Globalization, kitsch and conflict: technologies of work, war and politics

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ABSTRACT

How does globalization affect the politics of conflict and security? This treatment concentrates on three themes: technology, geopolitics of globalization and asymmetric conflict. Focusing on technology serves to shift the attention from globalization events to the infrastructure of globalization, which is shaped by parallel changes in technologies of work, war and politics. Considering violence means zeroing in on the dark side of globalization: how is it that the era of accelerated globalization is so deeply mired in politics of containment? Focusing on conflict and security shows the Janus faces of globalization. A point where key dimensions – technologies, the political economy of violence, geopolitics of globalization – intersect is asymmetric conflict, or conflict and security across development and technology gaps. East-West politics of containment have turned North-South and ideological justifications and strategies of conflict management have changed accordingly. The closing section considers counterpoints in conflict management.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, over 4 million people have been killed in violent conflicts. An estimated 90 per cent of those killed are civilians, primarily women and children.

(*UN Chronicle*, 1998a: 37)

The truth is that many conflict areas today are closer than our vacation destinations.

(Adolf Ogi, federal defence minister and president of Switzerland) (Olson, 2000)

In an advertisement two distant figures are in the middle of a rice field somewhere in Asia, presumably a Western man addressing a peasant: 'Take me to the Hilton', according to the caption. The obvious rejoinder would seem to be, why on earth should I? But that's not the point of the ad. The imperative suggests: I'm lost, I'm a stranger, yet this is my world. The ad is for the American Express credit card.

This kind of glossy advertising is one way in which the brave new world of globalization is taking shape. Technology gives instantaneous access across the world. Credit cards open any doors. With gold cards the doors open even wider. International brand name goods are available everywhere. Frontiers are fading, borders are for crossing. Mobility is unlimited, communication instant, consumer choice growing, Ronald McDonald smiling in the brave new world of globalization.

How about the other side of the split-screen? Poverty and inequality are usually subsumed under 'development' and delegated to international agencies such as the IMF and World Bank, which translate development into disciplinary regimes. As to conflict, opinion articles of the kind that accompany American Express ads offer 'the Golden Arches theory of conflict prevention', according to which 'No two countries that both had McDonald's had fought a war against each other since each got its McDonald's' (Friedman, 2000: 248).

With regard to violence, as with production, the state no longer holds the pre-eminent position it used to. Economies no longer necessarily hinge on the national market and states no longer hold a monopoly on the means of coercion. Criminal organizations and paramilitaries also organize flexibly, embrace the free market and source internationally for contraband, weapons, allies and profit. They too represent the 'magic of the market place'. Urban gangs, rural militias and warlords replay the game of states. The creeping privatization of security arrangements shows how unfettered free market practices erode the public sphere also in crime and conflict. Flexible technology enables minor states to afford weapons of mass destruction. As the nuke race between the superpowers draws to a close other chains of conflict unfold, involving biochemical weapons, environmental warfare and niche conflicts.[1] The nation state has become one institutional domain among several and state authority is making place for a multi-scalar network of governance structures from the local to the global, which operates on the basis of uneven premises and leaves glaring gaps. The nexus between profit and taxation as it used to exist is no more, hence the fiscal crises of states and the privatization of services. This institutional interregnum is often described under the shorthand of 'globalization'.

What is the relationship between globalization and conflict? How does the leading script of contemporary globalization, neoliberalism, affect

the politics of violence and conflict? Let's signal some paradoxes or anomalies of globalization and conflict.

- Globalization brings increasing bordercrossing and borderlessness, but there is no let up in border conflicts.
- Globalization shrinks the world, yet leading political accounts ('Jihad vs McWorld', 'clash of civilizations', the 'new barbarism', etc.) portray a deeply divided world.
- Borderlessness for capital and borders for labour; transnationalism in communication, travel and consumption, and border policing to contain migration and conflict.
- New technologies carry the gloss of the borderless world in the making and do double duty in border control, containment and surveillance.[2]
- Development efforts focus on capacity building while macro policies weaken or dismantle institutions.
- Neoliberal globalization weakens state capacities and in weak states conflict and crime proliferate.
- The need for supranational governance is growing, among others to manage conflicts, while multilateral institutions are being weakened.
- Under no-nonsense capitalism unprofitable sectors have been shrinking throughout the world – typically health care, education, social services – while conflict and security are growth industries.
- 'Transparency' in international finance and development suggests a world of visibility, legibility and accountability, but transparency is mostly one-way.

Globalization is a unified field for some and thoroughly partitioned for many. What else is new? The sunny side of globalization is rapidly expanding mobility and choice and the ideology of borderlessness in the dark is an all-too familiar world of poverty and growing cleavages and conflict. How do the two sides interact? A new, or at least refurbished, politics of containment seeks to keep the two sides apart.

Globalization and conflict involves multiple dimensions. Technologies enable accelerated globalization. In security and politics, as in economics, globalization is a package deal; transnationalization both requires and prompts informatization and flexibilization. Conflict and security are also economic sectors, as in the arms industry and crime networks, for instance in Eastern Europe, and paramilitaries in developing countries (e.g. Campbell, 1999). Conflict and security have become growth industries – the erstwhile war economy reborn as part of the post-Cold War economy. Trend-spotters recognize the opportunities for profitable investment in privatized security: the 'Criminal-Industrial Complex' is anticipated to be a 'major growth industry'. 'The $70 billion hypersafety industry (1995) will continue to grow at 9 percent per year through the turn of the century' (Celente, 1997: 291, 292).

In hegemonic politics in regional and local arenas new trends interact with older patterns, new economic and political interests interplay with vested security interests. The spillovers of the Cold War feed local and regional conflicts[3] while new dynamics come into play. Thus the need for interoperability between NATO and former Warsaw Pact countries prompts East European countries to release outdated weapons (and explosives such as Semtex) on the arms market, which in turn feeds into local conflicts.

While a distinction is often made between the Cold War era and contemporary globalization, common to both is modernity, which raises the wider question of the relationship between conflict and security and modernity, between military technologies and progress. After all, modernity, through most of its career, has been modernity at war.[4]

These dimensions of how globalization and politics of conflict and security interact are too wide a field to be adequately surveyed in a single treatment, so this argument concentrates on three themes: technology, geopolitics of globalization and asymmetric conflict. Focusing on technology serves to shift the attention from globalization events (its 'histoire événementielle') to the infrastructure of globalization. Focusing on violence is to zero in on the dark side of globalization, and conflict and security reveal the Janus faces of globalization. A point where these dimensions – technologies, political economy of violence, geopolitics, modernities at war – intersect is asymmetric conflict, or conflict across technology gaps. This includes humanitarian intervention, which is also termed humanitarian militarism (Chomsky, 1999). The central riddle is how is it that the era of accelerated globalization is so deeply mired in politics of containment?

The first section of this treatment argues that economic and security technologies have been changing in tandem and correlate with political changes. Contemporary accelerated globalization may be viewed as institutionalized schizophrenia – growing relative borderlessness *within* the world of Ronald McDonald and borders *without*. It follows that the key problem is conflict taking place at or beyond this dividing line, as in Friedman's Golden Arches theory of conflict prevention. The two faces and two worlds of globalization meet in the new politics of containment. Here representations 'across the fence' – for instance, judgements on the nature of 'ethnic politics' – interact with changing designs of conflict management.

According to a common premise in contemporary social science we cannot neatly distinguish between accounts and conditions, between perceptions and realities. Perceptions make up realities, subjectivities and conditions are interwoven and how situations are being evaluated is part of their reality: this is the point of constructivism, which means taking seriously the politics of representation at every step of the way,

including the representation of representation. This is particularly relevant to the politics of conflict and security. But constructivism applies not only in past and present, but to the future too; and thus the way realities are constructed holds a reconstructive potential as well, which is the point of applied constructivism. In an institutional interregnum such as the present representations and judgements are particularly significant for they open or close certain options.

If the worlds of accelerated globalization are mediated by representations of division, managed through politics of containment and policed by smart remote-control technologies, are there counterpoints that signal engagement beyond new politics of containment? This is the closing query.

TECHNOLOGIES OF WORK AND WAR

There are several ways to consider the nexus between technologies of work and war. The principle that technologies of work and war move in tandem is well established. Historically, economic progress and arms races often went together. Thus the emergence of modern capitalism in northern Italy was accompanied by rival military improvements (McNeill, 1982). Economic and military leadership usually go together and are intertwined in notions of international hegemony (e.g. Bornschier *et al.*, 1999). The stage for the military–industrial complex was set in the nineteenth century when military production was the industrial locomotive in France, Germany, Russia and Japan (e.g. Sen, 1995). The twentieth-century military–industrial complex extends to high tech, witness the affinities between IBM and the Holocaust and between the Pentagon and the Internet and Silicon Valley. 'The connection between war and technoscience has long been intimate; now it is integral' (Gray, 1997: 7). Military, intelligence and space technologies are intimately interwoven in the development of high tech and communication technologies.

Speed differentials have always been essential to military strategy. With flexible technology this has moved into overdrive. The Gulf War set a new standard of 'smart warfare'. Flex tech has become the basis of contemporary strategy. Rapid deployment forces, previously a sideshow to regular armed forces, have become a general strategic formula from the US and European Union to China. Military equipment has literally become lighter.[5] Lean multi-task mobile forces and smart military outfits follow the same principle as the automation of production: 'using knowledge so that less capital and labor may have to be expended' (Toffler, 1993: 172). The soldier in electronic warfare, like the multi-task worker in flexible production, becomes a multi-skilled operator, a 'software soldier' (ibid.: 174). Parallel trends in production are flexible system production, just-in-time manufacturing or Toyotism (e.g. Harvey, 1989).

Like production and business, warfare has become knowledge intensive, to the point of 'knowledge warfare' in which 'each side will try to shape enemy actions by manipulating the flow of intelligence and information' (Toffler, 1993: 171). 'Information management', 'info doctrine', 'knowledge strategy' along with policies of 'knowledge procurement', simulation and cyber war are part of this reorientation. Command and Control, C^2, has become Command, Control and Communication, C^3 (C^3I with Intelligence) and next, Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, or C^4ISR (Carter, 1999–2000: 110). As military endeavour becomes a network effort, connectivity is crucial, including shielding software and communication lines from hackers and enemy infiltration. C^4ISR is multi-scalar and involves the decentralization of coordination tasks. War, like flexible production, involves a network of global and local coordination efforts: globally via satellites, locally via flexible on the spot decision-making and just-in-time assembly and delivery of custom-made threats.

Surveillance technologies in civilian and military spheres follow parallel tracks. Closed-circuit television monitoring in security-sensitive public areas and production sites, satellite remote sensing (Geographical Information Systems), automatic vehicle location systems and cell phone monitoring add up to 'total tracking' capabilities. Employee productivity and work habits can be monitored through computer use. Remote sensing is to a large extent automated with in-built trigger alerts in response to anomalies, and financial and currency markets also partially operate on the basis of computer-set trigger thresholds.

To inform C^4ISR it takes flexible intelligence. Conventional intelligence followed standardized techniques such as the indiscriminate 'electronic vacuum cleaners' of electronic intelligence gathering (Herman, 1996), the equivalent of mass production. What is needed now is precision-targeted information. According to a CIA analyst: 'To tailor routine intelligence to particular consumers' interests, we need the ability to produce different presentations for each key customer. We envision final assembly and routine finished intelligence at the 'point of sale' (quoted in Toffler, 1993: 190). In other words, just-in-time (rather than just-in-case) intelligence. According to Defense secretary Cohen in the 1998 US Defense Capabilities Initiative:

> We must enhance our survivability by improving our ability to protect our forces from terrorism and from chemical, biological, and electronic attacks. And we must increase our sustainability by ensuring our ability to deliver supplies that can meet any requirement. Achieving these core capabilities will, in turn, require three 'enablers': Responsive information collection, processing and

dissemination; Interoperability; and Joint Alliance exploitation of technological innovation.

<div align="right">(Quoted in Martin and Butcher, 1999: 28)</div>

US forces, according to the Pentagon's Joint Vision 2000 paper, must have 'access to and freedom to operate in all domains – space, sea, land, air and information'. This matches the policy objective of 'Full Spectrum Dominance' – 'to defeat any adversary and control the situation across the full range of military operations' (in Gonsalves, 2000).

In information war, communication, media and education policies may become part of an overall knowledge-intensive military strategy (Toffler, 1993: 179). A country's information structure is essential in national competitiveness and 'the race toward the intelligent state', and is equally relevant from a military point of view.[6] 'The essence of Information Warfare and Information Operations is that the aim of conflict should be to manage the perceptions of an enemy leadership. . . . An integrated IO strategy would therefore incorporate covert action, public affairs and propaganda, diplomacy and economic warfare' (Rathmell, 1998: 290).[7]

Collective security operations, as in the Gulf War, involve the creation of 'modular coalitions as crises arise' or 'temporary plug-in / plug-out alliances' (Toffler, 1993: 102, 177), which 'parallels the efforts of the world's largest corporations to form 'strategic alliances' and 'consortia' to compete effectively' (ibid.: 102). Another account is 'cooperative security' (Brzoska *et al.*, 1995: 23). Thus, we see similar transnational combinations of cooperation and competition in business and in security: network business and network war.[8]

How does this inform the character of post-Cold War hegemony? According to Huntington, international politics is now a combination of unipolarity and multipolarity: 'a strange hybrid, a *uni-multipolar* system with one superpower and several major powers. The settlement of key international issues requires action by the single superpower but always with some combination of other major states; the single super-power can, however, veto action on key issues by combinations of other states' (1999: 36).

Technology is often viewed as a kind of general purpose snake-oil, also within the military, though the application of new technologies gives rise to anomalies. For instance, throughout history the key military concern has been to augment combat force and lethal capability, but now in several arenas the problem is *excess* military capability.[9] High tech is supposed to bring about a 'revolution in military affairs'; yet force structures change more slowly than technology and reflect command hierarchies of the past. Military applications of high tech require the reorganization of force structure lest there is a mismatch between cutting-edge technology and cumbersome command and control

lines. That collective security operations require a coordination of C^{4}ISR which may not be attainable politically is a recurrent problem in joint operations.

TECHNOLOGIES OF POLITICS

> The interdependent world looks more and more like the weather system described by chaos theory; influenced by millions of variables, its causality does not follow a linear model, and consequences are not proportionate to causes.
>
> (Guéhenno, 1998–9: 14)

Since war is the continuation of politics by other means we must also consider the technologies of politics. Technologies cannot be divorced from politics: they embody a politics and besides their application is thoroughly political. Parallels between power and technology are an old theme. As every analysis of power confirms, different forms of power (political, economic, ideological and military) are interdependent and change in parallel ways (e.g. Galbraith, 1983; Mann, 1986; Boulding, 1989).

In sociology, connectivity has given rise to the notion of the network society (Castells, 1996). A related notion is 'network capitalism', and to characterize the public–private partnerships in the politics of aid and intervention Mark Duffield (2001b) speaks of 'network war'. Geoff Mulgan (1994; 1998) makes a further argument on the relationship between technology and politics. In Mulgan's view, the heavy technologies of industrialism in the mass production phase were paralleled by command-and-control politics; standardized production was matched by standardized administration and regulation, standardized politics and coalitions. These involved heavy, top-down hierarchical relations between government and the governed and within bureaucracies, parties, trade unions and other organizations. Light touch-button technology, on the other hand, correlates with a network politics of lateral relations and information flows within organizations. The general idea is that technologies of social cooperation in production, governance and collective action by and large move in parallel ways.

One need not look at technology to arrive at similar observations. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) describe contemporary politics as 'hegemonic' and characterized by unfixed identities and fragmented space, in which nodal points nonetheless matter. In hegemonic politics, political coalitions are not stable as in old-time politics because the subjectivities are not as stable.

It has been argued that the technologies of domination and emancipation are structurally similar to the extent that both concern capabilities

and skills, while the difference lies in the values, objectives and methods that guide action.[10] Thus what is also at issue is the nature of progressive politics. Since the Enlightenment and the model of the bourgeois revolution progressive politics has been sprinkled with pleas for unity. The desire to forge a grand coalition of opposition forces translates into a search for a central counterpoint that would unite all dissident social forces. Nowadays this reflects nostalgia for 'old politics' characterized by clearly divided camps and neat ideological boundaries. Increasingly, however, the case for a 'convergence of radicalisms' fails to persuade because in such pleas the interests and subjectivities involved tend to be taken as given and static, rather than as being constructed and reworked in the process of political articulation. Analyses of collective action and social movements, then, again point toward the observation that politics, from above and below, has become more 'flexible'. A cultural politics approach points in the same direction:

> A more radical version of the cultural politics perspective would break with the traditional understanding of politics as a centralised process. It would take the very process of the creation of discursive realities as its object. Rather than seek to develop arrangements that allow to 'get behind' the metaphors it would explore how new perspectives can be created. The issue would not be to 'free' the natural human identity that now suffocates under the hegemony of technological applications; its aim would rather be to explore the unintended potentials of new technologies to create new identities and facilitate the awareness of affinities between various distinct identities.
>
> (Hajer, 1996: 260)

It is argued that in military technology 'the new communications networks favor democratic nations' (Toffler, 1993: 178). 'These systems . . . depend on . . . the ability to exchange information, to swap data, and to promote a free flow of information around the network, so that people can assemble the tactical pictures, they can relate their stuff together. . . . Societies that freeze the flow of communications, the free flow of ideas and data, will not, by definition, be able to make much use of such systems' (Stuart Slade quoted in ibid.: 177–8). Indeed, 'the soldier and the civilian are informationally intertwined' (ibid.: 185). A further consideration is that 'knowledge, as a resource, differs from all the others. It is inexhaustible. It can be used by both sides simultaneously. And it is nonlinear. This means that small inputs can cause disproportionate consequences. A small bit of the right information can provide an immense strategic or tactical advantage. The denial of a small bit of information can have catastrophic effects' (ibid.: 181).

This would give a different twist to the conventional Washington consensus that links the free market and democracy, with some ifs and buts. War and democracy don't sit well together, and media manipulation and information war are not all that helpful to democracy either (cf. McLaughlin *et al.*, 1999). Besides, obviously, the new technologies favour information-intensive societies.

The technologies of work, war and politics are intertwined but their interrelations are uneven within and across countries. Just as not every industrial production system is up to flexible system production, so 'not every army in the world is culturally or politically (let alone technologically) capable of using' the information-intensive C^4 systems (Toffler, 1993: 181).

ICT moves across the conventional boundaries between modes of production. Masai herdsmen in Kenya now use mobile phones and wireless radio to manage their herds. Such technological crossings are not new – as in plantations organized on industrial basis and trends such as agro-industry, 'miracle seeds' and biogenetic engineering. ICT enables long-distance nationalism such as Tamils in Toronto and London sponsoring the Tamil Elam struggle in Sri Lanka, or Kurds in Germany rallying against the Turkish government. Alternative or rival globalization projects, such as Islamic globalisms (Beeley, 1992), are likewise made possible by ICT. ICT also enables criminal organizations to operate flexibly over larger terrains and to cooperate and compete transnationally more effectively than previously (Schaeffer, 1997). In police methods, crossborder policing and transnational knowledge exchange are viewed as achievements of the knowledge society (Sheptycki, 1998).

The situation is contradictory in several respects. That we are heading towards a borderless world is one of the familiar ideologies of globalization (Ohmae, 1992). At the forefront of economic change this is supposed to be a time of deterritorialization, or even dematerialization (Harvey, 1989).[11] In politics, sovereignty has become increasingly decentred. Yet, in the view of strategy analysts, 'Most wars are still about territory... The key requirement for military force remains the ability to take and hold strategically important territory, or at least to control those that live there. Air and sea strategies must therefore always be assessed in terms of their impact on land strategy. This is as close a constant as we are likely to have in the study of war' (Freedman, 1998–9: 48). It is as if Napoleon's saying that 'the policy of a state lies in its geography' still holds.

This applies even more if we consider regional politics than if we take a big-picture approach to geopolitics. In most regions we find that the reports of the death or retreat of the state are exaggerated and territorial politics driven by 'national interest' is quite alive. For instance, Israel's politics in the Middle East is thoroughly 'Westphalian'. Egypt's relations

with Sudan are a regional eco-politics shaped by its interest in the Nile waters. Similar considerations apply to the relations between Turkey and Greece, Russia and China, China and Japan, India and Pakistan, the Balkans, etc. In most regions countries continue to behave according to national interests that include (but are not confined to) territorial considerations.[12]

While territory matters and we cannot understand conflict and security otherwise, territorial considerations themselves are embedded in and criss-crossed by economic, ecological and cultural politics. Obviously the US' commitment to the 'Washington consensus' cannot be simply understood within a territorial or Westphalian framework. The French politics of francophonie, in Africa and on issues of international trade in services and the World Trade Organization transcends Westphalian interests. Indeed, territorial considerations themselves are profoundly structured by national narratives and imaginaries. They are shaped by cultural fictions that can become 'fighting fictions' (Augé, 1999; Foster, 1999). Milosevic's Serbia's take on Kosovo was a case in point. Israel's Westphalian strategies are meaningless outside the framework of Zionism and the 'Jewish state' (Ben-Eliezer, 1998) or what Avishai Margalit (1998) calls 'the kitsch of Israel'. The same applies to relations between India and Pakistan (Nandy, 1997), including the Kashmir question. It generally holds for conflicts of the type referred to as 'ethnic', as in the Balkans, Sudan, or Tamil Elam in Sri Lanka (Silva, 2001): they are culturally overdetermined.

In strategy analysis, perspectives that combine *culture and strategy* have a considerable lineage (Booth, 1979; Farrell, 1998). According to a recent account, 'Strategic behaviour cannot be beyond culture'; 'Adversity cannot cancel culture'; 'Strategic culture is a guide to action'; 'Strategic culture can be dysfunctional'; and the conclusion is that 'all dimensions of strategy are cultural' (Gray, 1999: 62–9). If 'culture rules' in strategy, then what about international affairs? According to the constructivist turn in international relations theory 'ideas and discourse matter' (Dessler, 1999: 124; Katzenstein, 1996). This brings us from realism to 'cultural realism' (Johnston 1995) and the poststructuralist turn in international relations theory takes this further (e.g. Der Derian *et al.*, 1989).

These considerations come back with a twist in Guéhenno's observations on contemporary political leaders. 'Their political agenda is vague and while they may define their objectives in very broad terms, their identity and goals may be more accurately described as a style than as a programme . . . strategy then is no more than a pattern of action, linking together situations that are otherwise disjointed. . . . Just as corporations compete to create 'brands', political actors try to establish a "style"' (1998–99: 14). This account understates the role of political economy and interest: what underlie brands are market positions, and presumably

what underlie leadership styles are interests. It's just that interests cannot be separated from cultural narratives just like products can no longer be separated from their marketing images. What then would be the element of coherence in such strategic 'styles'? Interest, ideology, image, style, or all of these?

The old saying that 'language is a dialect with a navy and an army' confirms the significance of linguistic and discourse analysis (Dedaic, 1999: 137). 'Hate speech' from Rwanda to Serbia, and in slick packaging by NATO, is a case in point. The diverse perspectives on the role of discourse, images and interests in conflict[13] do not necessarily contradict one another but can go together and operate at different levels of awareness, all feeding into the role of media in the politics of conflict (e.g. Allen, 1999; Carruthers, 1999).

Media, then, are an integral part of network and conflict politics. In Lebanon, Hezbolla aimed television broadcasts in Hebrew at Israeli soldiers. Information war changes the politics of protest: 'information wars tend to be public-relations battles for Western attention, hence the adoption of English as the universal language of protest. It is assumed that the way to Western decision-making is through the media and public opinion' (Freedman, 1998–9: 52).

The question of 'style' suggests a further parallel between the technologies of work, war and politics. All along the military has also been an aesthetic and sign-intensive domain actively concerned with impression management and the 'politics of appearance' (Myerly, 1992). The US 'Star Wars' programme of anti-missile defence has found its way under the heading of 'future imagery architecture'. With the increasing importance of marketing, economics has also become sign and design-intensive (Lash and Urry, 1994) and this applies to politics too (e.g. Julier, 2000). Thus work, war and politics are all also semiotic and aesthetic projects. A précis of interrelations between technologies of work, war and politics is in Table 1.

TECHNOLOGY MATTERS BUT

The upshot so far is that modes of production and modes of destruction interact. Accordingly, technology may serve as a crosscutting angle from which to view the patterning of human affairs – i.e. not merely looking from production to social relations and from production relations to politics (as in Marxist accounts), but all the way across, from technology to production, politics and war. Technology then may be viewed as a deep structure of the rhythm of history made visible.

So no doubt technology matters, but is it a matter of technological determinism? An alternative view is that it is not technology as such that determines but the *capabilities* that technologies are an expression of.

Table 1 Technologies in diverse domains.

Technologies	Work	War	Politics
High tech	Flexible production	Smart war	Governance
ICT	Connectivity	C^4ISR	Connexity
Flexibilization	Just-in-time	Rapid deployment	Interactive decision making
Informatization	Knowledge intensity	Information war	Deliberative democracy
	Multitask worker	Software soldier	Empowered citizen
Information circulation	'Learning organization'	C^4ISR vs. command structures	Lateral politics, e-government, referendum
Information management	Marketing, branding, logo	Information Operations	Spin, style
Aesthetics	Sign & design intensity	'Spectacular war'	Media politics
Organizational structures	Concentration & decentralization	Concentration & decentralization	Decentralize, regionalize, internationalize
	Network capitalism	Network war	Network society
	Mergers acquisitions, joint ventures	Cooperative security, modular coalitions	Coalition politics
			Uni-multipolar international system
Space	Deterritorializing	Territorial	Neo-medievalism, 'electronic feudalism'
	Bordercrossing	Border control	Border negotiation

What underlies technology is human capability: technology is encapsulated human skill; or crystallized labour, in the Marxian frame. Technology is social relations made durable (Latour, 1991), packaged and routinized, a form of 'social mapping' (Goonatilake, 1984). Thus production, politics and war all reflect growing human capabilities in diverse domains, socialized in forms of cooperation and social practices and exteriorized in the form of technology. Technology, then, is an enabler: a necessary but not a sufficient condition for action. If anything what is at issue is capabilities determinism. But that is not quite true either.

The other major component besides ability is will; technology is only half the story, the other half is political will or motivation. Henry Kissinger said that defeat in Vietnam was due to a failure of American will power, a 'failure of nerve'. This is usually referred to as a matter of morale, the 'moral dimension' (Thornton, 1975: 110). Adolf Hitler put it boldly:

Any resurrection of the German people can take place only by way
of regaining external power. But the prerequisites for this are not
arms, as our bourgeois 'statesmen' always babble, but the forces
of will power. . . . The best arms are dead and useless material as
long as the spirit is missing which is ready, willing, and deter-
mined to use them . . . the question of regaining Germany's power
is not, perhaps, how can we manufacture arms, but, how can we
produce that spirit which enables the people to bear arms.

(1971: 459–60, quoted in Earle, 1943: 510–11)

Indeed, not just technology but also political will is changing in this
brave new world. One wonders, for instance, where the spirit of sacri-
fice is to come from in conditions of high affluence. And what of the
kind of national cohesion that is required to 'produce the spirit' of war
in the era of multiculturalism and transnationalism? This suggests that
politics of representation and propaganda acquire crucial importance at
every step of the way.

That warfare itself can become a multilevel spin doctoring operation
we see in the Gulf War (Taylor, 1992) and the Allied Force Operation
in Kosovo where media manipulation was a crucial component of
strategy (Hammond and Herman, 2000). These information operations,
in turn, are framed by an underlying politics of representation; this is
where contemporary narratives come in that explain how our brave new
globe is divided.

REPRESENTATIONS OF GLOBAL DIVIDE

For the foreseeable future, the world will be divided between a
post-historical part, and a part that is still stuck in history. . . .
Clearly, the vast bulk of the Third World remains very much mired
in history, and will be a terrain of conflict for many years to come.

(Fukuyama, 1992: 276)

. . . does globalization enhance the prospects of a democratic, or a
totalitarian peace?

(Der Derian, 1998: 2–3)

Current changes and trends generate, as usual, wildly diverse judge-
ments. Collective history is a mirror and prism of existential dilemmas
and cultural leanings. Usually the way out is to try and identify trends
that seem broad and structural enough to generate a minimum of
consensus. When considering perspectives on conflict and security what
matters is not merely whether they are right or wrong but also according
to which paths and preferences they construct reality and what policy
framework they imply.[14]

That major war is obsolete is a cliché among strategy analysts (e.g. Mueller, 2001). Michael Mandelbaum argues that major war is not impossible but 'obsolete in the sense that it no longer serves the purpose for which it was designed' (1998–9: 20). He views this as part of a wider trend of 'debellicization' or 'warlessness', an argument that has spawned a wide debate. Counter-arguments refer to nuclear proliferation, to the circumstance that 'winning systems look good', and to Asia as 'the region where the probability of major war is highest' (Doran, 1999: 147).[15] Mandelbaum has further elaborated his thesis:

> Warlessness is the product of developments that have their origins in the West over the last 200 years and that have gained strength in recent decades: the decline of orthodox communism . . . and the concomitant spread of democracy . . . the expansion of commerce, making war between and among trading partners, if not wholly irrational, at least increasingly expensive; the reduction in the average size of Western families . . . making each son more valuable and less dispensable; and perhaps even the waning of religious faith and with it the collapse of confidence in the existence of a world to come, placing a higher premium on remaining alive as long as possible in this one.
>
> (1999: 151)

Since this diagnosis is confined to the Western world it is reminiscent of Fukuyama's 'end of history' thesis that splits the world in an advanced part where war has gone out of fashion (the cost are too high and the risks too great in relation to the gains) and a backward part where small wars proliferate. It is a variation on the classic argument that 'well-established republics do not fight their own kind' (Weart, 1998: 22).

Let's note that part of cultural and symbolic violence is the hegemony of Western institutions and politics of representation. By default, in the absence of an alternative coalition that is strong enough, Western notions are the ruling notions. In 'McWorld' politics, even Western dissent has become the leading form of dissent, including Western notions of rights and justice (Nandy, 1989).

So what about the other part of the world? Some time ago a social scientist predicted 'that the 1970s would see the Politics of Despair, the 1980s the Politics of Desperation, the 1990s the Politics of Catastrophe, and that the 21st century would be the Era of Annihilation' (Schwartz, 1996: 192). At the turn of the millennium, for what such turns are worth, the apocalypse retail trade has been especially active and there is ample choice in apocalyptic scenarios. When it comes to conflict and violence two that stand out are the 'new barbarism' thesis and the 'creeping coup' scenario of conflict management which go quite well together.

According to the new barbarism thesis, these are times of ethnic pandemonium, as in Robert Kaplan's (1996; 2000) neo-Malthusian accounts of violence and mayhem in Africa and the Balkans. In this view, the deterritorialization of economies is being matched by the reterritorialization of identities. Identity politics and multiculturalism, in the conservative view, are part of the syndrome of intensifying niche conflict, neo-tribalism and social fragmentation. Those who are skilled in arithmetic inform us about 10,000 societies tucked within 180 nation states (Boulding, 1995: 199). In this perspective, ethnic fragmentation is a counter scenario to universalist politics. The new barbarism thesis (or 'Kaplanism') matches a definition of conflict management as the containment of security risk.

> 'Kaplanism' posits the need for a more authoritarian approach to global governance ... we will start thinking in terms of 'humanitarian sorties', rather than participatory distribution systems. If the military take on this role and, in effect, take on partial governance of 'failed states', without consent or invitation, one must conclude that a process that could be described as a creeping coup is indeed under way, filling the policy vacuum created as the United Nations developmental agencies are abandoned as an expensive failure.
>
> (Stockton, 1996: 147)

Besides assorted predictions of total war to come (e.g. Pearson, 1999) other chilling scenarios are Huntington's 'clash of civilizations' and Barber's 'Jihad vs. McWorld'. What these views share is that the assumption of progress and an evolutionary trend of gradually widening circles of social cooperation turns into reverse, to ever narrowing modes of cooperation and standards of action – from universalism to particularism, from secularism to communalism, from nationalism to ethnicity, from cosmopolitanism to localism.

Considered more closely, in effect two fundamentally different perspectives on the causes of conflict vie for prominence. One view emphasizes the politics of difference – hence growing conflict; another emphasizes growing homogenization, courtesy of corporate globalism and McDonaldization – hence exclusion and alienation, growing inequality and conflict. If these diametrically opposite frames of explanation are both deemed plausible, and are both pessimistic, then let's pause and also reflect on pessimism itself as a taken for granted common sense.

Paranoia comes natural and easy, has definite survival value and is thoroughly familiar to the brain. Evolutionary psychology holds that the roots of paranoia go back to primeval hunting times. In politics and social science, paranoia analytics have a formidable lineage (e.g. Pipes, 1996; Berke *et al.*, 1998). New technologies also inspire paranoid political scenarios (Spencer, 1996). However, for all its superb analytics, is paranoia also fertile soil for identifying constructive ways forward? If

we need to organize the future because that is where we will spend the rest of our lives, then on what premises do we organize the future?

There is a pessimism of the right as well as of the left and sometimes it's not easy to keep them apart. The pessimistic scenarios on the right offer dim diagnoses of trends past and present. The prediction that 'the world staggers toward inevitable war' serves to annul the 'peace dividend' and to justify rearmament (Pearson, 1999). The pessimism of the left shares with that of the right that it is based on a bleak view of human nature, a pessimistic anthropology. The difference is that while the pessimism of the right fears the forces of insubordination and instability, leftwing pessimism fears the forces of domination and the way the wheels of power are turning. New technologies are ever used for narrow ends and domination by capital now takes the shape of control by multinational enterprises, which is being turned into rule through the World Trade Organization.

Mandelbaum, Fukuyama, Kaplan, Huntington, Barber and Friedman, along with pessimists right and left, all suggest a world that is deeply divided (along different lines) while it is globalizing (a *précis* is in Table 2). An alternative account is that globalization makes North and South, while different, more interdependent than before.[16] Given the conjunction of divergence and interdependence, of accelerated globalization and multipolarity, what matters especially is politics *across* the lines of difference, conflict and conflict management across technology and development gaps, i.e. the politics of asymmetric conflict.

ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT

The strategic mind is readily identified and, on the whole, rather simple as well as straightforward. It is drawn uncontrollably to any map of the world, and this it immediately divides into spheres of present or potential influence.

(J.K. Galbraith, 1979: 332)

Table 2 Representations of 'globalization divides'.

Theme	Keywords for 'others'	Source
Clash of civilizations	'Islam has bloody borders'	Huntington
McWorld	Jihad	Barber
Golden Arches, Lexus	Olive tree	Friedman
'Kaplanism'	New barbarism	Kaplan
	Ethnic pandemonium	Moinyhan
End of history	Small wars	Fukuyama
Warlessness		Mandelbaum

The politics of violence draws on comparative advantages of weapons, organization and information. Business is a play of margins – drawing rents from temporary advantages in technology, production, marketing and distribution. Violence, likewise, involves playing margins of protection (cf. Lane, 1979). The contemporary world circumstance ranges from agricultural and industrial to knowledge societies. If we include indigenous peoples, the spectrum runs from the Palaeolithic to the post-industrial. The politics of violence involves a play of technology or capability differentials across terrains and social contexts. In the nineteenth century colonial armies could control large populations allegedly by means of simple technological leverage – 'We have got the Maxim gun / And they have not'.[17] By virtue of the same principle, warlords with access to modern weapons can now destabilize states. Even small arms, which are now in plentiful supply, make a lot of difference. 'In Uganda, an AK-47 can be obtained for the price of a chicken. In Swaziland, the same weapon has sold for \$6' (*UN Chronicle,* 1998a: 37).[18]

The Westphalian state system was based on a level of technology that enabled states to effectively monopolize the means of coercion within their borders. In many countries this kind of control is no longer available; state sovereignty can no longer be guaranteed by force of arms internally. Flex tech, in weaponry as in economics, alters the relations between regions and nations, between the local and the global. Complexity and uncertainty characterize the environment of foreign military intervention (Jentleson *et al.*, 1992). Part of this equation is asymmetric conflict, which ranges from the classic repertoire of 'small wars' and counterinsurgency to episodes such as the traumatic intervention in Somalia.

In this setting the information advantage of advanced societies may be of limited purchase, as demonstrated in Iraq, Bosnia and Kosovo: 'Modern sensors come into their own when observing a conventional order of battle, but have more trouble monitoring urban militias, rural guerrillas or crude mortars on trucks' (Freedman, 1998–9: 52). ICT is the wave of the future, but to what extent does information really constitute an advantage on the ground?

> In general, high-quality information systems work best when they are linked to a physical capacity to attack enemy assets, or to defend one's own. The focus on information systems as targets misses the point that, today, information is easily stored, reproduced and accessed . . . it is therefore important not to exaggerate the West's information advantage.
>
> (ibid.: 52)

If this forms part of the security dimension of global risk society (Beck, 1999), what are the trends in risk and conflict management? Conflict

management now refers to the overall spectrum of conflict prevention, conflict transformation, conflict resolution, humanitarian action and intervention, politics of aid, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Western countries may be keen to be active on either *end* of this spectrum, in conflict prevention or post-conflict rehabilitation, rather than in the middle, for that requires real engagement with local affairs.[19] Here the trend is to subcontract to NGOs and regional and Third World security forces.

One trend is to recycle the national security apparatus which has been underemployed since the end of the Cold War, by redeploying conventional organizations and techniques of control and surveillance. This applies to the way intrastate conflicts in 'third states' are being managed as well as to policies against crime and drugs.

In relation to drug trafficking, the main trend remains the 'War on Drugs', even though drugs are part of consumerism, 'prohibition' type policies are out of synch with contemporary levels of individualization and social and consumer choice and, besides, with present technologies such a war is not winnable. Legalizing drugs would be more realistic: it would give room to social choice and decriminalize the drugs trade. It would imply accepting a greater degree of individual and collective risk management. Prohibition policies achieve the reverse and are a boon to both crime and police organizations. 'Zero tolerance' policies in urban policing is another instance of command-and-control politics.

Phrased in different terms, if due to, among others, technological changes, we are experiencing a miniaturization of conflict – i.e. armed conflict, more than before, is no longer the prerogative of states but accessible to groups within states – the appropriate response would be a flexibilization of conflict management. Westphalian balance of power politics is out of step with technological, political and cultural processes. While there is a place for state politics (no doubt a larger place than granted in 'retreat of the state' arguments), it needs to be supplemented with more flexible and imaginative approaches to conflict management. A case in point is so-called ethnic politics.

ETHNIC POLITICS?

During three months in 1994 in Rwanda close to a million people were killed and two million displaced in a conflict between Hutus and Tutsis. Another ethnic conflict, another manifestation of ethnic pandemonium. Except that this was not an ethnic conflict; it was primarily a *political* conflict between well-organized factions, in particular the *Akazu* or small house around the Habyarimana regime, and the Rwanda Patriotic Front whose position in Uganda had become precarious.[20] This is just an example of how 'ethnicity' is being banded about as a signifier of mayhem, inspires sweeping generalizations and speculations on

'primitive' human nature and archaic solidarities, and in the process functions as a new imagery and code of racism. Civilized peoples have nationalism while 'others' indulge in ethnicity.

Representations of 'ethnicity' – as of 'fundamentalism' – are replete with references to irrational crowd behaviour, mass pathology and 'evil leaders' (Maynes, 1999). They are variations on the theme of the 'bestial crowd', a recurrent motif from Plato to Freud: 'the crowd as swinish multitude, as many-headed-hydra, as wild beast' (Gilbert, 1996: 6). In this respect the barbarism thesis on the part of the left mirrors the 'new barbarism' thesis on the right and the rightwing view of ethnic conflict through the lens of moral turpitude, anomie and decadence. 'Socialism or Barbarism' has a long lineage in left thinking, from Engels through Rosa Luxemburg to Samir Amin and others.[21] This thesis combines cultural prejudice with economic determinism and the underlying assumption of popular disorganization and cultural and political entropy.

An alternative perspective on ethnicity runs, in brief, as follows: Generalizing about ethnicity is of little use because ethnicity is plural and refers to a wide variety of expressions.[22] Different types of ethnicity can be distinguished, there are dynamics across different types, and to each type there are strands of domination and emancipation. Are those who are suspicious of ethnicity also suspicious of nationalism? Nationalism is ethnicity writ large and the core problem is the politics of nationalism, rather than ethnicity, for every form of ethnic conflict without exception arises from nationalism taking the form of monocultural control.

What is termed 'ethnic politics', rather than archaic and anarchic expressions of popular sentiment, identity politics gone berserk, is often an orchestrated, methodical and opportunistic mobilization of cultural differences. The problem of ethnic conflict, notes Maynes (1999: 19), 'is less one of bad leadership than of inadequate structures'. A complex and dynamic understanding of 'ethnic politics' means engaging the 'hidden economies of armed conflicts' (Rajasingham, 1997) and the deep political economy of violence. It means entering the labyrinth of local politics. Conflict situations usually involve a layered crisis that cannot be simply reduced to a single set of problems. This brings us to the point that complex emergencies require a complex response.

NEW POLITICS OF CONTAINMENT

The key work on strategy lessons learned from the Vietnam War in the US is Harry Summers' *On Strategy* (1981). It concluded that the Pentagon should no longer go into war without the backing of Congress and should avoid 'quagmires', i.e. there should be an exit strategy. The Pentagon can no longer afford fighting wars that are undeclared, have

no legitimacy and no public support.[23] In the era of media warfare, however, 'body bags' erode public support; 'Operation Restore Hope' in Somalia was a case in point.

> The fact that the first requirement of intervention in a conflict is now a credible exit strategy, like a debt-collector venturing into a rough neighbourhood, is symptomatic of a lack of confidence. Another symptom is the search for ways to influence events from a safe distance, especially through air power. This fits with the notion that we are dealing with criminal elements who must be punished if they cannot be coerced.
>
> (Freedman, 1998–9: 47)

This involves a historically novel notion of conflict management without risk to life, without sacrifice, without tears. This may be termed a 'postheroic style of warfare' (Falk, 1999: 163) or fighting and killing without dying (Ignatieff, 2000). Airborne warfare and smart technology seem to make the dream of clean risk-free warfare come true. Conflict management without body bags: isn't there a parallel between LAPD helicopters circling over risky neighbourhoods of Los Angeles and NATO planes bombing targets in Serbia and Kosovo from a safe altitude? Yet, at some point ground forces have to come in, in Kosovo as in Los Angeles.[24] A showcase moment in Los Angeles was police battering Rodney King, a black truck driver. A showcase moment in the clean war formula was Srebrenica July 1997.[25] How to provide safe havens for a population under threat if the terms of engagement are no risk to the lives of the peacekeepers?

Smart war without tears is enabled by a global and long-distance optics and cartography as against local optics. James Scott's *Seeing like a state* (1998) refers to a gaze 'from above', an engineering and managerial gaze that shapes nature (as in scientific forestry and huge dams) and society (as in urban and development planning). Macro-economics shares similar features. Its parallel in security matters includes 'seeing from the air' (Virilio, 1989; 1994).

The circumstance that distinctions between military and civilians often cannot be made from the air and smart weapons aren't all that smart is made up for by an overall lack of involvement in the local stakes, whether it concerns Iraq, Kurdistan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda, Somalia or Sudan. Not to mention Sierra Leone, Liberia or Chad. This matches the view of the world split into an advanced zone without major conflict and a backward zone of 'Iraqs and Ruritanias' where 'small wars' continue on (à la Fukuyama, 1992). This outlook often involves the reification of ethnicity, the objectification of 'ethnic conflict' and the perception of combatants and their conflict as somehow irrational, savage. In caricature and cartoon fashion – and isn't this a matter of cartoon politics? – this

adds up to a picture of supermen in the air, or airborne angels, and savages on the ground, and we recognize the profile of the Angel of Progress.

With this optics comes a global panopticon view that sees the world in terms of geopolitical objectives, strategic resources (oil, strategic minerals, diamonds, gold) and military choke points. In this view relations across zones – nicely bifurcated as advanced and backward – are reduced to strategic hegemonic and corporate interests, and threats and obstacles to these interests.

Global panopticism comes with a *politics of representation* that proclaims globalization divides (*à la* Kaplan c.s.), which require *politics of containment.* These are enabled by remote-sensing *technologies* and operationalized in *policies* such as embargoes and sanctions (Cuba, Libya, Iraq), blockade (the West Bank and Gaza), humanitarian interventions (Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo), aid governmentality, and immigration control (rising visa restrictions, border policing).

Downstream consequences of containment politics are that it inadvertently creates or fosters totalitarian control (as in Iraq, warlord territories in Liberia, Sierra Leone, etc.) and authoritarian politics and rent-seeking within the contained zone.[26] It increases military vulnerability in border control (e.g. Israel) and fosters seeking loopholes and crime (e.g. the upsurge in human trafficking in recent years). It mixes up military and police functions (or deterrence and compellence).[27] The objective of containment politics is not to settle or resolve conflict but to contain security risk, and it may be argued that on the whole containment politics sustain conflict. The underlying motif is that there is no interest, no motive, no capacity and no political tools for engaging with local realities, inequality and difference. This matches the politics of hopelessness of neoliberalism, a politics of betting on the strong without provision for the losers. A domestic parallel in the US is the twin phenomena of ghettos and gated communities. Fifty years hence a perspective on neoliberal globalization may be that it matches US hegemony, as a world-scale export of US capitalism, fosters a technologically and economically driven mode of growth, as in turbo capitalism, and is unable to address inequality.

Let's try to pinpoint the contours of the new politics of containment more accurately. Also during the Cold War 'containment' was but a headline and not a full account of what was going on, which included interventions *across* the dividing line, such as corporate joint ventures, covert operations, building political alliances, and rollback interventions. Now, likewise, containment is only part of the register, part of the security dimension, along with many other forms of engagement such as structural reform, stabilization lending, development cooperation, foreign direct investment, etc. A schematic comparison of Cold War and accelerated globalization politics of containment is in Table 3.

Table 3 Politics of containment.

Dimensions	Cold War	Globalization
Ideology	Free World vs. Communism	Clash of civilizations, etc.
Boundaries	East–West	North–South
	Ideology, political system	Development indicators, poverty
	Alliances	'Culture'
Threat	Communism	Rogue states, transnational terrorism, crime
Risk	Domino theory	Economic crisis: contagion theory Politics: 'New barbarism'
Infrastructure	National security states, etc.	Modular coalitions

The predecessor of current containment politics is the policy of dual containment of the closing years of the Cold War, aimed against communism and 'extremism'.[28] Besides this continuity, the globalization divide differs from the Cold War in several ways. There is no clear enemy. The terrain of capitalism vs. communism has made place for capitalisms, with Anglo–American capitalism in the lead. The East bloc policy of confinement ('the wall') is no more. The geography of the globalization divide is more fluid than the Cold War divide. And if the overall axis of difference has shifted from East–West to North–South, differences *within* North and South are as large or larger than those between North and South. So while the security apparatus of the globalization divide comes on top of and builds on the existing security structure, the terrain, the stakes and the policies are profoundly different.

The Cold War was won; is the globalization divide winnable? And what would winning mean? Or, can the new politics of containment work? The US defence system distinguishes between A category threats or threats to survival, B threats to national interest, and a C category of minor conflicts (Carter, 1999–2000). Can this distinction be maintained? Cliché spillover factors are transnational terrorism and crime. Do the politics of divided globalization and containment inspire a politics of subversion and resistance? Do the technologies that enable the new politics of containment also enable their subversion? Graffiti on the Islamic university in Gaza read: 'Israel has nuclear bombs, we have human bombs' (Khalaf, 2001).

CONTAINMENT OR ENGAGEMENT?

How to shore up anchor states while satisfying disadvantaged minorities is a huge challenge for international diplomacy at a time

when the US Congress seems determined to cutback aid and multi-lateral institutions.

<div style="text-align: right">(Slavin, 1999)</div>

A connected world defies the rules of zero sum games, where an advantage for someone else means a disadvantage for me.

<div style="text-align: right">(Mulgan, 1994: 29)</div>

The September 11 episode, the attacks on targets in New York and Washington, has suddenly elevated a minor conflict or B level security threat to an A threat. It dramatically illustrates the problematics of post-modern war. The apparatus, strategies, politics and mental frames of modern war are not suitable for postmodern war. Asymmetric war stretching to A level shatters the entire framework of the post-Cold War politics of containment. Worlds wide apart in feeling and experience turn out to be within reach of one another. The separation between A, B and C security levels crumbles. This episode defies globalization kitsch and the comfortable illusion that all is well in the world of Ronald McDonald.

Scratch the kitsch of globalization – the corporate gloss and marketing babble of globalization – and underneath there is glaring inequality, misery and conflict. In the early nineties US National Security advisors conceded that 'extremism' is born out of 'exclusion'. Now, along with the political economy of violence, novel features in the equation are a globalized social Darwinism and development-security nexus, and the sudden widening of the spectrum of asymmetric war. In this treatment this configuration has been examined along the three axes of technology (or capabilities), representations (including representations of globaliza-tion and borderlands) and conflict (as part of politics encompassing opposition, containment and regulation).

Long-distance optics and remote-control technologies create, maintain or enhance the illusion of separation between conflict managers and combatants, which, however, is at the same time being dispelled by live-wire media reporting that brings long-distance suffering close to home. Thus, one set of technologies enables dualistic engagement while another, ambiguously, suggests reflexive engagement. Remote sensing presents the paradox of distant engagement.

Connexity is a two-edged sword. It separates (by enabling surveil-lance and inflicting injury across long distance that separates perpetrators from victims) and unites (by establishing a moral nexus between actions and consequences, reporting and public awareness, engagement and responsibility). Enhanced technological capabilities inevitably involve an enlargement of responsibility. This dual track applies to technologies of war as it does to other technologies – such as the capacity to build large dams that can annihilate hundreds of villages or their livelihood, to

biogenetic engineering or genetically modified food, or to macro economic management. The 'capabilities turn' in economics and politics (enablement, empowerment) goes beyond the instrumental capacities of technology and refers to institutional capabilities (as in good governance) as well. Indeed we might include capabilities of (intercultural) representation. The global divide as represented by Kaplan, Huntington and others reifies the gap and cultural difference, and suggests that the new wars are a matter of failed modernity. Duffield argues that instead we should view them as expressions of resistant or alternative modernity.

> Rather than social regression, however, conflict can be seen as part of a wider process of reflexive modernisation. That is, a transformative exercise involving the critical appropriation and adaptation of the opportunities provided by global liberalisation. The widespread development of shadow or transborder economies throughout the global margins is a key aspect of this reflexive or actual development. In its ability to create non-liberal forms of protection, legitimacy and social regulation, the new wars are just one of the ambiguous possibilities of reflexive modernisation.
>
> (Duffield, 2001c: 3)

This makes sense on several levels. Recognizing that the new wars are an integral part of the contemporary global circumstance and not some alien side-show, by implication acknowledges the role of Western forces and the modernity of the responses. On this premise, then, engagement too should be viewed as part of the reflexive interaction of modernities, in other words, as reflexive engagement.

Is it too much to expect coherence between politics of containment and politics of engagement? The fiction of a world neatly split into advanced and backward regions may look superficially valid in view of the different stakes, weapons and methods of conflict in diverse theatres, but since it overlooks Western complicity in conflicts and the possible spillover effects of conflicts (as dramatically demonstrated by the September 11 episode), it is ultimately Mickey Mouse politics. The role of Western powers in conflicts the world over includes the legacies and backlash of the Cold War, transnational economic regimes, double standards for allies and foes, the interests of arms exporters,[29] preoccupation with strategic and valuable resources, and alliances between corporations and state agents that sow seeds of conflict, as in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This brings us to a significant but also difficult junction.

The ways in and the ways out are both matters of perspective and representation. Since in security issues worst-case scenarios often predominate the margins for progressive scenarios appear slim. Biased and doom scenarios predominate presumably because they recycle 'old'

politics and existing coalitions. If market forces are no foundation for governance, statist command-and-control politics are old-fashioned as well. New combinations of political forms are needed that are in synch with current capabilities and political spaces. What seems more appropriate than a static coalition politics or a new kind of political 'unity' is synergies among pluralistic actors that are flexible and mobile and do not require something as hefty and ponderous as ideological consensus. This is underway in several domains, as in the shift in public administration from government to governance and the trend, in local economic development and urban politics, towards intersectoral synergies of government agencies, nongovernmental organizations and firms. We need enabling diagnoses and scenarios but could only enable democratic trends if we would first recognize them. This is not a matter of taking a normative leap but taking stock of trends that are already in motion. Yet, since the new grows within the womb of the old, new trends are interwoven with current malpractices. If we don't heed the full complicity of actors in the present configuration we misread the unfolding drama; if we don't consider the innovations that are taking shape we fail to see the contours of change. While recognizing that to each coin there are at least two sides let's signal several ongoing trends in conflict management, first in relation to so-called minor conflicts.

- A counterpart to the political economy of violence is the 'Business of Peace', i.e. partnerships with the private sector in conflict prevention and transformation.[30] An example is efforts to restrict the trade in diamonds (and other resources) from conflict zones. Thus, a counterweight to 'network war' may be 'network peace'.
- The redefinition of sovereignty. Ongoing changes should not merely be viewed as a loss, as in 'perforated sovereignty' (Rivero, 2001), but also in a forward sense. For instance, an implication of the wider interpretation of Chapter VII of the UN Charter is that continued international recognition of sovereignty is becoming de facto conditional on respect for the human rights of the population.[31]
- 'Make law not war' (Ferencz, 1998), or strengthening the international legal order. Trying human rights violators and war criminals under international legal standards as in the War Crimes Tribunals of Rwanda and Yugoslavia, is becoming established practice. On the downside, these tribunals serve as fig-leaves for the actual absence of international forces when the conflicts occurred; yet they also set a precedent and may lead to a permanent international court for war crimes and human rights violations. Related forums are the International Court in The Hague and the emerging International Criminal Court. Other components of reform are restrictions on the trade in conventional arms (Sanchez, 1995) and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

26

- Trends towards post-national citizenship. Borders also offer protection, yet one of the causes of conflict, along with winner-takes-all nationalism, is 'hard sovereignty'. Accordingly a forward option is to experiment with forms of shared sovereignty such as transborder human rights regimes (Oberschall, 1999). In the Great Lakes region of Africa for instance such arrangements would enable people fleeing warlords in one state to find refuge in another without immediately being categorized as 'refugees'. Eventually such arrangements could evolve in the direction of 'regional sovereignty'.
- The role of NGOs. The broadening range of organizations active in complex emergencies involves relief and development agencies, medical organizations, international institutions, human rights organizations, legal offices, military outfits, police organizations, coming together in novel combinations. This represents the oft-criticized new governmentality of aid (e.g. Duffield, 2001a); yet it also means an extension and deepening of the international public sector that is acquiring an increasingly transnational character. Linking relief and development strengthens a developmental approach to complex emergencies that may involve a more participatory approach and, at least, a chance for local empowerment (Fisher *et al.*, 2000; Santa Barbara, 1998). The involvement of NGOs (diverse as they are) makes for a different organizational mix and can contribute different ways of relating to actors on the ground. While the growing prominence of NGOs leads to pressure for professionalization, at times it involves their role expansion in multi-track and people-to-people diplomacy (Rupesinghe, 1995).
- The reform of international institutions is part of the wider agenda of international governance. Reform of the UN and the Security Council to make these more responsive bodies from the point of view of planetary citizenship has long been on the agenda.

These trends are part of the horizon of so-called minor conflicts; in addition, the September 11 episode presents dramatically different risks and options, which are yet within the overall logic of the contemporary circumstance. Suddenly the spectrum of asymmetric war reaches into the heartland and the borderlands are borderlands no more. Ours is an interconnected world and globalization is a two-way street in experience, capability and reach. The upshot is, in brief, that responsible action requires real political engagement, in other words: a turn from new politics of containment to politics of engagement.

The present juncture may be viewed as part of a historical crossroads.[32] The essential problem of contemporary globalization is that technological capabilities and economic changes are ahead of institutional and political capacities; in a word, growing capacities, also for conflict,

and inadequate institutions. This is a time when global networks exist but not global society, let alone global community. All the same, global communications and instant live-wire reporting on violence in far-off places, even if filtered through intercultural stereotypes, involves cultural ripple effects and brings awareness of long-distance suffering as well as political and ultimately legal ramifications. Early warning imposes obligations. According to the Geneva Convention, preventing genocide is a moral and legal obligation that overrides all other international norms. It may be argued that we are witnessing the gradual emergence of a de facto global moral economy in real time that generates new demands. Early warning necessitates early response; hence the shift of concern to conflict prevention. On a broad canvas, these dilemmas form part of human evolution: over time the networks of social cooperation gradually widen while the institutions lag behind. In history, when new inventions and opportunities manifest, conflict usually predates cooperation and cooperation arises, in part, in order to regulate conflict.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1 'Envirowar' may be 'the Great War of the 21st century': 'Equating environmental violations to international aggression will become a major foreign policy issue in the twenty-first century' (Celente, 1997: 266; 268; cf. Barnett, 2001).
2 Cf. 'Futurists tell us of the "smart home" (that will perform a number of routine tasks, such as augmenting supplies, automatically for its inhabitants) that we can look forward to. But how many inhabitants of this planet will have a home at all?' (Kapoor, 2001: 166)
3 An example of Cold War dialectics is the blowback from the Afghanistan war of 1979–89. The US – together with allies including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, China and Israel – as part of its anti-Soviet operations in Afghanistan has inadvertently created networks of violent Islamic groups that have since then been active in Algeria, Egypt, Yemen, Bosnia, the Philippines and other countries. In the Middle East these groups, trained and armed by the CIA and other agencies, are known as 'Arab Afghans'. Ironically this includes Osama bin Laden (documented in e.g. Cooley, 1999).
4 Cf. Lawrence 1997, Joas 1999, Tiryakian 1999 and the special issue of *European Journal of Social Theory*, 4(1), 2001 on war and social theory. On nationalism and war see Comaroff and Stern (1995).

5 In procurement for US military equipment the maximum weight of vehicles is now set at 19 tons, down from 70 tons, as in the M-1A2 Abrams tank. (Thomas Ricks and Roberto Suro, 'U.S. Army to cut reliance on Big Tanks: Flexibility demands that heavy armor give way to wheeled vehicles', *International Herald Tribune*, 17 November 2000.)

6 An infostructure index has been developed on the basis of combined data on literacy and newspaper, radio, TV sets and telephones per 1000 of population (Connors, 1997: 226–30). Cyberwar is a subset of information war (Sardar and Ravetz, 1996). Virtual war goes a step further and presents the option of 'the "fifth dimension" of global warfare' (Der Derian, 1998: 3).

7 In Iraq, 'An information grand strategy would identify the key nodes in the Iraqi political system and select from a range of tools to disrupt them' (Rathmell, 1998: 290). Key nodes identified include media and the educational system, the intelligence services, elite military units and the ruling elite.

8 Business is often likened to war. E.g. Andrew S. Grove, CEO of Intel, wrote *Only the Paranoid Survive* (1996). In an interview he remarks that `Competition is warfare', speaks of security and `strategic inflection points' (Ken Auletta, `Only the fast survive', New Yorker, 20–7 October 1997). Especially since the nineteenth century, management and labour organization in industry have been profoundly influenced by military examples (Myerly, 1992).

9 Thus, an Israeli general in the West Bank finds himself in-between UN Security Council criticism of Israel's 'disproportionate use of force' and Israeli rightwing criticism of insufficient use of force. '"If I were to use all my force I could probably wipe out Beit Jalla in a matter of hours," General Gantz said. "Should I do that? I definitely don't want to do it."' His concern is Israel's lack of nonlethal weapons. (Orme, 2000)

10 This is argued in Nederveen Pieterse (1989, ch. 14).

11 Particularly geographers dissent and refer to the spatial dimensions of globalization and to re-localization and re-territorialization (e.g. Brenner, 2000).

12 Cf. strategic atlases such as Chaliand and Rageau (1985), Keegan and Wheatcroft (1986).

13 In evolutionary biology it is argued that the susceptibility to ideological persuasion or `indoctrinability' is a predisposition rooted in humanity's past (Eibl-Eibesfeldt and Salter, 1999). Several approaches overestimate the role of cerebral and ideological influences and underrate the role of signs and images: according to semiotic and Lacanian perspectives, ideology and language themselves may be conditioned by and stand in for deeper strata of imageries, symbols and signs. Thus one view holds that images and stereotypes acquire their meaning by being embedded in discourse (Ryan, 1999: 98–100). A different view, matching a Lacanian approach, is that discourses and narratives arise and cluster around images that serve as anchors and attractors at deeper levels of consciousness.

14 Following constructivism in social science, these views represent applied constructivism: a combination of patterns of hegemony and collective imagination, and the reconstructive potential of social constructivism (Unger, 1987; Hajer, 1997).

15 Scenarios in the region note worrisome trends (Saighal, 1999a) but also potentially viable options for regional stability (Saighal, 1998; 1999b; Sakamoto, 2000).

16 This argument is developed further in Nederveen Pieterse (2000).

17 Conversely it is argued that what mattered was not simply technological leverage (because technological differentials between colonial armies and local forces were often not so large) but rather political and military organization (Nederveen Pieterse, 1989).

18 'Low-tech weapons like assault rifles, machine guns, pistols and hand grenades have been responsible for as much as 90 percent of the world's conflict-related killings in the decade since the end of the Cold War.' ('A plague of small arms', *International Herald Tribune* 11 April 2001.)

19 'Willing the end but not the means', in the words of Adam Roberts (1999).

20 Cf. discussions by Adelman and Suhrke (1996); Uvin (1999).

21 A recent version is Kagarlitsky (1999); cf. Hobsbawm (1994).

22 This paragraph follows Nederveen Pieterse (1997).

23 Both the Korean and Vietnam wars were undeclared wars.

24 Mike Davis (1992: 18–19) compares Los Angeles to Belfast and the West Bank. (`We shall soon see police departments with the technology to put the equivalent of an electronic bracelet on entire social groups.')

25 The `Srebrenica syndrome' in the Netherlands is discussed in Both (2000).

26 A case in point is the Palestinian Authority in West Bank and Gaza, discussed in Sayigh (2000).

27 `Deterrence is mounted along borders; compellence is undertaken within borders. Deterrence is a military task; compellence is a police function' (Maynes, 1999: 21).

28 Hence Ikenberry (1996) views current policies of `dual containment' (of rogue states and terrorism) as a basic continuity of the Cold War order.

29 Let's note for instance that the West's three permanent members of the UN Security Council, the US, Britain and France, account for 80 percent of the world's weapons sales (Richard Norton-Taylor, `US sells half the world's arms exports', *Guardian Weekly*, 20–7 October 2000).

30 See `The Business of Peace – the private sector as a partner in conflict prevention and resolution'. Report by International Alert and the Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum and the Council on Economic Priorities <www.international-alert.org> Cf. Alao (2001).

31 The implications are discussed in e.g. Taylor (1995) and Nederveen Pieterse (1998), which also includes a fuller treatment of reform of humanitarian intervention.

32 Remote sensing capabilities have been traditionally attributed to the gods. Ample theological disputes have sought to address the dilemmas arising from these capabilities; now humans enter this pantheon.

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