17.42 / Causes and Prevention of War /
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                    THE FUTURE OF WAR AND SOLUTIONS TO WAR

I. TESTING THEORIES OF THE CAUSES OF WAR WITH THE CASES COVERED IN THIS
COURSE
    A.   Which theories of war perform best when tested against history? To
         test them, evaluate their cross-time, cross-space, and within-case
         predictions.
            Looking back on cases covered in this class, do you think the case
         method helps us understand the causes of war?
    B.   Are there missing theories that should be added to our tool kit?

II. WAR'S FUTURE: THE KAYSEN PUZZLE
    A.   The current picture: the world is in flames, but today's 20-40 wars
         (which kill several hundred thousand people each year) are mostly
         civil.
    B.   The short term future:
    1.   Some important causes of 20th century wars have abated.
         a.   Insecurity borne of fear of being attacked and conquered by
              conventional arms has sharply abated with the nuclear
              revolution.
         b.   Militarism has largely faded worldwide, with two possible
              exceptions: Pakistan, and perhaps someday China.
         c.   Historical mythmaking has sharply abated among
              industrialized democracies but not disappeared. (It
              continues in the Mideast and among extremist religion-driven
              groups like al-Qaeda.)
         c.   Democracy has spread, and with it the democratic peace.
              Wars stemming from the absence of democracy have faded.
    2.   Western Europe looks deeply peaceful--an amazing change from
         conditions before 1945. Students of peace should consider how
         this deep peace in Europe was created, and how it might be
         replicated elsewhere.
    3.   Possible future interstate conflicts on many short lists
         include:
         a.   Wars of WMD counter-proliferation that reprise the U.S. vs.
              Afghanistan (2001-) and U.S. vs. Iraq (2003-). Especially
              the U.S. vs. other "axis of evil" states (North Korea and
              Iran) and U.S. vs. Al Qaeda and its allies, in Pakistan and
              elsewhere. In such wars the U.S. would seek to de-fang
              rising WMD states and movements before they unleash great
              horrors on the U.S. or its allies.
              New developments that raise this specter:
              i.   The rise of terrorist ambitions to use WMD. Before
                   1990 the axiom among students of terror was that
                   "terrorists want a lot a people watching, not a lot of
                   people dead." It is clear that Aum Shinrikyo and Al
                   Qaeda want a lot of people dead. In Al Qaeda's case
                   the sky may be the limit--it might annihilate the west
                   if it could. The rise of millennarian religious
                   thinking around the world raises the danger that still
                   more groups seeking to end the world for religious
                   reasons will appear.
              ii. The rise of highly skilled terrorists capable of
                   acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction.
                   Before Sept. 11 2001 it was widely assumed that any
                   terrorists crazy enough to want to commit vast murder

would be too crazy to acquire the skills to pull it off. But on 9/11 Al Qaeda displayed a high skill level, indicating they are fully up to the task of acquiring and using WMD. They embody a once-thought-impossible blend of competence and nihilism.

iii. The sharply falling cost of WMD. Building them is markedly cheaper than it once was.

iv. Since 1991 the west, by its lassitude, has failed to secure WMD in the former Soviet Union and in research reactors around the world. This bizarre failure has opened the door wide to terrorist acquisition and use of WMD. WMD is also dangerously vulnerable to theft or sale in Pakistan.

b. Wars of nationalism. Conflicts fueled by nationalism are especially dangerous!

i. China vs. Taiwan. Ingredients:
> China's rising nationalism, which includes a claim to Taiwan.
> U.S. underestimation of this Chinese nationalism, leading the U.S. not to accommodate to it.
> Taiwan's lobby in Washington pushes for a U.S. unconditional guarantee to Taiwan. Should the U.S. acquiesce to this pressure, Taiwan could be inspired to take belligerent action that sparks war, such as declaring independence. (This risk has abated since the reckless Taiwanese nationalist Chen Shui-bian left Taiwan's presidency in 2008.)
> A desire for a cold war with China in some U.S. circles.
> Chinese false optimism about U.S. will to take casualties.

ii. Russia uses force to recover the Russian diaspora in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Latvia and Estonia. Consider also a more likely variant: Russia responds to U.S. efforts to bring Ukraine and Georgia into NATO by starting civil wars in both states, with the goal of detaching Ukraine's Russian-majority areas in Eastern Ukraine and Crimea, and non-Georgian areas of Georgia, and perhaps attaching these areas to Russia. Russia views Crimea as essentially Russian, won't let NATO control it. Much killing could ensue if NATO tries.

iii. Israel-Arab: Jewish vs. Palestinian nationalism. This conflict is quiet now but could explode again.

c. Wars of religion. The demon of hateful or aggressive religion is again loose in the world. In recent times we've seen horrific religion-fueled civil wars in Sudan since 1983 and in Algeria since 1991. The 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and the 1991-1995 Serb-Croat-Bosniak war had large religious dimensions. The Israel-Palestinian conflict has a growing religious dimension. Al Qaeda is a religion-based terror movement.

What conflicts will the future see? Some possibilities.

i. Religion-based Wars of Civilization, as Samuel Huntington fears. The biggest current fear: a conflict between the West and the Islamic world. Bin Laden wants to trigger such a war. Will the West be so foolish as to help him start it?

ii. Israel-Arab. This conflict has a growing religious dimension, on top of its nationalist dimension.

iii. Sunni-Shi'a wars in the Mideast. Iraq now divides on these lines.

iv. India-Pakistan, over Kashmir.

        d.   Wars of geopolitics and security.
            i.   China vs. U.S. Cold War: the world's top two states again clash for global power.
           ii.   China vs. India, Russia, Japan as China rises and they move to contain it.

C.   The long term future:
1.   Kaysen vs. "Factor 'X'" Reasons for war are declining but war itself may not be. Why is this?
2.   Will we continue to see WMD technology proliferate? The march of technology seems to make this inevitable. In one view bioweapons are undergoing a slow motion nuclear revolution--that is, becoming vastly more lethal than before. Defenses against bioweapons are also advancing but more slowly, so the forces of destruction are outrunning impediments to them. Where will this end?

      Is science inventing a version of Kurt Vonnegut's "ice nine"--a very destructive technology for which we are politically, socially and morally unready? If so, will this ice nine fall into the hands of nihilistic groups and individuals, and be used against civilization by them? And will our fear of an ice nine and our efforts to contain it spawn endless wars of counterproliferation?
3.   Resource wars and wars of environmental calamity? Under some scenarios global warming could make hundreds of millions of people homeless and destroy whole countries. Will these refugees shuffle quietly into the night? Or will they use force to compel compensation or gain vengeance?

III. SOME SOLUTIONS TO WAR
A.   Hegemonic America--the USA polices the world, preventing or stopping wars, promoting democracy (which in turn promotes peace), and enforcing non-proliferation of WMD. Pax Americana. Good idea?
1. Would it work? Would the USA prevent more wars than it caused?
    a.   Does the US have the needed power? Some say U.S. hegemony is infeasible.
    b.   Does the US have the needed wisdom? Some say the U.S. will cause more trouble than it cures by imposing its will on the world. It will spiral with others. The threat of US power will provoke others to acquire WMD, instead of deterring them from acquiring WMD. (Some argue this is happening now with North Korea and Iran.)
2. Would such policing serve US interests? Some say faraway wars don't do much injury to the US. Others note that wars tend to spread to engulf others; and that conflicts give governments a reason to acquire WMD, causing proliferation of WMD. So the U.S. would serve itself well by imposing peace.
3. Will the US in fact be willing to play this role in the future?
4. Will U.S. national missile defense (NMD) cause peace or war? NMD is proposed as a solution to war by proponents of U.S. hegemony. Is it a solution to war? ("It will deter rogue states from starting wars and discourage rogues from seeking nuclear weapons.") Or a cause of war? ("It will provoke an arms race and a cold war, perhaps even a hot war, between the U.S. and Russia and the U.S. and China.")
B.   World Government? An old-time favorite solution. Are you for it?
C.   Collective Security? Another popular solution. Would it work? Bear in mind that it's already been tried with the League of Nations 1919-1939. Why did it fail?
D.   Disarmament? A popular solution with serious shortcomings. (We've talked about them--see our early classes on arms and war.)
E.   Arms control--specifically, control of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction? Can this prevent wars of counter-proliferation?

Can the world be persuaded to accept a WMD monopoly by the current WMD powers? If so how?

F.   National perceptual engineering?

-- Track II diplomacy. Foster organized contacts between elites, hoping to cure their myths about each other?

-- "Amnesia International." Create institutions that track and oppose historical mythmaking, especially myths of the more poisonous kind. Replicate globally the work of the Eckert Institute (a.k.a. the Brunswick Schoolbook Institute).
     Much human hate stems from historical myths, especially myths of victimhood. Can we dampen hatred by dampening these myths?

-- Regarding other bellicist ideas, could we create institutions that track and oppose war-causing ideas, and "name and shame" those who purvey these ideas? For example these institutions would expose and oppose militaristic ideas, such as cults of the offensive, "war is fun" concepts, and exaggerations of others' hostility. They would expose aggressive states and movements and warn others against appeasing them. Is this too crazy to consider?

    -- An included idea: expose the pervasiveness and destructiveness of ingroup-outgroup thinking in human affairs as an effort at self-denying prophecy. If people understand it better they will do it less. Understanding the problem could create a self-denying prophecy.

-- Can belligerent religious ideas be reduced or combatted? Across the ages many have been appalled to see faith in God mobilized for hatred and violence toward other people. Such conduct strikes many as loathsome to God and therefore sacrilegious or even demented. Is there a way to bring the sacrilegious quality of such conduct home to the groups that engage in it? One suggestion: a new NGO, "Religious Hate Watch," is needed to "name and shame" those who use God for hate. Another suggestion: persuade organized religions to create truth commissions that would record the wrongs committed by the religion in the past, offer an expression of contrition, and create institutions [religious rituals] to purvey and sustain memory of the wrong among the flock.

    -- Should religions be asked to temper or abandon any teaching that they are the only way to God? Christian gospels teach that "those who do not believe will be condemned" (Jesus in Mark 16:16) and that "I am the way; ... no one comes to the Father except by me" (Jesus in John 14:6). Muslim scripture teaches that "the basest creatures in the sight of God are the faithless who will not believe" (God in The Koran, 8:55). Great tragedies grow from such claims, as they lead those who make them to view others with contempt and often to claim superior rights above them. This causes conflict and violence between religious communities and toward unbelievers. An appalling scene unfolds: people killing each other in God's name. Thus began many past wars of religion, which lie like a scar cross human history, a monument to human arrogance and a gross desecration of religious faith. They bring religion itself into ridicule and disrepute.[1] Does this situation require a movement of religious reinterpretation?

G.   Global values engineering? Can war someday be delegitimated, perhaps by the work of religious institutions, much as child sacrifice,

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[1] After the 9/11/01 terrorist attacks a wall graffiti appeared in the United States that expressed such thinking: "Dear God: Please save us from those who believe in you!"

slavery and duelling have now been delegitimated worldwide? Can we all learn to be better people?

H.   Be evaluative units yourselves! You can be part of the answer.

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