

Chapter 13: Violent Conflicts of the Future?

Future Wars for Economic Power

- There has always been a link between economics and conflict, throughout history economic concerns or incentives have been the reason for the start of wars or have at least influenced the conduct of military concerns
- Economic targets have often been the priority targets to hit
- History has proven that the most powerful countries have possessed the largest and most powerful economies.
- The importance of economic power has also been the source of economic competition
- Post Cold-War military power has declined in utility and importance instead economics became the new key power
- Edward Luttwak “we are entering a world in which states will compete with each other in the economic realm solely to achieve economic power.”
- Geopolitics- Form of foreign policy analysis that emphasizes the link between geographic variables and political behaviour. Political action is seen as largely determined by geography
- States will continue to battle each other but not for religion, territory or ideal reasons but for economic supremacy
- Economic War between states is considered cast under ‘zero-sum terms’ that is gains for one side are seen as a loss for the other side

As the economic war continues states will compete for the economic advantage. They will do so not only for absolute gains, but relative gains to prevent other countries from surpassing their own economic power.

- offensive weapons will soon dominate in the new global struggle for economic power
- these weapons will include a combination of incentives and trade embargoes
 - Research and development programs to encourage the development of certain economic sectors
 - Subsidies to certain industries
 - export assistance to domestic firms to encourage foreign sales
- states will employ these instruments to try and encourage exports to other countries, acquiring market share abroad, and ensuring the health of certain favoured sectors
- since states are going to be at higher risks when trying to get economic power this will put themselves in increased competition for economic development, which could then compromise the political relationship between states
- If states start adding tariffs, barriers and/or duties on other states goods it could have a damaging effect on the global economy and a rise in global political tension

Future Wars between Civilizations

- Samuel Huntington
 - Harvard professor
 - Published controversial article in Foreign Affairs in 1993
- Huntington argued that future wars will not be based on ideology, economics, or nationalism but will occur between the worlds civilizations.
- *“Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affair, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate world politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.”* Huntington
- Huntington suggests that with the state/state nationalism eroding and the ideological battles over, we return to an era characterized by conflict between civilizations
- *“A civilization is a cultural entity villages, regions, ethnic groups, nationalities, religious groups, all have distinct cultures at different levels of cultural heterogeneity... Arabs, Chinese, and westerners, however, are not part of any broader cultural entity. They constitute civilizations. A civilization is thus the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species.”* Huntington
- Huntington argues that there are eight major civilizations in the world: **Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-orthodox, Latin America, African**
- Many recent conflicts in the contemporary international system are taking place along these fault lines, in places such as the **former Yugoslavia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, the horn of Africa, Russia and Chechnya, India and Pakistan, and India and China.**
- Huntington predicts that future conflicts will increasingly take place on the fault lines where these civilizations meet
- Explanations by Huntington as to why inter-civilization disputes are growing and will become the basis of most conflicts.
 - Our **self-identities are based more on our civilization than our state**, civilizations are differentiated by history, religion, language, culture, and tradition. Therefore, they are more fundamental and enduring and have created the worst conflicts and will continue to do so.
 - Increasing global interdependence and interaction is **causing more people to become aware of their differences as opposed to promoting understanding.**
 - Economic and social change is altering the relationship between individuals and traditional social institutions. **The state is in decline and religion is replacing it**, which will lead a world uniting around religious heritages of civilizations than nationalist heritages of nation-states.
 - The spread and power of western civilization will cause a counter reaction in other civilizations. **Civilization consciousness is partly because of**

- Environmental degradation is regarded as a global problem. While this is true, environmental degradation has also been identified as a source of international conflict and war.
- Skeptics argue that it is inappropriate to characterize environmental issues as security issues because the environment is not an enemy and environmental issues can not be addressed through traditional military means.
- As the population of the planet increases, and as industrialization and consumption continue to grow and spread, the scarcity of resources will become increasingly smaller for three main reasons:
 1. Human Activity will increasingly consume more resources, degrading the quality and availability of resources.
 2. Population growth will increase the number of people making demands on a shrinking resource pie.
 3. Resources will not be distributed equally, and concentration of resources in a small segment of the population will decrease the availability of that resource to the rest of the population.
- As available resources deteriorate or are depleted, competition for access to these resources will increase. Conflict and war over resources will be the inevitable result.
- A number of different environmental issues have been cited as causes of existing or future conflicts:
 1. The degradation and loss of arable land, with consequent implications for crop and livestock production.
 2. The destruction of forests and consequent loss of forestry related employment, revenue, topsoil, and species diversity.
 3. The depletion and degradation of fresh water supplies.
 4. The depletion of strategic minerals, including oil.
 5. The overexploitation and consequent depletion of fisheries resources.
- The two links between environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and conflict and war. First, environmental degradation and resource scarcity may cause resource wars between states. Second, environmental degradation and resource scarcity may cause intrastate conflicts between people.

Resource Wars Between States

- **10/12 of 20th century conflicts were caused by the issue of access to oil or strategic minerals**
- Oil/ strategic materials= lifeblood of industrialized economies/modern military capabilities
- 5/12 of the conflicts were over renewable resources

Ex: Cold war, Gulf War, interstate conflicts

- Increasing cause of interstate war: water (freshwater/fishing)
- Spratly Islands Dispute: group of 500 small islands in the South China Sea claimed by 6 countries, dispute over water b/c of fishing
- Water Conflict in the Middle East: Exploitation of water in the Nile River will lead to reduced amount of water in Egypt causing Egypt to go to war. Israel pumped water from the Jordan River basin and ran a water deficit.

Resource Wars Between Peoples

- Intrastate conflict occur most often in the developing world
- Resource degradation/depletion can affect economic activity and contribute to deprivation
- environmental degradation, in combination with resource scarcity, enforces increasing demands on government finances&services i.e. shortages of water require expensive dams
- governments losing revenue can lead to conflict, i.e. intrastate, and intensify competition → those who profit well will attempt to maintain power while others struggle with the little economic power they have, leaving them with the desire to overthrow the 'elite'
- as a result, social order may collapse and people will fight to get any resources, facilities, and livelihoods that remain
- if there is no government, there are no regulations/laws → conservation/preservation cannot occur
 - issues such as these create a blend of violent conflict, crime, poverty, disease, starvation/malnutrition
- environmentally induced conflicts can lead to
 - **refugee movements:** these can spread conflicts as influxes of large amounts of refugees can alter land availability, distribution patterns, disturb economic relations, alter political/social climate, upset ecological balances, and can provoke communal conflicts between the refugees and those who live in the region
 - **migrations:** their interaction with conflict is best described by Astri Suhrke: "only under conditions of zero-sum interaction – whether actual or perceived. The alternative is a value-added model, where migrants are incorporated into the host society without collective strife, typically by providing needed labour and skills. Nor does ethnic differentiation between host population (s) and newcomers necessarily make the incorporation process conflictual."
 - refugees are often secluded in encampments, and may be too weak to be regarded as a threat; movements that are considered to be a threat have support from neighbouring states
- examples of this: Africa, **Phillipines:**
 - shortages of cropland&deforestation
 - population growth&unequal distribution of land have forced poor peasants to migrate into cities (government resources are further pressurized) and into highlands (they clear forests to create land for crops, which

contributes to deforestation and soil erosion) → both ways people end up poor

Haiti

- land shortages, population growth, and corrupt leadership who expropriates wealth has made Haiti the poorest country in the Western hemisphere
- land cultivation contributes to soil erosion, making much of the countryside unsuitable for farming
- environmental degradation has raised doubts about the nation's economic and political future

Brazil

- unequal land distribution and wealth = instability & violent conflict in future
- 12 million peasants without land, 180 million hectares of unused land many of these people go to the city, but still do not have access to government services, housing, or jobs = high crime rates
- people (who are represented by the Landless Workers Movement) have begun to return to the land, but have not been very successful due to conflicts with landowners and the police

Bangladesh/India

- refugees from Bangladesh to North India have provoked communal conflict
- Assam → the Lalung peoples have reacted angrily and sometimes violently against the Muslim Bengalis who are accused of appropriating land
- Tripura → insurgencies by the Tripuris over land access (short supply) due to refugees from Bangladesh)
- Indian government is trying to return land and stop flow of migrants
- Most of these are extreme cases, however such anarchic conditions will not expand to a larger degree. Most people don't live in conditions remotely close to these ones. Believing that the rest of the world is on the edge of an environmentally induced social collapse may lead to a mentality in the urbanized world which will cause it to isolate itself from the chaos of the world, i.e., refugees.
- **Solution:** effective response to crises, long term changes to economic development policy to prevent human disasters.

Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)

- An RMA is a significant qualitative transformation in the effectiveness of military technologies that fundamentally alters the conduct of military operations.
- An example is the gunpowder revolution.
- Advocates of the concept that currently there is a RMA point to:
 - o Precision weapons made possible by modern electronics.
 - o Weapons that can act autonomously from human operators.
 - o Advanced stealth technology.

- o Improved surveillance and reconnaissance capability,.
 - o Improved communications and battle management systems that reduce the “fog of war”.
 - o Increased capacity to fight effectively in all conditions.
 - o Ability to engage in offensive information warfare.
 - o The increased use of space.
 - o Training assisted by realistic simulations.
 - o The potential to reduce collateral damage.
- The United States is the leading proponent of the RMA concept, and is developing its armed forces for an RMA future.
 - Few if any countries have the resources to implement RMA techniques and weapons as well as the Americans.
 - However, as weapons technologies advance, all countries will be acquiring modern weapons. As a result, future interstate wars would be fought with progressively more sophisticated technologies.
 - Some securities expert doubts RMAs even exist. They would dispute the historical discontinuities in the development of warfare, or point out that the concept is motivated more by the arms industry than any sense of security requirements.
 - Others are worried that the U.S. will move so far ahead of the rest of the world in military capabilities that it will be less disposed toward multilateralism and more disposed toward unilateralism.
 - Others question the relevance of the RMA, since the vast majority of recent wars are fought with the weapons of the twentieth century.