

# Acceleration of History

War, Conflict, and Politics

edited by

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## THREE

# The Right to War and Violence

*From Objectivity to the Acceptability*<sup>1</sup>

Svetlana N. Shchegolikhina

### INTRODUCTION

R. D. Collingwood (1946) once said, "To the scientist, nature is always and merely a 'phenomenon,' not in the sense of being defective in reality, but in the sense of being a spectacle presented to his intelligent observation; whereas the events of history are never mere phenomena, never mere spectacles for contemplation, but things which the historian looks, not at, but through, to discern the thought within them. . . . For history, the object to be discovered is not the mere event, but the thought expressed in it."

Acceleration of historical development can be attributed to many factors, both objective and subjective. A comprehensive, multidimensional, and most notable factor is war.

"Polemology," which is a comprehensive study of wars, conflicts, and other forms of "collective aggressiveness" using the methods of demography, mathematics, biology, and other sciences, appeared in France in the 1970s. Representatives of this trend also believe that war is the main driving factor in the development of humanity. War is the most notable of all conceivable forms of social life; it is the result and the source of the breach and it restores balance. Wars are the engines of technological progress; they are the main factor of collective simulation (dialogue and borrowing crops), which plays a significant role in social changes.

Thus war and violence are inherent characteristics of the historical development of any human community at any stage. However, if we go back to Collingwood's saying, the main problem requiring a solution is an analysis of a set of additional, qualitative characteristics of war. First, does war represent progressive development or accelerates regressive trends that lead to the decline of humanity or even destruction? Second, does the duration of a war reflect the speed of general historical development? Third, what is the correlation of consciousness and unconsciousness in military violence? Is it possible to consciously regulate and peacefully resolve potential conflicts? Finally, do the changes in the nature of war influence its acceptability in the public mind and the level of voluntary participation in military clashes?

#### WAR AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The age of images of people striking each other with spears occurred ten thousand years ago. Previously it was thought that the ancient images of war were dated to five thousand years and belonged to societies with complex social organization. The researchers assumed that organized military action occurred in agricultural civilizations. Those people, who were engaged in hunting and gathering, had no incentives for war. Weak social organization also prevented coordinated military actions. But judging by archaeological finds in Australia, war was an integral feature of societies of varying degrees of complexity, and rock drawings illustrate the evolution of weapons. In early images of people we can see fighting, throwing, and dodging. There are even scenes in which the soldiers surround the fallen comrade, protecting him from their enemies. More "modern" weapons, such as spears and tridents, are found on paintings dated six thousand years ago. At that time battle groups were more numerous and were headed by a commander who dressed in special clothes.

A certain perception of the inevitability of wars is well traceable in written sources from different epochs and countries, both religious and secular in nature. Writers did not doubt that military dominance was important and often one of the main indicators of power. Restrictive measures against violence were recommended in accordance with the provisions of the doctrine of faith and from the point of view of pragmatism.

For instance, in Ancient India a kind of legal culture formed the development of international legal views, which belonged to the fourth to the sixth centuries BC. The earliest of them contain the monuments of the Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain literature.

Around the second century BC "Laws of Manu" appeared based on the more ancient lists. They contained interpretations regarding the cus-

toms of war, prohibiting the use of hidden and poisoned weapons and destruction of crops and land. Warriors should not kill anyone who asked for mercy (captured, unarmed, poor, wounded, and fleeing).

In the monuments of the Hebrew writings there are lists of contracts of Assyria, Damascus, and Egypt in which there are rules on mandatory declaration of war, on “the mercy of fruit trees,” on Saturday truces, and other customs of war.

Plato (2009) considered war a natural state of nations and in *The Laws* he condemned wars of conquest. In the dialogue of “Crete” he painted images of an ideal state, the union of sovereigns, the international court of justice, disarmament, and the prohibition of wars.

Jihad had no international legal values, which some modern politicians sometimes try to give it. The creed of Islam allows Jihad against the apostates or opponents of the faith. However, the Quran condemns war without a reasonable basis: “If one acts unfair against the other, then fight the unjust.” The outbreak of hostilities must be preceded by a declaration of war and a call for the enemy to convert to Islam or to pay tribute. Islamic war had its own rules and customs. The temples were supposed to spare. Women, children, and old men of the enemy could not be killed, even if they encouraged their soldiers. During the war it was forbidden to destroy homes, gardens, lands, and cattle, except for “spoils of war.”

Thus war was initially an objective factor in the development of society. It was the status and a means of gaining maturity. In many societies, people thought that a boy became a man only after the military initiation because he received a military status.

In *The Prince*, Niccolò Machiavelli (2012, chap. 14) believed that only military business was worthy for ruler, but his other politics should focus on preparations for war or to consolidate the conquered in the war.

In 1625, Hugo Grotius (2001, 18–41) wrote his major work, *On the Laws of War and Peace*. Even then, at the dawn of official diplomacy, he proposed to introduce a legal framework for the use of violence. Even then he talked about the need to avoid war whenever possible. The honor of the justification of the theory of diplomatic immunity, the nature of international law, based on the willingness of nations to live in peace with its neighbors, belongs to Grotius. He defended the freedom of the seas and advocated for moderation and restraint during war (although he was far from a pacifist, seeing favor and justice in the wars). He claimed that war was forbidden neither by natural law nor by the right of the people nor divine laws (2001, Book 1, Chapter 2).

In the seventeenth century, Jean de La Bruyère (1885, 207–12) wrote that war is the most vile and rude way to cling to power or come to it. But at the same time he noted that violence is inevitable—war is due to human nature, objectively unable to be satisfied with a little.

Thomas Hobbes (2013) echoed the words of de La Bruyère and said that states are in a natural state if they are in a state of hostility. And if



they stopped fighting on the battlefield, this would not be peace, but only respite.

Military conflicts change society, no matter how deeply it is involved in them. Recognition of the appropriateness of any military action by the society is one of the essential characteristics to be reckoned with. But now we are talking about the right of war, thereby marking the inevitability. What are the main milestones of the transition from the objective attitude to war and violence, understanding their essence, proposals to eliminate from the system of international relations to recognition of the inevitability and acceptance?

#### BEGINNING OF THE CONTRADICTIONS IN PERCEPTION (NINETEENTH CENTURY)

Wars, conflicts, and rebellions have always been the catalysts of the historical process, as proved by studies of polemology. However, the eighteenth century, the age of Enlightenment and the emergence of the new philosophical tradition of rationalism, formed the idea to control the historical process. From the point of view of this paradigm, war is not an inherent characteristic of the human community, and violence should be excluded from the system of social relations. Recognizing the inevitability and objectivity of war since ancient times has been developed rules of conduct. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they acquired form of regulations.

The paradox lies in the fact that the development of society, the spread of education, the priority of reasonable morality on biological instincts were to lead to the understanding of the unacceptability of war, internal abandonment. An active pacifist and newspaper publisher, Eugene Niboye (Ejeni Niboye) was convinced that the three decades of peace on the European continent since 1815 brought more improvement to the lives of people than all Napoleonic wars (Cooper 1998, 74). At the same time, the second key point of the new outlook was the desire to achieve desired goals in a shorter time, within a life of one generation.

A striking example in this respect is the Crimean War. Its differences from past conflicts are an active involvement of the common public through the mass media, visual coverage of events in photographs accessible to the public, and the active participation of volunteers. The Crimean War was extremely popular in the eyes of "Enlightened Europeans." It took place at the peak of development of the pacifist movement in Europe, the labor and socialist movement. The war featured a variety of technical innovations, a vindication of scientific discoveries (for example, narcosis, etc.). Therefore it crystallized the real attitude to war in European society. One very illustrative example occurred in March 1854. During the Crimean War, Aix-en-Provence (France) very inhospitably

met the warriors. Soldiers were sitting on the sidewalk with a warrant for the right to billet in their hands and crying from exhaustion and frustration. Only government intervention could break the persistence of aristocrats, merchants, and petty rentiers who were not willing to provide shelter to the military. But the students arranged them applause.

War is no longer a "case of sovereigns"; it becomes part of public work. As the famous professional French diplomat Jacques Cambon (1926, 62) wrote, "Politics as well as international politics now left offices of the government leaders. It interferes with a person of the street. He will bring his passion, his instincts, his prejudices, and his ignorance in it. It will be no easy task for people who, wishing to avoid catastrophes, try to appeal to his mind." That is, from a position of the objectivity and inevitability, war goes to the new level of events, based on the choice of society. It should be noted that it is unconscious impulses that influencing society, rather than a conscious choice, Cambon emphasizes. Thus in a new time, the new factor of military and public policy appeared—the readiness and willingness of some social groups and personalities to drastically change the situation. Some people agreed with the events accompanied by victims, but only if these changes radically accelerated the historical development.

Even pacifism, which tried to play a significant role in the nineteenth century (the Peace Societies in London, New York, Geneva, Paris; the Congresses of Peace; the Hague Conference), was defeated when faced with the reality of wars, national movements, and a growing interest in violence. The permanent president of the Peace Congresses, famous French writer Victor Hugo, refused to come to Switzerland in 1872 to participate in a meeting of the Geneva Peace Society after the Franco-Prussian War: "In our time, the war has created severe conditions that threaten civilization as a whole. Our future is filled with hate. Now at least it is odd to talk about peace" (Cooper 1998, 89).

So militarist sentiments were widespread in parallel with the spread of pacifist ideas in the "peaceful" nineteenth century. In that century, European states participated in 154 military conflicts. Twenty-four of them took place on the continent and did not exceed two to three years each in duration. They included both interstate collisions (Italo-Austrian, Danish-Prussian, Franco-Prussian, etc.) and civil wars and uprisings (Polish, Greek, Hungarian, etc.). In total, the military conflicts in Europe added up to more than forty years.

Armed clashes in other parts of the world were more numerous and lengthy. To one degree or another, the Europeans were involved in these conflicts as well. Their duration was from two to forty-seven years (Caucasian war); a number of these clashes had a recurrent nature (one to two Opium wars, Afghan wars, etc.). A permanent participant of the wars of the nineteenth century was the United Kingdom, which took part in 45 percent of all military engagements (France was in 18 percent, Russia was



of the Boer War was to demonstrate the benefits and the acceleration of the historical process. All achievements of European civilization have been tested in it; the war was used as a social elevator, as the basis for the formation of a new ideology and social consciousness.

So by the beginning of the twentieth century, the "war-antiwar" contradiction had been supplemented with the contradiction between the most active development (revolution) of "second nature" and lagging development of society. As a result, a compromise was found in the policy of "final blow" or "the war to end all wars." As the purposes of these military conflicts were proclaimed the ideas of "justice" (First World War), "development" (colonial wars of the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries), "establishing the 'appropriate' world order" (Second World War), "prevention of dictatorships" (the Korean and Vietnam wars), etc. The goals associated with any financial and practical advantages were not particularly important and were seen as the side effects, often without any significant dividends.

#### BEGINNING OF THE CONTRADICTIONS IN PERCEPTION (TWENTIETH CENTURY)

Until 1914, no government of the great powers wanted a European war, and especially not a world war. This is convincingly proved by the fact that in those regions directly faced with the political ambitions of the great powers, namely, in the overseas territories, their endless conflicts were resolved peacefully. Of course, they were far from friendliness and pacifism, preparing for war, but did not want it to begin soon. For example, Germany did not take advantage of the situation of 1904–1905, when Russia, the ally of France, was weakened. The German government only stated its claims to Morocco (the so-called Moroccan crises, which ended in 1912 with the transfer of the whole of Morocco under the protectorate of France). German emperor Wilhelm II at the last moment in July 1914 asked his generals if it was possible in the end to localize the war somewhere in Eastern Europe, refusing to attack France and Russia—but he received the reply that unfortunately it was not feasible. The old emperor of Austria, Franz Joseph, announcing the beginning of the war to his subjects, earnestly said, "I didn't want this to happen," even though his government, by and large, had provoked it.

But at the same time there was an extraordinary patriotic enthusiasm accompanying the beginning of World War I. In France, in fact, only 1.5 percent of the recruits evaded conscription in 1914 (when traditional it is 5 to 13 percent). In English society, traditionally held from hostilities, during the first eight weeks enrolled 750,000 volunteers, and another million over the next eight months. The Germans, as expected, even could not imagine disobeying the order. In memoirs, literary works, and

other sources of the eve of the First World War the Europeans complained of boredom of peaceful life and did not obscure the desire of some shaking up, trying to change their lives. The approaching war was seen as deliverance and relief, especially by the youth of the middle strata (Hobsbawm 1989). Psychologically the war was seen as a response to their subconscious desires.

Perhaps before the First World War there existed an illusion about the war as "the business of the state" that plays in the "fair play."

The development of industrial society logically requires a peaceful existence to produce, trade, work, and profit, it needs more or less stability. Scotsman Adam Fergusson (Fergusson 2015) wrote about it back in 1767 in "The Essay on the History of Civil Society." He pointed out the split and the distinction between the "trigger-happy" and "commercial" people. In his view, society, based on military prowess, gives way to commercial companies. But like his other colleagues in education, Fergusson was more optimistic in assessing human nature.

War of modern times was economically profitable (remember the history of the Rothschilds, Krupps, Siemens, concern "Renault," etc.). The benefits were not only for the biggest entrepreneurs; the war gave impetus to the development of new labor forces (for example, women's work in the years of World War I and II, which led to the revitalization of the feminist movement), gave a boost to small entrepreneurs. During the First World War men no longer wore beards (one of the reasons was the emergence of the gas masks). Hence there was an urgent need for cheap, easy-to-use razors. So the "Gillette Empire" was growing, and still exists today. That is, once again, we see a situation in which there are objective reasons for determining the eligibility of war in society, its admissibility.

The distribution of eligibility and the legality of the war in the public mind at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries has had two major consequences. The first was the increase of the aggressive "decadent" mood in society, the emergence of theories that justified human aggressiveness. The second is the desire of political forces to retain control of the public and not lose its place and influence.

Simultaneously with this process there was the tendency of setting the definite conditions for the exclusion of war and violence from the practice of human relations. Beginning with the decisions of the Hague Conferences and the Versailles Conference, the interwar treaties and agreements to UN resolutions are limited to legitimate the use of violence, methods, and tools of violence in international relations. So the nature of wars and conflicts had to be permanently transformed according to the new reality.

The highest state authorities decided the questions about the declaration of war. Article 1 of the *Hague Convention Relative to the Opening of Hostilities* (Hague Convention 2008) provides that the hostilities between states must not commence without previous and explicit warning, which

will have the form of a reasoned declaration of war or of an ultimatum with conditional declaration of war. The declaration of war in accordance with the rules of international law requires declaring the state of war and further the observance of the rules of warfare. The act of declaring war must contain a distinct meaning and present specific reasons, which are the basis for the declaration of war.

Article 51 of the UN Charter (UN Charter) enshrines the right of the states to individual protection or collective self-defense against aggression. Under aggression in accordance with the resolution of the UN General Assembly 1974 (General Assembly 2008) refers to the use of armed force by a state against the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of another state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the UN Charter.

If we carefully analyze these rules, even in the concise form in which they are represented in the documents of the Hague Conference, it becomes clear that any war is impossible in principle. Even if not taking into account the fact that when the Hague Conference of 1899 gathered to discuss limiting the arms race, the problem of the prohibition of war was not in the list. Shortly before the conference the representative of Germany, Professor Shtengel, spoke against the idea of perpetual peace: in his view, the war was a necessary accessory of the divine order of things, as evidenced in the Scriptures. From the point of view of the British delegation, the proposal of prohibition of development of new weapons would be in the interests of the "barbarous" people and it would be a wild step. That is, politicians were not willing to renounce war as an instrument of power.

During the wars with Mexico in 1914–1916 an American general, Hugh Scott, who was tired of the "misconduct" of the head of the Mexican rebels Pancho Villa, sent him the brochure entitled "The Rules of War." Pancho Villa amused about it and wondered: "I don't understand how it is possible to wage war, guided by the rules. It's not a game. And, what is the difference between the war of civilized countries and any other war?" (Reed 1987, 445–46).

Moreover, main types of weapons are prohibited; the actions of the soldiers and officers are determined by pure logic and rational behavior, eliminating any emotional component. In real conditions of justified violence, in the absence of constraining social, religious, and moral factors, having a weapon in hand and realizing your own impunity ("everything lost in the fog of war," "we were just following orders"), it is impossible to stay within the established rules.

In the world practice of the postwar period, the warring states tend to avoid formal declarations of war, as well as the wording "war" for military conflicts. This is due primarily to the possible violation of some norms of international law.

## QUALITATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF WAR: THE ACCEPTABILITY

European civilization (and more broadly the West) has not seen a big war since the Second World War. In society the feeling of relative security is strengthened; the development of civil society and the rule of law generally deny the possibility of an attempt on life and freedom. The prestige of the military profession has reduced (on the streets you rarely meet people in military uniform, which was common a hundred years ago); military service is considered only the start of social mobility—it gives benefits (citizenship, education, mortgage, etc.). The war is far away, it's almost not reality, seen on TV, videos, or via the Internet. And gradually the war is perceived as a "feature film," as a computer game, gradually becoming not just acceptable, but a necessary part of international life. But when it comes to the actual participation of every person in military operations, active antiwar movements are deployed—peace marches, desertion, and struggles against the growth of military spending.

In 1966, during the Vietnam War the opponents of the U.S. intervention wrote an article entitled "Suppose They Gave a War and Nobody Came?" Later a film appeared that had the same longish name, but the title very accurately expressed the main claim to the society. That is, the justification of the war was entrusted to the common man, who is indifferent, who did not kill, but from his indifference comes the war.

Another psychological explanation is well expressed by A. Camus (2015; March 1, 1950), "for most people, the war means the end of solitude." It really is what gives meaning to existence. So this is the basis for volunteering in the "small splendid wars," in the Foreign Legion, etc.

After the end of the Cold War, the world situation has become much more dangerous and every phenomenon that cannot be explained is a threat. Common are anxiety and doubt associated with deregulation previous mechanisms of international relations, the destruction of the old balance of power, the emergence on the world stage of new states and nonstate actors in international cooperation, splash diverse and numerous new types of conflicts. The main problem of adequate perception of the postwar experience is that no one can combine the liberal theory of international relations (based on the priority of law) with the theory of political realism (the primacy of national interest) and the concept of global meliorism (based on the notion of universal justice).

Strictly speaking, democracy and the free market are really powerful points in keeping peace, but at the same time, nowadays they are very limited by many factors. That is why, the realists think, military power is more important in this case. They have some arguments:

1. While democracy and the free market were developed by the Western civilization, the concept of military power is widespread and it is understandable. All its advantages and, more importantly,



social significance, therefore only the government and philanthropists can support the researchers. The military is the best customer in this sense. Lester F. Ward, the author of *Psychic Factors of Civilization*, wrote: "one of the strongest motives to ingenuity was war. Ancient people almost certainly were fighters. Even if they preferred peace, they were forced to fight to defend themselves. It was necessary to invent weapons. Thus, the ingenuity has developed strategic abilities" (Ward 1903).

Powerful state infusion allows conduct for costly development of the latest types of weapons and means of destruction. And as a result, become inventions for social use that with pleasure and joy perceived by the society. The United Kingdom really became the empire when the British War Department bought Marconi's patent for the invention of the telegraph, which began to be widely used. The telegraph and mail became the symbols of British Imperial power—the world could now be managed "from the comfort of your sofa." Freeze drying, GPS, veterinary clinics and adhesive tape, canister and Jeep, computers and microwaves were originally designed for military purposes.

Thus the dominant states do not fight among themselves, this is the destiny of growing states, seeking their identity, their national interests, their place in the world. But for the great powers it is considered admissible to take part in the confrontations (so named "proxy wars"), as it gives an impetus to the rapid development within their own countries with minimal casualties. Examples are "the small splendid wars," the basis for which is often not material gain, but solving their own internal problems (the disintegration of society, the prevention of social or political problems, economic difficulties, etc.)

## CONCLUSION

So responding to the questions posed at the beginning of the chapter, we can make the following assumptions. First, war is a powerful catalyst for the historical process, but only in certain areas (mainly technological or material). More important is the impact of war on the direction of future development, which may not always be considered progressive. Proof of a negative orientation is "kickbacks" associated with the destruction of past cultures and civilizations, cruel twists and kinks in the fate of weaker rivals, need for a long postwar recovery. That is, the war really speeds up history, but often puts it on a new path.

Second, the duration and magnitude of major wars reflected the speed of the general history development. The protracted conflicts have slowed, dropping back into society. Short-term military clashes have a double impact—both impede and encourage the development of society. World War II and the Cold War pushed the process of European integration, the



process that tried to carry out one by the European rulers since the Italian wars.

Third, initially the war is unconsciously perceived as a part of objective reality. But later it turns into a conscious understanding of the admissibility of war for a quick solution to complex problems. The basis for this transformation has been a qualitative change in the nature of war as a result of the development of society.

Thus the history of society in time of war most vividly and clearly identifies the basic principles of nature as individuals and society as a whole. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the acceleration of history can be considered one of the results of the "Game of Violence," with its clearly defined players, artificially developed terms and conditions, and "account" of won and lost rounds.

#### NOTE

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