space.

The US military sees the importance of time as a structural constraint outside the control of any actor. One can, bluntly put, only hope to apply the rules set forth by this structure to the best of ones ability, which, hopefully will be better than the opponent. The result is that war is conceived as unidirectional race in time within strict boundaries. Thus the elements of symmetry between the US military and the terrorist; they are both subjected to this structure. Time is the essential medium for both. For Bauman the opposite is the case, the use of time does not create symmetry, it is

³⁸ Baumann, note 3, p. 55.

³⁹ Baumann, note 3, p. 2.

differentiating, and this is where the power of time *and* space lie. Transcending space empowers you only and makes sense only if space still exists: ‘Deterritorialization of power therefore goes hand in hand with the ever stricter structuration of the territory’.⁴⁰ The power of time is not founded in time itself; it is a consequence of time’s relationship with space. Increasing freedom of movement, and movement with increasing speed is powerful only if space still exists. A global ‘unblinking eye’ and an ‘inevitable military leviathan’ make no sense if the enemy is not present somewhere. The power to act in time is meaningful only in relation to space; to a specific location; to a target situated in space. Success thus depends not only on being able to act successfully in time but also to impose yourself on space. The two are relational. In the words of Bauman: ‘all dominance consists in the pursuit of an essentially similar strategy – to leave as much freedom of manoeuvre to the dominant, while imposing the strictest possible constraints on the decisional freedom on the dominated side’.⁴¹ Freedom versus domination is, in Bauman’s globalized world, dependent on freeing yourself from space, while using space to limit the actions of the other.

The structural conditions that Bauman articulate are different from the ones of the US military and they can help us understand current warfare. That time transcends space does not make the power of time a structural imperative universally valid with uniform consequences, that would render space without importance. Time and space *both*, and time’s potential for transcending space in new ways, are the means of power in a globalized world. Time functions not as a structure, but as a means. The structure is in the relationship between time and space. Time has not liberated *itself* from space as such, but it can be used to liberate *yourself* from spatial constraints, just as the imposition of space on others limits their freedom of movement. Freedom from space – mobility – is according to Bauman of seminal importance, it is ‘fast becom[ing] the main stratifying factor of our late-modern or post-modern times’.⁴² It is what codifies success or failure in social life in general. This is the case to such a degree that he prophesizes that our times will be known as ‘The Great War of Independence from Space’.⁴³ The winners in this social war are the tourists liberated and free to move, mastering both time and space; the losers are the vagabonds caught in space, as it is constructed and imposed by the tourists. The same, I will illustrate in the following, is the case in ‘real’ warfare; it is, as stated by

⁴⁰ Baumann, note 3, p. 20.

⁴¹ Baumann, note 3, p. 69.

⁴² Baumann, note 3, p. 2.

⁴³ Baumann, note 3, p. 8.

Clausewitz, a reflection of society. Accordingly, being tourist in this war of independence from space is what warfare is about.

Tourists and Vagabonds of War

“For the first world, the world of the globally mobile, the space has lost its constraining quality and is easily traversed in both its ‘real’ and ‘virtual’ renditions. For the second world, the world of the ‘locally tied’, of those barred from moving and thus bound to bear passively whatever change may be visited on the locality they are tied to, the real space is fast closing up”⁴⁴

This description of the conditions of globalization for the tourist of the first world and the vagabond of the second world is a rather precise description of what current warfare is about. The integration of both time and space; the use of the power inherent in their relationship. The capacity to simultaneously traverse space, while tying the opponent in space gives you the means to ‘visit on him whatever change’. This is the dynamic of the Yemeni attack; the terrorists were very much tied in space, whereas the US military acted in the way of the tourist, traversing space – both real and virtual – with decisive effects.

In the relationship between the tourist and the vagabond the tourist always has the upper hand. He is able to apply a ‘new weightlessness of power’ that is both ‘ethereal and omnipotent, non-physical and reality-forming’.⁴⁵ Tourists live in time, whereas vagabonds live in space.⁴⁶ The tourist is free to move wherever he sees fit, whereas the movements of the vagabond are restricted. Unlike the tourist, the vagabond is doomed to bear the consequences of the space he is in, however they are created by the tourists. When he moves – and he has to move because ‘immobility is not a realistic option’ in a globalized world⁴⁷ – the journey is always perilous. The space he inhabits, wherever he is, is one of boundaries, fences, restrictions and controls limiting him and preventing him from reaching his destination. These two ideal-types are in Bauman’s conception their own alter egos. They depend

⁴⁴ Baumann, note 3, p. 88.

⁴⁵ Baumann, note 3, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Baumann, note 3, p. 88.

⁴⁷ Baumann, note 3, p. 2.

upon each other, and the one cannot exist without the other; no vagabond without the tourist and vice versa. Thus, while the greatest anxiety of the tourist is that he should lose his status and become a vagabond, the highest aspiration of the vagabond is to become a tourist. You can however never be certain of your status because the line separating the two is always tenuous, and it is easily overstepped.⁴⁸ The status of the agent is in constant flux, and keeping your status is a constant struggle.

The two ideal-types of social stratification in a globalized world as perceived by Bauman show how power is a product not only of being able to live in time, but also of being able to impose and form space. And this is central; you stay tourist not only by living in time but equally by mastering and imposing space on your alter ego; your opponent – the vagabond. And this is where Bauman's conception of the conditions of globalization differs from that of the US military. Although time is capable of transcending space, space is, for all agents, still of importance. Even the most deterritorialized and free-moving tourist needs to master space as well as time. Global space has to be mastered in a way that fits with the tourist's ability to traverse it. Being successful is thus not only about taking advantages of new technologies of time, but equally about technologies capable of making and shaping space. The yardstick for success thus cannot be seen as a unidirectional race for speed taking place only in time. There is a fundamental dialectic present between space and time that keeps space in the equation. Precisely because time is capable of transcending space, space attains a new importance. It is possible for social agents to make, shape and change space as well as impose it on others, while making it unimportant, traversable and safe for yourself. Thus, one can actually argue that the consequences of new technologies of time leading to the 'annihilation of spatial constraints' are that space is given new importance. Before, space was to a larger degree a given constraint, now the 'new weightlessness of power' allows it to be manipulated in new ways by social agents. Power is not about being in time. Power is about using time to construct space in a distinct way, limiting the freedom of some – vagabonds – while liberating others – tourists.

Clausewitz noted that the social world and the world of warfare are intimately related. How can we understand war in the world of tourists and vagabonds? The above has painted a picture of a globalized social world rather differently than the US military, in fact reintegrating the meaning and importance of space, exactly, and paradoxically, as a consequence of its reduced importance. What

⁴⁸ Baumann, note 3, pp. 93-97.

does this tell us about warfare? How can the analysis and the categories of Bauman be used to come to terms with practice in ‘The Long War’, and the relationship between time and space in present-day warfare?

UNDERSTANDING CURRENT WARFARE

Who are the military tourists of today? Who are able to construct and impose space on the opponent, while staying liberated from spatial constraints? As we have seen, the US military in doctrine and strategy seek, and to a large extent proclaim, liberation from spatial constraints. But a status as tourist does not necessarily follow from that alone, neither does it condemn the terrorist to the status of vagabond. The terrorist enemy is as well capable of liberating himself from spatial constraints. Christopher Coker acknowledges this as the defining characteristic of current warfare. He compares the terrorists of today with the nomads of the past, capable of bringing down great and territorially grounded empires by their capacity to ‘escape from space’.⁴⁹ But Coker, as the US military, captures only one aspect of current warfare. Hand in hand with the ‘escape from space’ goes the power to manipulate space.

Making War, Making Space

Looking at the ‘war on terror’, it is this dual capacity of the tourist to both escape and impose space that is central, and thus space becomes the centre of gravity. It is not enough to be a nomad, you have to be a tourist; that is, you have to make sure the opponent becomes vagabond. How does the war on terror look through this lens; how can we understand it if we apply the categories of Bauman? We have already seen the Yemeni attack argued as a significant military success by the US military. Compared to the US military the terrorist was limited in his movements; he was the vagabond, whereas the US military could employ time to ‘win’ the engagement. But, the terrorist as well has the capacity to act in time.

The attacks of September 11th are as good an example as any on how mastering time and imposing space is what warfare is about. Much has been written and said about 9.11 and its consequences for just about everything. Obviously the attacks functioned as terror in the traditional fashion. Additionally, however, one of the major consequences was to change the meaning of both global and

⁴⁹ Christopher Coker, “Empires in Conflict: The Growing Rift Between Europe and the United States”, *Whitehall Paper* 58, (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2003), p. 7.

American space, imposing new spatial constraints on America. As a consequence of the attacks, the US had to rethink the relationship between inside and outside. As argued by former Secretary for Homeland Defense (‘Homeland’ itself being a new spatial term) ‘Terrorists seek to...wage war in our streets and cities’.⁵⁰ Moving the war into American space changes that space. What was before civilian space is turned into a battlefield, what was before both secure and free, is now insecure and has to be controlled in new ways. As stated by George Bush while arguing an extension of the Patriot Act: ‘[W]e have a difficult job protecting America. The reason why is because we’re an open society that values freedom. We stand for the – we’re a beacon of freedom and we say you can -- our country is an open country’.⁵¹ It is indeed difficult to be both a battlefield and an open society. The attacks in fact question the identity of the US. Changing the meaning of American space makes it difficult for the US to be what it wants to be. Economically, socially and politically the US has been limited – or is limiting itself – as a consequence of the terrorist attacks. That this is the consequence of the terrorist attacks is nothing new; that the ‘open society’ is threatened by terror is political common sense. The example, however, shows how using technologies of speed and information can impose new or changed space on the opponent limiting his actions on a grand scale: making him the vagabond.

Making space can equally be seen as the centre of gravity in the war in Iraq. And additionally, the making of Iraqi space can be seen as the centre of gravity in the global war on terror. The problem confronting the US military is that terrorists – as the US military – are capable of operating globally; they are according to General Abizaid, Commander of US Central Command a ‘phenomenon without borders’.⁵² This is how the war in Iraq is to make sense in the larger war on terror. The

⁵⁰ Tom Ridge, Statement of Secretary Tom Ridge, Department of Homeland Security, Before the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, 9 April, 2003, accessed at:

http://www.globalsecurity.org/security/library/congress/2003_h/030409-ridge.htm.

⁵¹ George Bush, President Bush Calls for Renewing the USA PATRIOT Act, Remarks by the President on the USA PATRIOT Act at Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, Pennsylvania, April, 19, 2004, accessed at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/04/20040419-4.html>.

⁵² Quoted in Paul Wolfowitz, “Support Our Troops”, *Wall Street Journal*, September 2, 2003, accessed at:

<http://www.opinionjournal.com/editorial/feature.html?id=110003956>.

strategy for defeating al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan was to 'drain the swamp in which they breed'.⁵³ A swamp is a geographically delimited area that can be manipulated; it can be drained, you however cannot drain a phenomenon from an area if the phenomenon has no borders. The issue is thus to re-establish some borders capable of containing the phenomenon; to make a swamp which can then be drained. This is the so-called 'fly-paper' strategy. By creating space, i.e. by trying to establish a democratic Iraq, a new battlefield, a new space, is created attracting the terrorist and setting the conditions for his engagement. The US makes space and imposes it on the terrorist, making him the vagabond. The remaking of Iraqi space in three ways functions as the means to success in the war on terror. First, by making a battlefield in Iraq, a space is created wherein the terrorist is confined and can be destroyed; he loses his ethereal qualities when tied down in the Iraqi battlefield and can thus be identified and destroyed by the US military – or so the argument goes. Secondly, as this new battlefield ties down the terrorist in Iraq the hereto insecure US domestic space is simultaneously secured: 'Our military is confronting terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and in other places so our people will not have to confront terrorist violence in New York, or St. Louis or Los Angeles'.⁵⁴ Third, as the US succeeds in making Iraq a democratic space, that space will itself be secured against both global and more localized terrorist action.⁵⁵ Neither the intelligence nor the potential success of this strategy is at issue here. What is central is how creating space is the way to limit and contain otherwise global actors; how making the opponent vagabond while retaining your own tourist status is paramount in warfare. The fact that the US strategy in Iraq may result in the opposite; that the US maybe sinking into the swamp they themselves have created does not change the argument. On the contrary, it shows how one can never be certain of ones status; the line separating the vagabond and the tourist is, as Bauman argued, always tenuous. In current globalized warfare the capacity to impose space on the opponent while retaining freedom of action in time is central.

⁵³ Paul Wolfowitz, Testimony as Delivered to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Situation in Afghanistan, By Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC. Wednesday, June 26, 2002, accessed at:

<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2002/s20020626-depsecdef2.html>.

⁵⁴ George Bush, Remarks by the President to the 85th American Legion Convention, St. Louis Convention Center, St. Louis, Missouri, August, 26, 2003, accessed at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/08/20030826-5.html>; and further in speaking on Iraq "My job is to protect the people, and I firmly believe that if we were to leave before the job is done, the enemy would follow us here," President Bush, quoted in *Washington Post*, 4 April, 2007, p. A1.

⁵⁵ E.g. George Bush, *President Addresses Nation, Discusses Iraq, War on Terror*, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, June 28, 2005, accessed at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/06/20050628-7.html>.

The two examples above are by no means exhaustive; various others could be mentioned as well. They however show how the making of space is what successful warfare in a global world is about for all actors – the American military and the terrorists. Former US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in fact captures rather well this condition when arguing that we are witnessing a ‘parallel globalization of terror’.⁵⁶ Both actors are at the same time conducting warfare in an age characterized by globalization and employing the means of globalization. The potential predominance of time over space is both a means and a structural imperative. This is a fundamental condition for all actors. However, whereas the US military emphasizes the predominance of time, seeing globalization through the lenses applied by Bauman illustrates the central importance of space as well. Mastering time and simultaneously creating a space that limits your opponent is what warfare is about. Being able to act like Bauman’s tourist is what winning war is about.

Ends and Means: Global Violence and Global Control

“All that we have to do is to send two Mujahedin to the farthest East to raise a piece of cloth on which is written al-Qa’ida in order to make the generals race there to cause America to suffer human, economic and political losses without achieving anything”⁵⁷

This quote functions as a good example on how warfare can be understood by applying the concepts of Bauman. Al Qa’ida can, as the tourist, traverse global space, go to the ‘farthest East’ and by their actions there make that space important, which in turn forces the US to go there. The US becomes – in the quote by Bin Laden – a vagabond. The movements and actions of the US lead to nothing; they are constrained and limited by the meaning this particular piece of space has been given through the actions of al Qa’ida. That which is easy and apparently without any significant costs for al Qa’ida, is for the US both cumbersome as well as costly and in the end unachievable. USA is grounded in space as created by Bin Laden, who, on the other hand, apparently can act unhindered by any spatial constraints.

⁵⁶ Paul Wolfowitz, quoted in Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, “A Parallel Globalization of Terror”: 9-11, Security and Globalization’, in *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol. 37, no. 2, p 330.

⁵⁷ Osama Bin Laden, “Transcript: Translation of Bin Laden’s Videotaped Message, November 1, 2004”, *Washington Post.com*, accessed at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A16990-2004Nov1.html>.

Paradoxically, as the technologies of speed are providing actors with the means to transcend space, the importance of space for warfare changes or even grows. Warfare in a globalized age of virtual and instantaneous communication is a fight about what space is and how it can be shaped, thus tying the opponent down. This power to shape space, on the other hand, derives from the mastering of time. What is Iraq? What is the US? We saw above that defining what these spaces are and how they function was important for the success of both actors. What can and cannot be done by whom in these spaces? This is what current warfare is about. Space and territory no longer possess any fundamental defensive value against what Coker called nomads. This means that there are no safe havens, no secure places, nowhere is a priori under the complete control of any one actor. Everywhere can be a battlefield. Thus the 'flypaper' strategy; it can only be seen as an attempt to create a space – create a battlefield – for both engaging and confining the enemy; to create the swamp from which he can then be drained. Current warfare cannot be understood as a competition between offence and defence as there are no defensible spaces; success is about being tourist, about continuously being able to move while continuously tying down the vagabond.

This situation is closely related to globalization, and globalization is, as we have seen, central to understanding it. The process of globalization has at first glance done away with spatial constraints thus reducing the meaning of space; it can easily be transcended. So is the case in warfare, the technologies of speed associated with globalization have provided actors with the means to apply violence irrespectively of space. This is the case for both high-tech Western militaries and non-state terrorist actors. Warfare is now global, not in the sense of a global world war, but in the sense that it can happen everywhere. War is no longer confined and limited by distance but taking place in a global space. This effectively reintroduces space in two ways. First, how this space is created and by who will define who will be the winners and losers. Second, Audrey Cronin argues that 'the mechanisms of globalization need to be exploited to thwart the globalization of terrorism'.⁵⁸ I would push the argument further. Because warfare is a fight about the meaning of global space, then global war will not only use the mechanisms of globalization, it will redefine global space and thus ultimately redefine globalization.

⁵⁸ Audrey Cronin, "Behind the Curve: Globalization and International Terrorism", *International Security*, vol. 27, no. 3, (2002/03): p. 55.

The fundamental element in the above conceptualization of global warfare is the relationship between time and space. It is from this that everything follows. The central ‘mechanism of globalization’ is the capacity for agents to liberate themselves from spatial constraints. In the case of the terrorist this mechanism was what provided the capacity for 9.11. For the US military it provides the ‘unblinking eye’ and global reach making the Yemeni attack as well as the war in Afghanistan and Iraq possible. Both agents have the capacity to make violence everywhere at any time. As time transcends space so war transcends its previous limitations. But this capacity for global violence is only one side of the story. As argued in the criticism of the US military conception of warfare, acting in time is not all there is to global warfare. Bauman showed us that there can be no tourists without vagabonds; they are alter egos. Accordingly, acting in time – as for instance the 9.11 attacks – is not a goal in itself; it is a means to impose space on the opponent. Globalized warfare is a fight about what space is; it is about making space that will allow an actor to behave like a tourist while denying this status to other actors. The means to do this is violence, but the goal is control.

As stated by Bauman the power of the tourist lies not exclusively in his capacity to transcend space but equally in the way he can manipulate the space surrounding and constraining the vagabond. The power to control other agents is ultimately a consequence of how one creates space. Thus global war is fundamentally not about deterritorialized violence. Creating a particular global space that provides power to control the actions of the opponent is the ultimate goal.

Clausewitz saw that the world of war and the social world are connected. This is as well the foundation for Cronin’s argument that the mechanisms of globalization should be utilized in the war on terror. But the relationship between war and society is more than just a reflection of means. Current warfare is not just about synchronizing military strategy and doctrine with the business practices of global firms. The consequences of global warfare are that war can be everywhere; everywhere is a potential battlefield where violence instantaneously can materialize itself. This implies that war is no longer just a reflection of society. The ultimate aim of global warfare is to create a particular global space. This means that society will equally be a reflection of warfare.

Winning war is about defining space for your own uses. Here the differences between the US and the terrorist show themselves. The space that leaves the US as the only tourist is not compatible to the space in where Al Qa’ida is liberated from spatial constraints. Making a particular social space is the centre of gravity in current warfare. This is reflected in Robert Kaplan’s assessment of the more general US engagement in Yemen: ‘terrorism was both a cause and a symptom of the political

weakness of states like Yemen. So, in a sense, the US was fighting the unwieldy process of modernization itself.⁵⁹ Success or failure depends on remaking Yemeni space in a way that makes it impossible for terrorists to operate from it. In Kaplan's view this is achieved by making a modern and democratic Yemen. Only a particular Yemen – a particular Yemeni space – will keep the US secure. This, however, implies that all social spaces necessarily have to be remade,⁶⁰ that is the only way the US can secure its position as tourist. This is the consequences of the disintegration of spatial constraints.

This will not be easy however; the vagabond and tourist are both ideal types. In actual practice the identity of the two will be less than clear-cut, and the competition delimiting the one from the other is a constant feature of globalization. So is the case in warfare, no actor can ever be certain of his status. Coker compared modern warfare with that of the nomads; that their escape from space gave them victory. But as argued here that is not enough. As stated by the most successful warrior-nomad 'conquering a country while mounted is easy...dismounting and building a nation is difficult'.⁶¹ So is the case today, speed is essential but not sufficient. Wars are won only by making space. Therefore the 'global war on terror' will equally be a 'long war' as its ultimate goal is to universally fight and see through the 'process of modernization'. It is about defining and controlling global space; making globalization safe for America.

CONCLUSION

'Every explosion of social forces...will be re-echoed from the far side of the globe', this sentence was the point of departure for this essay. Currently we are witnessing major explosions of social forces resulting amongst others in what is known as the 'global war on terror'. The preceding has tried to investigate this war and warfare in general in a globalizing world. Changes in the time/space relationship identified already by Mckinder as pivotal for social and political change is still of paramount importance for the conduct of warfare in this global war.

⁵⁹ Robert Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground*, (New York: Random House, 2005), p. 31.

⁶⁰ See for instance Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-first Century*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2004).

⁶¹ Djengis Khan quoted in Kaplan, note 59, p. 94.

'Time has conquered space' could well be the headline for current conceptualizations of war, and as we have seen, time is indeed conceived as the central concept in warfare by the US military. From this very distinct praxeology follows a particular definition of the identity of the US military, a definition of viable and intelligible action, as well as the defining characteristics of the enemy. I characterized this war as an economy of speed. It draws its concepts from an economical conception of globalization and its only medium of exchange is speed. Success is measured in time only, space and spatial constraints are both things of the past. How one views globalization; how one views the relationship between time and space is central to how warfare is viewed as well. Using Bauman's concepts of the tourist and the vagabond I have tried to outline an alternative understanding of the consequences of globalization for warfare. The structure of the relationship between time and space is still central in this conceptualization. Time has however not in Bauman's view universally conquered all spatial constraints leaving space without importance. On the contrary, the power of time is exactly in its capacity to impose spatial constraints on social agents. So, have I argued, is the case in warfare. Making and controlling space is what global war is about; time is important in this, but the praxeology of the US military overemphasizes time and underestimates space.

The consequences of this relationship between time and space in current warfare are serious. The central element of the above is that the centre of gravity in warfare is the control of space. This could imply that not much has in fact changed in what war is about. Traditionally the goal of warfare was equally the control of space or control of territory. But as the means of warfare has been liberated from spatial constraints war is no longer confined to any one battlefield. Warfare is conducted in time, and violence can, as we have seen, materialize itself everywhere at an instant. Therefore, the space that has to be controlled or managed is no longer limited to one battlefield or to a bounded territory. Neither remaking American nor Yemeni space is enough to guarantee victory; only when everywhere is remade is it possible to claim victory. Global war, including the 'Global War on Terror', becomes about the control of global space. Consequently warfare cannot be viewed only as a reflection of society or as a continuation of politics. Lacking any spatial limitations warfare becomes an inherent and general part of society and politics.

Terrorism: When Risk Meets Security

Karen Lund Petersen

ABSTRACT

The paper draws attention to the changing concepts of risk and security after 9.-11 and the consequences it has for the political constructions of the state-market relation. It examines the speech acts of both the U.S. government and the insurance industry in the face of the terrorist threat and how these discourses convey certain understandings of the state-market relation. It argues that the private company is an agent in the provision of national security; that the company is political actors in the sense that it is left with political responsibilities that goes beyond that of respecting the law. The private company has a security responsibility to self-regulate of its own behaviour – to act morally and in accordance with national values.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history private companies have been considered important to national security. In the heydays of mercantilism, protectionism was generally seen as an important foreign policy instrument and in recent times, we have witnessed how boycotts of products and stops for export have been used as a strategy in international politics. Compared to recent decades, however, private companies have after the events of 9-11 come to play a far more active role in defining western security policies. As it, repeatedly, has been emphasized by President George Bush, a shared responsibility between government and private sector is essential to national security in the face of a terrorist threat.¹ There are mainly two ways of explaining this active involvement of private companies in today's war on terror. One way is by referring to the nature of the terrorist threat, and the impossibility of separating internal from external threats. Accordingly, national security threats cannot be reduced to external threats and cannot be handled by diplomatic or military means alone. Terrorism has to be fought

¹ George Bush 2002, *The National Strategy for Homeland Security*, p. 24, July 2002; George Bush 2003, *The National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets*, February 2003; and George Bush 2006, *The National Strategy for Combating Terror*, September 2006.

within society, it is argued. Generally this has been the reasoning behind the establishing the Department for Homeland Security; for emphasising the need for ‘neighbourhood watch’; and for the calling private companies to actively take a role in the fight against terrorism. Yet, besides its direct involvement, the private company has a strong symbolic value that makes it especially important in the so-called War on Terror (WoT). By threatening private companies, terrorism hits the western images of market and capital and the individual’s right to freedom of movement (so fundamental to the existence of the ‘market’). This metaphorical relation between the company and the vulnerability of the liberal state is very important politically; because it describes some very fundamental values of our society and because it is allegedly these values that groups such as Al-Qaida try to fight.

In order to reduce the vulnerability many regulatory initiatives have been taken to increase corporate security: increasing the control of imported food products; increasing the control and security in airports; and far-reaching regulation of the private insurance market, to mention just a few initiatives. National security has, however, also become an integrated concern in the decision-making of many private companies – both because of the direct threats from terrorism and because of the legal regulation that these companies are subject to due to national security. In corporate circles there has been a heated debate on how to manage the threat from terrorism and relate to the increasing political and public concerns with corporate security. In 2005, the World Economic Forum stated that the risk of terrorism is likely to have an ‘extreme impact’ on business and markets in the future. This awareness has led many companies to include terrorism in their risk assessments and the insurance industry to invest much effort in developing methods for determining the risk levels of terrorism.

The paper draws attention to the changing concepts of risk and security after 9.-11 and the consequences it has for the political constructions of the state-market relation. It examines how the speech acts of both the U.S. government and the insurance industry have been constructed in the face of the terrorist threat and how these discourses convey certain understandings of the state-market relation.

The question of political changes is approached as one of changes in the understanding of concepts. Inspired by the English historian Quentin Skinner, concepts are understood as foundational and constitutive; they both represent and are constitutive of human understanding and experience.

Therefore, a conceptual analysis of this kind shows us what the premises are for politics and political change.²

With this in mind, the paper proceeds in three steps. First, the main features of the modern concepts of risk and security are outlined. The purpose is to set up the context or convention in which the concepts of risk and security traditionally have been understood. It is based on those conventions that the paper secondly analyses the speech acts of both government and private insurance companies. It asks how the market is constructed in security policies and how the politics of security is constructed in the private market of insurance. Thirdly, the paper considers how these conceptions of risk, security and the private company meet and what the political consequences are of this conceptual development.

THE CONCEPTS OF SECURITY AND RISK

This section presents key elements in the modern concepts of risk and security as they are commonly used by private companies and states in their every-day practice of risk analysis and security policies. These concepts of security and risk constitute the basis for the coming study on the current debate on terrorism, as it describes what will be seen as the context of meaning or convention that current political and corporate debates on terrorism build on, relate to, reiterate or dismantle in their conceptualisations of security and risk.³

The Concept of Security

Many IR scholars have commented on the meanings of security – coming from a realist and neoliberal tradition, over cultural and constructivist traditions. Although realists, liberals, and cultural analysts all have been important contributors to the debate on international security, constructivists

² Meta-theoretically conceptual history has become a part of the linguistic turn in social science, and the conceptual historian analyzes the use of concepts in order to tell us something about how the world is understood and do not, as e.g. the 'conceptual analysts' Sartori and Oppenheim aim at finding the timeless and logical core of the meaning of a concept in order to define concepts. Giovanni Sartori, *Social Science Concepts - A systematic Analysis* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1984); and Felix E. Oppenheim "'Fact' and 'Values' in politics: are they separable?", *Political Theory* 1, 1 (1973): 54-68.

³ This presentation of the concepts of security and risk, does not aim to describe the variety of approaches to the concept of risk, such as the sociological approaches of e.g. Ulrich Beck or Niklas Luhmann or the cultural approaches of e.g. Mary Douglas, or the variety of approaches to international security within International Relations (IR). See Karen Lund Petersen, "Tre Risikokulturer", *Politik* 8, 2 (Marts 2005): 6-13.

and postmodernists are the ones that (due to the methodological stance) have considered the historical meaning of security and its constitutive role for our understanding of politics and political order.⁴

As most authors agree, the relation between the concept of 'security' and 'state' is absolutely central. Walker writes: "The security of states dominates our understanding of what security can be, and whom it can be for, not because conflict between states is inevitable, but because other forms of political community have been rendered almost unthinkable".⁵ Hence, the state is considered the core category of political imagination: the security-identity relation is naturalised in a way that it becomes hard to see other identity relations as relevant to security studies. In his study, Walker does not essentialize the concept of sovereignty in the sense of making sovereignty the only possible principle of political organisation, but questions the naturalness of the concept of sovereignty and state by showing how this organisation of space marginalises other forms of political organisation e.g. the possibility of world government, the possibility of thinking security in terms of humanity etc.⁶

Michael C. Williams shows how this understanding of political identity was closely related to security concerns. He states that the naturalisation of relation between security and state was a deliberate attempt to exclude identity concerns from the political realm (e.g. religious concerns) in the late 18th century England. There was a 'liberal sensibility' behind this modern construction of the identity-security relation, Williams writes.⁷ A similar observation is made by the German conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck who traces the non-identity relation between peace and religion back to the reformation in the 16th century's Germany. He argues that, "... peace became possible only when

⁴ Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde, and Ole Wæver, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998); David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Policy of Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); Lene Hansen, *Security As Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); Jef Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); William E. Connolly, *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations As Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); R. B. J. Walker, "Security, Sovereignty, and the Challenge of World Politics", *Alternatives* XV, 1 (1990): 3-28.

⁵ Walker 1990, note 2, p. 6

⁶ Walker 1994, note 2

⁷ Michael C. Williams, "Security and the Politics of Identity", *European Journal of International Relations* 4, 2 (1998): 204-225.

religious potential was used up and exhausted; that is, at the point where it was possible to politically restrict or neutralize it. And this disclosed a new and unorthodox future.”⁸ According to Koselleck, it was, however, not until the Peace of Westphalia that peace (and thereby security) became founded in the political state.

Although the state historically has been constructed as the main security provider, the question is still ‘who’ this security is provided for. The state, as such, does not have the unity or the individuality to make it the *subject*⁹ of protection - in and by itself.¹⁰ Rather, the individual (meaning persons, firms and institutions) is most often constructed as the subject that the state must protect. This picture is especially strong within the contractual theoretical tradition which has informed especially the American version of realism and liberalism.¹¹ In this picture, security is constituted as a *right* that citizens hold, and therefore something which is closely connected with the meaning of protection and responsibility. The role of the state is, in this optic, to take care of the ‘victims’ – assuming responsibility *for*. Said differently, this concept of security entails the possibility of separating between the responsible and the possible ‘victimized’ part – that of placing guilt.

However and even though this individualized side to the concept of security is present, the concept of security entails a strong element of collectiveness, as Buzan et al writes.¹² Although, in the 1980s, concerns about environmental degradation, the effects of globalization, drug trafficking etc. were seen as a threat to our security, and not only states but also other identities were recognized as reference objects, security remained a collective term. The individual alone cannot make claims on security: something does not constitute a security threat because it constitutes a threat to individuals alone (e.g. smoking, crimes, traffic) but a security threat is always formulated in collective terms (as a matter of we, us, them). Individual security (although the individual is the one that ultimately should be protected) is kept the unmarked side of security in this conceptual universe; is an important defining counter-concept. Said differently, security in international relations is defined as having its

⁸ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), p. 9.

⁹ Here subject designates the autonomous unity that is referred to in terms of protection

¹⁰ Foucault Michel, "Governmentality," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller eds., *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 103.

¹¹ Ole Wæver, "The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations", *International Organization* 52, 4 (1998): p. 720-1.

¹² Buzan et al, note 2.

own specific characteristics, which are distinct and different from the concept of security that we ‘normally’ refer to in our daily lives as individuals. The image of international politics as distinct from national politics ‘makes’ security something that has to do with external and existential threats to nation-states or at least larger political identities.

The Concept of Risk

Historically, the concept of risk that we know today came into being during the early modern era – around the same time as the nation state was firmly established as the main political organisational unit. The concept dates back to the transitional period between the late Middle Ages and the modern era, and as with the concept of security, the concept of risk was formed as a secular counterpart to a religious programme. According to Mary Douglas, Anthony Giddens and Niklas Luhmann, the concept of risk replaced the secular concept of ‘sin’, which expressed the individual’s behavioural relation to the future. Instead of being deterministic, risk designated the modern believe in the possibility for progress.¹³ Also the rise of statistical methods in the same period became highly central to risk analysis, risk assessment and risk management, which were introduced systematically in connection to maritime trade and insurance.¹⁴

In today’s practice of risk analysis, two logics are present. First is the insurance logic. Insurance companies live by selling and thereby also creating new risks. These companies basically base their risk calculation on statistics as the probability (frequency and severity of an event) and the number of clients willing to draw the kind of insurance in question must be settled in order to set premiums. Hence, this risk analysis is based on the many former like events that have occurred – on statistical methods and probability theory. The risk analysis that is conducted by companies in their everyday

¹³ Mary Douglas (1990) “Risk as a Forensic Resource”, in *Daedalus* 119, 4 (Fall 1990, pp. 1-16; Niklas Luhmann, *Soziologie Des Risikos* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991).; Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

¹⁴ Statistics were originally associated with states and their need for mapping and governing populations. According to Foucault 1991, ‘statistics’ originally meant “the science of the state”, note 8, p. 96. See also Claes Wahl, *The State of Statistics: Conceptual Change and Statistical Reasoning in the Modern State 1870-1940* (Stockholm: Department of Political Science, University of Stockholm, 1996).

decision-making is, on the other hand, based on an investment-logic (e.g. in cases of political risks¹⁵). Risk analysis is used by companies to assess whether a given project or action is sensible to undertake, and the most common method is cost-benefit analyses, where risk reduction is considered a benefit.¹⁶ Risk is necessary and positively related to the possibility of profit.¹⁷ Thus, this distinction between insurance and investment does affect how risk is considered: as a commodity that is traded or as a necessary cost that must be accounted for in an investment strategy.

In practice, however, the two logics of risk analysis (insurance and investment) are of course related, as the insurance aspect is often a part of an investment strategy. Moreover there are many common features. On a very general level, a private company runs risks by making investments and doing business - risks which are positively related to that of creating returns.¹⁸ The economic success of the market presupposes competition and therefore also that some companies die and others live and that those who make sound decisions and arrangements will succeed. The rest will have to pack up and leave. Buzan, de Wilde and Wæver write that, there is “inherent insecurity” in the market,¹⁹ and Vincent Cable labels ‘uncertainty’ and ‘risk’ “the basis of economic freedom and choice”.²⁰ Hence, the concept is generally formulated within the system of economics – decisions on the matters of risk are economic decisions affecting profit and returns. It is this economic system that gives the conceptualisations of risk a ‘common’ reference and helps to present risk as a rather stable category.

¹⁵ Political risk is the risk that companies run by making direct investment in a foreign country and it is usually the political stability and situation in the host-country that is subject. One example is expropriation; another is import restrictions; a third is rigid bureaucratic systems; a fourth is corruption; and so on. See Darryl Jarvis, "International Relations and International Risk: Method and Technique in Political Risk Analysis", presented at the International Studies Association, Montreal (March 17, 2004).

¹⁶ W. D. Rowe, “Risk assessment approaches and methods”, in J. Conrad ed. *Society, Technology and Risk Assessment* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1980).

¹⁷ See Francois Ewald, "Insurance and Risk," in Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp, 197-210 for a presentation of the insurance logic, and Peter L. Bernstein, *Against the Gods* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998) for a presentation of the investment-logic

¹⁸ Bernstein 1998, note 15; Louise Amoore, "The Risk Masters: Management Consulting and the Politics of Uncertainty," *Constructing World Orders Conference, SGIR, Den Haag, Sept. 9-11 (2004)*

¹⁹ Buzan et al 1998, note 2, pp. 115

²⁰ Vincent Cable, "What is International Economic Security?", *International Affairs* 71, 2 (1995): 306. See also Virginia Haufler, *Dangerous Commerce* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 5; and Bernstein 1998, note 16)

By calculation, risks can fit into the system of currency: a system where money is the medium that translates risk into a material present. In line with this thinking, it is assumed that risks can be classified, quantified and to some extent prevented, and that rational behaviour can help us to manage or maybe even eliminate risk. Rational behaviour can prevent risks from materialize in cases where the relation between cause and effect is comprehensible and rich on information.²¹ Risk establishes the future in the present, as it is the insecurity about the future that is expressed in the formulation of risk.²² To name something 'a risk' helps to justify change and action in the present, and designates the possibility of changing the future.

This assumption about calculability, however, also presupposes that the business environment can be delimited or fixed. The risks are assumed to be out there, to be met and available for sizing and controlling. It is therefore also essential to the concept of risk that it is possible to establish an acting subject. As stated by Luhmann, a risk is something you 'run', where dangers are something you are 'exposed' to.²³ E.g. you run a risk when you smoke. Accordingly, the concept of risk refers to idea of purposive and individual action. Danger is kept as the unmarked side of risk, as both Beck and Luhmann has shown – danger is the counter-concept that at once describes the identity and the non-identity of risk.²⁴ Danger remains that which cannot be either seized or controlled – is the antithesis to progress.

In terms of comparing the ontology described in the concept of risk and security respectively, there is no doubt that the two concepts expresses two different ontologies – a collective and an individual. Moreover, the economic logic that dominates the thinking on risk is conceptualized within a universe of control and calculability – concepts which in the modern era have been associated with internal domestic developments.

²¹ John Adams, *Risk* (London: UCL Press, 1995); Bernstein 1998, note 16; Ewald 1991, note 15, 197-210; and Michael Power, 'The Risk Management of Everything', (London: Demos, 2004).

²² Douglas 1990, note 11, p. 3; and Ulrich Beck, *World Risk Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999), p.52

²³ Luhmann 1993, note 11, pp. 148ff

²⁴ Risk-decisions, however, always involve danger for someone else – as smoking is a risk for me, and a danger for the people around me (who have chosen not to smoke). Luhmann 1991, note 11, p. 178. Hence, risk and danger are always defined in relation to one another. In an organizational picture, this means that every time one makes a decision or decides not to make one, a risk is taken and new dangers are created.

TERRORISM AS A RISK FOR PRIVATE BUSINESS: THE U.S. SECURITY POLICY POST 9-11

Where this section asks how the market is constructed in security policies, the next considers how the politics of security is constructed in the private market of insurance. The analysis is presented as two parallel analyses in order to maintain sensitivity towards the respective contexts and thereby remain open to the possibility of there being more than one conception of security represented in the debate. This does not mean that the two concepts (security and risk) have nothing in common or that the two spheres (market and state) are disconnected, but only that it is not possible to approach these distinctions from the outside. Instead it is the construction of this distinction that is under investigation – a construction done by the actors in the fields of security politics and terrorism risk insurance.

More specifically this section is a study of the speech acts on risk and security in today's debate on terrorism: the need for 'warning', 'promising' or 'encouraging' a certain political development.²⁵ The premise is that any socio-political change demands a justification that is based on these already established conventions – a speech acts that confronts, defines, and redefines the established concepts of risk and security defined above. As will be shown there may be many concepts of security in play in the debate on terrorism – many speech acts on security that constructs the role of private companies in different ways.

When it comes to understanding the role of private companies in the security policies of the U.S. post 9-11, two trends can be identified. In the first reading the distinction between the internal and external affairs of the state is upheld and concept of security manages to stay inside the 'traditional' discourse on national security. In the other reading, however, the possibility of this division is questioned and the changing role of the state as the sole provider of security is emphasised.

²⁵ This analytical strategy is inspired mainly by Quentin Skinner, whose writings have been concerned with the meaning of concepts and their use in speech acts. See e.g. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume I. Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); "A Reply to my Critics" in James Tully ed., *Meaning and Context* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 231-288; and "The State" in Terence Ball, James Farr and Russell L. Hanson eds., *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) pp. 90-131.

The so-called traditional discourse on security refers to the “terrorism as war” representation of terrorism – a representation that dominated American security policy after 9-11 where the U.S. declared “War on Terrorism”. The conceptualization of terrorism as war has worked politically to secure a concept of security that conceptualises the state as the main security provider and the threats as being primarily external. This discourse on terrorism and national security can be traced back to President Reagan who in 1985 launched the concept of ‘state terrorism’. The concept of state terrorism was used to define the states that pose a threat to the U.S. national security, and to argue that terrorism should be fought by military rather than domestic juridical means.²⁶ The argumentation around the concept of ‘state terrorism’ was powerful in the U.S. foreign policy after 9-11, and paved the way for dividing of the world into friends and enemies (the axis of the evil versus the free world). Although the media generally focused on the threats from Osama Bin Laden and his non-territorial organization, Al-Qaeda, the states of Afghanistan and later Iraq were established as the main source of threat – a threat that by and large was handled with the traditional military method, namely war. Accordingly, the focus on the threats from individuals and the transnational character of terrorism did not remove the state as a source of threat. By George Bush’s famous words “either you are with us or against us”, it was firmly established that states can be ‘part of terrorism’ due to their political action or speech.

In this reading security is dealt with as an external affair of the state. The concept of security is closely tied to a concept of national security, where war is the ultimate manifestation of security politics. This security logic establishes the state as the ultimate protector and national interest as the main referent object. Moreover, the threat from terrorism is, by and large, externalized (as the enemy is foreign) and the classical division between inside and outside, between domestic and international affairs, is upheld. This externalization of threats, however, also helps to keep a division between normal (internal) politics and security politics in place, as the state remains the one responsible security provider that do what is necessary for the nation to survive. This discourse on “War on Terrorism” to a large extent emphasises continuity rather than change, and also in accordance with the interpretation of many academics. Posen and Calhoun, Price and Timmer emphasise the

²⁶ Bruce Hoffman *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p.p. 185-96; and Steve Simon and Daniel Benjamin, “America and the New Terrorism”, *Survival* 42,1, (Spring 2000): 59-75.

rhetorical effect of labelling the attacks on World Trade Centre and the Pentagon as an act of war.²⁷ According to these scholars, the naming of 'war' is not interpreted as mirroring a change in the concept of war, but the concept of war was adopted to legitimate and defend *military* retaliatory action in Afghanistan.

A different understanding of the concept of security is, however, also represented in these foreign policy debates. Where the story so far corresponds to the traditional picture of security, where national interest is the main referent object and the state is considered the main security provider, the need for private companies to take action in the provision of national security is also emphasized.

The relation between national security and the company is generally conceptualized in terms of three forms of disciplining mechanisms. The first form appeals to the self-interest of the company – an appeal which establishes the company as an agent with free choice on how to combine the concern for security with the concern for profit-making. A second kind of disciplining mechanism is an appeal to the loyalty of the company – especially a loyalty toward national values and societal security. This mechanism does not in the same way as the former insist on the compatibility between profit and moral action, but emphasize moral action as something that should come first and be prioritized. The last mechanism is legal regulation which is argued on the basis of necessity – an appeal to necessity which is established by law and which leaves no choice for the company but to adjust.

All three mechanisms are represented in this discourse on terrorism. First, it is argued that the field of security policy has expanded to embrace issues that formerly were seen as a normal policy issues, e.g. such as individual crimes, the security of private companies etc. Hence, we have seen a securitization of issues that formerly were considered normal political matters. This securitization has happened through the use of legal regulation. Airport security is just one example of the many concerns which until recently were considered something that could be handled within the scope of

²⁷ Barry R. Posen, "The Struggle Against Terrorism", *International Security* 26, 3 (2002): 39-55; and Craig Calhoun, Paul Price, and Ashley Timmer, *Understanding September 11*, New York, New Press, 2002).

day-to-day politics, but now is considered to be of national security interest.²⁸ A second example is the U.S. bioterrorism act of 2002, which was designed to increase the level of food safety in the US against terrorist attacks. This act includes an extensive regulation of foreign manufactures as it lays down the security standards for foreign manufactures that export food to the U.S. A third example is the regulation of the insurance market in the US and a number of European countries. The signing of the “Terrorism Re-Insurance Act” (TRIA) by President Bush in 2002 and again in December 2005 was seen as a significant step toward a politicizing or even securitizing private insurances. Politically, terrorism insurance was considered to be an important means to counteract an economic crisis after a terrorist attack and to facilitate a continuing trust in the economy.²⁹ In the U.S., insurance companies were reluctant to offer terrorism insurance for companies exposed to terrorist attacks due to the expected losses. This was and is still considered a serious political problem because the economy is becoming vulnerable to threats of terror. The solution has been to regulate the insurance market. As Sheila C. Bair, Assistant Secretary of Treasury, argues in a speech about TRIA to the American association of re-insurance companies:

“... Congress needs to consider the adverse economic consequences that could ensue in the event of a future terrorist event, given the unavailability of terrorism coverage, particularly for properties viewed as potential targets. A federal terrorism insurance program is an *essential part of our nation's defenses* against this insidious new threat.”³⁰

As this citation shows, the actions of the insurance companies are linked to national security, and the normal logic of insurance seems to be set aside for national security concerns. However, the state still seems to be considered as the main reference on security – leaving a picture of ‘private business’ as *subject to* this policy. In a RAND Corporation publication from 2006 entitled *National Security and*

²⁸ E.g. the Bush administration’s implementation of the “Airline profiling system”: A Computer-Assisted Passenger Pre-screening System II (CAPPS II) which is used as ‘an exceptional measure’ in the fight against terrorism. CAPPS search secret intelligence and law enforcement databases and rate every airline passenger as a red-, yellow or green-level threat, indicating each person’s security risk. As raised by liberty organizations, an enforcement of this act constitutes each individual as a security threat and the constitutional rights of individual freedom and privacy comes in second.

²⁹ See the justifications of the American “Terrorism Risk Insurance Act 2002”, November 26, 2002 at www.geerccgroup.com/global/resource_center/resource_terrorism_summary.html

³⁰ The Office of Public Affairs, March 20, 2002 (<http://www.treas.gov/press/releases/po2016.htm>). My emphasis.

Private-Sector Risk Management for Terrorism, the link between insurance and national security is highlighted as something that government and intelligence services need to govern closely.

Besides these examples of securitizations - securitizations which have become successful by the use of political and legal regulation - private companies have also been subject to a security regulation that stresses the moral responsibility of the company, and a form of regulation that challenges the view of the state as the ultimate referent on security. Sundelius' paper from 2005 on the future of the EU security policy is a good example of a how need for a closer cooperation between states and private business is seen as essential to national and international security.³¹ In this EU policy paper, he argues that the old concept of security ("the security of territory"), which was closely tied to the state and referred to external threats, cannot grasp today's challenges of terrorism. Instead he introduces the concept of functional security: a concept that focus on "the security of critical functions in society" (to maintain infrastructure; free trade; safeguard basic values etc.). These functions are, according to Sundelius, both internally and externally important and cannot be handled by states alone. Therefore it is essential that these security threats be dealt with in close cooperation with private sector actors and across state borders. Likewise, on the question of critical infrastructure, which is the core task of the U.S. Department for Homeland Security and which focus on the aim of securing critical infrastructures such as telecommunication, electricity, bridges etc as well as symbolically and economically important assets such as historical buildings and nuclear power plants, the role of private sector actors and their security responsibilities is stressed.³² In the National Strategy for Homeland Security, it is argued that "[t]he responsibility of providing homeland security is shared between federal, state and local governments, and the private sector", and that "[p]rivate firms bear primary and substantial responsibility for addressing the public safety risks posed by their industries."³³ And to sum it up:

"A close partnership between the government and private sector is essential to ensuring that existing vulnerabilities to terrorism in our critical infrastructure are identified and eliminated as quickly as possible. The private sector should conduct risk assessments on

³¹ Bengt Sundelius, "Functional Security", in Antonio Missiroli ed. *Disasters, Diseases, Disruptions: a new D-drive for the EU*, Chaillot Paper 83, (Institute for Security Studies, European Union, September 2005).

³² George Bush, *The National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructures and Key Assets* (February 2003); and George Bush, *The National Strategy for Combatting Terror* (September 2006).

³³ George Bush, *The National Strategy for Homeland Security* (July 2002), p. xii and 33

their holdings and invest in systems to protect key assets. The internalization of these costs is not only a matter of sound corporate governance and good corporate citizenship but also an essential safeguard of economic assets for shareholders, employees, and the Nation.”³⁴

Where the securitization of the actions of private companies is conceptualized as a matter of legal regulation, this relation between national security and private companies is characterized by a focus on moral obligations and responsibilities. One can even go as far as saying that the private company in this representation is constructed within a logic of the patriotic citizen that stress the responsibility and loyalty of private companies towards the nation, the core ideas of the nation or the government.³⁵

This subjectivation of the private company can, on the one hand, be read as a redefinition of the liberal distinction between market and politics, as the relation between politics and market not only is defined in terms of law but also in terms of morality and responsibility. On the other hand, this discourse can also be seen as part of a general trend to discursively establish the company as a “corporate citizen”³⁶ that is responsible (beyond legal regulation) for its influence on society (environmentally, socially, with regard to health etc). In this respect, the discursive move of establishing the company as responsible towards its country is not entirely new. What is new is, however, that this responsibility involves issues of national security. The company’s self-administration of security policies is attributed to the private company politically. The company is not only obligated to protect itself, but also the society or the nation that it is a part of. This argumentation is very much in line with the argument above on the changing meaning of politics vis-à-vis private actors, as it is the companies ‘self-administration’ of its and the nation’s security that is considered the political criteria of success. The political task is to make sure that this happens.

³⁴ Bush 2002, note 31, p. 24.

³⁵ See also Kristian Soby Kristensen “Critical Infrastructure Protection and the Practice of Sovereignty”, paper presented at the XIV Nordic Political Science Association, Reykjavik 11-13 August 2005.

³⁶ For a thorough treatment of the concept of “corporate citizenship” and the general literature on Corporate Social Responsibility, see Elisabet Garriga and Doménech Melé “Corporate Social Responsibility Theories: Mapping the Territory”, *Journal of Business Ethics* 53 (2004): 51-71.

Taking the entire debate into consideration, the ‘private company’ takes on two roles in the US foreign policy debate on terrorism. On the one hand, the company should (like any other individual) be protected by the state against external threats. On the other hand, the company also appears as protector of national security – as an important and necessary security political actor. Although this might seem as a paradoxical to construct the company as both *subject to* and *subject of* national security, it is, however, questionable whether this means that security responsibilities are handed over to corporate actors and thereby handled within the risk format of private business. Such a development would indeed challenge the idea of the state as *the* protector of individual security, freedom, and equality – ideas that are basic to a liberal democracy. Rather, this analysis has shown that it is the understanding of what meaningful can count as a ‘security policy’ that has changed. The link between ‘politics of security’ and ‘the market’ is in this foreign policy discourse not mainly constituted in terms of law but the appeal to moral action is playing a huge role in the policy on terrorism – a policy that stresses the self-governance of companies as good corporate citizens.

TERRORISM AS A RISK FOR PRIVATE BUSINESS: THE INSURANCE BUSINESS POST 9-11

I will now turn the corporate insurance literature on terrorism, asking how the politics of security is constructed in the private market of insurance. As mentioned, the insurance industry is generally seen as important to national security in the U.S., and partly therefore, terrorism has become one of the industry’s main concerns.

The debate on terrorism risk insurance is basically divided between those who emphasise continuity and those who stress change in the concept of risk. The first discourse on continuity, establish the concept of risk according to the traditional categories of calculability and conceptualise the risk of terrorism as a commodity that can be traded on the market. The second discourse that emphasises discontinuity, on the other hand, stresses the political nature of terrorism: the political reality that the company must include and relate to in their risk assessments. Even though terrorism basically is approached as a commodity, calculable and definable in terms of money, in the first discourse, this discourse recognises that political and societal change may alter this conception of risk. Hence, this discourse generally sees the second discourse on discontinuity as its ‘Other’.

In the risk literature (especially the economically founded), ‘uncertainty’ usually refers to that of unpredictability; that of not being able to make precise calculations about the future,³⁷ and the concept of risk associated with the possibilities of calculations, knowing the odds. Accordingly, ‘risk’ and ‘uncertainty’ usually are conceptualized as counter-concepts: the concept of risk being associated with that of making precise measurements and calculations, that of avoiding uncertainty.

The distinction between ‘risk’ as something that can be measured and ‘uncertainty’ as that which cannot possibly be measured or estimated is a classic distinction in the academic debate on risk. However, in the debate on terrorism insurance, this distinction is challenged. The problems of risk management in relation to terrorism are perceived as a matter of dealing with the uncertain inherent in terrorism risk. This is due to the fact that the idea of establishing the probability (frequency and severity) of terrorism is seen as impossible. As a re-insurer testify to the U.S. House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Capital, Markets, Insurance and Government Sponsored Enterprises: “Unfortunately, the potential harm that terrorists can inflict is unpredictable in frequency and unlimited in severity... [t]errorism has become uninsurable in the private marketplace”.³⁸ Also, Michael Huber argues that, “Lacking any kind of experience, insurance activities are left with “gut-feelings” about the insurance aspects.”³⁹ This problem of establishing the probability is often compared to the data-problems of other catastrophe events.⁴⁰ E.g. the experiences from Hurricane Andrew in 1992 are often compared to today’s problems with terrorism. This event led to much debate in the 90s on how to insure against natural catastrophes and a huge

³⁷ The concept of uncertainty changed with the writings of John Maynard Keynes’ *The General Theory* from 1936. Keynes went against the established view that laws of probability determined the future – that the future was like a spin of the roulette. Instead, he argued, we must develop a theory of uncertainty – a theory that takes account of the incalculable. Bernstein 1998, note 15, pp. 228-30. See also Frank Knight, *Risk, Uncertainty and Profit* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921). Knight was the first to develop a clear typology that differentiated between risk and uncertainty.

³⁸ David Mathis, “Testimony before House Subcommittee on Capital Markets, Insurance, and Governmental Sponsored Enterprises,” (House of Representatives, 24 October 2001): pp. 3.

³⁹ Michael Huber, “Managing the Unknown Future: different rationales for insuring against terrorism”, *World Trade Bulletin*, no. 10 (2002): 1. Likewise Ericson and Doyle writes, “terrorism loss estimate models are heavily dependent upon the subjective opinions of selected experts.” Richard Ericson and Aaron Doyle "Catastrophe Risk, Insurance and Terrorism", *Economy and Society*, 33, 2 (2004): 150.

⁴⁰ Guy Carpenter, “Terrorism Modeling”, *GG in the News* (December 2004); Philip Bougen "Catastrophe risk", *Economy and Society* 32, 2, (2003): 253-274.

increase in scientific research that should, with greater certainty, facilitate more precise predictions of these events. After now almost fifteen years, there is a general agreement within the insurance community that such progress has been made and that the models used to assess the risks of natural disasters are generally working well. The same progress is expected to happen in the research on terrorism, although terrorism is considered a ‘man-made’ event. Today the models on terrorism risk are by and large based on these models on natural disasters.⁴¹

The concept of risk presented tends to include the uncertain and thereby confront the distinction between risk and uncertainty, which has been behind the concept of risk represented in the literature on risk management for at least sixty years. Uncertainty and risk is *not* perceived as counter-concepts in this debate on terrorism insurance. Rather, the two become alike and undifferentiated, both characterized by an absence of measurability and controllability. This discourse on the risk of terrorism, however, manages to stay inside the paradigm of control. The problem of terrorism is the lack of control – a lack that the writers believe to be able to solve by developing the right method to measure the threat.⁴² This is attempted by expanding and developing the technical and economic methods to risk analysis. Because ‘risk is also profit’, as Ericson and Doyle formulate it, the insurance industry tries to make sense of the uninsurable in insurable terms,⁴³ consequently seeing terrorism as a ‘normal’ risk. Thus, rational behaviour is seen as the way out of this chaos of uncontrollability – eventually bringing the concept of terrorism back into the ‘real’ discourse of risk-management. It is a technification of terrorism risk that works as a speech act of ‘normalizing’ threats by making these risks objects of calculation. However, this is not a question of deciding whether these actors deliberately try, as Beck writes, “to feign control over the uncontrollable”.⁴⁴ Rather, these interventions are only possible because these writers are able to draw on a wider and already

⁴¹ Ericson and Doyle 2004, note 37, p 149

⁴² See e.g. Gordon Woo, “Quantifying Insurance Terrorism Risk”, Paper prepared for the National Bureau of Economic Research Meeting, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1 February 2002). There are several competing models on the market today, available from EQECAT, Risk Management Solutions (RMS), and Applied Insurance Research Worldwide (AIR). See Risk Management Solutions (2004) for an attempt to measure the risk of a terrorist attack.

⁴³ Ericson and Doyle 2004, note 37, p. 137

⁴⁴ Ulrich Beck, “The Silence of Words: On Terror and War”, *Security Dialogue* 34, 3 (2003): 255-268

segmentalized discourse on risk. Hence, the speech act and thereby the meaning of these conceptual interventions (their intentions) is only possible to understand within the larger discursive context.⁴⁵

However, in the insurance literature there is also another representation of the concept of risk, one that stresses the political content of terrorism (the second discourse), and thereby challenges the picture of continuity just described. In this discourse, the problem of terrorism risk is presented as something that goes beyond the question of techniques and calculation, as something that is dependent on the politics of national security.

In this discourse it is the resemblance between terrorism and war which is conceptualized as posing the biggest challenge to the traditional concept of risk. The 9-11 terrorist attacks had war-like qualities: the U.S. being at 'war against terrorism'. Therefore, it is argued, the risk of terrorism for private business is something that must be dealt with by governments and private business in cooperation.⁴⁶ This argumentation is very powerful in the U.S. debate over the "Terrorism Insurance Act" (TRIA). In a speech to congress, the president of the Reinsurance Association of America, Franklin W. Nutter links the problem of terrorism insurance to the actions of the federal state (the problem of interdependence). He argues that "[t]he industry cannot predict the number, the scale or the frequency of future terrorist attacks that we may face as our nation continues to execute the "war on terror""⁴⁷. Because of the political nature of terrorism and the problems of measurement, the TRIA was designed to backstop the insurance industry financially in the case of another major terrorist attack on U.S. soil - increasing the availability of terrorism coverage by making the insurance affordable for private businesses. By creating this system, more businesses could buy terrorism insurance and the national economy would become less vulnerable in the case of a major attack. Said in technical terms, the risk of terrorism is considered being interdependent. The vulnerability of the

⁴⁵ The concept of intention is taken from Question Skinner, who uses this concept to define the meaning of speech act. He explains "I have argued that we may speak of a writer's intentions in writing, and of these intentions as being in some sense 'inside' their texts, rather than 'outside' and contingently connected with their appearance." Skinner 2002, note 24, p. 99. In making 'intentions' a semantic feature, Skinner argues that intentions are not 'motives'. Motives assumes a causal logic, the possibility for planning and therefore that it is possible to stand 'outside' the text.

⁴⁶ Kent Smetters, *Insuring Against Terrorism: The Policy Challenge*, (Brooking-Wharton Financial Papers: 2004), p. 153; Franklin Nutter, "Oversight of the Terrorism Insurance Program", (Testimony before The Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs, April 14, 2005).

⁴⁷ Nutter 2005, note 44

company does not only depend on the way the company provides for its own safety and uncertainty, but is interlinked with the actions of other institutions (e.g. the government, the police, other private companies in the same sector etc), its history, its location, the size of the company, the symbolic value etc.⁴⁸ Therefore, it becomes either extremely difficult or impossible to locate the risk-taker in the face of a terrorist threat. The company can increase its level of security, but whether that will prevent a terrorist attack (or the public fear of such an attack on the company) is very uncertain. The intentionality that usually is associated with the concept of risk is considered as more or less absent in the case of terrorism due to this interdependency.⁴⁹ There is no established linear causality between actions of the private companies and the risk of a terrorist attack, and therefore it is not possible to confine the level of risk to something that has to do with private decision and action alone. Terrorism is basically considered uncontrollable.

In this line of argumentation, Michael Huber maintains that terrorist attacks are not risks at all. Following Niklas Luhmann and Ulrich Beck, he argues that risk is something that the company runs, where danger is something one is exposed to.⁵⁰ The danger of terrorism is uncontrollable and therefore uninsurable. Terrorist attacks are planned and intended acts and hits societies independent of what society decides to do. Therefore, Huber argues, terrorism is not a risk but a danger that per definition is uninsurable. For something to be a risk, he argues, one must be able to locate a risk-taker. Huber's article is a first-class textual example of how the conceptual distinction between risk and danger is changing in the debate on terrorism. Huber tries to hold on to the modern concept of risk, upholding the distinction between risk and danger, arguing that dangers are not for insurance companies to deal with as danger refer is a collective threat there cannot be referred back to individual actions of companies.

This debate shows that there is a conceptual struggle going on, and that the distinction between risk and danger, the insurable and the non-insurable is constantly challenged and called into question. One could be tempted to conclude, as Ulrich Beck does, that this is a sign of the neo-liberal failure

⁴⁸ See e.g., Howard Knunreuther and Geoffrey Heal, "Interdependent Security", *The Journal of Risk and Uncertainty* 26, 2/3 (2003): 231-249; and Bruce Schneier, *Beyond Fear. Thinking Sensibly about Security in an Uncertain World*, (New York: Copernicus Books, 2003), p. 34.

⁴⁹ Kip W. Viscusi and Richard J. Zeckhauser, "Sacrificing Civil Liberties to Reduce Terrorism Risks", *The Journal of Risk and Uncertainty*, 26,2/3 (2003): 99-120; and Beck 2003, note 42, p. 260

⁵⁰ Huber 2002, note 37.

to cope with global crisis and an example of reflexive modernity.⁵¹ In this interpretation, terrorism has dissolved the distinction between the insurable and the non-insurable (risk and danger). This argumentation, however, overlooks how the paradox in this argumentation described is ‘de-paradoxified’. The question is not an either-or-question, one of upholding the old logic of risk associated with controllability and measurability or dismissing this logic. Instead what we see is a re-writing of the relationship between the insurable and the non-insurable, risk and danger. On the one hand, for the insurance business to stay in business, it is argued that terrorism risk is insurable, can be measured. But, on the other hand, it is also argued that the government must backstop the insurance business due to the non-insurable nature of terrorism (the problems of measurement). Accordingly we end up with a description of terrorism as both insurable and non-insurable. To use the terms of Swiss Re, reinsurance has become a matter of “thinking the unthinkable and predicting the unpredictable.”⁵² What happens is that the insurable/non-insurable distinction re-enters the space of insurance (the insurable) and it becomes possible to talk about the non-insurable within the language of insurance – to talk about the irrational in a rational manner. Risk, danger, uncertainty, the insurable, and the non-insurable are now sensibly talked about by referring to one single label - namely ‘risk’.

WHEN RISK MEETS SECURITY

The consequence of the described conceptual development seems huge, as the inclusion of the non-insurable or danger in the formulations of risk challenges the traditional understanding of business environments and thereby also politics. The term ‘business environment’ is broadened and not only delimited to private projects of the companies but includes governmental and societal behaviour due to international war-like events such as terrorism. Hence, the environment is opened in spatial terms, and the role of the company in society gets absolutely central to the concept of risk. All this opens up for the possibility that what has normally been considered a state-matter – namely security issues – is now an integral concern of the market. In the future this may affect the possibility of calculation, as Beck predicts in his writings on risk. But, as this analysis shows, this is not necessary so as long as the insurance industry are able to successfully re-write the distinctions between uncertainty and risk and risk and danger. Today it makes perfectly sense to talk about the apparently uncertain and

⁵¹ Beck 2003, note 42, p. 262.

⁵² Swiss Re, ”The insurability of ecological damage”, Report, (Zurich: Swiss Reinsurance Company, 2003), p. x)

incalculable within the conventional language of risk analysis. The uninsurable (terrorism) thereby become insurable.

This does, however, not mean that there aren't any political effects of this conceptual battle. In the foreign policy debates on security, the actions of private companies are generally seen as having a large impact on national security. The private company is, in the foreign policy discourses on terrorism, constructed both as an actor that must be protected, and as an important partner in achieving the aim of national security (as the one that must provide protection). The private companies are not only subject to legal regulation but it seems increasingly important to direct and supervise private companies to act morally responsible in terms of national security. Hence, this foreign policy discourse on security broadens the notion of (security)policy by making it possible to have moral appeals and requests to define the relation between politics and markets – and thereby not only the law.

In both the corporate and political discourses on terrorism, the meaning of security responsibility is challenged. In the terrorist discourses, the company is no longer considered as a 'victim', but do bear a security responsibility for acting single-handedly on the terrorist threat – taking the measures necessary to safeguard not only its own assets but also the national security. Security is in this discourse considered a duty more than the 'right' that it traditionally has been thought of. The effect is an understanding of the company that needs reflexively to engage in a form of self-regulation.

CONCLUSION

Altogether this paper has shown how the debate on terrorism risk and security installs the private and economic actor as an actor that legitimately and successfully plays a defining and mediating role

in the securitization of terrorism.⁵³ The conceptual battle on the meaning of risk and security is politically as it articulates a reaction to the conventional understanding of risk and security – articulates alternative political visions by writing, re-writing, and confronting the established ones.

It seems almost banal to mention that the distinction between state and market, politics and economics is socially constructed. Adam Smith constructed his version of the liberal state and market, the Marxists objected to this construction and so on. This paper likewise reminds us how this construction is constantly written and rewritten in the politics of security and that a boundary drawing is constantly taking place. But as Smith and Marx reminded us, this distinction is important as it designates not only the meaning of privacy and freedom but also that of responsibility and protection – values that is salient to democracy.

⁵³ In this perspective it is, however, important to recognize that it is possible to do a speech act on security without it being a securitization in the way the Copenhagen School has defined it to be. Where the concept of securitization refers to a particular speech act on security, namely the speech act that establishes something as a security issue, this debate on terrorism risk and security is also about how something that already has been securitized – namely terrorism – are dealt with in the practice of corporate risk analysis and in the conduct of security policy. These practices, of course, facilitate a certain meaning of security and thereby also in the last instance redefine the meaning and possibility of securitization. See Ole Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization," in Ronnie D. Lipschutz, ed. *On Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 46-86.

Towards the End of War? Peeking through the Gap

Pertti Joenniemi

ABSTRACT

The concept of war is clearly not its old self. The recent debate indicates with considerable clarity that there no longer exists a superior position from which to authoritatively enforce a dominant and broadly accepted definition. The most profound challenges consist of the claims that the concept has had its day and should accordingly be abandoned.

In addition to exploring the background to the critique, my aim is to pass judgment on what accounts for the openness in the first place and invites for numerous efforts of renaming war. The effort is probe the broader conceptual constellations underpinning war and in particular the nexus between war and the state in order to trace possible changes. The claim is that these broader constellations provide a much more firm basis for arriving at conclusions concerning the dynamics underway as well as the future of war as a fundamental political and social concept.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of war does not seem to carry in the way it used to do. It is no longer of help, the argument goes, if one is to make sense of a variety of more recent events and it is unlikely to be much of a guide – with the breakdown of many of the previous certainties constructed in the name of war – in view of a host of future challenges.

This then implies that pressures are building up amounting to an unraveling of the established ways of comprehending war. The restraints part of the discursive structures underpinning the concept have turned less severe allowing it to be questioned on both ontological and epistemological grounds, for the critique then to be accompanied by numerous efforts of renaming and re-differentiation between various forms of political violence.

A variety of voices have gone as far as asserting that a breaking-point has emerged. Their claims indicate with considerable clarity that the concept is not just routinely reproduced and naturalized but also challenged through the initiation of profound counter-discourses. The critics find the concept unconvincing and assert that it is out of touch with the essence of contemporary conflicts. The commonplace is therefore to be relegated to the dustbin of history in order to pave

room for other, and so far less established forms of meaning. War is taken to have become 'obsolete', it is seen as being on its way of 'dying out' or regarded as having entered the process of being 'disinvented'.¹ Allegedly, "War is not only in transition, it is in a crisis".²

The recent debate concerning the essence of war thus indicates with considerable clarity that there no longer exists a superior position from which to authoritatively enforce a dominant and broadly accepted definition. The previous self-evidence of the concept of war and its assumed contingency has turned unsustainable and what is left consists of a plurality of contending conceptualizations. Said differently: rather than being seen as a fixed 'single-point' concept with considerable resilience, war has turned unfixed and 'multi-perspectival' with several constitutive logics simultaneously present on the scene struggling with each other. One might, in fact, speak about a certain 'postmodernization' of war (or, for that matter, of developments that reach beyond modernity with war appearing in both pre- and post-modern forms) as indicated by the emergence of a host of efforts of grasping its essence through the creation of new coinages. The emergence of concepts such as 'new wars', 'cyber wars', 'asymmetric wars', 'post-Clausewitzian wars', 'post-national wars', 'hybrid wars', 'pre-emptive wars', 'immanent wars', 'liberal wars', 'humanitarian wars' or 'global wars' indeed points to that contemporary wars are taken to be different from earlier ones. 'War' is no longer to be treated as an 'ideal-type' of concept in a Weberian sense as it appears, more generally, that a fundamental category of the political and social discourse has become a shifting one.

The conceptual renewal, part of the search for new interpretative categories, also includes coinages such as 'network wars' developed in order to stay in tune with both rapid societal and

¹ Arguments along these lines have been presented among others by Christopher Coker, "Post-modernity and the End of the Cold War: has war been disinvented?" *Review of International Studies* 18, no. 3 (1992): 189-198; Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991); Chris Hables Gray, *Postmodern War. The Politics of Conflict*. (London: Routledge, 1997); Kalevi Holsti, *The State, War and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and John Lynne, *Battle, A History of Combat and Culture* (Boulder, Co: Westview Press, 2003). For an effort of summing up some of the discourse, see Michael Brzoska, "'New Wars' Discourse in Germany". *Journal of Peace Research* 41, no 1 (2004), pp. 107-117. The point of political and social concepts being historical rather than fixed has on a more general level been made and elaborated by Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, transl. by Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).

² Gray, note 1, p. 3.

technological transformation.³ The latter concept – echoing talk of a ‘revolution in military affairs’ – has had considerable impact on the military machineries as has the one of ‘fourth generation war’ with stress laid on changes in the sphere of information technology, complexity science and the organizational logic of the network society.⁴ The concepts of ‘spectacle war’ and ‘virtual war’⁵ stress, in turn, images as a major product of military encounters rather than information as such and Slavoj Žižek speaks somewhat similarly about “war without casualties”. He suspects that there might be “war without warfare” in train with warless war resembling coffee without caffeine.⁶

In general, the concept is no longer used as unreflectively as often used to be the case. The feelings seems to be there that with the blurring of many fundamental distinctions – including those between inside and the outside, politics and economy, public and private as well as peace and war – brand new vocabularies are required if one is to differentiate between various forms of collective violence.

The conceptual diffusion and fragmentation that have over the recent years been conducive to numerous efforts of redefinition also includes a collaborative scholarly platform called ‘Dictionary of War’.⁷ The endeavour departs quite explicitly from the idea that (modern) war as an armed confrontation between sovereign states is a thing of the past, and at the same time there is no ‘peace’ as current developments are rife with political violence of various kinds. War is not seen as an isolated occurrence disrupting a state of peace but constantly imbricated and

³ This concept has been used in particular by Mary Kaldor, “American Power: From ‘Compellance’ to ‘Cosmopolitanism?’” *International Affairs* 79, no. 1: 1-22. Also Ulrich Beck has contributed to the debate with a number of new coinages such as ‘post-national wars’ or ‘humanitarian wars’, see Ulrich Beck, “Über den postnationalen Krieg”. *Blätter für deutsche und Internationale Politik*, no 8 (1999), pp. 984-990.

⁴ See for example William Lind, “Understanding Fourth Generation Warfare”. *Anti-War.Com* (<http://antiwar.com/lind/?articleid=1702>).

⁵ The concept has been used among others by Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (Sudney: Power Publications, 1995).

⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (New York: Verso, 2002), p. 10. On the concept of ‘virtual war’ see Andreas Behnke, “vww.nato.int.: virtuousness and virtuosity in NATO’s representation of the Kosovo campaign”, in Peter van Ham and Sergei Medvedev, eds., *Mapping European Security after Kosovo* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 26-144. On the refusal of most western leaders to use the concept of war in the context of the Kosovo ‘campaign’, see Pertti Joenniemi, “Kosovo and the end of war”, in Peter van Ham and Sergei Medvedev, eds., *Mapping European Security after Kosovo* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 48-65.

⁷ See <http://www.woerterbuchdeskrieges.de/>.

deeply rooted in social relations. Thus, in viewing the almost ever-present war “as a constitutive form of a new order”, the project aims at challenging established perceptions by coining altogether 100 articulations regarding the issue of war. In other words, it seeks to generate a plentitude of vocabularies thereby adding considerably to the linguistic resources available in order to stay in tune with a number of unprecedented developments that increasingly exceed established definitions. It is asserted that new and increasingly rich vocabularies are needed as war now exists in plural with modernity having lost control in a dual sense with war neither disappearing, nor taking expected forms.

The project signals, more generally, that with the proliferation and blurring of established borderlines, it has become increasingly obvious that war does not mean the same thing in all times and places. Rather than being confined to its own place and time, it permeates the normality of the political process. No doubt, the platform’s underlying logic of trying to tackle the issue in a productive manner is different from the more defensive one applied by critics such as Christopher Coker, Kalevi Holsti or Martin van Creveld. Instead of celebrating the virtues of complexity and aiming at broadening the repertoire of meanings as well as linguistic resources required in arresting what war is about, the critics tend to favour parsimony and opt for the return of precise and stable meanings. They tend to find, one might assume, the plentitude aspired for in the context of endeavours such as the ‘Dictionary of War’ quite disturbing. In their view the concept of war has, with the banishment of various crucial limits and boundaries, been deprived of any real substance. It ought to be, instead of being broadened and made increasingly fluid, damped with distinctions to be redrawn and fixed in the context of some other conceptual departures. Stated it in Foucaultian terms, the critics claim that a certain age marked by a specific mode of reflection (episteme) has come to an end. A rather unexpected gap has emerged, they think, with the break in the discursive order that has traditionally carried the concept of war across time and space. As war no longer has a perpetual presence in social and political life reproduced and reinforced through the use of undisputed and inter-subjectively shared meanings, one is consequently asked to imagine change reaching beyond what has been imaginable in the context of the established meaning and the attendant social continuities.

A KEY CONSTELLATION OF CONCEPTS

My aim here is, as such, not to pass judgment on these two approaches and ways of reacting to war having lost its stable and previously sedimented meaning but to probe the void that seems to have emerged with the discourse on war no longer having the power to categorically oust articulations pertaining to exit. Or, to state it somewhat differently, I attempt to explore the openness that appears to be there with a number of established comprehensions having turned

controversial.

The increasingly contested nature of the concept signals with considerable clarity that changes are in train. However, the question remains how far do they reach. Are we basically talking about a cyclical phenomenon observed many times before and pressures that the concept can accommodate by and large in its established form without being in danger of collapsing as a meaningful communicative device or does the more recent discord really point to a genuine implosion? Is it to be concluded that a crucial signifier has had its day in being fractured beyond repair with the end-talk thus indicating that war as a commonplace is well on its way of becoming history?

In examining and passing judgment on these questions, I do not aim at privileging and staking out some particular definition of war but rather approach the concept as socially constructed. It may, in being historically negotiated and culturally contingent, well display signs of contingency over a considerable period of time. It is part of a discourse (such as the Hobbesian emphasis on the state of nature being inherently violent and conflictual) that renders war as something largely inevitable but remains nonetheless adjustable and malleable to changing circumstances. The latter qualities entail that it is from time to time opened up and re-packed.⁸ It has to be re-founded in order for the concept to remain vital and of value.

There is, in this perspective, nothing particularly surprising in that the concept of war has after the Cold War and 9/11 – and the faltering of a considerable number of previously well established fault-lines – been thrown into doubt. It is equally unsurprising that a number of contending claims concerning the ‘real’ essence of war have emerged and that it has become increasingly hard to adjudicate between various assertions.

What is more difficult to account for is precisely the claim that the concept has had its day and that it is no longer applicable in an intellectually legitimate manner. That part of the discourse is different in the sense that it does not aim at contributing to a sorting out between different options, endeavour at staking out a particular definition or aspire to coin some new departures for the meaning of war to be re-stabilized. It is instead openly ontological in nature raising questions about war as a major aspect of being. The core issue to be addressed is therefore what

⁸ For this argument, see Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought from Enlightenment to the Cold War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), John Keegan, *History of Warfare* (London: Pimlico, 1993), or P. Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 5.

allows the talk pertaining to rupture to surface at all, what provides such articulations with legitimacy in the discourse and, moreover, do these claims pointing to exit have any chance of gaining broader credibility.

The alleged demise tends to lack in credibility among other reasons because it would undermine a considerable number of certainties constructed in the name of war. A breakdown would spell, in addition to considerable ontological anxiety, difficulties also for many other key concepts and departures essential in defining what politics is about. With war turning ambivalent if not outdated, not just a variety of contemporary security practices but also a considerable number of other more general efforts of ordering would run into trouble. The concept would no longer be productive in the sense of allowing the thinking about a contingent future, although rupture would also – if seen from a different perspective – open up for new modes of thinking. Specific articulations such as 9/11 pertaining to particular instances, neutral terms such as ‘conflict’ or ‘campaign’ or concepts like ‘risk’ and ‘crime’ more generally would come to the forefront even more forcefully than has already been the case. They are bound to grow in significance in order for the void to be filled.

In probing the alleged gap, my approach here rests on treating the concept of war as part of a distinct discursive structure and a constellation of core concepts that regulate what can be meaningfully said.⁹ It is this pairedness and link of deep connections to some conceptions in other fields that makes the concept of war convincing in the first place and easy to reproduce even across a longer period of time. The link, or one might speak of an overarching code, may consist of a larger constellation of concepts – in the case of war above all concepts such as ‘politics’, ‘reason’ and ‘international’ come to mind. In other words, the meaning of war gets established and is upheld – or for that matter, thrown out of balance – within this discursive universe of related concepts.

Focusing in this context on a plurality of key concepts would undoubtedly provide a quite detailed as well as comprehensive picture. It would, however, also significantly add to the complexity of the analyses. My aim, therefore, is to delimit the constellation to the extreme and condense the analysis of relationality to a nucleus of meaning. I do so by merely taking onboard

⁹ For a similar effort, although applied to the concept of power, see Stefano Guzzini, “The concept of power: a constructivist analysis”, *Millennium* 33, no. 3 (2005): 455-521. On a more general level, see Martin Bulmer, “Concept in the analysis of qualitative data”. *Sociological Review* 27, no. 4 (1979): 651-677.

the concept of the state as a basic form of communality.¹⁰ The analysis departs, in other words, from that war can be meaningfully and convincingly spoken of if the state is integrally included within the underpinning constellation of core concepts. The two articulations, those of war and the state, have over a considerable period of time constituted the constellation that accounts for both contingency and fragility. There is resilience, once the link between war and state remains unproblematic and conversely, the concept of war can no longer be articulated with the same level of confidence as previously if this link unravels and war gets severed from the concept of the state. In this perspective, endism turns into serious option once the usually taken-for-granted relationship to the state is up for grabs.

FRAMING EARLY WAR

The core ideas impacting various descriptions pertaining to the historical trajectory of war are clearly those of regulation and differentiation. These two ways of framing, used in the various historiographic efforts of outlining what war is about and how it has evolved, contribute to that the outcome tends to be (despite some conflicting elements) one of a rather linear rendition. The story told is basically one of war being narrowed down from something rather unconstrained to various more regulated, instrumental and modern forms. It seems, overall, that the initial and expressive as well as existential forms get downplayed for war then to appear easier to frame and comprehend.¹¹

There is some degree of differentiation present in the historiography of war right from the very beginning. This is so as the very concept of war refers to something more organized and sanctioned than just individual acts of killing and murder or random forms of massacre. However, the differentiation remains quite mild as already indicated by that the term ‘primitive’ dominates the various accounts and efforts of categorizing the early phases of war. In effect, the accounts tend to boil down to descriptions of a broad variety of cases of violent conflict without these being narrowed down into any specific pattern or form of ‘war’.¹² With little regularity to be traced as to the entities involved in the conduct of violence or the grievances fought about, there

¹⁰ On the centrality of the state, see in particular R.B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations As Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

¹¹ Among the numerous works, see for example Claudio Ciotti-Revilla, “Ancient Warfare: Origins and Systems,” in Magnus I. Midlarsky ed., *The Handbook of War Studies II* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 223-245.

¹² Along these lines, see Keith F. Otterbein, *Feuding and Warfare. Selected Works of Keith F. Otterbein*. (Langhorne: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers), 1994).

is scarce ground for a nuanced framing. In a similar vein, it may be observed that wars far back in the history have often been cast as ‘chaotic’ or seen as generally part of the human condition. Factors such as bravery, chivalry and heroic self-sacrifice have been on the forefront and have dominated the renditions at the expense of war being seen as purposeful and instrumental. Unsurprisingly, concepts such as ‘feud’ tend to run parallel to ‘war’ as to the vocabularies used.¹³

It further seems, as to the depictions of war being part of a plurality of concepts, that the connections have been viewed as being quite weak. War has rather been presented as a kind of natural and ever-present perpetration of deliberate violence. It has to some extent been essentialized and provided with immanence instead of the concept being restrained and bounded by various other, related concepts, i.e. concepts that have later been rather crucial in allowing war to be pinned down and provided with distinct and far more regulated meaning.

It may also be noted that the various efforts of defining war during its early phases through moves of exclusion have not fared much better. Whereas the concept refers in its modern tapping to a crisis, points to a moment of existential danger and aims at outlining something quite extraordinary, it has been much more difficult to sort out between the norm and the exception in the context of various historical accounts.¹⁴ Likewise, the option of defining war through its productive effects has yielded rather meager results. This appears to pertain to that the link between war and community-building has remained quite obscure, although it has occasionally been pointed out – for example in the case of the ancient wars fought by the Greek city-states – that their fighting was conducive to border-drawing. It took place in regard to ‘barbarians’, thereby depicting and singling out the Greeks as a more ‘civilized’ community.¹⁵

A crucial step of differentiation occurred once factors such as religion, moral and ethics increased in importance in terms of the assumed underlying causes. War could hence be, with authors such as St. Augustine and St. Aquinas providing the intellectual ground for the move, differentiated in terms of ‘just’ and ‘unjust’ wars. This distinction bolstered the regulative efforts in the sense that some forms of war became to be seen as prohibitive whereas others were comprehended as tolerable if not justified. It also implied in ontological terms that the exceptional could be kept separate from the normal.

¹³ See for example Keegan, note 8.

¹⁴ On the relation between the norm and the exception, see Jef Huysmans, “International Politics of Insecurity: Normativity, Inwardsness and the Exception”. *Security Dialogue* 37, no. 1 (2006), pp. 11-29.

¹⁵ Otterbein, see note 10.

The moral and ethical distinctions then further contributed to various law-based approaches and framings. Authors such as Vattel, Pufendorf and Grotius built on the initial differentiation by turning the previous, predominantly theological approach into an explicit legal category, one also increasingly attached to states as the sole legitimate authority and bounded political community to take decisions concerning peace and war. This latter move was quite important in further narrowing down the ambiguity, doubt and uncertainty that had previously for long surrounded various ways of defining and comprehending war.

TOWARDS A MODERN READING

In accounting for the ontological and epistemic developments as to the concept of war, there is obviously no passing of Carl von Clausewitz. He wrote his seminal work *On War* at the end of the Napoleonic wars.¹⁶

Contrary to various efforts of rendering war outside of politics through an emphasis on law or morally and ethically premised departures, Clausewitz placed politics at the very core of the equation. Although stressing the complexity of war rather than trying to develop a systematic theory, he viewed war as an expression of its political and social milieu with the state replacing societies pervaded by warlike relations. War was viewed as a reflection of broader societal constellations, i.e. not seen as being something autonomous and premised on laws of its own. The state – equipped with military institutions and a monopoly over the means of violence – was located as the basic unit of an international order, one composed of sovereign states. War, within the context of the Clausewitzian comprehension, thus allows for a differentiation between domestic sphere of politics and the relations between the statist entities as a major form of human agency.

Notably, the classical model of war introduced by Clausewitz has been one of duel between equal sovereignties. War is therewith comprehended as a means of settling interstate conflicts of interest, with states having something of a monopoly of war. When for example Herfried Münkler argues that ‘war’ has more recently become a politically controversial concept, his vantage point consists in essence of the classical, Clausewitzian understanding.¹⁷ There are hence, if seen against this background, good reasons to recapitulate some key aspects of the way the story of classical war has unfolded in order to capture the structuring logic that has over a long

¹⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by M. Howard and P.Paret (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1976).

¹⁷ Herfried Münkler, *The New Wars* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 4.

period profoundly impacted the way of viewing war.

The emergence of such a concept substituted previous, far more anarchic and unbound conceptualizations of war with war having stood more generally for clashes and the collective use of violence. Various moral or religious departures were abandoned in the process of subordinating war to modern reason. With war boiling down within the new comprehensions to a duel, no state can claim to have the issue of righteousness on its side. Moreover, with the enemy recognized as an equal and accordingly also provided with the right to self-defence, war was no longer – as could be the case in earlier times – to be conceived as a prime form of self-expression. It then also followed, contrary to previous wars of substance which required the elimination or at least submission of the opponent and their re-socialisation, that the aims of classical war could be regarded as limited. In general, with politics steering war and being governed by calculable reason, the exercise of war could, in principle, be restrained to a balance of interests.

Along similar lines, a spatial delimitation took place in the sense that the recognition of war as a statist affair ratified and sanctioned the establishment of homogenous and stabilised insides, while locating difference and contingency to the outside, i.e. the sphere of anarchy and unpredictability. The spatial difference established between the inside and the outside, by outlining the outside as the space of war, has then been quite conducive to making the modern world readable and instructive.

The rule-bound approach has allowed, more generally, for war to be talked about as an institution, a 'regime', or comprehended through the use of generalisations such as a 'war-system'. Another example of such an institutionalisation consists of the practice of formal declaration of war. As the parties recognised each other through the notion of *justus hostis*, they have been presumed to be able to wage regulated war by limiting their hostilities to attacks against combatants and military objects. Once furnished with recognition, they have been able to negotiate various rules and norms that govern the practice of war. These agreements have included some rather specific rules of war or the actors involved have, for that matter, been able to pursue activities such as arms control. In a similar vein, they have been able to confer about peace.

What is crucial here is the close interconnection established between war and states in the context

of the Clausewitzian comprehension.¹⁸ The framing does, however, not merely imply that a conjunction is being outlined as it entails, in fact, recognition of the states as core actors in politics and international relations. They are not just seen as pre-existing actors aiming at advancing their interests through a relationship of instrumental rationality but viewed above all as entities that prevail through their central prerogative of deciding over war and peace, and in this context their opposition to each other. The relationship has, in short, been depicted as co-constitutive with war waged in the name of the sovereign whose interests are at stake.

Incidentally, the connectedness that has formed one of the baselines of modern life is also to be traced in the more current talk about failed states. The requirement of equal dignity – with all states having the generally recognized monopoly of war – has become increasingly questioned due to growing conditionality. The introduction of a more hierarchic set of norms and rules underpinning recognition appears to invite for more denial, disrespect and denigration. One may subsequently note in this context that it is not only the concept of war that is in trouble. Statehood is also questioned and it gets diversified in categories such as failed, rogue, anaemic, collapsed, aborted, predatory, kleptocratic, phantom etc.¹⁹ Crucially, these are terms of misrecognition implying that states as the key constitutive units of the international system are no longer *a priori* alike. They are instead subject to considerable and norm-based differentiation allowing, among other things, some states to position themselves above others for the superior ones to gain the right to resort to violence in the name of protection, rescue, care, democracy or progress. The norms prohibiting recognition on equal basis hence also allow for invasion.

A DISCRIMINATORY CONCEPT OF WAR

Although the classical concept quickly developed into a template and has been over a long time treated as the most advanced and true expression of what war is about, it has also been controversial as well as in focus of internal disputes.

¹⁸ The link has been stressed in particular by Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime", in P. B. Evans, D. Rueschmeyer and T. Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 164-185. See also Vivienne Jabri, *Discourses on Violence. Conflict Analysis Reconsidered* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

¹⁹ See Anna Leander, "External Determinants of Local Violent Conflict: The Transnational Nature of Contemporary Warfare", in *Interdépendences et Aide Publique au Développement: Actes de Séminaire DgCiD-Iddri 2005-6* (Paris: Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, 2006), as well as Vivienne Jabri, *War and the Transformation of Global Politics* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2007).

As noted by Wilhelm Grewe, “The most significant difference between international law in the 19th century and the Anglo-American Age is the turn towards a discriminatory concept of war”.²⁰ Such a norm-based approach aims at imposing a certain inhibition on the unfolding of war. This development may be seen as reflecting a switch from the teachings of *Realpolitik* to a more liberal stance but may also be interpreted as reflecting crucial tensions within the *Realpolitik* school of thought itself.

As to this latter issue, already Carl Schmitt pointed out in his writings towards the end-1930’s that efforts of disciplining war by the creation of normative rules transfers decisions on the legality and illegality of war from the states themselves to an supranational institution.²¹ It actually deprives, he claimed, states of one of their central prerogatives: the decision over war and peace. War no longer remains, within such a context, premised on the right of states to take autonomous decisions as they are constrained by the collective interests of the international community. And with autonomy gone, also the option of authentic disclosure of political space will vanish. In a similar vein, decision about the just nature of war would no longer rest with the states themselves with war being ‘collectivised’ and ‘denationalised’.

War therefore takes on a very different nature, Schmitt argued.²² It does not any longer stand for an extension of national politics by other means but is fought in the name of a higher order. In fact, the previously coherent concept is ruptured into two contradictory concepts which ultimately abolish the concept of war altogether. He asserted that either war is legitimate and just or it is unjust and illegitimate. The introduction of a discriminatory concept of war – which was to some extent introduced already during the years of the League of Nations – therefore ultimately abolishes the classical one, albeit does this without eliminating violence. Schmitt argued that with war turning from instrumental to righteous, the various restrictions inbuilt into the classical concept would unravel and the outcome could be one of opening the floodgates of ‘total war’. There can hence be no viable alternative to the classical one, he concluded.

But these Schmittian warnings notwithstanding, war seems to have been collectivized and denationalized over time. The Clausewitzian stress on rationality, cost-benefit calculations and the primacy of politics has allowed for a different reading within *Realpolitik* itself and more generally, a liberal way of thinking to gain in impact. As Timothy Dunne has pointed out, being concerned

²⁰ Wilhelm Grewe, *Epochen der Völkerrechtsgeschichte* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1988), p. 728.

²¹ Carl Schmitt, *Die Wendung zum diskriminierenden Kriegsbegriff* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1988 [1938].)

²² *Ibid.* p. 35.

with the possibilities of peace rather than the inevitability of war, with order rather than anarchy, and with progress instead of repetition, liberal thinkers have in the 20th century been able – particularly in view of the nuclear threat – to challenge what he calls the ‘pure war’ related views as an ideology and a theory of choice.²³ Reason has turned into a restraint and an obstruction for war to unfold. The more recent developments that have been there after the century’s traumatic conflicts and the period of the Cold War seem to have considerably strengthened the strand of arguments aiming at restricting war through various normative departures. It has, in other words, been possible to trace a rather crucial disruption in contingency in the sense of the conceptual link between state and war turning far weaker than it used to be.

THE DECAY OF STATES

With the monopoly of states being undermined in the discourse, waging war has been increasingly anchored in ‘global’ and ‘cosmopolitan’ departures or attached to entities such as ‘humanity’. The two latter epithets tend to stand for openly normative approaches with the use of collective violence being seen as having potentially also some quite positive consequences. However, also terms such as ‘transnational networks’, ‘society’ and ‘local actors’ figure frequently in the analysis on ‘new wars’ and occasionally also groups such as ‘warlords’ – not to mention ‘terrorists’ – get furnished with agency.²⁴

Yet a third option of anchoring consists of viewing war as a ‘grand theatre’. Crucially, it is then disconnected and deprived of any external bonds and viewed as a spectacle void of some specific anchorage or meaning. Accordingly, in turning into an end onto itself and being comprehended in a wholly self-centered manner, war spins rather wildly but then also contributes – due to its detached and autonomous stature – to the unavoidable dissolution and demise of some other key categories of political order. States in particular are affected.

There is, however, little agreement as to the transformations underway and, consequently, no clear coalescing around any particular anchorage. For some observers the fragmented, non-regular and scattered nature of wars leads to an emphasis on the ‘local’ actors and conditions whereas others draw the opposite conclusion that the underlying causes are to be found in worldwide patterns, this then also mandating ‘global’ action to cope with the challenges. The

²³ Timothy Dunne, “Liberalism”, in Johan Baylis and Steve Smith, eds., *Globalization. An Introduction to World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 148.

²⁴ Mary Kaldor’s various writing on ‘new’ wars are a case in point. Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars. Organized Violence in the Global Era* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1999). See also note 3.

'global' and 'humanitarian' departures and ways of framing war are often underpinned and strengthened by 'liberal' approaches.

To the extent that a shared and unifying marker gets invoked, it consists of the 'global'. This departure stands out a major factor in the efforts to account for the alleged disjunctures pertaining to war, although the 'global' figures in the discourse both as an explanation as well as an outcome. As to efforts of explanation, the pointing out of various corroding effects of 'globalization' constitutes a major way of accounting for the assumed weakening and declining position of the states. In other words, 'globalization' gets often identified as a major reason for why the capability of the states to govern and exercise their power, including the waging of wars, seems to have declined. "Economic globalization has turned post-colonial state-building into state-decay" argues for example Herfried Münkler in the context of his more general study on the interrelated processes of war-making and state-making in the context of globalization. State-making has been crushed, he contends, by the twin forces of globalization and tribalism.²⁵

It may be noted, however, that despite of the frequent talk about 'new' wars, the argument is not necessarily that the emergence of such 'non-regular' wars stands for something altogether unprecedented. The 'newness' does not always imply novelty or point to linear development. The claim is rather that various conflicts which previously existed in the shadow of regular and power political wars waged between great powers have now entered a much more central stage in the sphere of international politics. Or to state it differently, what was previously viewed as excess and seen as constituting a relatively unimportant residue in regard to the way modern war was unfolding has more recently (and unexpectedly) gained in standing. What was before viewed as exceptional has been reconfigured and is now seen as being part of normality whereas the previous normality with wars between states seen as 'proper' wars has turned into an exception. What used to be viewed as a residue has not disappeared from the scene but instead grown in importance in order to dominate the discourse on contemporary wars. Rather than remaining in the shadows as something 'irregular' or 'unconventional' – if not disappearing altogether – such wars have occupied a key constitutive position as to the more recent efforts of accounting for crucial forms of political violence.

Münkler talks in this context about an 'ironic' relapse into premodern times.²⁶ This argument,

²⁵ Münkler 2005, p. 19-21. See note 14.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 72. For an analysis with stress on local and postcolonial wars, see Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, "The postcolonial moment in security studies". *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 2 (2002), pp. 329-352.

sometimes also taken to point to a 'medievalization' of war and in this regard a return to (neo)-medieval times is yet another way of accounting for why the interconnections between war and the state have turned far less distinct.

However, it is clearly the talk on terrorism that has had the most destabilizing impact with 9/11 defined already from the very start as "the day that changed the world". Instead of the calculable and the well-delineated threats of the power political era, the discourse has been focused on 'pathological' dangers that tend to transform the classical, statist forms of war into a thing of the past. Terrorism has, for the most part, been viewed as something quite unprecedented with the terms thereby functioning as profoundly border-breaking. Past experiences and delineations are not of much help in figuring out the essence of contemporary terrorism as it is set up as something quite future-oriented. It has been taken to pertain, in the first place, to something rather diffuse and be quite detached from any usual statist reason. Terrorist attacks might happen at an unspecified point of time and as a form of violence they are in this sense void of the usual regularities characterizing war in its traditional forms. Established discourses get undermined in many ways: 'guerillas' are turned into 'terrorists', 'civil wars' are termed as 'terrorist' wars, nuclear weapons (seen as constituting traditionally power political arsenals) are called 'terror weapons' and some states (like Iran) get slotted in the category of 'terror states'. Actors previously at the fringes of the debate are acknowledged. Moreover, the nation and society more generally are provided with considerable agency in the 'War on Terror' through the coining of concepts such as 'homeland security'. In fact, the discourse on terrorism signals with considerable clarity that quite crucial categories of differentiation are on their way of being undermined and yet the concept of war seems to malleable enough to be able stay around.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, it seems that the categories used in differentiating various forms of war have become quite blurred. The standard vocabularies appear increasingly insufficient to serve as reliable points of reference and anchorage and for some regularity and recognition to prevail; even distinctions drawn historically have been brought back and re-evoked in the discourse. Moreover, a rich repertoire of quite new concepts has been thrown into the debate.

Obviously, there is no avoiding of the conclusion that war is no longer its old self. In the first place, there is much doubt to be traced in the debate. The concept is clearly not treated as being generally valid, stable and merely descriptive in nature but has instead become contestable and an object of a considerable amount of critical scholarship. Moreover, there is much more awareness of the concept's historicity. It may also be observed that the various moves of conceptual rescue

do not seem to work in the way intended with war having become part of an expanding list of contested concept.²⁷ Rather than restoring war's traditionally uncontested and stable nature, they seem to testify to the increasing fragility of the concept. It seems that they rather add than reduce the various signs pointing to a disruption of contingency. Instead of erasing doubt, the efforts of restoration appear to add to 'noise', or as stated by Anna Leander "wreak havoc on the established fundamental categories through which we see the world".²⁸

But does this then warrant the conclusion that the concept of war has basically become intellectually illegitimate, has had its day and is well on its way out of the discourse?

Confining the analysis to mere changes in the concept itself does not seem to suffice in order for more durable answers to emerge. The concept may be down as to its Clausewitzian meaning but nonetheless able to re-surface in some other context. The emergence of exit-talk also among scholars of war undoubtedly signals some weakening. It severely challenges the usual self-evidence and ideal-type nature of the concept but yet much of the symbolic power still remains and may be capitalized by opening up for some new, perhaps non-cyclical and openly hybrid meanings and uses.

Staying on the level of the concept itself may actually be insufficient for some more profound answers to be gained and the effort here has thus been one of probing the broader conceptual constellations and discursive structures that tend to provide war with a more distinct standing. My analysis here has in particular focused on the nexus between the concepts of war and that of the state, i.e. a connection which arguably has been crucial for the credibility and stability that war as a concept has enjoyed throughout the modern era.

It appears, against the background, that there is currently more at stake than just a slight updating of the concept. The changes seem to point to something more than just a cyclical phenomenon with the concept being every now and then revised in order to stay in tune with changing circumstances. The efforts of renewal and search for alternative articulations do currently not occur, it seems, merely in the context of an established and unchanged constellation of broader conceptual departures. There is ground, in that sense, for talk on exit and various other claims referring to rather profound change. There is clearly an extensive reshuffling underway, including

²⁷ On 'essentially contested concepts', see W. B. Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. New Series, Volume LVI, 195-56 (London, 1956), pp. 171-172.

²⁸ Leander 2006, p. 17. See note 16.

also changes in the nexus between war and the state.

This is, however, not to say that the state would have lost out altogether. It is certainly still part of a broader constellation of key concepts underpinning war but it does not seem to have the same eminence as it used to do. Instead the state has to compete other departures, in particular those of ‘humanity’, ‘cosmopolitan’ and the ‘global’. It is less autonomous and has to lean on, be paired with and borrow from other concepts part of the repertoire pertaining to war. There appears to be a multitude of candidates and possible options competing with the state for an alliance with war, and there is no clear hierarchy to be traced with the state occupying a self-evident primacy. On the contrary, the various bonds seem to have turned quite diffuse and fluent, this than also allowing and inviting for war to be expressed and named in a quite multifaceted manner – or with the concept of war dropped altogether.

To catch these dynamics, creative efforts of re-naming and coining a broader linguistic repertoire – rather than aspiring for a return to some strictly unilinear, precise and stable meaning – seem to be warranted. Yet, for a return of war in its traditional conceptual disguise, also a restoration of the nexus between war and the state would be required. It can thus be argued that the various voices calling for the state to be brought back in into the discourse on war along neo-Weberian lines get it in principle right, although the prospect for such a move to succeed appear quite slim with the discourse moving mostly in an opposite direction with war severed from the concept of the state. A serious void has indeed emerged and will presumably grow in strength rather than be narrowed down in the years to come