1999

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Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 28. (1999), pp. 73-108.

Stable URL:
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0084-6570%281999%292%3A28%3C73%3AWBTTF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-0

Annual Review of Anthropology is currently published by Annual Reviews.

Annu. Rev. Anthropol. 1999. 28:73–108

WAR: Back to the Future

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Key Words: warfare, conflict, militaries, combat

■ **Abstract** War is a fraught subject. Those who study it often fight about it. This chapter examines the current state of the study of war, described and analyzed by anthropologists and nonanthropologists who employ concepts like culture in writing about the future of war. Warfare seems bound to keep us revisiting certain aspects of the past. At the same time, nothing induces change quite like conflict. Does war have a future? The preponderance of evidence—biological, archeological, ethnological—suggests that it does. But not all anthropologists agree. This in and of itself represents one of a series of gaps that begs further consideration.

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0084-6570/99/1015-0073$12.00

INTRODUCTION

War is a fraught subject. Those who study it often fight about it (see for example Hallpike 1973, Ferguson 1996, Chagnon 1997, Keegan 1997). This review examines the current state of war, described and analyzed by anthropologists and nonanthropologists who, as they debate the future of war, downplay or highlight such concepts as culture, civilization, and nature, areas in which anthropologists have long had a stake.

Certain kinds of war and war fought by certain types of people(s) have always received anthropological consideration (see for example Ferguson & Farragher 1988, and references therein), and the literature on primitive warfare continues to grow. A decades-old debate still rages about whether a divide, a threshold, a horizon, or nothing at all separates "primitive" from "true" or modern war. With a few notable exceptions, anthropologists have barely studied modern wars, and when modern war is treated as a subject, it is the why behind the fighting and the aftermath of it—not the how or the process—that receives most attention.

As increasing numbers of anthropologists confront the issue of violence, this is likely to change. Already more is being written about local causes and effects of conflict, though (again) not its mechanics, as fieldworkers witness the people they live among being treated as targets and combatants and too often winding up as victims. Ethnic conflict has become an area of study in its own right (Horowitz 1985, Williams 1994). Nevertheless, the presumption remains that although we may not be post-nuclear, we have finally moved beyond mutual assured destruction.

But have we? Consider the devastation wrought in Somalia, Rwanda and the Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the former Yugoslavia, and Chechnya during the 1990s. What of the decades-long fighting in the Sudan, Afghanistan, Burma...? Can we say with any certitude that globalization is moving us toward one world and increasingly interconnected states, or will our future be full of further fission as nations disconnect?

Questions such as these pose serious challenges to those who protect our national security interests. Military psychology, military sociology, and military history examine national security issues from a number of angles, and a significant proportion of political science is dedicated to security studies. Anthropology, in contrast, largely avoids studying those who wield force. As with conflict in general, the effects of militaries and militarization—on masculinity, gender roles, and civilian populations—attract attention. But military ethnographies are rare.

Of course, there is a history and a rationale to the military being a taboo subject among anthropologists. Suspicions and counter-suspicions swirl around anthropologists thought to have assisted or opposed the government during the Cold War as well as in Vietnam (Nader 1997, Price 1998). Anthropologists balked at being associated with programs such as Project Camelot (Ferguson 1989:155), and from Southeast Asia to Central America there has been open condemnation of the notion that any ethnographer would assist defense-related research. Unfortu-

nately, one consequence of this is that little common ground exists between anthropologists and those commissioned with projecting force.

Today, somewhere, plans are being drawn up to wage war. And today, somewhere, people will be killed. From the perspective of those who might die, our unwillingness to reason with those who control the means of destruction might seem unconscionable. That we allow others to link war's past via the present to our collective future and draw sweeping conclusions also demands an explanation, although one reason we desist is that buried in the question of whether anyone can (or should) read the future in the past lurk a host of disciplinary bogeymen. Whose past are we referring to? Whose version of whose past? How far back dare we go? Down which anthropological path do we venture first?

Tylor [1970 (1871)] and Morgan [1985 (1877)] linked improvements in weaponry directly to societal advancement. Few anthropologists today would argue in such evolutionary terms. In fact, many would probably counter that it was post-Boasian anthropology that helped to purge teleology from the social sciences. But are notions about human advancement really dead?

The idea that we can now out-think, out-maneuver, outmode, and maybe even outlaw war is evolutionist in the most traditional sense. Embedded in the hope that we are beyond war is the implication that we are, or can be, different. Is this ethnocentric bias or a necessary ideal?

One aim of this article is to pose these questions in the context of a present in which wars continue to be fought. A second goal is to consider how war is (still) being planned for on the cusp of the new millennium. We might wish war away, but the fact that states continue to prepare to fight other states (as well as insurgents) is ample reason to investigate.

THE PAST

Those who probe the origins of war have done so in three basic ways, each of which suggests a different outcome for the future of war: Causes are inherent (ergo war will always be likely); conditions create situations that call forth war (change the conditions and we can limit war); and war emerged at a particular point in time for particular reasons (thus, it can also be made to disappear in time via reason).

To get at the origins of war, scholars have drawn heavily from primate studies, ethology, evolutionary psychology, archeology, and ethnology. It is important to note that, as with much ethnographic data, the same sets of facts can be manipulated in very different ways. For instance, some consider chimp-on-chimp aggression observed in Tanzania to be evidence that chimpanzees, at least, engage in war[1] (Wrangham & Peterson 1996). Others disagree. One carefully crafted definition describes war as "organized, purposeful group action, directed against

[1]Or there are ants (Wright 1983, Holldobler & Wilson 1984) and also viruses which attack us and to which we respond both literally and figuratively as if at war.

another group that may or may not be organized for similar action, involving the actual or potential application of lethal force" (Ferguson 1984b:5), and no one has yet observed two groups of chimps systematically engaging one another in sustained combat (Carneiro 1994:9).[2]

To War Is Human

Because a number of very good articles already review the "origins" literature (van Hooff 1990; van der Dennen 1990; Ferguson 1984b, 1989; Otterbein 1997), my aim is simply to push to their logical conclusions the four sets of arguments commonly made to explain why individuals would fight in groups. Few of those making these arguments explicitly project the past into the future (one notable exception is Fox 1992/1993). But if we accept a common humanness and agree that individuals form groups in which to fight in order to reap, achieve, attain, or acquire—(*a*) inclusive fitness advantages (Chagnon 1990, Durham 1979, Hirshleifer 1998), (*b*) definite emotional rewards or releases [Fox 1992/1993, Rosaldo 1993, Durkheim 1965 (1915)[3]; Hallpike 1973, Goldschmidt 1997], (*c*) "more" (in terms of tangible goods and/or greater status) (Ferguson 1984b, 1995; Harris 1984; McCauley 1990), and/or (*d*) heightened in-group solidarity (Smith 1981, Harrison 1989, Turton 1994)—then it must be our humanness as much as anything else that creates conditions conducive to war.

Even if no compulsion to war per se existed, what war can provide and offer individuals may be too satisfying for some to resist, particularly because any war can meet a multiplicity of needs or uses, and war, as an act, can be engaged in by victors over and over again. Incentives to fight may overlap and reinforce one another: Successful warriors who enjoy combat and reap material, reproductive, and leadership rewards are likely not only to want to engage in (more) combat but to rank combat as the most conclusive test of fitness. Wars do not just test, they also prove fitness in more realms than we can catalog (see Hallpike 1973:466, Young 1975:206)—literally, figuratively, spiritually, through time, across space, and cross-culturally. But even so, does the fact that war provides benefits to individuals adequately explain the existence of war?

Perhaps war is more a by-product of humans already living in groups. Because humans are reproductively bound to be sociable, both reproduction and sociability can be considered culpable. If, for instance, we agree with Tiger & Fox that bonding among adolescent males is critical to their becoming socialized (1988:

[2]This is even more clearly the case if we adopt Cohen's definition of war: "[W]ar refers to publicly legitimized and organized offensive and/or defensive deadly violence between polities" (1984:330). There is also Turney-High's definition: "[W]ar is violent action or the threat thereof by one social system against another" (1981:315).

[3]Prefiguring the emic link Rosaldo (1993) makes between grief and a headhunter's rage is Durkheim's observation that when sorrow-induced pain reaches a certain "degree of intensity" within a group, "it is mixed with a sort of anger and exasperation. One feels the need of breaking something, of destroying something... Thus it became the custom to give one's self up to the veritable orgies of tortures during mourning. It seems very probable that blood-revenge and head-hunting have their origin in this" [1965 (1915):446].

113), societies cannot escape the violent spin-off from young "men in groups" (Tiger 1984). It is worth noting, too, that older males only stand to gain by challenging young males in a competition they direct outward. They do this by rendering the experience of war alluring and by recounting their own past deeds (see Fukui & Turton 1979, Fadiman 1982) (see below).

Not surprisingly, all militaries take advantage of male-male competition. That some of the same status-seeking behaviors observed among human males in groups have been noted among chimpanzees suggests a truly ancient lineage for war (Manson & Wrangham 1991, Wrangham & Peterson 1996); fraternal interest groups seem particularly contributory (Otterbein 1994). On the other hand, Knauft (1991) finds no clear or unbroken continuity between primate models of aggression and the kinds of fighting that occur among what are purported to be chimpanzees' closest social descendants: human foragers. Thus, for some who seek clues about our evolutionary past in primates, nothing about our connection to other species predisposes us socially, or in any other way, for war.

Evolutionary Heritage(s)

The origins literature speaks to (and about) two very different kinds of evolutionary heritage: the past that has been stamped into us physiologically, and the past that we actually lived, behavioral survivals of which haunt us in the present. For instance, was it the length of time humans spent foraging with spear, bow and arrow, and slingshots that created the template for spear-, bow and arrow-, and slingshot-wielding warriors (Tiger 1984, Turney-High 1981)? Standing the old hunting arguments on their head, Ehrenreich (1997) proposes that it was the hunting of humans by other predators that led us to begin sacrificing one another via war in order to propitiate the gods. Nationalism then displaced the gods but still requires blood.

Shaw & Wong (1989) bring us to nationalism and the brink of the twenty-first century by a very different route. They concentrate on how we lived (not what we did) for millennia: in small kin groups. Theirs is an inclusive fitness argument to which they add the hardwired fact of xenophobia; we are preprogrammed to fear strangers, and as we grow up, we are socialized and learn who to consider Others. Our cognitive ability to stretch social categories makes it easy, given the right conditions, to telescope kin into nation and project strangeness onto anyone we do not (want to) consider family (see also Connor 1994).

For Gabriel (1990) (borrowing from Morris 1967), on the other hand, our ability to construct ideologies like nationalism, and to wield symbols, represents a disconnect not a continuity, and thus renders us radically different from all other animals. Were we any other kind of animal, we would know at a glance, when confronted by a visibly stronger potential foe, whether we had met our match and could signal our readiness to submit. But beliefs hinder our ability to communicate honestly and nonverbally with potential opponents, and a firm belief in "our" ideology often prevents us from making peace (see also Scheff 1994). As Meyer explains, people do not fight for resources but for "their ideas of resources" (1990:235).

Masters hints that language may be a goad to conflict: "Because the contradictory intentions and behaviors in any social group need to be reconciled, politics is natural to an animal using speech and language..." Politics, along with speech and language, are always messy, ergo "social conflict can never be solved, nor can perfect human institutions be invented" (1989:245). Sociability on its own, then, might be catalyst enough. If, as Tiger & Fox (1988:114) put it, our "bio-grammar," which dictates our propensity to strongly bond in certain ways, creates the building blocks of society (via blocks of females with young, males, and adolescent males), then the negative of this "positive" must map potential breaking points.

In other words, if we treat war as a social fact and accept that humans are biologically bound to be social, the logical conclusion is that war is a product of our nature and that it has a future. For those who oppose this idea, however, no argument that links our present-day cognition or emotions to our developmental past is likely to prove convincing, because deep-seated factors about which we may have no consciousness have left no recorded trace. Some contend that child rearing and enculturated emotions, or a society's psychocultural disposition, dictate who will be more war prone (Ross 1993, Ember & Ember 1994, Feshbach 1995). Yet, the only truly solid proof we have concerning motivations is ethnographic and autobiographical, and as Ferguson suggests, all of this evidence is, at best, post-contact (1989:146). If there are no written records describing a pristine state (Fried 1978), there are none describing the development of war. All that mining of the ethnographic record can uncover are the reasons wars are fought. Perhaps then, reason—and malice aforethought—is the cause?

War as Historical Fact

According to Keeley (1996), the weight of the archeological evidence coupled with what we know ethnographically suggests that the compulsion to engage in conflict knows no cultural bounds. All kinds of societies have practiced war, although—significantly—this does not mean that warfare has been universally practiced by all societies (Keeley 1996:32). The implication is that war is conditional. Keeley blames "rotten apples" and "bad neighborhoods"—"proximity to a bellicose neighbor, during hard times, and along frontiers" (1996:127).

Unfortunately, archeologists cannot tell us when wars first began or what they were over (see Martin & Frayer 1997). Skeletal remains that show clear signs of violence do not necessarily reveal whether this was organized or accidental violence (Ferguson 1997). Likewise, there is disagreement over such "simple" elements as walls and whether these were meant to keep nature or fellow humans at bay (Keeley 1997:317, Ferguson 1997:324).

Keeley suggests that conflict may have changed by degree but not by kind across cultures and through time. "Tribal warriors or their recognized leaders conceived and executed plans to exactly the degree of elaborateness and sophistication that their social organization, cultural proscription of leadership, and economic surplus permitted. In this regard, they were no different from civilized soldiers and commanders" (1996:46–47). But this is in stark contrast to the distinction Turney-High (1991) draws between primitive war and "true" war, or war

above the military horizon. In his classic but often misinterpreted work, Turney-High demonstrates that the aim of war was different for most acephalous, kin-based societies than it has been for states. States, for instance, can engage in conquest (Cohen 1984). Hierarchies allow for surplus extraction and for bureaucracies to store, control, and redistribute the manpower and materiel needed to support permanent armed forces. Acephalous societies cannot do any of this, though as Tilly (1990) and Porter (1994) have pointed out, militaries themselves have often been the catalyst—and not the byproduct—of the rise and then coalescence of European states.

Because recent warfare reflects linear developments in technological and scientific know-how (McNeill 1982, van Creveld 1991b, Keegan 1993, O'Connell 1989, Hacker 1994), it has been easy to suggest that war has evolved, so that starting with the Greeks, or in the Middle Ages, or with the military revolution (Parker 1996), it appears as if we have only advanced. But is this so? According to Keeley, the lethality of war has not changed (1996:64). According to Turney-High, the principles of war above the military horizon have remained constant (1991).

This issue of change in degree versus change in kind lurks beneath the surface of most histories of war and may have as much to do with where time is sliced as with what it is about war that is privileged (e.g. technology, tactics, strategy, and/or organization). In a recent provocative history of warfare, O'Connell (1995), a military historian, contends that "the plant trap" initiated war as we know it. Nomads may have first chased farmers into fortifications, but it was local crop failures that led agriculturalists to engage in wars of conquest. They had to steal the stored crops of others or gain access to their land in order to survive. This affected not only the scale but also the purpose of armed combat. This is not the standard population-pressure argument: that as settled populations increase in size, pressure leads to tensions and the urge/need to expand (Johnson & Earle 1987:5).

The Role (Not Rule) of Technology

Implied in the above argument by O'Connell (1995) is a link between nature occasionally spiraling out of control and cycles of war spiraling to new levels. The development of new weapons and new weapons systems was key (O'Connell 1989). To pry people out of fortifications required innovations in the art of siege, whereas the threat of being besieged inspired new defensive designs. This was the arms race in microcosm, eventually resulting in satellites, space-based weapons, and Star Wars. Corollary to the relentless pursuit of power that both caused and resulted in the acceleration of technological inventiveness (McNeill 1982), a second logic emerged: If the means of destruction trump the means of production, maintaining control over the production of the means of destruction assures an almost unbeatable edge. The most vivid proof of this may be the tight security maintained over nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons research (Gusterson 1996). But Goody describes parallel concern over firearms in precolonial West Africa (1980), not so different from the anti-gun sentiments of sword-wielding Japanese samurai in seventeenth-century Japan (Dyer 1985).

Without question, some weapons have had a punctuated equilibrium effect. The development and perfection of machine guns virtually guaranteed Western military domination in Africa and Asia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Ellis 1986, Vandervort 1998). But as Black recently demonstrated, what seems a neat narrative history that credits technology as the force that propels us ever forward may not be quite so neat. Regional and domestic politics, succession struggles, and legitimating principles have long been integral factors in all wars (Black 1998a,b). The Aztecs (or Mexica) were defeated less by the weapons and horses of Hernan Cortes than by his ability to take advantage of their own structural (and imperial) limitations (Hassig 1988, Thomas 1993), whereas the Incas were already weakened by extensive civil wars before the Spaniards invaded (Hemming 1970). Black (1998a) describes innumerable cases in which technological prowess was immaterial, or less significant than has often been believed (Adas 1989). Such cases are lesser known, he writes, because "non-Europeans were and are generally seen as of military interest only in relation to the Europeans and, more specifically, if they adopted European weaponry and methods" (Black 1998a:2).

If technology receives too much attention and the local political environment too little, perhaps the scope of what has been considered the "means of destruction" has also been overly constrained. Disease is increasingly treated as one weapon in the arsenal of conquest (McNeill 1976, Diamond 1997, Crosby 1986). But in only a few cases has a disease been employed as a weapon and purposely unleashed on others (Sprinzak 1998; DC Rapoport, unpublished data). What of other tools that have had lethal effects: alcohol, opium, trade goods, cash...? We might do well to wonder why any of these proved so devastating.

If military historians focus primarily on how winning leads to domination by the West, anthropologists have tended to concentrate on what our "winning" has done to others and, at least in terms of the triumph of the West, have presumed Westerners to take unfair advantage of others. Typically, too, anthropologists have avoided writing about inherent sociological vulnerabilities or internal weaknesses in relation to culture clashes.[4] This is ironic because, on a smaller scale, ethnographers have long used crises to peer into the inner workings of society, noting inconsistencies and contradictions (Turner 1957).

Scale and Complexity

Hindsight and the *longue durée* suggest that scale itself is a pivotal factor. At some point, large-scale social formations always lose their ability to respond to competition effectively (Turney-High 1981). Techniques, tactics, and technologies diffuse—especially during war (Gabriel 1990). States overextend themselves (Toynbee 1950). Surplus production cannot keep pace with the costs of

[4]Hallpike (1973) and Edgerton (1992) are notable exceptions on the topic of weaknesses. Ironically, it turns out to be the lack of external competition (which, presumably, includes war) that allows the "sick societies" Edgerton describes to reproduce maladaptive practices and institutions.

maintaining the means of destruction (Reyna 1990). Natural disasters occur (Ember & Ember 1992). On these grounds alone, war appears to have a future.

Something invariably happens to cause even the most complex societies to collapse (Tainter 1988, Yoffee & Cowgill 1988). The seeds for collapse may lie in what Tainter describes as "the marginal productivity of increasing complexity" (1988:93). As others have argued for the more ethnographic present, being controlled and locked into a hierarchy chafes (Leach 1964, Horowitz 1985, Clastres 1994, Nietschmann 1987). This is particularly so when basic security cannot be guaranteed (Simons 1997a 1999; Delmas 1997). It cannot be coincidence that often it is people in the less-well-provided peripheries or interstices who rise up, or are recruited by others, to challenge the center (Wallerstein 1974, Mann 1986).

A truism that emerges when examining empires and complex social formations—none of which arose without waging war (Carneiro 1994:15)—is that conditions can shift unexpectedly. Conflict might then result from, or be the cause of, a shift (Demarest 1996). Ember & Ember propose that "war is mostly caused by a fear of unpredictable natural disasters and a partially resultant fear of others," although they also note that "state societies are more likely to have mechanisms that could mitigate the effects of disasters" (1992:258). Yet states may just as often exacerbate natural disasters, turning droughts, for instance, into famines, and in the 1980s and 1990s famine has been both a cause and an effect of conflict (see Besteman & Cassanelli 1996, de Waal 1997, Fukui & Markakis 1994).

Carneiro contends that the conditions that cause war can be specified: "They range all the way from material considerations such as the desire to seize territory or natural resources, to immaterial ones like 'redeeming national honor'" (1994: 20–21). He explicitly privileges the material realm. So, too, do numerous others (McCauley 1990, Ferguson 1984b), fueling an ever-hotter debate over the sources and causes of war in what Ferguson & Whitehead (1992) refer to as "the tribal zone."

Conditions as Causes

Two sets of conflict, in particular, have been examined and reexamined in the effort to uncover the reasons for war. The Yanamamo have been described as fighting over access to women (Chagnon 1990), to material goods (Ferguson 1994), and to meat and game (Harris 1984)[5], implying chronic shortages and/or an uneven distribution of tangibles in an easily upset environment. (For a thorough review of this literature and the debate see Sponsel 1998.) Warfare in Papau New Guinea is the subject of an even more confusing debate, in part because those who argue cite different ethnographic cases and approach warfare from markedly different angles. For instance, a summary reading of a fraction of the

[5]Recently, in a review of Ferguson's *Yanomami Warfare*, Harris comments, "Had I known in 1972 what I know now about the role of steel in Yanomami life, I strongly doubt that I would have pushed for an ecological, population-pressure model to explain Yanomami warfare.... In the absence of ethnographic data about steel I went for what seemed infrastructurally most plausible at the time" (1996:416).

recent literature could leave the impression that the Dani may or may not fight to gain access to material goods (Blick 1988, Shankman 1991), whereas the Avatip fight in order to create community (Harrison 1989) and the Chimbu fight from having lost community (Podolefsky 1984).

Melanesianists writing about warfare use three different frames of analysis and begin their examinations at different (but still connected) spatio-temporal points: The local ecology provides certain constraints and opportunities (Vayda 1971, Rappaport 1968, Ember 1982); the local culture into which people are socialized creates constraints and opportunities (Stilltoe 1978, Tuzin 1997, Roscoe 1996); and supralocal events and institutions have constrained as well as liberated indigenous societies (Knauft 1990).[6] If Knauft is correct in his review of the subject that "the existence or intensity of warfare in prestate [Melanesian] societies cannot be predicted as a linear function of population density, population pressure, or protein scarcity" (1990:270), then causal linkages may not be provable within any frame, let alone among them. Certainly the Yanamami case confirms this. However, Ferguson (who has written extensively about the Yanamami) is also able to demonstrate that we may be able to account for variability itself if only we examine "infrastructural, structural, and superstructural connections between war and society" (Ferguson 1999:50; see also Cohen 1984). Ferguson's materialist paradigm is specifically designed for cross-cultural and inter- and intrasocietal comparisons.

However, even were we to substitute Ferguson's paradigm for the three frames employed by Melanesianists, a divide persists: Thus far, wars appear to have been waged either to (re)achieve a balance of power or to attain and then exert control (see also Wolf 1987). Again, the dichotomy between change in degree versus change in kind surfaces. The debate over equilibrium as an emic or etic value and its connection to conflict is almost as old as anthropology itself (Gluckman 1963, Hallpike 1973). But what of the present? Are the linkages between aims and conditions sufficient to suggest that the purposes for war do dramatically shift?

THE PRESENT

A broad reading of the literature not only suggests conditions themselves may be of two types—conditions that recur, in which case change is cyclical, versus conditions that permanently alter the social scape, rendering change ratchetted but still linear (as appears to be the case with technology)[7]—but the military horizon

[6]Clearly, these schools of thought reflect preoccupations in the discipline at the time researchers engaged in (or analyzed) ethnographic accounts.

[7]For instance, industrial and material/scientific change appears linear, ergo we easily think in terms of progress. Seasonal change, on the other hand, is cyclical. On a more cosmic level, as Belbutowski (1996) points out, there may be strategic implications in the ways in which different societies think about, measure, and treat time. The North Vietnamese, for instance, used time and American impatience to their advantage in fighting the United States (Baritz 1986).

of Turney-High (1991) may be more suggestive than has been realized. Below his military horizon, men keep the majority of their enemies alive so that they can fight them again. The Plains Indian practice of counting coup is a prime example of a widespread, war-generating but war-limiting institution [Turney-High 1991: 104, Grinnell 1972 (1923)]. The Yanamamo (Chagnon 1983), Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1978), and Higi (Otterbein 1994), among others, have all been described as fighting according to carefully calibrated and common sets of rules. We can say that feuding, wherever it is practiced, likewise connects people through sanctioned violence predicated on intimate mutual knowledge (Black-Michaud 1975, Keiser 1991, Boehm 1984).

Still, the case of the Plains Indians differs because the conventions they fought by were not just practiced within single societies, they operated across distinct groups, thus creating or revealing a shared system. Is this simply a characteristic of war below the horizon? Not if we consider the Geneva Convention and other sets of rules pertaining to the treatment of prisoners of war, wounded soldiers, civilians, etc (van Creveld 1991a). According to this logic, one might even argue that the United States and the Soviet Union likewise must have shared rules during the cold war, which neither side breached, because the cold war never turned hot. This suggests the United States and the Soviet Union were systemic (even if not cultural or ideological) partners.[8]

Generally it is the destructive power of nuclear weapons that is used to explain the odd peace among the superpowers during the Cold War (Keegan 1993, O'Connell 1995, Delmas 1997), though as Waltz cogently predicted early in the Cold War, "mutual fear of big weapons may produce, instead of peace, a spate of smaller wars" (1959:236). But it could well be that war and threats of war under certain circumstances should also be viewed as a means of, and not just an end to, exchange and communication. The superpowers did fight numerous proxy battles by using conventional weapons in unconventional locales. The modern collapsibility of time and space must surely be considered significant. Satellite imagery and other sources of real-time intelligence communicated all sorts of things to allies as well as to enemies. One would think that with instant communication and fast travel, wars might again become short events, more like daylong battles fought in Papau New Guinea or ancient Greece than the world wars of this century. In some cases, technology even offers the possibility of choosing and controlling the tempo of a conflict.[9]However, the fact that it has become easier to fight people with whom no borders or interests are shared also allows an increase, rather than a decrease, in cross-cultural miscommunication and fewer clear-cut ways in which to declare victory (Bond 1996) or peace.

[8]Tellingly, this may not have been the view during the Cold War when, as Worsley writes, "co-existence with the Soviet Union is a very unsatisfactory and fragile condition: little more than armed balance of terror" (1997:78). Nevertheless, as Pitt points out, the superpowers and "their power elites" shared many beliefs, "including the existence of 'universal values'" (1989:7).

[9]I owe this point to John Arquilla who cites the "silent war" in the Gulf as an example (see Priest & Schneider 1999).

Culture Clashes

Culture clashes, in which groups (or peoples, organizations, and/or states) have sought either to take advantage of their differences or to make less of them, have occurred throughout recorded history.[10] As was the case in seventeenth-century Virginia, people may strive to show others who is stronger without realizing they are misreading those they seek to impress, incorporate, or assimilate (Gleach 1997). When leaders, in particular, misread one another, war often results (Stoessinger 1993). Or culture clashes may be sparked by brief, predatory encounters, as in the Hawaiian instance (Obeyesekere 1992; Sahlins 1987, 1995), or they might grow out of a relatively long, contentious relationship (Gump 1994; Edgerton 1988, 1989, 1995). Historically, one of three sets of differences can be noted in a culture clash: mode-of-production differences, ideological and ideational differences, and/or differences in political organization and social type. Any or all of these can map onto one another,[11] although the latter are particularly important because the side with superior organization often wins (Turney-High 1991, Andreski 1968).

A direct correspondence exists between political organization and style of warfare. We can distinguish among at least four types of cross-cultural clash: those that occur between or among (*a*) acephalous societies, (*b*) acephalous societies and centralized states, (*c*) centralized states, and (*d*) centralized states and purposely decentralized organizations. Examples of each of these occurred throughout the 1990s: in Nuer-Dinka or Somali-Somali clashes; in relatively ineffectual attacks by American forces on Somalis, by Nigerian forces on Tuaregs, by Turkish forces on Kurds, and by Russian forces on Chechens; in the conventional war fought between centralized states in the Gulf; and in unconventional warfare practiced by insurgents and counterinsurgents the world over.

Militarily speaking, conventional wars may be easiest to win, but politically they are proving decreasingly viable. In part this is because those fighting on behalf of stateless peoples have proven unusually adept at organizing themselves to hover just below the military horizon. In what can only be considered an eerie reprise, late-twentieth-century insurgents appear deceptively decentralized. Leaders keep their command and control hidden and hard to find, groups remain disassembled, and fighters move frequently. Guerrillas and terrorists typically engage in small-scale actions designed to undermine everything that large-scale conventional militaries and states stand for: protection and security (Chaliand 1982). Often they do this in the name of providing better protection and security

[10]Of course, as Robarchek & Robarchek (1996) indicate, not all culture clashes have been negative; some have instigated peace rather than war.

[11]For instance, for the cyclical clashability of nomads and settled peoples, see Barfield (1994), Khazanov (1994), and Fukui & Markakis (1994); for the difference that bride-wealth payments can make, see Kelly (1985); and for religion and ideology in general, see Mann (1986). Abler (1992) directly links practices in war to differences in Indian/European belief systems. For the critical distinctions between centralized and acephalous societies, see Fortes & Evans-Pritchard (1940), Cooney (1997), and Otterbein (1994).

to more people, and not infrequently they purposely attack the state where the state wants to be perceived as least vulnerable (e.g. in the air, the capital city, the marketplace).

As states respond, meanwhile, they deploy units that remain self-sufficient for long periods of time—as if they themselves are guerrillas, demonstrating that warfare involves as much mimicry as invention, in organization as well as weaponry. If not exactly cyclical, wars invariably enmesh people in spiraling relationships. Exchange and one-upmanship take place at multiple levels. From a distance, violence—and terrorism in particular—can even appear to be discourse (Zulaika & Douglass 1996, Gray 1997).

Warfare of the modern sort, carried out at the substate level, and often referred to as low-intensity conflict, would thus seem to contrast sharply with total war, which pits all the resources and personnel of one state against those of another. Such a distinction appears to reconfirm the persistence of two very different kinds of warfare,[12] unless we shift perspectives one more time. Consider that for those in the war zone, low-intensity conflict can only feel like total war.

The Ethnographic Zone

As more anthropologists encourage one another to write about conflict (Warren 1993a, Nordstrom & Martin 1992, Sluka 1992, Nordstrom & Robben 1995), a growing number of works focus on what war means, both from the perspective of those fighting against state militaries and/or from the perspective of those who have been targeted by militaries.[13] Regionally, some countries and conflicts receive more coverage than others. In Europe, strife in Ireland (Feldman 1991, Sluka 1989, Aretxaga 1993, Murray 1995) and Spain (Zulaika 1988, MacClancy 1997) has attracted considerable attention, as it has in Latin America [Guatemala, Carmack (1988) and Warren (1993b); Argentina, Suarez-Orozco (1992); and Peru, Stern (1998), Starn (1991), and Isbell (1992)]; in Africa [Zimbabwe, Lan (1989), Kriger (1992), and Werbner (1998); Sudan, Deng (1995), Hutchinson (1996, 1998), Kurimoto (1994), Salih (1994), and Kurita (1994); Mozambique, Nordstrom (1997); and Sierra Leone, Richards (1996), Peters & Richards (1998)]; and in Asia [Sri Lanka, Tambiah (1986, 1992) and Daniel (1996); the Punjab, Mahmood (1996) and Pettigrew (1995); the Philippines, McKenna (1998); and Vietnam, Hickey (1993) and Jamieson (1995)].

The literature on Vietnam offers the broadest treatment of conflict so far, both in terms of the effects of combat on American combatants (Stevens 1995, Holm 1996, Baritz 1986) and on the Vietnamese among and against whom they fought (Hickey 1993, Jamieson 1995). Wars in the Sudan (Deng 1995), Sri Lanka (Tam-

[12]Numerous typologies of war have been constructed over the years, based on differing aims and functions (Wright 1983), technologies (Keegan 1993), and technology coupled with energy sources (van Creveld 1991b), in addition to those focusing on socio-political organization (Turney-High 1991, Andreski 1968, Otterbein 1994).

[13]The literature on political violence is already extensive (reviewed in Nagengast 1994 and Brubaker & Laitin 1998). Here I restrict myself to conflict that directly involves organized, state-sponsored militaries.

biah 1986, 1992; Daniel 1996), and Bosnia (Sorabji 1995) have likewise been treated in terms of clashing cultures or systems. It may be no coincidence that in each of these cases, anthropologists have removed themselves from the local scene to consider multiple points of view. In contrast, ethnographers who have conducted extensive fieldwork in Northern Ireland have examined contemporaneous violence from within a single set of (Irish Catholic) perspectives (Feldman 1991, Sluka 1989, Aretxaga 1993). In the same vein, Zulaika (1988) examines conflict in Spain from the bottom-up, outside-in Basque point of view, as does McKenna (1998) for Muslims in the southern Philippines, and as Mahmood (1996) and Pettigrew (1995) do for Sikhs in India. In all these ethnographies, motives, explanations, and rationales for wielding arms against the state receive detailed attention. Collectively, this body of work suggests "people want self-determination when the state in which they live doesn't protect their rights" (Mahmood 1996:261).

Studies done on the war(s) in Sierra Leone and Liberia (Richards 1996, Peters & Richards 1998) support Mahmood's observation (Mahmood 1996:261) made half a world away. In his triangulation of war, youth, and resources, Richards attempts to illustrate what he calls "a cultural ontology of war—the concept of war as a drama of social exclusion" (1996:xiv). Young Sierra Leonians take action into their own hands and react against authorities when they feel their futures (and expectations for the future) are being thwarted, much as Sikhs seek Khalistan because they feel state structures deny them due process and social justice. Kurimoto (1994) reports that the inability of young Pari to continue with their schooling or find work likewise funnels many of them into the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (see also Deng 1995). As Sluka notes, there may be a range of reasons young people are attracted to violence.

> Children and youth in Divis Flats riot because the danger involved makes it tremendously exciting, because it is a chance to "get their own back" against the soldiers and policemen who harass and abuse them, and because they believe that when they attack the Security Forces they are making a valuable political contribution to the cause of Irish Nationalism (Sluka 1989:266).

Significantly, it is youth hemmed in and kept out in northern Ireland, not simply youth lost at the margins, as in Sierra Leone, the Sudan, and elsewhere, who react violently to those who would prevent them from being all that they can be.[14] The US Army uses "Be all that you can be" as its motto in its targeting of disadvantaged youth (Kitfield 1995). Nor is the comparison as far-fetched as it might seem. In any given year, photojournalists freeze images of young soldiers being taunted or facing down their often more-fortunate and better-educated peers. This juxtaposition of student/demonstrators and peasant/soldiers is just one of many means by which opposing points of view become institutionalized.

[14]Youth living on the West Bank and in Gaza during the intifadah reacted to restrictions and perceived oppression in much the same way.

After and Between Wars

The more ethnographic accounts that are written about militaries, those they oppose and those who oppose them, the more patterns we should be able to see. The same holds true for the older but still expanding literature that considers the societal unravelings and reravelings that wars cause. This is the subject of much of the writing on war in Latin America (Stern 1998, Carmack 1988, Warren 1993b, Starn 1991, Suarez-Orozco 1992, Wilson 1991, Zur 1998) and Africa (Hutchinson 1996, 1998; Nordstrom 1997; Fukui & Turton 1979; Fukui & Markakis 1994). The processes and aftereffects of the 1965–1980 civil war in Zimbabwe continue to be studied (Lan 1989, Kriger 1992, Werbner 1998). As new countries borne of conflict open up, such as Eritrea, we will likely see more analyses of the social legacy of war, as well as increased coverage of the environmental damage fighting inflicts (Webster 1996).

Anthropologists are also writing more about the relationship between war and ethnic identity (see Eller 1999, Turton 1997, James 1994) and war and nationalism (Comaroff 1995). Struggles over identity formation and the creation of nationhood may well foreshadow future wars in places like Macedonia (Karakasidou 1997), just as they foreshadowed recent wars in Lebanon (Gilsenan 1996) and Afghanistan (Edwards 1996). Alternatively, past war zones, such as Cyprus (Papadakis 1995), may yet erupt. As military strategist Carl von Clausewitz noted more than a century ago: "[E]ven the ultimate outcome of a war is not always to be regarded as final" because those who are defeated may consider "the outcome merely as a transitory evil, for which a remedy may still be found in political conditions at some later date" [von Clausewitz 1976 (1832):80].

According to Tuzin, war is, "in some sense, a necessary prelude to peace. In other words, peace, with all the social benefits that attend it, is fundamentally attainable only through war" (1996:24). Caplow & Hicks (1995) argue that peace and war must be considered together because they are systemically, not cyclically, linked. In only one sense may peace be considered the obverse of war: the more complex a society and the greater its organizational capacity for sustaining war, the more institutions there also are for attaining and sustaining peace. Conflict resolution and peace studies are growth areas (Turner & Pitt 1989, Foster & Rubinstein 1989, Rubinstein & Foster 1997, Gregor 1996, Sponsel & Gregor 1994). Nevertheless, no matter how vital our need to gain a better appreciation of the values (and not just structures) necessary for staying at peace, we cannot ignore the critical finding that war makes some of the very same demands in terms of requiring intense cooperation and trust within fighting units (Tooby & Cosimides 1988, Richerson & Boyd 1999). Could cooperation in war be as attractive to some people as cooperation for peace is to many of us?

Thinking along these lines almost, but not quite, brings us full circle, because so far there has been no systematic, long-term participant observation by a trained ethnographer of the culture that wars create. As Hinton (1998) points out for one end of the combat continuum, anthropologists have not even asked the most basic question of perpetrators of genocide: "[W]hy did you kill?" Local and regional culture certainly informs war and motivates combatants, as Hinton so deftly dem-

onstrates for Cambodians (see also Denich 1994 on Yugoslavia). But what of the culture that emerges during combat, which impels people to continue striking out at one another rather than converging to strike a deal?

THE ABSENT

Studying Combat

If, as Keeley suggests, the psychic unity of mankind manifests itself through war, does psychic unity manifest itself in war? According to McRandle (1994), psychic unity via the ritualization of war occurs everywhere; battlefield experiences are cross-culturally similar. Others describe war as a joint ritual (Tiger & Fox 1988, Turton 1994:26, Harrison 1989, Gleach 1997). But there is scant agreement in the literature on what combat means to individuals, let alone societies, in part because there are at least three distinct bodies of combat literature: academic analyses of the behavior of soldiers in battle (Holmes 1985, Marshall 1961, Keegan 1984, Grossman 1995, Mansfield 1982),[15] literary memoirs that are rife with ambivalence (see Hynes 1997; see also Gray 1970), and popular nonfiction accounts of warrior heroes (see Hackworth 1989).[16]

A selective reading of this literature reveals that on some occasions and in some cases, combatants clearly dehumanize the enemy. In other instances, enemies will lionize or grudgingly learn to respect one another. This is something historians, sociologists, and anthropologists have noted in scattered places (Ben-Ari 1998, Harrison 1989, Utley 1997, Baritz 1986, Dower 1986). Yet the fact that dehumanization and/or heroization can occur within the same war and may vary across units, whereas at other times enemies are treated indistinguishably (e.g. American GIs referred to Vietnamese and Koreans as "gooks"), begs further study. The significant variables seem to be whether conflict is cross-cultural and intersystemic, how much sociocultural distance there is between warring groups, and whether enemies are long-term or first-time opponents.

Although no one has systematically studied cross-cultural encounters via combat, the United States' 10-year-long involvement in war in Vietnam suggests that when combatants do not know each other well but engage over time without one side besting the other, dehumanization eventually dissolves (Plaster 1997). Feinting and engaging with the enemy synchronizes soldiers' points of view (Dyer

[15]There is also a considerable and growing literature about the behavior of men in particular wars. For instance, for World War I, see Fussell (1975), Winter (1979), Leed (1979), and Eksteins (1989). Eksteins, in particular, treats World War I as a culture clash. For World War II, see Fussell (1989), Cameron (1994), Bergerud (1996), Linderman (1998), and numerous works by Stephen Ambrose.

[16]Significantly, popular nonfiction has been paid the least attention by scholars, although this represents the largest body of writing on war by combatants and is likely to have had the greatest effect on enlistees and potential enlistees. Unlike works regarded as classics of war literature, these are not particularly nuanced or contemplative but instead highlight the drama, excitement, and pride the authors experienced during war.

1985). The nature of the tango is such that soldiers confined to the field of battle may come to realize they have more in common with those they oppose—space, time, profession—than with civilians who are back in "the world." Interactions across the trenches in World War I certainly reflect this. But so too do veterans, such as former Marine William Broyles (1986), who, with time, recognized that he and the North Vietnamese he fought against were "brothers in arms."

Of course, the military itself walks a tightrope. Decision-makers had better understand the enemy (see Bradford 1997, Baritz 1986, Bevin 1995). But leaders cannot afford for soldiers to become too sensitized. This is yet another rationale for enlisting unsophisticated and unworldy youth and drilling them in obedience.

For frontline combatants war is, in every sense, a liminal event (Shay 1994, Holm 1996). But so too is serving in the military (Karsten 1978). Disentangling the effects of combat from the fact that soldiers are in the military while in combat is difficult. To compound our ignorance about the military mechanics of war, only a handful of anthropologists have studied the military and the mechanics of soldiering.[17] And when anthropologists have studied particular military units, they have generally done so in the safety of the rear and/or during peacetime.

Studying the Military

Recent military ethnographies fall into four broad categories and augment work being done by other social scientists. Analysis by Hawkins (1999) of the US Army stationed in Germany during the final decade of the Cold War concentrates on life for soldiers and their spouses in a setting of high tension. His work directly addresses the sociological literature on military families (e.g. Segal 1988; see also Pulliam 1997, Randall 1989) as well as the sense by sociologists that the military is increasingly regarded by service members as an occupation rather than an institution (Moskos & Wood 1988).

Simons (1997b) analyzes daily life and group dynamics in a single unit, the US Army Special Forces. Prior to her fieldwork with Green Berets, units were written about either by historians, who concentrated on wartime activities and interviewed combatants after the fact (Bergerud 1993, Ambrose 1992, Sherwood 1996, Marshall 1979), or by journalists (Atkinson 1989; Wilson 1989, 1992a,b; Waller 1994; Sack 1995; Ricks 1997).

Coming closer still to analyzing soldiers at war, Stewart (1991) compares and contrasts cohesion among British and Argentine units during the Falklands War. Her invaluable account thus directly contributes to the literature on cohesion and morale (e.g. Henderson 1985, Shalit 1988), as well as cross-cultural conflict (Bradford 1997). The study by Winslow (1997) of Canadian paratroopers who served in Somalia during Operation Restore Hope is, like Stewart's, an after-action report. At the behest of the Canadian government, Winslow explored the unit's culture by interviewing paratroopers and thus indirectly contributes to the

[17]Anthropologists have worked with and for the military at, for instance, the Army Research Institute and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. However, they have generally studied the military or aspects of the military for practical, not academic, applications.

growing literature on the multicultural composition of peacekeeping and coalitional forces (Rubinstein 1993, Higham 1997).

So far, only Ben-Ari among contemporary anthropologists has analyzed the military while a member of the military. Decades after World War II, Evans-Pritchard described his engagement in unconventional warfare in Africa (1973), Turney-High's interest in the military directly relates to his reserve service, and Bailey uses his military experiences when he examines self-respect and social obligation (1993). But unlike American and British anthropologists who may have once worn a uniform, Ben-Ari continues to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces. Thus, his analysis of the ways in which Israeli militarism helps preconceive soldiers' points of view is not just bottom up but inside out (Ben-Ari 1989, 1998). As he puts it elsewhere, it is within units such as his battalion where we truly see "the effects of the macro forces on the micro plane of the individual" (Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari 1999).

Control in any military is, as Ben-Ari makes clear, never just orchestrated from the top down, it is also released, shaped, and routinized internally. Humor is one tool (L Sion & E Ben-Ari, submitted for publication). As Simons (1998) has noted for the US Army Special Forces, just enough ambiguity is structured into otherwise identical units to allow informal pecking orders to develop without jeopardizing the formal order. This ensures flexibility, which is ever more necessary to contemporary militaries (Shamir & Ben-Ari 1999); at the same time, some informality is critical if soldiers within units are to bond (Ben-Ari 1998).

One thing we know about militaries is that, as institutions, they methodically prepare individuals to sacrifice themselves for others. They also condition individuals to be able to commit homicide and engage in organized violence, something that (it has been argued) is otherwise abhorrent to most well-socialized people (Grossman 1995; Goldschmidt 1989, 1997). All militaries achieve these changes via rites of passage, relentless training, and drill (McNeill 1995). But despite however separate and different these practices render military and civilian worlds, numerous scholars still consider countries like the US to be militarized.

Militarization

Three strains divide the militarization literature. First, there is the inculcation of military values in members of the armed forces (Huntington 1985, Janowitz 1960, Ben-Ari 1998, Brasset 1997) and the effect the military has on broader society (Andreski 1968, Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari 1999). Governance, order, control, and military values merge (Rapoport 1962, Lutz 1997) and often determine the outlook of dominant segments of society (Gillis 1989, Rapoport 1995). Alternatively, dominant segments of society, whose members often served in the military, are deeply invested in supporting the military-industrial complex (Mills 1956, Gray 1997).[18] How this then affects particular communities in the United States is one area that has begun to attract serious anthropological attention, as

[18]In perhaps the most accurate recent rendition of this term, Hackworth (1996) refers to it as the "military-industrial-congressional complex".

evidenced by the nuanced examination of the Lawrence Livermore lab in Livermore, California, by Gusterson (1996) and the ongoing research in Fayetteville, North Carolina, just outside the gates of Fort Bragg, by Lutz (1999).

Second, there are the effects of militarization on gender relations both in this country and abroad (see Lorentzen & Turpin 1998, Enloe 1989, Gill 1997, Levy-Schreiber & Ben-Ari 1999). As Ignatieff summarizes, "war militarized the male and the male militarized the routines of factory, office, and school" (1997:13). It has recently been argued that if "women ran the world" there would be less war (Fukuyama 1998). Others, though, contend that women have played a larger role in warfare than has previously been acknowledged, as direct combatants (Jones 1997) and/or as supporters (van Creveld 1991a; see also Elshtain 1987). Current debates over the role of women in the military, and in combat units in particular, are heavily politicized (Francke 1997, Mitchell 1998). Far less contentious are discussions about the military's use of (and for) civilian women in subordinate and often demeaning positions (see Enloe 1990).

Third, there is the considerable role militarization has played in the shaping of national cultures (e.g. Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari 1999). How we respond to war as Americans has proved a subject of growing interest (Sherry 1995, Engelhardt 1995, Petersen 1992, Gusterson 1991). Military historians also describe a specifically American military history (Millis 1986, Perret 1989, Keegan 1996), delineating an "American Way of War" (Weigley 1973) This implies that other countries might also have distinctive ways of war, a subject of considerable interest to anthropologists during World War II, when cultures were still being granted personalities (Benedict 1989, Yans-McLaughlin 1986). More recently, Willems (1986) reconsiders World War II in light of 300 years of Prussian-German militarism, which he describes as a culture complex. The field of strategic studies also continues to presume that national culture matters.

THE FUTURE

Because the purpose or function of all militaries is to prepare for future war(s), some suggest that this alone guarantees a future for war. One prescription for ridding ourselves of war is to dismantle militaries. But this may be impossible for two structural reasons. Thanks to strategic military needs during both world wars, governments retain the capacity to command the economy (McNeill 1982), and the military not only gave rise to but continues to serve as a broad social welfare safety net (Skocpol 1992, van Creveld 1996). Because the armed forces have been woven ever more tightly into the political and economic fabric (Lutz & Nonini 1999), there may be no way now to dismantle the military. Defense industry cutbacks devastate local and regional economies.

On the global scale we must also remember that the international system is acephalous (Waltz 1959, Masters 1964, Worsley 1989, Galaty 1987, Cleese 1987). Security remains the raison d'etre of states, and states (and/or their rulers) will continue to support militaries in order to protect their citizenries and/or themselves from being overrun, absorbed, and conquered. Dismantling the military

thus raises the specter of a prisoner's dilemma: Who would not be tempted to cheat? There would be no way to know.

Recognizing this problem, some have suggested the establishment of a one-world government (Keeley 1996) or the need for "powerful superordinated organizations" (Hinde & Watson 1995a:239) or for third-party mediators (Cooney 1997). Alternatively, we could invest international institutions that already exist (like the United Nations and World Court) with power not just to keep but also to make peace. However, any such organization(s) would be hierarchical by definition. Who would run them? Who would be in charge? These are critical questions because hierarchies do not distribute power or goods or mete out justice equitably. The perception of slights, injustices, and inequity borne of hierarchy too often leads to conflict (Horowitz 1985). Yet if people sought autonomy, this too would lead to war (Clastres 1994, Nietschmann 1987).

Future Conditions

Moving beyond structural rationales, other more material arguments for safeguarding our security take stock of current givens and treat these as future conditions. The influential article by Kaplan (1994) is one exemplar. A second is the recent prediction about the "clash of civilizations" by Huntington (1996). Significantly, neither Kaplan (a journalist) nor Huntington (a political scientist) borrows much from anthropology. In a series of vivid descriptions, Kaplan describes an undeveloping world in which "criminal anarchy emerges as the real 'strategic' danger" (1994:46). His epicenter is West Africa and he claims that much as it has done in Sierra Leone and Liberia, scarcity will precipitate social and political chaos elsewhere. Richards, with deep local knowledge, challenges Kaplan on Sierra Leone, pointing to the salience of political frustrations rather than environmental scarcity (1996:xvi).

However, anthropologists might also take Kaplan to task on more general grounds. The entire subfield of political anthropology is predicated on finding order where none is visible; at ground level, people always self-organize somehow, and they know who is gunning for whom. Anarchy—case after case suggests—is nothing more than an intellectual construct, and all dire predictions to the contrary, it never really exists.

Rather than predict a meltdown and general free-for-all, which strands people at the bottom, Huntington's clash presupposes the existence of civilizations that tie people together from bottom to top. Cleavages are largely religious. But is this how "civilizations" should be defined? Do civilizations even exist?

One problem with the grand theories being advanced to describe the kinds of future wars we face is that those promoting these theories use catchall terms—anarchy, civilization, and culture—to explain phenomena that have local roots. Wars are always fought locally, even world wars; they are conjunctural events. Logistics, supply, leadership, climate, terrain, morale, and social relations all have to be taken into account.

A second problem with the use of terms such as culture is that they are increasingly employed to lump types of differences together, thus reifying and privileg-

ing only certain sets of attributes. Peters (1998)—a prolific writer who, prior to his retirement from the army, was assigned to think about future warfare—lists seven key "failure factors" for states that are "rooted in culture": "The greater the degree to which a state—or an entire civilization—succumbs to these 'seven deadly sins' of collective behavior, the more likely that entity is to fail to progress or even to maintain its position in the struggle for a share of the world's wealth and power." The key "failure factors" are "restrictions on the free flow of information, subjugation of women, inability to accept responsibility for individual or collective failure, extended family or clan as the basic unit of social organization, domination by a restrictive religion, a low valuation of education, and low prestige assigned to work" (Peters 1998:37).

I quote Peters at such length because his work is widely disseminated. He has been published more frequently in *Parameters*, the preeminent journal devoted to "topics of significant and current interest to the US Army and Department of Defense," than anyone else in recent years. And although there have been some published critiques of his predictions, the criticism comes out of military history not anthropology (Tucker 1998).

Peters (1997) is unabashed in asserting that the United States represents what is best in the world, using the United States as the standard against which everyone else is measured. In this sense, he engages in a different kind of analysis than does Kaplan. Kaplan, too, foresees a world riven by, as Peters puts it, "warriors—erratic primitives of shifting allegiance, habituated to violence, with no stake in civil order" (Peters 1994:16). In Kaplan's crystal ball, however, lawlessness will drive those of us who can afford it to hire private security forces (see also Bunker 1997, Shearer 1998). But Kaplan and others forget that citizens have experienced lawlessness in the past and have voluntarily ceded away their rights to totalitarian regimes (in fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and Soviet Russia). Why not again?

One problem with grounding global predictions in West Africa is that no contemporary West African ruler has proven powerful enough to be totalitarian. This has as much to do with colonial history, with the development of the nation-state in Africa, and with local politics as it has to do with environmental givens.[19] To ignore these realities is to simply project the wrong history—and anthropology—into the future.

Future War

When it comes to the topic of future war there are some astonishing lapses. For instance, Toffler & Toffler (1993:24) describe an essentially globalized division of labor: The first sector wave supplies agricultural and mineral resources, the second wave supplies cheap labor, and the third wave creates and exploits knowledge. They want the United States to remain firmly at the crest of this third wave.

[19]Of course, too, the environmental givens are radically different in diamond-laden Sierra Leone than they are in resource-poor Somalia. Contemporaneous wars in both countries may have featured "warlords" (Reno 1998), but there the similarities all but end, as any analysis of the fighters indicates (Clapham 1998).

Unlike Kurth (1994), they do not see all three waves—or the disenfranchised, the workers, and the privileged—crashing into one another in America. Being technophiles, they also presume that we no longer have to worry about "the plant trap" (for a contrary view see Neild 1995) and that everyone within the system they describe shares their values. Yet as Dyer (1997) reports from the American heartland, third- and fourth-generation farmers consider the soil they work an inalienable possession; not all are interested in trading their land or labor for information or wealth (see also Hanson 1996). Dyer predicts a very different wave from the one the Tofflers envision engulfing the United States, with the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City representing but the beginning.

The Tofflers are hardly alone in concentrating on technology and the control of information (Shukman 1995, Dunnigan 1996, Friedman & Friedman 1996, Adams 1998). In fact, two broad areas of concern surface again and again in the future war literature: high-tech weaponry and biological, chemical, and information warfare on the one hand[20], and environmental scarcity on the other (Homer-Dixon 1993). Clearly, those worried about environmental scarcity recognize that Man cannot live by silicon and Olestra® alone. Nevertheless, missing from either of these schema is any consideration of (or for) the social effects of complexity. As Tainter (1988) and other archeologists might remind us, we can be extremely sophisticated and still collapse: If things become too complex, inevitably our chase after diminishing returns will become too taxing.

At the same time, whether war itself is a political act, and the degree to which Clausewitzian warfare may be dead or alive, is hotly contested (Metz 1994/1995). Van Creveld (1991a) asserts that the aphorism by Clausewitz that "war is the continuation of policy by other means" is but a time-bound conceit and a direct reflection of Clausewitz's time (the nineteenth century) and place (Prussia). The orderly Clausewitzian connections between governments, armies, and people have largely dissolved (van Creveld 1991a, Peters 1998/1999). According to critics, Clausewitz's strategy was based on states; if states are no longer the sole players, the conventional rules he describes can no longer apply. Van Creveld clearly believes political forms morph, ergo styles of warfare change. Yet in his narrative about war, war's content does not alter. The idea that the means of war—weaponry, states, and parastates—evolve whereas the ends—fighting, killing, and winning—remain constant suggests progress at the proximate level, but ultimately perhaps no progress at all.

Delmas (1997) arrives at a similar conclusion by a different route. In his view, the Cold War balance of nuclear power staved off an East-West confrontation. Now any such balance is gone, and he scoffs at the notion that international law or

[20]There is an immense literature about the new military revolution (Krepinevich 1994) that is occurring in the realm of technology (Arquilla 1997/1998) and in military affairs (Bacevich 1996, Luttwak 1995). What is particularly striking is that most proponents of this dual revolution stress bloodlessness. Not only will war be fought via computer virus and against machines, but the public—which increasingly expects casualties to be minimal and to affect professional soldiers only—will not be disappointed: Wars will be fought primarily, if not exclusively, by small armies staffed by professional volunteers.

economics might instead prevent conflict. Where there are no common interests there is no shared morality (Leach 1977), and—pushing his argument one step further—so long as global economic interests are capitalist, the moral order in which we live will remain competitive. Competition, much like war, invariably hurts some while benefitting others. The sense of insecurity this creates only undermines further the only political form we have for providing long-term stability: namely states. In a sense, this means we are trapped in a catch-22 of our own making, much as all large, complex societies have been. As Delmas points out, tweaking or fixing our political or economic relationships in the international arena will hardly solve the underlying problem(s), which may well be systemic.

If we localize Delmas' argument, it may ring truer still. There is ample ethnographic evidence to suggest that altering the cultural terrain and adjusting relationships from the top down may not sufficiently change the social landscape and relationships from the bottom up. Consider, for instance, anthropologically familiar institutions of war. Some, like headhunting, have been banned but not forgotten (Durham 1991, Hoskins 1996, George 1996, Rosaldo 1980). Others, such as oathing, are underground practices that wars call forth (Gellner 1991). The past is often remembered when insecurity looms (as the most recent outbreaks in the Balkans prove). And social formations are often resurrected when the relationships that comprise them have not been dissolved. In Somalia, for example, clans and clan-families never take shape or are apparent outside of crises, but their constituent elements (genealogical links) are always extant (Marlowe 1963). Variations on this theme of institutional dormancy include age grades that easily double as age regiments (see Mazrui 1977, Fukui & Turton 1979, Deng 1995). There are also the potentially galvanizing roles of spirit mediums (Lan 1989, Young 1997), religious leaders (Evans-Pritchard 1949), and prophets (Anderson & Johnson 1995, Dowd 1992, Lamphear 1994).

In examining the extent to which phenomena such as these recur, are we better off treating them as institutions of or as institutions for war? Is war itself an institution? Some who believe it is have argued that it can be abolished the same way as were two other evil institutions: dueling and slavery (Mueller 1989, Hinde 1991). But is that possible when war's constituent building blocks persist? Alternatively, who is there to enforce the abolition of war? Raising such questions ultimately returns us to problems of command and control.

CONCLUSION

Embedded in the assumption that if there are reasons for war then reason can be applied to rid us of it is the irony that locating the rationales for war at the conscious level—rather than in our evolutionary heritage—offers hope.[21] Yet, it is

[21]In his review of Mueller's *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War*, Kaysen writes that he too wants "to offer a real basis for hope.... To seek a different system with a more secure and a more human basis for order is no longer the pursuit of an illusion, but a necessary effort toward a necessary goal" (1990:63).

hope far more than despair that invariably leads people to choose war over accommodation: the idea that we can beat the odds, advance against (or beyond) people we do not like, overcome those we fear...

Meanwhile, parallel to the conviction that "if only reason were applied to war" is the notion that war got started for a reason. If war had a discernible birth, then it can have an eventual death. The problem with this view, however, is that it presumes war to be some sort of animate(d) force. We do tend to anthropomorphize war. In doing so are we better off believing that we control war or that it controls us?

What if, for instance, war recurs as part of the societal life cycle (Balandier 1986:508) rather than a stage through which humans must pass? Depending on one's point of view, it has been only or it has been already 50 years since our last world war. To some, nuclear weapons truly mark an end, to others only a respite. Mueller (1989), Hinde (1991), Keegan (1993), and O'Connell (1995), among others, believe war is increasingly unnecessary. Other institutions are emerging or are already in place that will render war moot. Van Creveld (1991a, 1996), Peters (1995/96, 1997), and Huntington (1996) vigorously disagree. In fact, the numbers of books with such titles as *Civil Wars*, *Uncivil Wars*, *Unwinnable Wars*, all examining the ethnic nature of future war in order to help inform present-day policy makers, will soon outstrip the ability of publishers to sell them. The explicit aim of much of this pre-Kosovo literature is to keep us out of others' messy fights.

But does anyone know where our policies of intervening only in certain places (like Somolia and Kosovo) but not others (such as Liberia) might lead? Perhaps the vantage point from which we view war today is really a precipice, and in trying to pierce the fog of others' wars, we have lost sight of the edge on which we ourselves teeter. It seems almost too apropos to point out that most who read this article have been lucky; we have escaped war's tornado-like fury. Not so those who cannot read this or anything else because their lives have already been dominated, disrupted, shattered, or ended by armed conflict. Tellingly, this is exactly the distinction—and the information-scarcity-injustice divide—that many military analysts believe will feed future war. If they are correct, we will not have to worry about a clash between "civilizations." Instead, those on the attack will be illiterate, hungry, amoral barbarians. This is also being predicted (Peters 1994, Dunlap 1996). But is it tenable? As anthropologists, how should we respond? What would barbarians represent: a cultural construct, a response to conditions, or simply ourselves in a different guise?

The jury is out, but the fissures are there.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Brian Ferguson, Catherine Lutz, and Les Sponsel for sending me material. And to Eyal Ben-Ari, Jack Hirshleifer, and Jennifer Taw for comments on my initial draft. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to John Arquilla. I'm afraid I've only answered half of his questions and probably followed too little of his advice. Even worse, all mistakes and any inadvertent omissions are completely mine.

Unfortunately, war is a huge topic, as my students remind me with passion every time I teach.

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