The Nation State and War

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1 Introduction

Nationalism is an ideology which can legitimize wars. It is not necessarily an aggressive ideology; there have existed very diverse concepts of nationalism and corresponding national wars (Kohn, 1955; Lemberg, 1964; Rejai, 1991; Brubaker and Laitin, 1998; Smith, 2001). These forms include: Movements and wars for national independence (including regional movements of secession from the mother state); wars for the preservation or restoration of national prestige; national existence wars; expansive-aggressive national wars. In all these forms of war, noble motives and values can play a role, but also pure lust to suppress, dominate and terrorize other peoples. A close connection between nation, violence and war is also more typical for large states. Small states like Switzerland are better able to develop a national identity without an aggressive component (Weber, 1964, 315). It is without question, however, that wars have played a pivotal role in history. Many, if not all empires and modern nation states have emerged out of war (Giddens, 1985).

In order to understand the decision to enter into war and the progress and characteristics of wars it is necessary to look at the relation between elites and citizens. Declarations of war or decisions to initiate war-like actions are made – also in modern democracies – by the political elites or even by single political leaders. They can build on factual or invented foreign threats in order to win the consent of parliaments and citizens to war-like actions because a threat from outside always leads to close ranks inside and to repel others (Mead, 1983). This is possible because the threat of violence and war can be legitimized from the normative point of view and fulfils a series of positive societal functions (Schoenbaum, 1980; Keegan 1997; Hondrich, 2002). One among them is the promise to do away with factual or asserted economic exploitation, inequality and injustice.

It seems premature to speak of an end of nationalism at the beginning of the 21st century (Hobsbawm, 1991), even if instead of wars between states new kinds of wars and terrorism can be observed today (Kaldor, 1999). It is particularly the European context which leads to the view of the end of nationalism since the nation states within the European Union seem to loose their autonomy more and more.
and the EU presents itself as a new and peaceful "civil power" (Beck and Grande, 2005). In the world as a whole, the situation is very different. Issues of national grandeur, independence and autonomy still play a crucial role both in the established old (Russia, United States) and rising new world powers (China, India, Japan), as in the rest of the world (particularly in Africa and the Near East).

In this paper, these topics shall be discussed in five steps. First, a general hypothesis is proposed; second, the normative aspect of the legitimation of war is dealt with; third, the issue of war and national identity is discussed from the sociological-explanatory perspective; here, also a historical-sociological typology of wars connected with national identity is developed; fourth, the normative and the sociological-explanatory aspects are combined to sketch out how a critical analysis of war could be conceived. Also some perspectives for a future world without the use of violence in international relations are discussed.

2 Personalisation of the Nation State: The General Thesis

The basic assumption of this paper is that the long-term changes as well as the concrete, present-day appearance of collective violence and war, related to the nation state and national identity, are determined by two sets of mechanisms: (1) General social "laws" concerning the formation of nations and the role of violence and wars therein; (2) long-term changes in social structure, political institutions and values related to the nation state and war.

As far as the first point of view is concerned, as sociologists we must also be aware that violence and war carry with them very deep and unique human experiences and gratifications. (I will come back to this issue later in this paper). Without their recognition, we cannot understand their universal existence in human history. Most of these mechanisms are well known and recognized in social science, even if much less so in public discussions.

There is far less agreement concerning the second aspect. Nineteenth and early twentieth century theories of history which have depicted history as a directed, linear succession of stages with a clear direction - have been discredited fundamentally, not the least because of the terrible experiences of two world wars, fascism and genocide. However, we can nevertheless say that there exists a directed change which is more than just an adaptation to a changing environment, a "natural evolution" of mankind. This change contains two elements: First, changes in social structure and the related conditions of life; second, changes in the relative importance of values and norms guiding the behaviour of individual men and women and of societies as collective actors.

There is no doubt that present-day, developed societies are much richer than any historical society has been; the conditions of life, the health situation and the expectation of living have been improved significantly over the centuries, and in particular so since the rise of industrial-capitalist society. However, we can speak of a comparable, directed and irreversible change also in the area of values. From antiquity to present times the dignity and the fundamental rights of the individual person have been recognized and extended more and more. Already the Judaean-Christians, the Hellenic and Roman traditions recognized the dignity and worth of the individual person; however, only a small part of the population was considered as possessing this worth in full. In modern times, the fundamental human rights have been extended not only to all members of a society, but to all humans living on earth, irrespective of status, gender, colour and nationality (Küng, 1990; Margulis, 1996; Boudon, 1999).

On the backdrop of these considerations, the following central thesis of this paper is proposed:

The close connection between the nation state, violence and war in the 19th and 20th centuries can be considered as a specific and transitory historical stage in terms of changes in social structures, values and political institutions. What is specific for this stage is a contradiction between the general spread of the universal value of the dignity and worth of the individual human person, and the application of a similar dignity to the collective unit of the nation state.

In structural and political-institutional terms, the past two centuries, and the last decades in particular, have brought with them a very strong tendency toward the enforcement of the rights of the individual person vis-à-vis those of collective units such as the community, the church or the state. The process of globalization has weakened in a significant way the role of the nation state. Yet, a change in the corresponding values, a shift toward obligations also for collectives, has taken place only in part. Especially in the area of nationalism, traditional-collective values have reached a climax and led to the two terrible World Wars of the twentieth century. They continue still today to induce violence and wars throughout the world.

Let us go on to examine this thesis now in more detail, first from the normative, then from the explanatory point of view.

3 The Legitimation of War by National Interests: The Normative Aspect

The normative aspect is of central importance in any discussion about war. War involves a behaviour - to kill other people - which in principle is considered as being one of the greatest human crimes and is forbidden by all system of ethics. Yet, war is one of the few exceptions where this fundamental principle is put out of force. Any war - in history as at present - has to be legitimized therefore in some way by reference to other, possibly more important ethical principles. There are two issues in the problem of the normative legitimization of war for purposes of
the defence of national identity: its general legitimacy and the concrete situational conditions of this legitimacy.

3.1 The principle of responsible action as a guideline for the legitimation of the use of violence in the defence of national identity and interests

The idea of the "nation" has been, and still is, one of the most forceful principles called upon to legitimize the use of arms and violence. But this idea cannot legitimate war in any situation, or the use of every kind of violence.

In the discussion of the normative underpinnings of war we have to make clear the general significance of ethical principles for human behaviour. The argument is widespread that there are no universal values, and that most if not all values are valid only in a certain historical or societal context. I think that this is misleading. The fact that some institutions, such as slavery, have been considered as legitimate in earlier times, but are considered as illegitimate today, does not prove relativism. Rather, it shows only that the recognition and institutionalization of universal values is historical, not the values themselves (Popper, 1973). Also values are based on rational principles. Axiological truths imply that the validity of values is evident to us in a similar way as statements about facts or as scientific theories (Weber, 1973; Boudon, 1999; Haller, 1999). There are three elements inherent in such axiological truths: (1) Any reasonable person is convinced about their validity; we know that there exist "good" and "bad" actions, and we make our decisions very clear before and after an act how it has to be evaluated; these convictions are rational reasons. (2) We consider an act as good or bad not because of its consequences, but because we confront it with an abstract ethical principle, such as the principle of fairness or congruence: contribution and retribution should correspond to each other. (3) Relevant actors in the establishment of norms and values do not only involve persons and groups interested in the outcomes, but also disinterested third parties, external observers or impartial spectators. These observers and the public opinion they create constitute an important force in putting through universal values against particular interests (Habermas, 1962). Related to this concept is the idea of "responsible social action" which implies that value-guided behaviour is also taking into consideration the side-effects of a certain line of action (Bienen, 2008).

Out of the foregoing considerations, we can formulate this general normative principle here as follows: Responses to violent suppression inside and aggression from outside must take into consideration all the side effects of the use of violence and armed forces. A nation or a comparable collective group or unit (ethnic, religious, regional or sub-national) aspiring to become an independent nation has no universal right to use violence, but must continuously bear in mind the negative side-effects of this violence for third parties. We could also say that the general principle that even in warfare common norms must be respected (Coser, 1956) does apply in fights for national independence as well. In this case, it must be particularly so because the new nation will usually become a neighbour to the "old" nation and, thus, the re-establishment of positive relations between them is very important for both of them.

3.2 Three sociological perspectives for the critical investigation of the legitimacy of political violence

A concretisation of this normative principle in sociological terms must consider at least three aspects: (a) the general justification of the use of violence and the proportionality of the means employed; (b) the relations between the elites and the populations at large; and (c) the influence of general social-psychological mechanisms in violence and wars.

When is it possible to consider the "political" use of violence and war as a legitimate means for a nation state or a group aspiring to become a nation? There exists a straightforward answer to this question. The same one will be given when it might be allowed for an individual to use violence and endanger another person's life. In this case, the use of violence is legitimate to the degree that it is necessary to defend the integrity of our life, to refute a dangerous, life-threatening attack from another person. In the same vein, violence in the interest of a nation can be legitimized only if a nation is endangered in its existence. This is the case, for instance, if a foreign power invades the territory of a nation, or if the government of a state suppresses a minority with violent means.

In this context, the relations between the elites and the populations at large - my second point - are of crucial importance (see also Haller, 1992, 1996b, 2008). A declaration of war, more than any other far-reaching political decision, is usually made by a tiny group of elites, often by a single leader. Here, the problem becomes most acute with which any democracy has to cope with, namely the fact that a split may occur between the interests of the population at large and their political elites and leaders (Ezrioni-Halevy, 1993). In the case of national identity and war, the problem becomes most acute: A threat or attack from outside can create a strong feeling of community. This feeling, however, is often used in an instrumental way by political leaders: In order to direct attention away from other, unsolved internal problems, in order to increase their popularity and power, they can (and regularly do) invent apparent or enlarge existing foreign threats, and they may eventually declare wars in order to reach these goals unchallenged by public opinion. A situation of threat (whether real or invented) creates a readiness among the population to consent to any counter-measures, and a high internal pressure on anybody to consent to these measures; the publication of dissenting opinions in such a situation is usually stigmatized as a threat to national unity and security, and their proponents as traitors of the nation. Elites and leaders can use (and manipulate) any information in this regard in a strategic way; in some phases, they may also be prone to suppress information about threats from outside. Therefore, issues of foreign policy and security...
are usually treated as "highly confidential", is a matter of Geheimdiplomatie. Now, elites and leaders have a very different attitude toward war than the population at large. For the leader, a war will usually strengthen his position and power in a way which cannot be attained by any other strategy. For the population at large, the situation looks quite different. For many people – in particular young men eligible for military service and their families, but also for the civilian population which will become a victim of military and para-military operations – war brings a threat to life, the possible loss of kinsmen, devastation of buildings, devaluation of savings and so forth (Kant, 1795). Political and military leaders, on the contrary, are never participating in a war at the frontline. Even military generals usually operate far behind the front in secure headquarters.

A third general social mechanism relevant here can be called the competition for national independence. Many national independence movements do not take the use of violence into consideration from the very beginning but try to achieve independence by political negotiations. Efforts of one national sub-group or region, however, lead to resentments and counter-actions both from the side of the central nation state and from other sub-national units. Claims for independence will lead to reactions of the central state and possibly also to similar claims of other sub-groups and regions.

A further, far-reaching social mechanism is that "violence bears violence". Such "spirals of violence" make it nearly impossible to solve some of the most old and deep-seeded conflicts in Europe and other parts of the world today, such as that between Israelis and Palestinians. War itself leads to a brutalization of mores and actions among soldiers and the population at large. War can be carried through for a considerable amount of time only if there are enough reserves in terms of young recruits, money and weapons. In this way, a new war economy comes into being, and among its participants a lifestyle develops which is based on the continuation of violence and war. This is connected with so many advantages that a return to a civilian way of life becomes more and more undesirable (Waldmann, 1985).

4 Violence and War in the Building and Acting of the Nation State. The Sociological-Explanatory Perspective

In this part, I will focus on the sociological-explanatory question why nation states and violence are so closely related. I will proceed in three steps: First, a few general social "laws" concerning the social meaning and use of violence are sketched out; then I will ask why violence and wars are so closely related to the nation; third, a typology is developed which allows to establish a connection between the normative and the explanatory approach.

4.1 The welding together of communities. General social and political functions of threat, violence and war

There is a widespread agreement in social science that violent collective conflicts and wars have a number of significant social functions (Schelling, 1973; Richter, 1982; Keegan, 1993; Scheff, 1994; Kelman, 1997; Doubt, 2000; Joss, 2000; Hondrich, 2002; Holert and Tschirkessidis, 2002; Haring and Kuzmics, 2008). Only by considering these functions is it possible to understand why violence and war play such an important role throughout human history up to the present day, despite their highly destructive effects. To say that wars fulfill certain functions means neither to legitimate them, nor to say that they are something "innate" to human nature. This question may never be answered. I assume, however, that there are always some degrees of freedom in the decision to use violence and war or not.

The functions of war may be summarized in the following eight theses.

1 Threats from outside lead to a uniting of the members of a society and produce a closely-knit community, welded together against the 'aggressor' (Simmel, 1923; Coser, 1956). The most important fact about the external threat is not the objective degree of danger but the perception of such a threat. In the extreme, such threats can also be invented.

2 The strong emotions and feelings which develop in such a community – closeness between members, hostility toward others defined as 'enemies' – tend to override rational considerations concerning the objective degree or threat (Tajfel, 1981; Smith, 1991). Internal dissenters are blemished, stigmatized and left out.

3 Communication with the outside world, and in particular with the aggressive enemy, is reduced to a minimum. Since the same occurs from the other side, systematic disinformation is produced, and a spiral of mutual misinformation comes into being (Dedaic and Nelson, 2003; for the Yugoslav case see Calic, 1995; Doub, 2000).

4 The threatened community needs and usually soon 'produces' political and military leaders ready to respond to the external threats. These in turn are easily able to influence and manipulate the collective mind of their groups and fellow citizens (Haller, 1996b). The position of authoritarian or dictatorial regimes is strongly enforced when a country is attacked from outside.1

5 The process of the formation of a closed group is suddenly enforced (since it can now be based to a considerable degree on factual experiences) when collective violence comes into play. Violence itself is used to demoralize the

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1 Examples include the terror regime of Stalin after the attack on the USSR by Hitler's Germany, the consolidation of the Islamic Republic in Iran after the attack by Saddam Hussein's Iraq (Sharif, 1991:1631 and many others).
enemy and to strengthen cohesion within the aggressors by making all jointly responsible.  

For many active participants in collective violence and war, this constitutes an exceptional personal experience. Although painful and ambivalent in many regards, it is often also strongly rewarding by providing a thrill accessible in no ordinary humdrum situation, confirming personal strength and power, and providing an exceptional sense of unity and comradeship with the fellow fighters.

The use of violence, the outbreak and the carrying through of a war induce a spiral of violence and counter violence, and – in the longer term – a war-dependent group life, society and economy. Violence begins to turn into a protracted conflict which is less and less amenable to efforts at cessation and reconciliation (Waldmann, 1985).

The mechanisms outlined here may be considered generally true for any society or historical epoch. Now we have to ask how these mechanisms came into play in the last centuries up to now, when collective violence and war became more and more associated with the nation state.

4.2 The connection between the nation state and war

Why has nationalism and national identity become such a strong force, that people are ready to sacrifice their lives for it? The historic apex of “nationalism” – “high nationalism” – has been the first half of the twentieth century (1914–1945). How was it possible that men and women welcomed World War I which would bring death to over twenty millions of people, hunger and starvation to whole countries?

I would like to put forward here the following thesis: High nationalism was only a transient stage in the political development of the last centuries; it marked a transition period between absolutism and democracy. In 1914, continental Europe was still governed – with few exceptions – by monarchies. Even if industrial society was developing fast everywhere, and some forms of limited democratic participation had been introduced, the main structure of the European states was still absolutist: Nobility was the leading political class, and the monarch on its top was the uncontested head of the state. Political power was legitimized by the idea that the ultimate foundation of the power of the monarch was transcendental-religious, by divine right. While the ideology of nationalism made a decisive turning point it retained one essential element of this political ideology: Instead of being embodied by the monarch, the legitimation of power was conceived as being with the people; however, the idea of the state as something transcendent, even "holly", was retained. Thus, in the nationalist age “societies worship themselves brazenly and openly” (Gellner, 1983, 56; see also Durkheim, 1968; Haring, 2008). This decisive step was made during the French revolution. The revolutionary armies were so successful in their advance on other states for a good part because they were inspired by this new republican spirit of sacrifice for the ideals of their nation (Keegan, 1997, 492 ff.). The armies formed under these rules followed wholly new military tactics: They were larger than most armies had been before; they were also filled by ardent fighters from non-French territories occupied by foreign powers; and they neglected traditional rules of military tactics while passing the massive border line fortifications, and infiltrating fast and deep into the neighbour’s territories.

The general assertion made here is that war has played a fundamental role in the establishment of the modern nation state. This fact is overlooked in much of contemporary writing on nation and nationalism. While the catchword of "culture" occupies a central place in any text about "nation", even in the most recognized works on the topic (e.g. Gellner, 1983; Anderson, 1991; McCrone, 1998), we find the entry "war" neither in the contexts nor the index (exceptions are Smith, 1991; Mann, 1993; James, 1996). Giddens (1985) sees nationalism primarily as a psychological phenomenon. However, nation and nationalism were the most forceful of all 19th and 20th century political ideologies, as historians of nationalism have pointed out (Kohn, 1955; Lemberg, 1964; Rejai, 1991). Therefore, the normative aspect becomes central, also concerning the legitimation given for entering into a war. A central concomitant of the ideology of nationalism is also a new understanding of war, and a fundamental change of the meaning of military service and combat. It changed from that of an (often) hated obligation to a prince, to a moral duty of every male citizen. To die in war, from now on, was not only an unavoidable destiny but the greatest sacrifice a man could make for his nation. This fact gave revolutionary armies their penetrating power. Therefore, we find rolls of honour for the dead of the two World Wars throughout continental Europe. Things have changed, however, since World War II. In order to understand the connection between nation and war today, we have to look more closely at the forms under which the new wars in the name of the nation state were (and still are) carried out.

4.3 A typology of “national wars” and their persistence to the present day

At the beginning of the 21st century, the period of “high nationalism” is over. In order to understand the close relation between the nation state and war, which still exists today, we have to distinguish between different types of war. Following historical and social scientific studies on nationalism (Kohn, 1955; Lemberg, 1964; Rejai, 1991; Hobbsbawn 1993; Kaser 2001), we can assume that there are four different types of war related to nation and national identity. These types are: (1) Wars for national


3 An excellent description of these experiences has been provided in Arthur Koestler’s narrative “A Spanish Testament” from the Spanish Civil War 1936–39. For the Vietnam war, see Holert/Terkessidis 2002:44ff.

4 For Clausewitz (1963), peoples’ and soldiers’ morale and support are one of the three decisive factors for a victory (the other two being the abilities of the generals and of the soldiers).
independence; (2) “total” national wars, carried out for the existence and survival of a nation; (3) national prestige and power preservation wars; (4) aggressive and expansionist national wars for the rounding off or the enlargement of the national territory; and (5) the “new wars” that we can observe in the last decades, involving not whole nation states but national subgroups, terrorist groups etc. There are significant differences in the legitimation of these four kinds of war, in the tactics employed, and in the time periods when each type was dominant.

Wars for national independence are based on the ideology of “liberation nationalism” (McCrone, 1998, 102 ff.). They include internal insurgencies of ethnic-national subgroups against a dominating central state in order to attain more autonomy or even secession from this state: wars of (usually smaller) nation states which had been invaded and are dominated by other states. The legitimation of such insurgencies and wars seems to be straightforward: The right to defend one’s own country against an invader, or to fight for independence if a national subgroup is suppressed. An important document which tried to legitimize the use of violence in this case was the book The Wretched of the Earth by Franz Fanon (2004[1961]). Yet, we have to ask also in this and similar cases two questions: First, if the use of violence is justified at all; and what the side-effects of this use are. Also here, the general principle outlined in the first section has to be applied: Violence can only be legitimized if there is no other possibility to protect or attain independence. In this regard, the symbolic figure of the Indian fight for independence, Mahatma Gandhi, has represented an opposite stance compared to that of Fanon when he denounced the use of violence in the fight against colonialism and movements for national independence (Becke, 1999).

Empirical data show that in the second half of the twentieth century (1946–2001), not less than 225 armed conflicts took place, and 34 were active in the year 2001 (Clelitseh et al., 2002). Most of these conflicts occurred within a single state, as fights of internal minorities for more autonomy or national independence. Many of these fights have changed into civil wars where self proclaimed “liberation groups” are attacking not only the central government but also terrorizing the population which they assert to liberate. This is proved by the fact that, for instance, in Ireland and the Basque province, large demonstrations keep taking place against the actions of “terrorist” groups. In many less developed countries, political oppression and violence and incredible social and economic harm result directly and indirectly from decade-long fights between “liberation groups” and governmental armies. According to the UNHCR-report of 2006, there are about 9 million registered refugees in the world today.

“Wars for national existence and survival” emerge in two forms: Total national wars are those in which the resources of a nation are exhausted up to the maximum possible. This type whose paradigmatic cases were the two World Wars, was existing only in the limited period of the first half of the twentieth century. In earlier periods of history and in non-Western cultures (such as China or the Islamic world), warfare was often guided by the principle of mitigation and containment. The two World Wars in fact were unique in history, involving not only all the larger advanced societies, but also constituting “total wars” in the sense of the human, material and economic resources of the involved nations were exhausted to the utmost. It is a fact that the outbreak of World War I was connected with the feeling of an existential threat, especially in the side of Germany, whose emperor Wilhelm II felt - not without a reason – that France and Russia had entered into a conspiracy against Germany (Scheff, 1994). Historically unique was the fact that the peoples in the large, multinational empires were still ready to go into war for a good part for their emperors. The apotheosis of the personalisation of the nation occurred in the time between the two World Wars, in the fascisms in Germany and South and East Europe whose central element was a quasi-religious cult of the leader (Haring, 2008, 535). Today, the bloody conflict between Israelis and Palestinians certainly does involve a similar feeling of an existential threat. No other motive can explain fully the desperate suicidal attacks of dozens of young Palestinians on the civilian Israeli population, or the indiscriminate military attacks of the Israeli army on Palestinian towns and buildings.

The second variant of this type is the defensive national war which is waged on one’s own territory after the attack or invasion of a foreign power. In this case, the existential threat is real and this fact often awards an unimaginable force to a nation. Several big powers had to learn this when their large armies were defeated in the occupied territories, from the knights of the Habsburgs in Switzerland, through Napoleon and Hitler in Russia, up to the United States in Vietnam. Even the outbreak of the war in Yugoslavia can be explained, at least in part, with reference to this motive. First, the Slovenes and Croats felt more and more threatened by the Serbian dominated central government and army after the enforced abolishment of the autonomy of the province of Kosovo; second, people in Croatia and Bosnia feared to become suppressed minorities in the emerging new nation states; finally, even Serbian leaders felt that Serbia was encircled by internal and external enemies, threatening the existence of the state of Yugoslavia.

Also the third type – wars for national prestige and preservation of national power – is highly relevant even today. Already Max Weber (1964, 677) remarked that “the idea of nation stands in close relations to ‘interests of prestige’”, particularly in connection with a specific “cultural mission” of certain nations. In the case of the United States whose presidents have several times classified the countries of the world under “good” and “evil” ones, this motive may play a significant role. But also in many other cases this interest to demonstrate one’s prestige and power is more than evident. It has played an important role in the war of Great Britain against Argentina in the Falkland war in 1982; the same was true for the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979, and in the war of India against Pakistan.
about the province of Kashmir in 1965. In most of these wars, the advantages which
the aggressor can achieve are in no relation to their costs.

The fourth type of national wars — wars for the rounding off and the enlarge-
ment of national territories — has been in existence since the days of the French
revolution. This revolutionary war itself soon turned into aggressive expansionary
military campaigns, especially as leadership was taken over by Napoleon. Never
before had such a series of long and bloody wars been experienced in Europe.
Expansionist wars of this type show an ever-recurring characteristic, namely the
transformation of the originally defensive into an aggressive-expansionist character.
It began with the expansion of Prussia in the second half of the nineteenth century
which involved not only the reunification of the German territories, but also the
conquest and assimilation of parts of Poland and France (Alsace). At the beginning
of the 20th century, the Germany of Wilhelm II also pursued imperialistic aims,
visible in the massive military build-up and the drawing up of the "Schlieffen-Plan
in order to conquer the mining and industrial French province of Lorraine for
Germany (Fischer, 1991). But also the outbreak of war in former Yugoslavia must
be seen from this point of view. Ever since Slobodan Milosevic came to power, he
propagated the idea to create a "Greater Serbia" with this aim, he was supported
by influential groups of intellectual and religious elites (Libal, 1991). Also the war
of the United States against Mexico (1846–1848) in which the latter country lost
more than half of its territory, can be subsumed under this type.

Today's extremely high military budget of the United States5 and their worldwide
military presence cannot be understood without reference to this motive, namely,
to confirm and enlarge the strength of the nation. Neither the reference to
the aim of defending democracy, nor that of combating terrorism, nor that of
securing economic interests in the Golf (the provision of the West with crude oil)
alone can provide adequate motives for the military operations of the United States
in less developed regions and continents all over the world. The appeal to national
unity and strength played a central role in the "State of the Union Address" by
the danger from and the measures against terrorism and Iraq. In this speech, Bush
uses 63 times words like "our country", "our nation", "we Americans", "all Americans"
and the like. In his view, the world consists of "good" and "evil" states while
America is the "right country", the "blessed country", which has "to make the world
better". Bush also employs a parallel between terrorist groups and terrorist political
regimes. This equation is significant since it allows Bush to speak of a "war against
terrorism" and to attack whole countries instead of combating terrorism with more
adequate measures as those mentioned in international treaties on terrorism (see
F.A. Boyle in Bilek, 2002).

Finally, for some decades we can observe "new wars" (Kaldor, 1999) in many
of the poorer regions of the world. These are not traditional wars in the sense
that whole nation states are involved, but usually subgroups within such states or
operating at the borders between states. Here, the borders between war, terror-
ism and organized crime become blurred. Self-proclaimed "liberation groups"
often use violence and terror not only against the enemy, but also against the local
population, in order to recruit personnel, to collect money and to acquire weap-
ons. Their activities are often induced by the existence of "failed states" (Chomsky,
2006) which in turn are unable to provide for the basic needs of their populations
in terms of security and basic social welfare. The majority of such "failed states"
exist in the least developed, sub-Saharan African countries; extreme poverty and
underdevelopment are among the main reasons for this problem. However, also
in this case the issue of national identity plays a pivotal role. Many of these states
have been established after the attainment of independence, within the arbitrary
borders created by the colonial powers. In the new states, usually one among the
many diverse ethnic, linguistic and religious subgroups seized power and usurped
state revenues, thus leading to insurgencies from the side of many other groups.
Thus, an urgent political task in these states is to develop a common vision and
identity for the political community as a whole.

5 Outlook: Perspectives for a More Peaceful World Order

What are the perspectives for a world order in which wars are no longer seen as "a
continuation of politics with other means", to use the famous dictum by Clausewitz?
George H. Mead (1983) has pointed to this issue already in the time between
the World Wars when he mentioned the necessity to civilize the international commu-
nity in a way that conflicts of interests can be solved in peaceful forms. Given
the world-destroying potential of modern ABC-weapons, the need for such an order
has never been more evident in history. Let us firstly look again at the different
developments in Europe and America, and then ask which measures could contribute
to a more peaceful world.

One world macro-region where we could see the emergence of much more peaceful
international relations is Europe. How was it possible on this continent, which
through centuries was shaken by bloody wars? A first factor was the terrible
experiences of countries like Germany, Italy and Japan through their aberration of
fascist-totalitarian states. These have led to a stronger rejection of militarism both
in the general public and among the political elites than in most other parts of the
world. Throughout Western Europe, less and less people are ready to fight for their
country and to sacrifice their life for the nation (Dogas, 1994). A related trend is
the abolition of the obligatory military service, one of the central elements of the

5 The strength of the American military today is as much as that of the next two-dozen states
in Europe and the Middle East. (Bilek, 2002, 60)
The reasons for these developments are manifold: First, the disintegration of an older, more mature economy. Younger, more dynamic, and more competitive, it is often the case that younger countries perform better in export markets and invest more in education, research, and development. This often leads to a more rapid economic growth and higher standards of living. Second, the spread of democratic values and institutions. As democratic institutions become more widespread, they tend to promote peace and stability. Third, the rise of new states. The creation of new states, often as a result of decolonization, can lead to a more fragmented international system and to a greater number of potential conflicts. Fourth, the increasing complexity of the international system. The increased complexity of the international system, with its many actors and interactions, can make it more difficult to maintain peace.

The factors that contribute to the decline of the West and the rise of alternatives are many. Some of the key factors include:

- The failure of the West to address the root causes of discontent, such as poverty, inequality, and injustice.
- The failure of the West to adapt to new challenges, such as the rise of new powers and the changing nature of international politics.
- The failure of the West to promote values and institutions that can promote peace and stability.
- The failure of the West to address the environmental challenges that it faces.

These factors have led to a decline in the West's influence and a rise in the influence of alternatives. The West's decline is not irreversible, but it is clear that the West must change if it is to maintain its position in the world.

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Max Heller

The Nature and State of War

former nation-state, which is now underway in many countries of Western Europe. The reasons for this are manifold: First, the disintegration of an older, more mature economy. Younger, more dynamic, and more competitive, it is often the case that younger countries perform better in export markets and invest more in education, research, and development. This often leads to a more rapid economic growth and higher standards of living. Second, the spread of democratic values and institutions. As democratic institutions become more widespread, they tend to promote peace and stability. Third, the rise of new states. The creation of new states, often as a result of decolonization, can lead to a more fragmented international system and to a greater number of potential conflicts. Fourth, the increasing complexity of the international system. The increased complexity of the international system, with its many actors and interactions, can make it more difficult to maintain peace.
countries go to the purchasing of weapons instead of investments in education, health and other basic social necessities, unrest and violence will persist within and between those nations.

6 References


