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**The Short War: Realistic or Wishful Thinking?**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Industrialization and technological changes of the nineteenth century provided the means to harness the complete national power of a state to fight a war. Thus, if fighting an equally capable opponent, the war would be long and bloody with the victor suffering as much as the vanquished. To counter this dilemma, a new doctrine was developed in Europe during this same period and was referred to as the 'Short War.' The goal of this new type of war was to achieve a rapid and complete defeat of an opponent without the losses envisioned in an attritional war. This doctrine was extremely appealing and provided the basis for western strategy in the twentieth century. The doctrine, however, continues to be state versus state centric and does not satisfy the realities of the post-Cold War period or the future environment. Asymmetric warfare, violent non-state actors, failed states, rapid technology growth, globalization and resource scarcity form part of an extensive list that represents the emerging threat environment. Liberal democratic states cling to the doctrine of a 'Short War' when the realities of today are somewhat different. The changing threat environment and the broadening definitions of war and warfare that must include a post-conflict phase are what make this doctrine highly unlikely and dangerous. Liberal democracies must adapt to fight the enemy, not the doctrine.*

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## The Short War: Realistic or Wishful Thinking?

“The modern conduct of war is marked by the striving for a great and rapid decision.”<sup>1</sup>

- Helmut Graf von Moltke the Elder

### INTRODUCTION

The Second World War began when the Germans unleashed a sudden, terrifying and deadly offensive, first against the Poles in 1939 and then against the French the following year. This *Blitzkrieg* – or lightning war- caught many military institutions off guard by what appeared to be a new means of waging war. This new doctrine achieved a decisive result both quickly and completely. Many who experienced the onslaught of the German armour columns could not counter the speed and flexibility of this new warfare.

The origins of the *Blitzkrieg* stemmed from German successes on battlefields in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but it was the likes of J.F.C. Fuller and Sir B.H. Liddell Hart who conceptualized this new form of fighting in the 1920's and inadvertently developed the basis for what was to become the German *Blitzkrieg*. Military figures such as Colonel General Heinz Guderian and Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, translated these ideas into practical applications resulting in the tremendous decisive victories at the beginning of the Second World War. The *Blitzkrieg* appeared to

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<sup>1</sup> *Moltke: On the Art of War, Selected Writings* edited Daniel J Hughes (Novato: Presidio Press, 1993), 176.

be the means to satisfy the larger strategic question of how to conduct a short war, the much sought-after end-state for industrialized warfare. The imperatives for a short war will be discussed in the broader context of its historical development later in the paper.

This paper will show the evolutionary development of the *Short War*<sup>2</sup> and how post-modern nations prepare to fight such a war. This paper will also examine how a *Short War* is not achievable due to the reality of today's global context, where the desired end state is proving to be more elusive and expansive than ever before. Asymmetry, non-state actors, differing ideologies, human rights, mass media, domestic opinion, the perceived responsibilities of the victors and the wants of the subjugated peoples all affect just how short will be the war. An outright victory on the battlefield does not necessarily translate into a war won. This has been vividly demonstrated in Iraq today where winning the peace has proven to be infinitely more demanding than winning the war. This paper will first examine the origins, definitions and outcome of the *Short War*, and then it will look at the means to achieving its core goal of a short sharp war through a decisive battle or short campaign. Finally, this paper will look at how in the post-Cold War era, the idea of the *Short War* is more wishful thinking than a realistic strategy.

Before continuing, it would be helpful to review the definitions of war, warfighting and peace as they are being defined today. The Oxford Dictionary defines

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<sup>2</sup> The term short war will be italicized to denote a particular form of warfare for the remainder of the paper.

war, “as armed hostilities between nations; conflict – a specific conflict or the period of time during which such a conflict exists.”<sup>3</sup> It also defines warfare as, “a state of war, campaigning, engaging in war.”<sup>4</sup> Peace is defined as, “the state existing during the absence of war.”<sup>5</sup> These definitions are very state centric. One final definition is that of short meaning: “of little length; not long.”<sup>6</sup> These definitions no longer address the realities of the nature of conflict in the twenty-first century. This is a critical element when the future threat environment is examined in Chapter II. These definitions are insufficient descriptors of the nature of war as it exists and will exist in the future.

## **SHORT WAR AS THE EPIPHANY**

This paper will focus on the era of the industrial revolution circa nineteenth century and the subsequent rise of state-supported and equipped mass forces.<sup>7</sup> Due to the sheer magnitude and cost a war would incur in terms of human capital and resources, another way of fighting had to be found. Long attritional campaigns were no longer acceptable,<sup>8</sup> thus the modern doctrine of the *Short War* was developed.

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<sup>3</sup> Oxford English Reference Dictionary, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. revised (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1628.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 1628.

<sup>5</sup> The Collins English Dictionary © 2000 HarperCollins Publishers; available from <http://www.wordreference.com/English/definition.asp?en=peace>; Internet; accessed 28 March 2003.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> By this definition, First World countries and other similar states, like Japan and China are the foci.

The term *Short War*<sup>9</sup> was coined to describe the vision of war in the latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. This strategy gained validity with the Prussian victory over Austria in 1866 and was solidified once the Prussians beat the French during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/71. The 1 September 1870 decisive Battle of Sedan, in which the French Army was soundly beaten in one day, led the French Emperor to surrender personally to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck.<sup>10</sup> Shortly afterwards, Parisians rose up in rebellion resulting in the encirclement of their city. Though fighting continued until 29 January 1871, when Paris finally capitulated, the outcome of the war was pre-ordained with the loss at Sedan. Notwithstanding the hold out of the French capital, the otherwise rapid battlefield success of the Prussian army offers an early example of a short sharp war, as did the victory over Austria.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Civil wars are wars, however they tend to be bloody and drawn out by their very nature and will not be dealt with in the scope of this paper.

<sup>9</sup> Writers such as Lancelot Farrar have employed this term and Gunter E. Rothenburg to describe what Moltke theorized in his doctrine of a short sharp war and the decisive battle. Lancelot Farrar, Jr , “The Short-War Illusion”, Holger H. Herwig, *The Outbreak of World War I* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 35-41 and Gunter E. Rothenberg “Moltke, Schieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment”, Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 296-325.

<sup>10</sup> JFC Fuller, *Decisive Battles of The Western World: 1792-1944*, vol. II (London: Granada Publishing, 1982), 274.

<sup>11</sup> The Prussian strategic objective was the unification of the German states and the removal of a possible threat to that process. Hajo Holborn, “The Prusso-German School: Moltke and the Rise of the General German Staff” Peter Paret, *Markers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 286.



In essence, a *Short War* was a war of limited duration decided in one decisive battle or short campaign that would annihilate a state's opponent, in particular its' army. This type of war was based on offensive action. Modern examples of what would fit in this definition would be the most recent Gulf Wars, Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. This definition also advocated the principle of a preventive strike to ensure success.<sup>12</sup> The genesis of the modern *Short War* strategy<sup>13</sup> can be traced to the birth of the German General Staff and the appointment of Gerhard Johann David Scharnhorst as the Prussian Army Chief of Staff during the latter stages of the Napoleonic Wars. It was Scharnhorst who grappled with a timeless problem of Germany's (in this case Prussia's) geographic location on the continent. As Emilio Willems has written, "Prussia cannot conduct a defensive war...It was implied, then and later, that national salvation lay in preventive war, or at least in the choice of the time and locale of confrontations."<sup>14</sup> This central location of Germany with respect to its historic opponents encouraged its military thinkers to adopt a form of warfare that relied on rapid movement while operating on interior lines. Thus, the basis for offensive doctrine was irrevocably tied to Germany's fate and all its future military planning considerations.

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<sup>12</sup> The concept of pre-emption/prevention will be examined in detailed in Chapter II.

<sup>13</sup> *Short Wars* are arguably not new, however what is new are the impacts of industrialization and technology and the subsequent consequences that sharply define the period under study in this paper. Thus the evolution of the short war will be looked at from the nineteenth century onward.

<sup>14</sup> Emilio Willems, *A Way Of Life And Death: Three Centuries Of Prussian-German Militarism*, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1986), 55-6.

At this time, it would be opportune to introduce Hans Delbruck, a noted German historian, and his ideas about two types of strategies that are tied to the *Short War*. Delbruck, who wrote from the 1870s through to his death in 1922, lived in a period when the *Short War* was generally accepted as the best option to achieve victory. His extensive study of military history convinced him, as Gordon Craig explained, "this type of strategical thinking had not always been generally accepted...there were long periods in history in which a completely different strategy ruled the field."<sup>15</sup> These two different strategies Delbruck called *Niederwerfungsstrategie* and *Ermattungsstrategie*,<sup>16</sup> - the former with a strategy of a single decisive battle and the latter, with a strategy of manoeuver and battle.<sup>17</sup>

*Niederwerfungsstrategie* was a strategy of annihilation and was the basis for the *Short War*. Battle was only engaged when the right conditions existed to deliver a knockout blow to the enemy. Thus, battle was a means unto itself and did not necessarily incorporate the aspects of politics and economics into an integrated strategy. *Ermattungsstrategie* was a strategy of exhaustion or attrition as described by Craig as, "the battle was no longer the sole aim of strategy; it is merely one of the several equally effective means of attaining the political ends of the war and is essentially no more

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<sup>15</sup> Gordon Craig, "Delbruck: The Military Historian", Edward Mead Earle, *Makers Of Modern Strategy: Military Thought From Machiavelli To Hitler*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), 272.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 273.

important than the occupation of territory, the destruction of crops or commerce, and the blockade."<sup>18</sup> Delbruck provided examples of both, but believed that, "[even] the victories of 1864, 1866, and 1870, the immense increase in the war potential of a nation proved that *Niederwerfungsstrategie* was the natural form of war for the modern age."<sup>19</sup> *Ermattungsstrategie* was seen as a limited war, where annihilation could not be achieved or it was not the desired outcome for political reasons. Limitations did not have to be self-imposed; landmass, size of engagement areas and resources available would have affected the strategic choice.

Another important contribution by Delbruck was his analysis of past battles and in particular, the Carthaginian victory over the Romans at Cannae in 216 B.C. Count Alfred von Schlieffen, who assumed the post of Chief of the German General Staff in 1891, was greatly affected by how the Carthaginians were able to envelope the flanks and rear of the Romans and completely overwhelm them.<sup>20</sup> This strategy so influenced Schlieffen that he, "taught the Germans to strive constantly to reach a decision on the enemy flanks or rear".<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> In the modern context, the decisive battle could be more than one battle linked together in a single short campaign.

<sup>18</sup> Craig, *Delbruck: The Military Historian...*, 273.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 275.

<sup>20</sup> Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics Of The Prussian Army 1640-1945*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 279.

<sup>21</sup> F.O. Miksche, "Blitzkrieg", Fred Freedman, *War*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 233.

Thus the phrase *Short War* is used to describe the offensive strategy of engaging an enemy and defeating him so handily in a relatively short period of time, that he would never be able to recover sufficiently to threaten the victor again. However, both strategies focused on the fight, not what came after in the post-conflict or war-termination stage. Moral and legal obligations to the vanquished and its population during this phase of the campaign were never a consideration. This concept of responsibility is a fundamental reason as to why war can no longer be viewed as the actual fight itself, but must be expanded to be more holistic.<sup>22</sup> This concept will be further developed in Chapter II.

It is important to understand why most modern industrialized states bought into this strategy at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> Why did they plan and prepare for a strategy of annihilation rather than exhaustion? Again, the Prussians provided the necessary first step for adoption of their ideas on continental Europe. It is best illustrated

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<sup>22</sup> In a recent article, A Smith Richardson Foundation senior program officer Nadia Schadlow wrote about the need to see political and economic factors as a part of war. Nadia Schadlow, "War and the Art of Governance," *Parameters* Vol. XXXIII, no. 3 (Autumn 2003): 85 and 87.

<sup>23</sup> Great Britain, was an example of a state that did not necessarily support a *Short War* strategy, but rather attrition warfare. This was due to its overwhelming control of the seas and its ability to protect its commercial lifelines. Germany and France are example of states that supported a doctrine of the *Short War*. Their political and economic sustainability depended upon it.

within three broad categories: industrial, social, and political. Field Marshal Helmuth Graf von Moltke (Moltke the Elder)<sup>24</sup> encapsulated these thoughts as follows:

The character of the modern conduct of war is determined by the quest for great and quick decisions. The mobilization of all the able-bodied, the size of the armies, the difficulties of feeding them, the expensiveness of the mobilized forces, the interruption of trade and commerce, industry and agriculture, and the armies' organized readiness to strike and the ease with which they are assembled - all this urges the quick termination of a war.<sup>25</sup>

Appointed to the position of Chief of the General Staff in 1857 - and holding the post until 1888 - Moltke authored the Prussian successes against Austria and France in 1866 and 1870. A proponent and principal author of the *Short War* doctrine, he believed that war must be short and decisive.<sup>26</sup> This belief would eventually change after the Franco-Prussian War. In the words of one scholar, "Moltke feared a repetition of the popular uprising, the 'people's war', which had prolonged the Franco-Prussian War at great cost to both sides, as well as a long struggle between regular armies."<sup>27</sup> Moltke went on to predict that the next war "would last seven or even thirty years."<sup>28</sup> According

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<sup>24</sup> This nickname is sometimes used to distinguish between this Moltke and his nephew von Moltke, the German Chief of General Staff, at the outset of the First World War. Moltke 'the Younger' lacked the strategic abilities of his uncle.

<sup>25</sup> Helmuth von Moltke, "Doctrines Of War", Fred Freedman, *War...*, 221

<sup>26</sup> Daniel L. Hughes, *Moltke On The Art Of War: Selected Writings*, (Navato: Presidio Press: 1993), 10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Lancelot Farrar, 'The Short War Illusion', Holger H. Herwig, *Problems In European Civilization: The Outbreak Of World War I*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 36.

to Lancelot Farrar, "in an age in which the existence of nations is based on the uninterrupted progress of trade and commerce... a strategy of exhaustion is impossible when the maintenance of millions necessitates the expenditure of billions."<sup>29</sup> This growing realization of the difficulties was lost when Graf Alfred von Schlieffen assumed the German Chief of the General Staff appointment. This was partially due to his insistence that military and diplomacy were two separate and distinct jurisdictions.<sup>30</sup>

Industrialization provided the means to mobilize mass quantities of men and material and concentrate them at the right point at the right moment to achieve victory. The old saying that an 'army marches on its stomach'<sup>31</sup> was to take a whole new direction with the introduction of the railway. Not only could fighting formations move quickly about the battlefield, re-supply and sustainment could be achieved by this same means. Moltke the Elder studied the railway and understood its potential. So too did France, as highlighted by Martin Van Creveld, "...Prussia next mobilized in 1859, the performance of her railways in the military service was still eclipsed by that of France."<sup>32</sup> The difference was that Germany learned from the wars of 1864 and 1866 to the point where, "in Europe...the full potentialities of the railways as an instrument of war were

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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 36.

<sup>30</sup> Gunther E. Rothenberg, 'Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment', Peter Paret, *Markers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 313.

<sup>31</sup> Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics From Wallenstein To Patton*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 40.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 83.

realized."<sup>33</sup> The railway was a means to move, sustain and reinforce large forces necessary to defeat an opponent. It would allow for the rapid concentration of forces at the decisive moment thereby overwhelming the opponent and achieving a decisive victory.

Industrialization of the nineteenth century also linked the economies of nations together through trade and commerce, a precursor to the globalization of today. A long war would interrupt this trade and cause great strains on the whole international economic infrastructure. Financiers and industrialists shared the belief in a *Short War*; therefore, preparation for anything else would be unnecessary and unwanted.<sup>34</sup> Holger Herwig illustrates this point, "consistent with this assumption, factories and farms were subordinated to the military front - industrial and agricultural workers were drafted (into the army) as the war began."<sup>35</sup> A war of attrition could cripple a nation's ability to wage war. It could also cause massive social upheavals, as was demonstrated with the introduction of women into the workforce on a considerable scale during The Great War. The need to keep war industries working and supply men to the front necessitated this step.

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 103.

<sup>34</sup> An illustrative example is Japan in the 1930's. By 1937, with over 700,000 men committed to China, Japan was spending 5 million dollars a day. The Japanese government was forced to borrow this money sending the national debt skyward, much to the dismay of business and financiers. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000*, (London: Fontana Press, 1988), 390.

Industrialization also produced mass movement of populations from the rural areas to the cities seeking work in the factories. This social phenomenon of mass upheaval and unrest caused much concern among the political elites of the European nations. Marxism, strikes, universal suffrage<sup>36</sup> and the general public's awakening empowerment produced instability and potential for revolt. In the words of one scholar:

...historians have wondered whether if external war had not come in 1914 England might not have been caught up in civil strife,...In France...the struggle between the right and the left raged with unabated intensity around the twin issues of the three-year draft and the progressive income tax...According to Arthur Rosenberg, the political and social tensions in prewar Germany were typical of a pre-Revolutionary period.<sup>37</sup>

Another example of a social issue was the diminishing French birthrate compared to the increasing birthrate of the Germans, resulting in the superiority of German military strength. F.O. Miksche explained: "The French birthrate had dropped after 1870 so that by the turn of the century Germany's population was larger by fifteen million."<sup>38</sup> A long war would favor the nation that could produce a larger army. It benefited France to pursue a *Short War* strategy. Also, a long war, even if successful, could still lead to a revolution if the troops, upon their discharge back to civilian life, were not provided for by their government and discontentment over their treatment boiled

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<sup>35</sup> Lancelot Farrar, "The Short War Illusion"..., 37.

<sup>36</sup> One exception was France, which did not grant women the vote until after the Second World War.

<sup>37</sup> Arno J. Mayer, "The Primacy of Domestic Politics", Herwig, *The Outbreak...*, 45.

<sup>38</sup> Miksche, "Blitzkrieg"..., 271.



over. This was a very real possibility given most countries involved would now have a whole generation of soldiery that had matured and grown confident over the course of a war. These ex-soldiers would not tolerate the status quo and would demand more from a nation for whom they had fought. One example, after the First World War, where the first steps of large-scale unionization strived for better working conditions and pay. This directly challenged the pre-war status quo.

Politically, the *Short War* was more easily defensible by the ruling elites to their populations. The modern industrialized age meant the fielding of large armies with increasingly lethal technologies that would cause non-sustainable casualty rates. These armies needed the support of the population. The key was how to generate that will amongst the people. For without the popular moral support, a nation could not maintain an army in the field. This was vividly demonstrated both in Russia when it exploded in revolution in 1917 and then again when the German army collapsed in 1918.

France generated its national will from the people's revolution in the late eighteenth century. It was a bottom-up process that created the political institutions to support this ideology - democracy and a voice for the people were a cornerstone part of the political landscape. Thus the need to sell the war to the people to garner their support was crucial. The *Short War* was a doctrine that people would support. The 'war would be over by Christmas' was a rallying cry that would see millions of men hurry to the recruiting centres to join before the war was over. The German experience was

something different. Borne out of the defeats at the hands of Napoleon, the drive to change their perennial problems was started in Prussia, not for democratization, but for "political unification."<sup>39</sup> It was a centralized, top-down driven process. The military's lack of a key role in the suppression of the 1848/49 revolution and the subsequent 'blood and iron' 1862 speech by Bismarck drove the military to seek a more prominent role in the soon to be formed German state. It also enabled continuance of Prussian militarism, where individualism was subordinated to the collective good. Germans were also very aware of their geographic position and understood that their survival depended on defeating an enemy quickly to avoid a two-front war. Thus, regardless of how the political structures developed or functioned, it was the common factor of industrialization that wedded European societies to a strategy of *Short War*.

More importantly than the common bond of industrialization, was the relationship between those responsible for the formulation of war strategy (the politicians or rulers) and those responsible for the execution of that strategy (the military). Moltke the Elder understood the critical importance of politics and its relationship to war. He was astute enough to realize that: "the enhanced strength of the newly united Germany and...the growing intimacy (with Austria) were now calculated to destroy the remnants of Russian friendship."<sup>40</sup> Schlieffen did not have that same level of understanding; in fact

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<sup>39</sup> Willems, , *A Way Of Life And Death...* , 68.

<sup>40</sup> Craig, *The Politics Of The...*, 274.

he prided himself on being, "unpolitical".<sup>41</sup> His famous plan was to violate Belgian neutrality in order to achieve his desired end-state. First, Germany had to knock France decisively out of the war quickly and second, to turn its attention to the slowly mobilizing armies of the Czar. This ambitious plan may have resulted in a *Short War* if the conditions for success had been set. The conditions however, were not achieved and the result was a lengthy attritional war. The critical condition not set before the start of war was the lack of interface and coordination between the political and military leaders of the German state. Long after Schliefflen was dead, Germany was about to launch into the First World War with a plan that had been watered down by his successor Helmuth von Moltke (the Younger). Fuller explains, "the Kaiser discovered to his deep dismay, there was only one direction in which the German armies could march - westward, against France, not only that, but in order to outflank the French frontier defenses, westward through Belgium. Belgian independence was guaranteed by Britain."<sup>42</sup> Schliefflen, desiring a short decisive war, did not heed his predecessor and involve the political institutions needed to forge a sound national strategy that would satisfy the national requirements and provide the military the operational means to achieve the desired end-state. Neither Helmuth von Moltke nor Graf Alfred von Schlieffen allowed for a flexible plan that could be adjusted in response to unexpected situations. Annika Mombauer describes it as not allowing for the, "frictions...instead everything had to conform to a

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>42</sup> Fuller, *Decisive Battles...*, 290.

rigid, preconceived pattern."<sup>43</sup> This would lead to the initial advance on the Marne suffering, as Gerhard Ritter puts it, "badly from shortage of supplies, caused by the demolition of the railways."<sup>44</sup>

Another aspect was rail and its strategic relevance. The long right hook provided the French with better interior lines for movement, as the German Army become more spread out and separated from its railheads.<sup>45</sup> Mombauer goes on to say, "the French had an advantage because the railways that they were able to use allowed them a more rapid deployment of troops."<sup>46</sup> The German battle plan was a feasible theoretical exercise, but not a plan that would survive contact.

Politically, all countries believed that a short decisive war doctrine would achieve that very necessary need to maintain political stability and popular support for a war. Political elites worked very hard to cultivate this image. It should be no surprise then that most of the populations involved at the outbreak of the First World War thought the war would be over by Christmas. This could be considered a dangerous presumption, but an understandable one. Politicians and military leaders believed the same rhetoric;

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<sup>43</sup> Annika Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the Origins of the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 85-6.

<sup>44</sup> Gerhard Ritter, *The Schlieffen Plan: Critique of a Myth*, (London: Oswald Wolff (publishers) Limited, 1958), 8.

<sup>45</sup> The German First Army had marched 500 km in the first 30 days. Mombauer, *Helmuth von Moltke and the....*, 252.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 253.

the alternative was be too horrible to contemplate. It is interesting to note that with the return of French self-confidence on the eve of The Great War, the French developed a new plan, Plan XVII, one that in order to achieve, "victory (it) necessitated the offensive."<sup>47</sup> The French saw this new plan as a way to mobilize the will of the people. It was also the only means to achieve a decisive victory.

Although it has been noted that the vast majority of political and military elites throughout Europe supported the concept of *Short War*, there were a few who did not. Most notably; Moltke the Elder after the Franco-Prussian War; Lord Kitchener, the British Secretary of War; Chief of French General Staff Joseph Joffre; and a Polish military theorist, Ivan S. Bloch. As previously discussed, Moltke became skeptical after having witnessed both the revolutionary activities of the Parisian population that delayed the end of the war and how well France was recovering as early as 1878 from what was considered a knockout blow. Lord Kitchener and Field Marshal Joffre did not accept the notion of a *Short War*, but did nothing to prepare for a long war. Bloch published a six-volume study of war in 1897/98 that, according to Richard Preston and Sydney Wise, "made a remarkably accurate forecast of the nature of the WWI."<sup>48</sup> His study foretold the fearful attrition of The Great War and also that the victor would suffer almost as much as the loser. He believed that the final result would be the collapse of the social order for all

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<sup>47</sup> Lancelot Farrar, "The Short War Illusion"..., 40.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Preston and Sydney Wise, *Men In Arms: A History Of Warfare And Its Interrelationships With Western Society*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Montreal: Holt, Rinehart and Winson, 1979), 259.

participants.<sup>49</sup> His works went largely unheeded except by the Czar of all the Russia's who did not have the capacity to modernize or better prepare his army.

The stage was now set for the first industrialized *Short War*. Although, as previously stated, there were some in the various elites that questioned the viability of the concept of a decisive battle, they were brushed aside as too costly and non-viable alternatives. The Germans accepted a certain risk with their Schliefflen Plan, less than originally intended, but a risk nonetheless. They sacrificed short-term security on all fronts to ensure that they could concentrate sufficient forces at each point of penetration, first to the west and, once France was defeated, then on to Russia. They opted for the indirect approach of enveloping the French through Belgium. They calculated a forty-day campaign that should have prevented the British from firmly establishing themselves on the continent before France was defeated. With only 150 miles of common border between the two, this plan was in the realm of the possible. The French Plan XVII, although based on offensive doctrine and supported by the *Short War* strategy, was, as Liddell Hart has commented, "purely a direct approach in the form of a headlong offensive".<sup>50</sup> In other words, they may have supported the *Short War* strategy of annihilation, but were in fact conducting a war of exhaustion from the outset. *Short War* assumptions can lead to wrong decisions.

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<sup>49</sup> Any outstanding piece that examines many of the First World War impacts on the British and its Commonwealth is Paul Fussell's, *The Great War and Modern Memory*. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>50</sup> Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, Second Revised Edition (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 1991), 151.

Moltke the Younger had watered down the German offensive to provide for greater security on the flanks. This decision combined with a lack of confidence on the part of the German General Staff at what was the real or potential threat to the encircling army, caused Moltke to approve a tightening of the original sweep from west of Paris to the east side. Liddell Hart judged this a crucial mistake: "By this contraction of his frontage and greater directness of approach, for the sake of security, Moltke sacrificed the wider prospects inherent in the wide sweep...instead of contracting the risk, he invited a fatal counterstroke."<sup>51</sup> By 11 September 1914, the German armies were withdrawing from the Marne and the stalemate that would soon dominate the Western Front was firmly entrenched by December 1914. The war of attrition, which no one wanted, had arrived. Most remarkably, nobody realistically considered a negotiated peace.<sup>52</sup> This marked a dramatic departure from nineteenth century campaigns and earlier, where a negotiated peace was the norm. The *Short War* strategy of victory was firmly entrenched as a war of complete defeat.

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 157.

<sup>52</sup> This lack of a political input was a direct result of an ineffective German political structure. Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg was no Bismarck. Clemenceau's maxim "war is too serious a business to be entrusted to the direction of soldiers" is very appropriate in this case. Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army: 1640-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972),301.

On the Russian front, neither the same levels of industrialization<sup>53</sup> nor resources were available for the Germans to deliver the decisive blow necessary to knock the Russians out of the war.<sup>54</sup> It was a question of too much real estate and not enough resources. Thus the conditions were never set to achieve that decisive blow on this front.

The First World War presented an example of what happens when there is a lack of understanding and unity of command by both political and military hierarchies. France went to war with no real war aims but to win. The question remains to win what? Germany's political leaders did not fully appreciate what the military was committing the nation to in order to accomplish its military aims. Although Russia may have been more aware of the potential effects of a war, it was too encumbered by antiquated systems and institutions. The belief that the next war was going to be the much sought after *Short War* proved illusive. The result was four years of attritional warfare that slaughtered a generation of men from European and British Empire nations. Liddell Hart has written that while General Ludendorff preached, "strategy should control policy..."<sup>55</sup> a more effective system was in the making. This system was to combine both functions under one individual - Hitler. Hitler's ability to incorporate the two allowed him to harness

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<sup>53</sup> Neither the Russians nor the German – Austrian Armies had the railway infrastructure to rapidly mobilize on the Eastern Front.

<sup>54</sup> Though the huge casualties and losses suffered by the Russians would eventually provide the basis for widespread discontent that would result in the Russian Revolution.

<sup>55</sup> Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army...*, 211.



what was for the initial phases of the Second World War, the next version of the *Short War*, the *Blitzkrieg*.

The *Blitzkrieg*, as previously mentioned, stemmed from the minds of several great military thinkers, namely Fuller and Liddell Hart during the inter-war period.<sup>56</sup> They recognized the revolutionary aspects of the technologies emerging to fight the next war. The combination of the tank, the airplane and wireless could potentially deliver the means of realizing the idea of a *Short War*. Ironically, neither the British nor the French fully capitalized on the ideas propounded in the writings of Fuller and Liddell Hart, but rather the Germans. General Guderian reportedly admitted: "I learned from them (Fuller and Liddell Hart) the concentration of armour...it was Liddell Hart, who emphasized the use of armoured forces for long range strokes, operations against opposing army's communications."<sup>57</sup> The victors of the previous world war remained wedded to a defensive strategy, one with the status quo as the desired end-state. If attacked they would fight a defensive attritional war supported by the new weapons but within the confines of traditional employment models of trench warfare. The Germans on the other hand, had remained faithful to the idea of the preventive strike and offensive strategy.

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<sup>56</sup> Soviet Chief of Staff MV Tukhachevsky was an important inter-war thinker on the use of armour and the deep strike, however his life was cut short by the Stalin purges in 1937. Condoleezza Rice, "The Makers of Soviet Strategy" Peter Paret, *Makers of Modern Strategy...*, 669.

<sup>57</sup> Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, (London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 1953), 20. However, like all good theories, there are opposing views that take aim at the origin of the *Blitzkrieg*. He argues that German success was not a result of any particular new method, technology or weapon, but of institutional excellence that came about through sustained effort for a period of decades. Robert M Citino, *Path to Blitzkrieg: Doctrine & Training in the German Army, 1920-1939*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).

To implement these ideas men like Guderian and Manstein developed the methods to employ these tools of war - the tank, the airplane and wireless - effectively. A generally receptive command structure enabled Guderian to experiment and test his ideas.<sup>58</sup> Once Hitler came to power, he adopted Guderian's ideas into organizational and structural changes. During one of the war games, Hitler asked Guderian what would be his next move after capturing a bridgehead across the Meuse: "Unless I receive orders to the contrary I intend on the next day to continue my advance Westwards."<sup>59</sup> Hitler now had the means to accomplish his political aims if his other avenues failed.<sup>60</sup> Preston and Wise aptly state: "Germany (was) thinking in terms of Blitzkrieg and a short war."<sup>61</sup> These political goals still adhered to the idea of defeating its enemies sequentially and thereby preventing the need to fight a two-front war. Originally, for the campaign against France, Hitler and his General Staff followed the principles of the Schlieffen Plan.<sup>62</sup> This plan was later modified to account for Field Marshal von Manstein's belief that the Schlieffen Plan could not have a decisive effect on the war. This was because he felt that the original plan did not take into account the realities of 1939 and the capabilities of the

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<sup>58</sup> Matthew Cooper, notes there were two schools of thought in the German Army that continued to persist with regards to armoured forces and their roles. There was "an unresolved conflict between the protagonist of a new strategy founded on revolutionary use of armoured, motorized and air forces engaged in a mission of paralysis, and the adherents of the traditional strategy based on mass infantry." Matthew Cooper, *The German Army 1933-1945*, (Toronto: Scarborough House Edition, 1990), 149.

<sup>59</sup> Guderian, *Panzer Leader...*, 92.

<sup>60</sup> Bold initiatives such as the remilitarization of the Rhineland or the partition of Czechoslovakia.

<sup>61</sup> Preston and Wise, *Men In Arms...*, 317.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 317.

German Army.<sup>63</sup> The strength of Germany's forces in relation to the enemy's offered no basis for an all-out victory.<sup>64</sup> The modified plan was known as Operation Yellow or the 'Manstein Plan'.

This apparent rapprochement of political and military institutions appeared to be firmly in place, as demonstrated by the spectacular achievements of the decisive battles both in the capture of Poland and France. However, the truth was the military was not as confident as Hitler in its ability to accomplish its assigned tasks. Much of the skepticism disappeared with victories. There were some, however, that believed that the military would not be able to deliver the knockout blow.<sup>65</sup>

The means that Hitler was to employ was in modern terms, a manoeuvrist approach. The *Short War* was to employ the decisive battle, accomplished through the envelopment of an enemy's flank. This usually involved attacking in an indirect manner through gaps and seams in an opponents front and it meant that the attacker was willing to accept

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<sup>63</sup> Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, *Lost Victories*, (Navato: Presidio Press, 1994), 98.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>65</sup> Very few supported the 'armoured idea', which differed from 'vermachtungsgedanke' in that the latter focused on the achievement of rapid manoeuver to encircle and annihilate enemy forces. It sought the use of new technologies only to achieve decisive encirclement; not to achieve large breakthrough penetrating deep into the enemy's rear to pierce and paralyze his vital nerve centres - his headquarters, communications and supply lines. This lack of true understanding both by the German political and senior military commanders would be a major reason the Germans failed in their Russian campaign. Matthew Cooper, *The German Army 1933-1945* (Toronto: Scarborough House Publishers, 1990), 139-40.

greater risk to its own flanks and lines of communications. Both of these issues will be discussed later in the paper.

In both in Poland and France the indirect approach demonstrated that the use of armoured columns led by dive-bombers slicing through the defensive lines and racing through the rear could decisively vanquish an enemy. What was truly amazing was that the campaign was virtually decided by a small fraction of the total German force. Liddell Hart provided the following illustration in France, "(the) decisive fraction comprised 10 panzer divisions, one parachute division, and one air-portable division, plus the air force."<sup>66</sup>

Following on his successes in Poland and France, Hitler turned his attention to his real objective, the conquest of Russia.<sup>67</sup> Again, the indirect approach proved very successful during the initial stages of the campaign, although these successes would prove less enduring than the previous year in France. After the setback in the winter 1941/42, Hitler began to exert control over the operational conduct of battle. Although this had no immediate impact, the summer 1942 offensive changed from one of indirect to direct approach once Hitler insisted that Stalin's namesake city be taken at all costs. This would prove to be the turning point on the Russian Front. The indirect approach

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<sup>66</sup> B.H. Liddell Hart, *History Of The Second World War*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970), 66.

<sup>67</sup> John Keegan, *A History of Warfare*, (New York: Vintage books, 1994), 373.

that had proven so successful in the past was abandoned and once again the combatants entered into an attritional war that Germany could never win.<sup>68</sup>

The *Blitzkrieg*, though wildly successful in the initial stages of the war, failed to achieve the decisive results required for a *Short War* strategy.<sup>69</sup> That a decisive victory would eliminate your enemy from ever contesting your right to dominate that particular area or location proved illusory over the long term. This did not necessarily mean the destruction of defeated enemy's resources or infrastructure, but rather the enemies will to fight.<sup>70</sup> Hitler failed for the same reasons that Napoleon did during the Napoleonic Wars. Hitler was unable to achieve a political solution in conquered areas, a solution that would truly result in an enduring victory during the post-conflict phase.<sup>71</sup> Ukrainians initially treated the Germans as liberators. This was quickly replaced with a vile hatred once Nazi policies were implemented. This idea does not seem radically different from modern times as demonstrated by the British and American "Hearts and Minds" strategies in Malaysia and Vietnam respectively. The former being an example of this strategy applied successfully while the later is an example of what can go wrong. It can be argued that what is occurring in parts of Iraq today is an example of what can happen if all the

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<sup>68</sup> Unless they had developed the atomic bomb.

<sup>69</sup> This comment assumes Hitler had greater plans all along and was not content to stop after France. If the six-week campaign in May 1940 is looked at in isolation, it would provide an example of a successful application of the *Short War* doctrine.

<sup>70</sup> This ties to the modern doctrinal philosophy attacking an enemy on the moral as well as the physical plane.

<sup>71</sup> Another important consideration that will be further developed in Chapter II.

different aspects of politics, economics and military are not harmonized and communicated properly. In other words, the American backed coalition is winning the battles but losing the war.

In the development of the *Short War* strategy, the link between the political and the military was a crucial element in setting the conditions for long-lasting success. Moltke the Elder understood this, but was still incapable of delivering such a blow that the new German state would never have to worry about France again. By 1878, he had come to doubt the *Short War* strategy when confronted with the rebounding French state. Thus the *Short War* is not solely derived from the decisive battle, but from all the component parts of the strategy. The military piece is only one part of national power applied to finding a solution. Schlieffen did not have the understanding of the linkage needed with the political component of national power. His failure to unite the two sides did hinder the political options available to Germany.<sup>72</sup> The consequences of attacking France through neutral Belgium, although it made military sense, did not necessarily justify the political cost. Hitler's rise to power brought a unity of effort to both political and military fronts. However, the problems began to develop when the military was no longer an accepted partner in the decision-making process in the prosecution of the war. The outcomes during both World Wars were an imbalance between the military and political components of national power. This imbalance, whether it is weighted too much

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<sup>72</sup> "The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose" Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

to one side or mutually exclusive, did not set the conditions that would permit long-term success for the *Short War*. Rather, these campaigns may have been successful in a decisive way, both wars turned into attritional contests with huge costs to human life and infrastructure.

Thus the questions remain, can the conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries be altered to bring about a *Short War* in the post-modern context? Is it realistic or is it wishful thinking?

## **THE FUTURE BASED ON HOPE**

Before proceeding with a look at the future battle space, it is important to explain the leap in this paper from the Second World War to the 1990's. This Cold War period had the distinction of being the only period in this study not defined as multi-polar or uni-polar. It was a bi-polar world, one that is described in terms of ideology, one - liberal democracy versus another – communism. States either belonged to one of these two camps or were part of the non-allied states. These non-allied states played an important role like China, but were not strategic players on par with the United States or the Soviet Union. Wars tended to be proxy ones, where one side would either support a belligerent in direct combat with the other superpower or use its proxy to fight the other superpowers' proxy. The end result were wars that tended to be attritional in nature like Vietnam for the United States and Afghanistan for the Soviets as examples of superpowers in direct conflict with proxy nations. India-Pakistan and the numerous

Israeli-Arab wars as examples of wars where superpowers supported a war through provision of resources like weapons and intelligence to proxies. Long wars or attritional ones were favoured as they tended to grind away at the opponent's resources and energy without direct engagement in conflict. Robert Stanton's impressive work on the Vietnam War showed how debilitating the effects ten plus years of a limited war had on the combat effectiveness of the American Army.<sup>73</sup>

War between the Americans and the Soviets was unthinkable due to the large numbers of nuclear weapons. Nuclear deterrence or to use the phrase coined by President Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD)<sup>74</sup> was at the forefront of all political and military decisions during this period.<sup>75</sup> The Cold War was still largely defined as state versus state as most non-state actors were either working for or held in check by one of the two superpowers. This period did experience some terrorism, but it mainly focused on political aspirations not what Ralph Peters termed as apocalyptic terrorism.<sup>76</sup> During this period terrorist groups were normally backed by the Soviets either directly or indirectly. The Cold War was a period that in many ways represented a stable global framework, where all the actors

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<sup>73</sup> Shelby L. Stanton, *The Rise and Fall of an American Army: U.S. Ground Forces in Vietnam, 1965-1973*, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1985), 348.

<sup>74</sup> David Miller, *The Cold War: A Military History*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 365.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 71.

<sup>76</sup> He classifies these new terrorists in this manner because of what they want, they want revenge for all their perceived injustices. They hate the West. He goes on to say there is no other way of dealing with these terrorist but to kill them. Ralph Peters, *Beyond Terror*, (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2002), 35.



knew their relative position within this environment. Those who rebelled against this system were neutralized. This period of stability ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Many weak states that had been propped up during the Cold War began unraveling setting the conditions for the future battle space.

The future battle space has been the focus of much debate and study. What will it be? What are the emerging threats? How do states structure themselves to prepare for survival in this new environment? These are important, broadly based questions and they provide the foundation for study in determining the feasibility in adapting or discarding the doctrine of *Short War* in the twenty-first century.

Robert Kaplan wrote that to understand the future environment, one had to look to the past. His book *Warrior Politics* examined ancient times to gain a greater understanding the emerging threat environment, one that was dominated by non-state actors and difficult to combat by city-states or empires. These threats of today are not new but rather old enemies adapting to today's world and are proving difficult for a state to combat. A particularly vivid illustration he cites is Thucydides and how Thucydides spoke to the human condition. Humanity is broken up into different groups that are always in competition with each other out of self-interest. These groups seek advantage and may be considered by another group good or evil depending on the moment in the

historical timeline.<sup>77</sup> He also delved into the age-old problem of *realpolitik*, where a nation might be forced to work or ally themselves with another group with whom they would not traditionally be compatible. Pakistan provides a modern example of this phenomenon. Prior to 11 September 2001, this state was viewed by the West as unstable and dangerous, yet today it is considered a close ally in the War on Terrorism. This relationship continues even after it was discovered that Pakistanis had been selling nuclear technology to rogue states. The West continues to foster a relationship with Pakistan even when it does not support Western ideals.

The Canadian Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts focuses on eight key trends that are shaping this future battle space: Globalization, rapid scientific and technological innovation, shifting power balances, demographic shifts, resource scarcities, weak and failed states, growing significance of non-state actors, and identity-based conflict.<sup>78</sup> There is a ninth one proposed by this author and it is becoming a more recognized component of war – the post-conflict responsibilities of the victors. Each one will be first described in detail, then the ‘so what?’ on *Short War* doctrine will be examined.

Globalization is the growing interdependence of state economies on one another. This is not new, but rather its rapid growth fueled by technology has been the truly remarkable

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<sup>77</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, *Warrior Politics: Why Leadership Demands a Pagan Ethos*, (New York: Random House, 2002), 51.

<sup>78</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence. *Future Force: Concepts for Future Army Capabilities*, (Kingston: Directorate of Land Strategic Concepts, 2003), 2-13.

feature.<sup>79</sup> Multinational companies move goods and services within different areas of their own company structure but these components parts may be located in different countries. The North American car industry is an excellent example of this point. Plants producing a specific type of car may be located in the United States, but the parts may come from factories in Canada. The need for fossil fuel to run the industrial complexes that generate wealth for nations means a growing awareness and interest in those regions that provide this essential commodity. What happens in the Persian Gulf generates great interest in the West. Globalization results in greater integration economically, culturally, and communally. However, in many cases it may result in a loss of sovereignty for the state. Any of these issues may trigger a backlash on the system, whether it is from a growing disparity between wealthy and poor nations or the imposition (perceived or real) of someone else's cultural values. All have the potential to cause instability and conflict within the global environment. Globalization is perceived to be good for business by the business community and any disruption through war is bad for business. Therefore, there continues to be strong support amongst global business leaders, that if there is to be war, it must be based on the doctrine of a *Short War*. There can be no interruption to the flow of oil, raw materials or investments. This massive growth of interdependency, has resulted in a far higher complexity both in terms of the number of players involved and how they affect each other. Second and third order effects are significantly more complicated in the twenty-first century given the high degree of integration. An example

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

of the second and third order effects is the shifting of mass production to third world countries where labour is cheap and rules governing environmental impacts are not strictly applied. This has resulted in tremendous internal social changes in these third world countries caused by mass migration from rural areas and increased urbanization. Thus war, or more importantly, the resolution of war, has become more difficult. How the war will be fought; what weapons are to be used; what will be the collateral damage; what effects will have on the country itself, the region and the international community; what are the conditions needed at wars end; and, how conflict termination will occur are all questions that need to be addressed. It is not possible to impose solutions if the people are not ready or willing. A long lasting peace is not achievable without public support such as cited in the Ukrainian example in Chapter I. If the population does not support an initiative for whatever reason (e.g. fear, apathy or disagreement) then the result for the overseers will be as one American political commentator George Will called it, “a duty to do something, that cannot be done.”<sup>80</sup>

Rapid scientific and technological innovation has meant that war can be waged with non-traditional weapons or as the Toffler's wrote in their seminal work on future warfare that weapons would be based on information not firepower.<sup>81</sup> Non-kinetic weapons could potentially disable other systems and not necessarily kill the people operating those same systems. Essentially, you could achieve success without the huge loses in personnel by

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<sup>80</sup> George F. Will, “..Or Maybe Not at All.” *Washington Post*, 17 August 2003, B07.

<sup>81</sup> Alvin and Heidi Toffler *War and Anti-War* (Toronto: Little, Brown and company, 1993), 73.

not having to kill them. In the West, the concept of a surgical or clean form of war has resulted in a perception that casualties can be minimized and precision guided missiles can be applied to all situations. Many technological advances are designed to gain greater situational awareness of the enemy, or in other words, forces only enter into a fight when they have excellent knowledge of the enemy and can win. Technology also focuses on reducing the ‘sensor to shooter’ time or reducing the time it takes to identify a target and to kill it. Targeting is no longer solely looking at the physical plane but also at the moral plane. To paraphrase Napoleon, the moral is to the physical as three is to one or in other words, to strike at an opponent’s will to fight.<sup>82</sup> Morality is a key concept in tomorrow’s battle space that can be exploited by both sides. Technology permits the overwhelming of the enemy in all domains and causes his rapid capitulation. These technologies support the *Short War* doctrine if one assumes two critical facts, first that the foe is a state actor, and second, his critical vulnerabilities (and thus targets) are similar to other state actors. 11 September 2001 demonstrated how emerging threats such non-state actors or low technology enemies can pose a significant threat to the successful application of the doctrine. Technology also brings the capacity to inflict infinitely far greater casualties on a society or group, whether from a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) or from weapons that can kill more quickly.<sup>83</sup> Much of this technology is readily available on the open market and simple to use. Innovations in technologies are needed to maintain security of a nation, but the dependencies this requires provides an

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<sup>82</sup> Peter G. Tsouras *Warriors Words: A Quotation Book From Sesostrias III to Schwarzkopf, 1871BC to AD 1991*. (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1992), 266.

opportunity to a willing foe. Bioterrorism, dirty bombs and computer-network attack are but a few examples of potential threats in the twenty-first century. In this threat environment, the enemy does not need to win; they only need not to lose.<sup>84</sup> When fighting the West, a strategy of attrition or exhaustion favours the non-state actors.

Shifting power balances has been a constant feature of human history. From the Greeks to the Ottomans and on to the current dominance of the West<sup>85</sup> are a few examples of these shifting balances. As other nations or non-state actors rise to challenge the position of the West, they will look for ways to influence or attack its power base without direct confrontation. This challenge may be played out on the world media stage like the effective use of the media in the Palestinian quest for a nation-state or employing a terror campaign like that of Al-Qaeda. In many cases a states' people must feel threatened before they see the validity of a particular conflict. Many Western societies are grappling with the legitimacy of the latest Iraq War. They did not see how Iraq threatened their national interests and thus were not convinced that a regime change was either necessary or legitimate. Michael Ignatieff pointedly wrote that, "power without legitimacy, without support, without the world's respect and attachment, cannot endure."<sup>86</sup> However, the campaign to overthrow the Taliban Regime in Afghanistan had

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<sup>83</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, *Future Force...*,5.

<sup>84</sup> Tom Donnelly and Gary Schmitt, "The Right Fight Now: Counterinsurgency, Not Caution, Is the Answer in Iraq," *Washington Post*, 26 October 2003, B01.

<sup>85</sup> The term West is used to represent modern liberal democratic states though this system is lead by the remaining superpower, the United States.

broad support and it could be directly tied to national interests. This latest round in Iraq has led to fractures in the West's unity and may provide an opportunity to be exploited by an enemy.<sup>87</sup> The West may want to fight a *Short War*, but is it likely that their next foe will not share the same strategy; they will attack weakness or seek a battle of attrition, a perceived vulnerability of western democratic states. It could be argued that the recent bombing of the Spanish commuter trains in Madrid and the subsequent election results were a direct consequence of the emerging threat. The decision by the new Spanish government to pull its forces out of Iraq could be interpreted as the outcome of an attack by non-state actors. Polls prior to the attack had favoured the ruling party be returned to power, after the attack, the governing party fell to the more left leaning opposition. It is hard to dismiss these events as a mere coincidence. Given the apparent success, will democracies face a similar threat every time they go to the polls?

Demographic shifts and the resulting urbanization of many third world countries will challenge any modern force to conduct a *Short War* within its confines. Urban areas reduce the effects of technology and leverage the strength of poor countries - vast numbers of young people and thus potential soldiers on the ground.<sup>88</sup> Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and Mogadishu Somalia in 1993 in a more recent conflict, are both

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<sup>86</sup> Ignatieff, Michael, "Why Are We In Iraq? (And Liberia? And Afghanistan?)," *New York Times Magazine*, Magazine on-line; available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/07/magazine/07INTERVENTION.html>; Internet; accessed 7 September 2003.

<sup>87</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, *Future Force...*,6.

illustrations of the difficulties of conducting operations in urban areas when the population is hostile. If this is extrapolated to Shanghai or Calcutta where the populations exceed twenty million people in Shanghai and thirteen million in Calcutta, the challenges in conducting operations in these areas will be enormous.<sup>89</sup> Many military planners recognize the significant challenge in the urban fight – it is a question of keeping control of an area after you have won the initial fight. Technology may provide some of the answers through initiatives such as non-lethal technologies that are designed to mitigate collateral damage to both infrastructure and non-combatants. There is also the legal and moral imperatives on how the West may employ forces in such an area that will be important considerations affecting how the war will be undertaken and how long it may last.<sup>90</sup> Urban terrain will be the battleground of choice where these low-tech forces will seek battle from within these areas. Battle in this ground will be long and drawn out against a determined foe. The war in Iraq demonstrates challenges of urban warfare and the complexities in winning in this environment.

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<sup>88</sup> Over the next ten years the West's population will generally remain constant at the 1 billion mark, the developing countries will see a net increase of roughly 1.5 billion people, moving up from 4.5 billion to over 6 billion. *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>89</sup> China Daily; available from [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-12/05/content\\_287714.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-12/05/content_287714.htm); Internet; accessed 12 April 2004 and Indian Population. Available from <http://indiabudget.nic.in/es2001-02/chapt2002/chap107.pdf> Internet; accessed 12 April 2004.

<sup>90</sup> It is important to emphasize the West's approach to fighting in urban areas comes with expectations of minimum casualties and surgical strikes. The recent example of the Russian foray into Grozny, Chechnya 1999-2000 demonstrates the difference in waging war. The Russians flattened Grozny with massed artillery before entering the town. Civilian casualties were not a major consideration. Center for Russian Studies. *Military-Operations-Russian Federation*. [chronology on-line]; available from <http://www.nupi.no/cgi-win/Russland/krono.exe>; Internet; accessed 13 November 2003.



Resource scarcities will be a major factor in the near future. There are several key commodities such as water, oil and food that will become increasingly scarce over the next thirty to forty years. For the purposes of illustration, water will be examined in more detail. Forty percent of the world's population will be facing continuous water shortfalls by 2025, a situation likely to cause future conflict,<sup>91</sup> one that is based on control of the resource, access to it or the inability of governments to provide for it to its population. The doctrine of *Short War* may be applied to the physical end of the war although it will not solve the root cause – the lack of water. Thus can there be a true decisive victory if the root cause is not solved? Can a self-sustaining, enduring peace be achieved if the reasons for the conflict have not been resolved? The answer is probably not. These questions relate to the issue of conflict termination and will be discussed later.

Another trend for future instability is that weak and failed states will continue to pose a challenge as these states emerge from the post-colonial era. Many of these are simply non-viable states, as they do not encompass homogeneous populations, resources or strong governance institutions necessary to support a state structure. Their inability to govern, impose the rule of law, reduce corruption or provide for the most basic of needs for their populations are major factors in why these states pose a threat in the future security environment. The net result has been instability that cannot be solved quickly. It also makes dealing with a problem like terrorism or the proliferation of WMD that much more difficult particularly in these types of states. The lack of structure provides a

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<sup>91</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, *Future Force...*,9.

perfect environment for emerging threats to thrive and work. These states provide a safe haven and normally a large recruit base for non-state actors. Pakistan is a classic example of a country with a relative weak central government. This in turns allows for terrorist group like Al-Qaeda to establishment itself within Pakistan relatively free from interference. Resolution means a long-term commitment by the international and domestic parties involved with the conflict, the antithesis of the *Short War* doctrine.

The growing significance of non-state actors adds to the complexity and visibility in any conflict. These groups may be non-violent, non-governmental groups (NGOs) such as the CARE Canada or World Vision, the United Nations (UN) and multinational corporations. It also includes the perpetrators of violence such as organized crime, anarchists, insurgents, and terrorists.<sup>92</sup> These latter groups are difficult to target. Noel Williams refers to this as matrix warfare, a type of warfare that is not sequential but three-dimensional.<sup>93</sup> Essentially, the three-dimensional term describes the internal membership structure and its affiliated allies. This structure is continually changing and adapting to the environment to ensure that its operations are concurrent and multi-focused, but not sequential. The enemy have flattened command structures that are loosely knitted together for a common purpose, but do not necessarily employ the same means of achieving their goals. The new enemy has little to no infrastructure,<sup>94</sup> no

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standing armies, they do not wear uniforms and they have no centralized command and control. They are masters at blending in and may be found around the globe. They have been empowered through technology and wealth that enable them to organize and communicate globally exploiting the Internet. Thus the uses of coercive acts are no longer the sole purview of the state.<sup>95</sup> So the question remains, is a decisive battle possible? The tactical victories being won by the United States Forces along the Pakistani-Afghanistan border have been many yet the War Against Terrorism continues without a termination date. Richard Gabriel quotes Palestinian Abba Eban on the Israeli dilemma: "Israel seemed destined to fight wars in which the vanquished will forever refuse to come to the bargaining table and make peace with the victor."<sup>96</sup> Groups like the Palestinians tend to fight a more attritional form of war. It plays to their strengths and lessens the Israeli's technological and conventional training advantages. Palestinians not only have more people, but they are also willing to conduct a war on terms that the West finds morally offensive.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> There are exceptions such in the case of Al-Qaeda where it had the support of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. But as has been demonstrated, even with the destruction of the Taliban, Al-Qaeda continues to function.

<sup>95</sup> J.Noel Williams, *Matrix Warfare...*,3.

<sup>96</sup> Richard A. Gabriel *Operation Peace for Galilee: The Israeli-PLO War in Lebanon* (New York: Hill and Wong, 1984), 214.

<sup>97</sup> The use of children as suicide bombers is the most notable example.

Prominence of identity-based conflict speaks to the increasing number of conflicts based on ethnic, religious, culture and identity.<sup>98</sup> Kosovo, Rwanda, Chechnya and the Middle East are examples of this trend. Previously mentioned in this paper there are a number of weak or failed states in the world today. How they came about comes with a long assorted history. However, the reality is that many of these states do not exist as homogeneous nation-states, a state where a single people live within the borders of that particular state. A number have several differing groups of people that live and co-exist within a state's borders, for example; Iraq, many of the African states and Pakistan. When there is a lack of strong state institutions or a desire for one group to break away, the inevitable consequence is often conflict. Once again, stability may be imposed by force, but the means of dealing with the cause must be developed. If not, the circle of violence and conflict will continue as has been demonstrated in Kosovo and Middle East. There are important political and self-determining aspects that must be included if a war termination is to be successful. The fight itself is not enough as has been demonstrated during the last few conflicts. Unless the conditions have been set for ensuring success at war's end, an alliance or coalition who is successful on the battlefield, will fail in the end. This may include being inclusive of the groups involved or that have a stake in the future framework of the governance or structures needed for an enduring peace. In true democratic fashion, this will take infinitely longer than the actual fight and be infinitely more complex. The former Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt went so far as to write

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<sup>98</sup>, Department of National Defence, *Future Force...*,12. The Cold War is an example of an ideologically based conflict that is different from identity-based conflict.

when describing these circumstances, that the central challenge is not reconstruction but state-building.<sup>99</sup> The harmonizing of political, economical and military elements are essential to conflict resolution and termination. The political and economical aspects of modern conflict, as has been demonstrated, are playing increasing significant roles. They take time, years to develop and are contrary to the tenets of *Short War* doctrine.

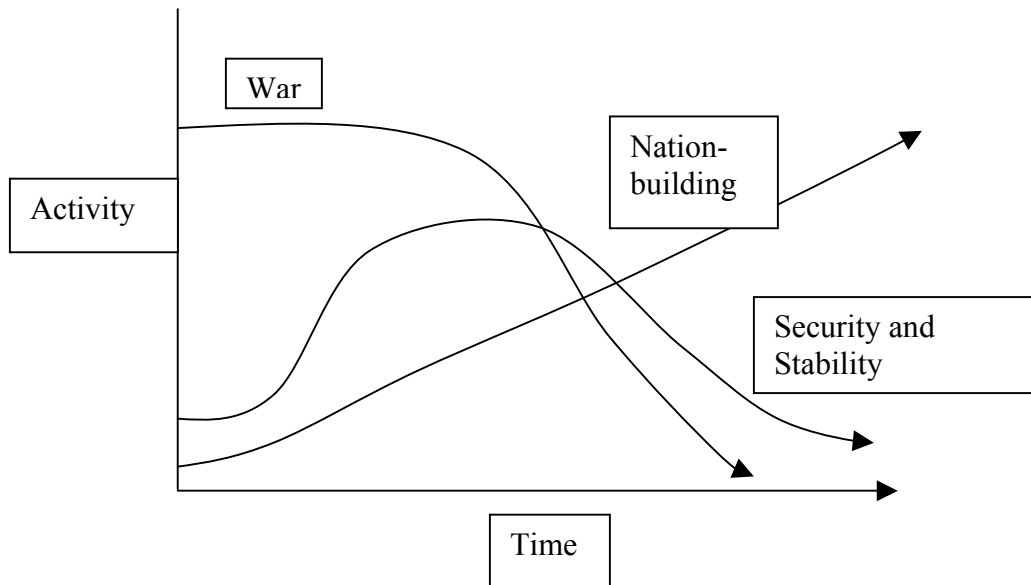
The final trend that will be examined is the post-conflict or war termination phase. For simplicity, this paper will use the term post-conflict for the remainder of the discussion. Post-conflict is that period when major fighting has ended and the transition to security and stability operations has occurred. This phase includes nation-building that normally occurs somewhat concurrently with security and stability operations but increases as the security and stability stage gains success. Anthony Cordesman's excellent review of the most recent Iraq conflict shows how the level of violence decreases as the level of governance increases.<sup>100</sup> Table 1 illustrates graphically the relationship between security and stability, and nation-building. Once the warfighting starts to drop off in a given area, the focus shifts to security and stability operations (SASE). As SASE requirements decrease, nation-building begins to increase. This acceleration is driven by the growing capability of the local governance structures as they develop in self-sustaining entities

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<sup>99</sup> Carl Bildt, "Seven Ways to Rebuild Iraq." *International Herald Tribune*. 7 May 2003, 2.

<sup>100</sup> It is important to note that that the interim Iraqi authority has is at the bottom end of the scale and thus there continues to be high levels of violence in certain areas. Anthony H. Cordesman, *Iraq and Conflict Termination: The Road to Guerrilla War?* Center for Strategic and International Studies 28 July 2003, 3.

able to exert legal, moral and physical authority over its own sovereignty and can enforce its policies.



**Table 1 – Conflict to Peace Timeline**

The concerns with post-conflict issues are a relatively new phenomenon. The First World War demonstrated that if a war is to be concluded successfully, then winning the peace must be taken into account. The conditions placed on Germany at the end of The Great War were a direct cause for the Second World War.<sup>101</sup> The United States Secretary of State George Marshall in the post Second World War period understood this and developed what became know as the “Marshall Plan”. Essentially, this plan provided for nation-building throughout Western Europe, including the Allied portion of Germany, through a large injection of resources to rebuild industry and re-establish those

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<sup>101</sup> JFC Fuller, *The Decisive Battles of the Western World: 1792-1944*, ed. John Terraine, (Toronto: Granada Publishing Limited, 1982), 432/3.

institutions needed for self-sustaining state governance.<sup>102</sup> This post-conflict responsibility has basically remained ever since. The key differences with these major wars were that they were attritional and not *Short Wars*. As discussed in Chapter I, although the First and Second World Wars were planned to be short, they quickly turned attritional resulting in substantial levels of destruction inflicted on the enemy and victors alike. Towards the end of the twentieth century, this post-conflict responsibility has taken on a more significant mass, where of resplended this occurred, 80th (jor )Tj1.0003

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How does this translate into the future threat environment? It means the enemy will use complex terrain like cities and mountains to reduce the effects of Western technology and techniques. It means that the war will be fought on the moral and physical planes and the battle space that encompasses land, sea and air both on and off shore. It means that forces engaged in conflict must be prepared to conduct a whole host of operations from warfighting to humanitarian assistance, all within “a three-block” radius.<sup>104</sup> It means a low tolerance for casualties, friend, foe and non-combatants. It means that war will be fought in a non-linear, non-contiguous environment. It means that responsibility for the security and stability of an area post-conflict will remain with the victors until it has been transitioned to another force or a self-sustaining internal government. Finally, it means that the future enemy may well come from non-state actors without well-defined support structures and thus, become much more difficult to target. This does not mean that victory cannot be obtained, but the speed so emphasized in Western doctrine will not be easily reached. It means that war is not just about the fight but must be viewed in the broader context that encompasses all the component parts, from winning the information campaign at the outset to the building of a self-sustaining, long lasting peace or stability within a country, region or area, all of which do not support a *Short War* strategy.

Precision guided missiles will not replace boots on the ground as Somalia, Iraq and the

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<sup>103</sup> Carl Bildt, *Seven Ways...*,2.

<sup>104</sup> General Charles Krulak, former United States Marine Corps Commandant, wrote about the three-block war that spoke to the environment that soldiers would find themselves in as conflict moved to the twenty-first century. Humanitarian operations, peace support operations and warfighting could all be happening within a three –block radius all being dealt with by the same unit. General Charles Krulak; available from <http://www.urbanoperations.com/>; Internet; accessed 13 April 2004.



Balkans attest to these realities. The definitions iterated in the introduction no longer provide adequate descriptions that fully define the future spectrum of conflict.

When military planners are in the process of designing a campaign plan, they approach the matter in a holistic fashion. They look at the problem from activation/notification of formations to their subsequent return after post-conflict phase. In democratic states, the military does not operate in isolation. Military action is initiated once political direction has been provided. Military planners would like clear direction including the establishment an end state, one that defines mission success. At the political level this may be something like has been seen in Bosnia with a mandate for a stable, democratic multi-ethnic state. The military end state is to provide a safe and secure environment within Bosnia to allow for the development of the necessary governance structures to become self-sustaining. Although difficult to define in a conventional war or a conflict between states, this requirement has become increasingly more difficult to define when post-conflict requirements are considered. David Malone has recently written of Iraq, “democracy develops slowly...in unfertile soil.”<sup>105</sup> This democratic building process consumes time and resources that will require continued expenditure until the processes truly take hold during the second or third set of elections. Some have suggested that it may take upwards of four to six years after the commencement of the post-conflict phase to see true results. Canada’s thirteen-year operation in the Balkans is

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<sup>105</sup> David Malone is the former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations. David Malone, “The Vision Thing Stumbles,” *Globe and Mail*, 31 December 2003, All.

a prime example of just how long a presence is required to rebuild a nation. Coupled with this commitment to democratization is the need to set aside the desire to retain a friendly government in power. Panama's current government won the election on an anti-United States platform, but has subsequently developed an amiable relationship with the United States.<sup>106</sup> This process cannot be forced by the desires of an occupying power. President Eisenhower has been quoted as saying that the West will only truly know if they have been successful with the re-building of Germany into an enduring free democratic state in 50 years time.<sup>107</sup>

What do these future trends mean to the *Short War* doctrine? Perhaps at this juncture it would be useful to revisit the basis upon which the *Short War* was built. It was Hans Delbruck that coined the phrase *Niederwerfungsstrategie* or annihilation to describe what he believed was the best means of fighting a modern war.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps this was true when Delbruck expressed these thoughts at the turn of the twentieth century, but does it remain so today? What do we mean by War and Warfare? Is it just fighting? Does it include the post-conflict period as well? Or are we in a constant state of conflict with the

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<sup>106</sup> Minxin Pei, Sarmia Amin and Seth Garz, "Why Nation-building Fails in Mid-course.", *International Herald Tribune* March 17 2004; available from <http://iht.com/cgi-bin/generic.cgi>; Internet, accessed 17 March 2004. All three authors are researchers at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

<sup>107</sup> General Eisenhower reported made this reference in 1945 when discussing how long it would take to rebuild Germany into a democratic state.

<sup>108</sup> Craig, *Delbruck: The Military Historian...*, 273

occasional periods of fighting? Bobbit in his superb work, *The Shield of Achilles* even named the period from 1914 to the end of the Cold War as, ‘The Long War’.<sup>109</sup>

This paper has already provided the current definitions for war and warfighting. However, it has also been demonstrated that these definitions do not fully describe what the broader concepts and responsibilities are for a western state engaged in conflict today or in the future. It is undeniable that major combat operations in Iraq lasted only twenty-one days and overthrew the despot Saddam Hussein, but has the fighting stopped? Many would argue that the war has moved into a different phase, a counter-insurgency or guerilla phase, it is still war simply fought differently against a changing enemy strategy. Vietnamese General Giap described a three stage campaign plan in the prosecution of a guerrilla war: stage one was defined by small groups employing hit and run tactics and holding no ground; stage two he defined as larger units employing similar tactics but holding ground; and the final stage, stage three employed conventional forces to complete the defeat of the enemy and establish its authority of the area and its population.<sup>110</sup> It would appear that today’s threat is reversing Giap’s doctrine. First conduct a stage three war to garner the necessary moral support and legitimacy then move into stage one where all the advantages for the emerging threat are found. Stage one, as British General Irwin has noted is, “difficult to combat for a democracy.”<sup>111</sup> The

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<sup>109</sup> Phillip Bobbit, *The Shield of Achilles*, (New York: Random Books, 2003), xxvii.

<sup>110</sup> Dr George Friedman, *Guerrilla War in Iraq*; available from <http://www.globalspecops.com/gwiraq.html>; Internet, accessed 15 March 2004.

West currently has the ability to dominate stage three and stage two. It is stage one where the new threats exist and thrive – or as it is being more commonly referred to as Fourth Generation Warfare.

Authored by retired Marine Colonel Wilson and championed by noted military theorist retired United States Air Force Colonel John Boyd,<sup>112</sup> Fourth Generation Warfare or 4GW is the term used to describe the current threat environment. The four generations are as follows: first was the age of Napoleon, second was the age of firepower, third was the age of manoeuvre and ideas, and fourth is the age of independent action cell or asymmetric warfare.<sup>113</sup> 4GW seeks to undermine an opponent's strength while attacking weaknesses. These attacks are normally conducted using methods that are not the same as their opponents. It is as simple as not wearing distinguishing markings to allow for

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<sup>111</sup> General Irwin at the time of the writing of this article was the Military Secretary in the United Kingdom. General Irwin uses the analogy for these insurgency forces as “swarmed like jackals around regular forces.” Alistair Irwin, “The Buffalo Thorn: The Nature of the Future Battlefield”, *Military Power: Land Warfare in Theory and Practice* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), 228.

<sup>112</sup> The term was first used in a 1989 Marine Corps Gazette article that examined future war. William S. Lind, Colonel Keith Nightengale, Captain John F. Schmitt, Colonel Joseph W. Sutton and Lieutenant Colonel Gary I. Wilson, “The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation.” *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 1989, [Journal-on-line]; available from [http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/4th\\_gen\\_war\\_gazette.htm](http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/4th_gen_war_gazette.htm); Internet, accessed 4 April 2004. Colonel Boyd, a pilot with the United States Air force, determined that in order to beat an opponent that you would need to be able to make decisions faster than him and thus he would always be reacting to your actions. This circular process would eventually lead to your opponents collapse. He called it the OODA loop or observe, orient, decide and act loop.

<sup>113</sup> Asymmetrical War is fought not with just the traditional weapons of war, but across the battle space using all means to exploit an opponent's weakness. Whether that be moral, physical, cultural, economical, political or religious, all weaknesses are to be exploited. Although not new, it is the consequences and the affects that make this type of war notable. Robert O'Connell's discussions on “symmetrical response” provided the basis of comparison for this new emerging concept of asymmetrical war. Robert L. O'Connell, *Of Men and Arms: A History of War, Weapons, and Aggression*, (Oxford: Oxford University press, 1989), 7.

recognition as a combatant in accordance with the normal established Law of Armed Conflict. Wilson calls this a blurring of the division between combatant, criminal and civilian. The proponents of 4GW see the enemy attacking the Western reliance on technology, its emphasis on being fair and the cumbersome bureaucratic structures that support Western societies. He cites the 9-11 attacks, “consisted of box cutters and ceramic knives, combined with a steely determination to die for a cause.”<sup>114</sup> The strongest superpower was helpless to stop them. Again Ralph Peters provided insight into the workings of the modern terrorist and their motivations.<sup>115</sup> Thus the environment of today sees the need to harness the capabilities of the breath of government services not just the military. It is the only way to tackle the ‘how’ when determining the best method in defeating the threat.

Another aspect of this new war is returning to the roots of the early nineteenth German General Staff and the need for a preventive or pre-emptive component. The latest war in Iraq has focused the discussion on the issue of prevention or pre-emption, a fundamental principle of the *Short War* doctrine. Chapter I discussed that to be successful in a *Short War*, it would have to be based on an offensive strategy – to strike first. The British Prime Minister Tony Blair in a recent speech came out in favour of pre-emption and publicly stated that some international laws or accepted conventions may need to be

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<sup>114</sup> Colonel GI Wilson, *INFOWARCON 200*. Washington DC, 1-3 October 2003; available from [http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/pdf/4gw\\_judo.pdf](http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/pdf/4gw_judo.pdf); Internet, accessed 3 March 2004.

<sup>115</sup> Peters, *Beyond Terror*, 35.

changed to reflect the realities of the threat today and in the future.<sup>116</sup> The proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the potency of non-state actors and rogue states have driven leaders, particularly Western leaders whom are the most at risk, to challenge the relevancy of currently accepted rules and norms. It is also contrary to the accepted basis of the *Just War Theory* which stipulates that war is justified only if it is to restore the status quo to the pre war status less the restoration of the capabilities of the aggressor.<sup>117</sup> It also does not normally look at internal state reformation for the belligerent.<sup>118</sup> The Just War Theory does speak to some post-conflict responsibilities such as crimes of aggression and war crimes. In essence, the Just War Theory supports a defensive strategy. However, with the emergence of the new threat environment previously described, there has been a renewed impetus for the concept of prevention. Imminent threats are hard to define; one terrorist detonating a small dirty nuclear device at a hockey arena when it is packed with 18,000 fans is too late. What means will a state use when it believes a group or a rogue state may strike at them in order to justify that they must act first. What is the level of proof needed to take action? What level of risk or legitimate criteria will a state

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<sup>116</sup> Prime Minister Tony Blair supports the notion that changes to international law may be required to allow pre-emptive strikes. A CBC news story. *Blair Supports Law Changes for Pre-emptive Strikes*; available from <http://www.cbc.ca/stories/print/2004/03/05/world/blair040305>; Internet, accessed 6 March 2004. This notion of pre-emption is also favoured for humanitarian efforts by Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham. He believes that the world community has the right to violate a states' sovereignty if that state is committing violence against its own people, Rwanda is an example cited. Jeff Salot, "Lessons of Rwanda may go Unheeded, Graham to Tell UN." *Globe and Mail*. 26 March 2004.

<sup>117</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. Second ed., (United States: Basicbooks, 1992), xvii.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.* xvii. The latter problem of interfering in a country's internal affairs is a separate but related issue as the world moved to the back end of the 1990s. People would no longer allow for human tragedies like the genocide in Rwanda to occur again. A state, the world is beginning to say, is not above the law, even if the law is a moral one only.

use to justify a first strike? Who establishes these initial standards? If a state gets it wrong either way, it will be roundly condemned. An illustrative example was arguably the most respected member of Bush administration, Secretary of State Colin Powell, who was unable to sway the vast majority of world public opinion or their leaders to support the attack into Iraq with the evidence he was presenting the United Nations Security Council. What is the justifiable threshold to employ a pre-emptive strike? Is there such a thing as perfect intelligence, or intelligence convincing enough to launch a first strike? The United Nations has sponsored a number of round table discussions on the issue of intervention, when can it be used and for what purposes. Although primarily focused on the human security agenda, it also touched on a number of other areas that can be related to intervention or pre-emption.<sup>119</sup>

The United Nations sponsored International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty tabled its report in December 2001. It dealt with a wide range of issues regarding when intervention and in some cases, pre-emption in an internal state's affairs would be considered legitimate. An entire chapter is devoted to the issue of legitimacy and the commissions' tool to be employed as a barometer when determining a *prima facie* case; it is called a *Just Cause Threshold*. This threshold has six criteria that must be met before intervention or pre-emption is authorized: the right authority, just cause, right

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<sup>119</sup> United Nations, *The Responsibility To Protect*, International Commission On International and State Sovereignty roundtable discussions December 2001, (Ottawa: International Research Council, 2001), Article 1.33.

intervention, last resort, proportional means and reasonable prospects.<sup>120</sup> The importance of this report cannot be overstated. For the first time, it opens the door to a broader definition of *Just War Theory* as it recognizes the emerging threats that result from weak or failed states, many having been formed in the post-colonial period.<sup>121</sup> It also specifically deals with the responsibilities for what the commission terms as post intervention obligations, that if intervention or pre-emption is authorized then it is not, “just prevent and react, but follow through and rebuild.”<sup>122</sup> A first strike or offensive act is a key component of a *Short War*. However, this recent United Nations report that sanctions the use of force in an intervention or pre-emptive strike also obliges the victor with greater responsibilities in the follow through and rebuilding phase. Thus the post-conflict requirements are greater than those required to fight the war. It also sees the commitment of the victors to a long-term presence. Canadian Major-General Andrew Leslie was quoted in a recent press article stating that it may take up to ten years to create a safe and secure Afghanistan.<sup>123</sup> Again, the actual major fighting engagements may be completed, but is the commitment through the whole campaign that must be considered. The United Nations has provided the framework that may form the basis for future decisions of pre-emption or prevention. It has also reinforced the need for a broad

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<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* Article 4.16.

<sup>121</sup> There has been a four-fold growth in new states since founding of the United Nations, not all with homogeneous or stable institutions. A point recognized by the commission. *Ibid.* Article 1.33.

<sup>122</sup> Chapter 5 of the report deals with the post intervention obligations. *Ibid.* Article 5.1.

<sup>123</sup> Lewis Mackenzie, “Time to go on the Offensive in Afghan,” *National Post*. 21 February 2004; available from [www.forces.gc.ca/spotlight/2004/02/21/afghanstime040221.html](http://www.forces.gc.ca/spotlight/2004/02/21/afghanstime040221.html); Internet, accessed 22 February 2004.



coalition to ensure legitimacy. In his recent article, George Lucas refers to it as multinational coalitions giving greater legitimacy to an operation.<sup>124</sup>

The final issue of importance to the argument is military force structure and its employment limitations. Western states design their forces to protect against a conventional threat that may or may not have a chemical, biological or nuclear component. Forces are built by states to fight other states. Anything outside of this definition will normally be considered a police or civilian matter, particularly with regards to violent non-state actors. Although specific military capabilities occasionally are placed in support of civilian authorities to combat similar threats, it is not their primary responsibility.<sup>125</sup> This is now changing as the state attempts to deal with the emerging asymmetrical threat. Philip Bobbitt aptly describes it as, “a period...when very small numbers of persons, operating with enormous power of modern computers, biogenetics, air transportation, and even small nuclear weapons, can deal lethal blows to any society.”<sup>126</sup> It is no longer acceptable to limit forces to strictly fight the decisive battle, but rather they must be capable of responding throughout the spectrum of conflict - General Kulak’s three-block war. However, as this paper has already addressed, military forces are only part of the solution to this complex problem. Different players

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<sup>124</sup> George R. Lucas Jr., “The Role of the ‘International Community’ in Just War Theory- Confronting the Challenges of Humanitarian Intervention and Pre-emptive War,” *Journal of Military Ethics*, Vol 2 Issue 2 (2003): 126.

<sup>125</sup> Support to counter-drug, human smuggling or surveillance are several examples of military forces being employed in support of the civil authority. They have been in a supporting role.

<sup>126</sup> Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles...*, 811.

will engage in either a leading or supporting role dependent upon where the operation is in the spectrum of conflict. However, all elements are needed if the mission is to be successful. Cordesman has presented one possible blue print for such a campaign based on his review of the recent Iraqi conflict.<sup>127</sup> Without this concerted multi-organizational, civil-military, multi-national structure, the victor may face, as Adam Siegal writes, “the unpalatable choice between indefinite military presence or conflict resumption.”<sup>128</sup>

Force structure must reflect this new reality. Large forces able to fight a conventional threat are still needed to deter and defend against a real threat that continues to exist. China, North Korea and Russia still represent capable conventional threats to the West. However, the other reality is that there is a growing unconventional threat that must be addressed with more agile forces, supported by excellent intelligence and one that is not subject to the restrictive rules as currently imposed upon conventional military forces. Regardless of the force or structure, will these structural changes produce a *Short War*? The answer can only be no, force structure does not drive the length or type of war. However, it does speak to how a war will be fought. Regardless of how short the actual major combat operations last, the post-conflict period and all that entails determines the length of a war. Giap’s stage one counter-insurgency plan is attritional, long lasting and will be for the foreseeable future.

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<sup>127</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman spoke to how the post conflict would have been better shaped when he reviews the American failures during OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. Cordesman, *Iraq and Conflict Termination...*,10-14.

<sup>128</sup> Adam S. Siegal, “Post Conflict Problems,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 2000, 36.

The emerging trends for future war coupled with the growing moral and legal obligations assumed by the victor in the post-conflict phase of a war confirm that the doctrine of the *Short War* is truly wishful thinking. The Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq are current examples that support this position. Western nations hope that wars will be short, bloodless and have little or no impact on the daily lives of its citizens. Recent events have proven this assumption completely false. Whether regime change in Iraq or the War on Terrorism, both have resulted in extended campaigns in the continued fight in the case of the latter or in the post-conflict phase in the case of the former. Large amounts of capital and resources from all nations involved have continued to be expended at high levels with no noticeable signs of ending. Whether the correct term is post-conflict, that period signifying the end of major conflict, or still war, are merely descriptors. The reality is that George Bush's calls on ending hostilities in both Iraq and Afghanistan have seen an ongoing counter-insurgency war continue in both theatres. "The war" has not ended the ongoing terror attacks around the world; Madrid and Bali are but two examples. Understanding the threat and the fight required to win will be the first task in developing a long-term comprehensive plan to defeat these emerging threats. Realistic goals and proper resourcing to achieve those goals are essential. The military is only part of the solution, a coordinated response from the political, military, economic, social and religious components are essential in combating the threats in the now and future environment. Wilson refers to it as a war of ideas and time – both must be won.<sup>129</sup>

Violent battle can only achieve partial success, full spectrum dominance and winning the ‘hearts and minds’ – the ideas’ battle - must be part of the strategy.

## CONCLUSION

Is the *Short War* strategy a valid one at all? Given the technologies available today, nationalistic ideologies, and the political imperatives, can there be anything but attritional war? The evolution of war during the industrial age sought an answer to the costly results brought on by massed state generated armies and the parallel development in technology to nullify the advantages of mass. Thus by the end of the Second World War, a stable but precarious peace had formed by the emerging victors. This was an era dominated by proxy wars and would remain so until the fall of the Soviet Union. The collapse did not bring about greater stability but rather a growing sense of anarchy within the world arena. The number of states grew four-fold and the power of the non-state actor also grew. The result was greater complexity and difficulty on how to deal with the emerging threats.

Most modern armies continue to train for the *Short War* doctrine. This doctrine supports the idea of a decisive battle that envisions the collapse of the opponent both physically and morally by enveloping and creating chaos in the enemy's rear, a doctrine very reminiscent of *Blitzkrieg*. This doctrine was meant to be pursued

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<sup>129</sup> G.I. Wilson, *Fourth Generation Warfare*, Boyd Conference 2002; available from [http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/pdf/4GW\\_wilson-wilcox\\_boyd\\_conf\\_2002.pdf](http://www.d-n-i.net/fcs/pdf/4GW_wilson-wilcox_boyd_conf_2002.pdf); Internet, accessed 8 February 2003.

throughout the spectrum of conflict. There continues to be weapons of mass destruction, non-state actors, urbanization, technologies, cultural differences, economic and globalization factors mentioned in chapter II that will affect a desired strategy. This is particularly true for liberal democracies where accountability and freedom of the press factor on most of the political and military decision-makers.

Another factor that will influence whether a strategy of annihilation is to be considered is that of the will of the subjugated population. It may be that the people are content to be freed from whatever form of political governance to which they have been subjected. Or it could be the population would continue to see the liberator as an oppressive force or even take the defeat of an existing local power broker as an opportunity to break from the old state or regional boundaries. The unknown ingredient is the emergence of nationalism amongst ethnic groups and the ideological divergence within these groups. Regardless of how liberal or democratic the victor may be, nationalistic ideas may not be compatible with those of the victors, thereby preventing a decisive victory from turning into an enduring peace. Afghanistan and the rise of the very oppressive Taliban regime post the Soviet withdrawal is a good example of how differing ideologies may result in the establishment of a more repressive system.

The *Short War* strategy still has a place in the options of strategy. The very reasons why it was so attractive as a means to waging war in an industrial age in the twentieth century remain valid for the twenty-first century given the ongoing

conventional threats that can still be arrayed against the West. The capacity for industrialized nations to mobilize its full resources, both human and materiel, to wage an attritional war is still possible and thus, a strategy to guard against this must be considered. However, the emerging asymmetric threats, when faced with a superior, technologically advanced opponent will, more often than not, opt for an attritional war, one that gives them a form of advantage. This form of warfare will normally commit the entire resources of asymmetric threat to the war effort – they do not have to win, they just need not to lose. Long drawn war is a difficult pill for Western nations to buy especially if they do not see the need for the sacrifices. The Cold War era with massed forces along the old inter-German border is long gone and for the most part, the West's' population have yet to fully understand the emerging threat, although 11 September 2001 provides a glimpse into the possibilities.

Industrialized nations train for the *Short War* and it still is a valid requirement, however, it is not the only reality nor the most likely form of war to be fought in the world today and of tomorrow. In fact, it is becoming increasingly possible that what we see in Afghanistan, Iraq and worldwide in the fight against Terrorism will be the true reality. These emerging threats cannot be ignored. For a state not to prepare to fight this new threat is at best being optimistic and worst amateuristic. This fight is not just about winning the major battles, but continues to the post-conflict phase of the campaign. It must be planned for and resourced to ensure that the transition to peace is effective and long lasting. It is about winning the minds as well as the physical defeat of an opponent.

It means amending those old definitions to broaden their meaning to become more inclusive, both in descriptions of the potential adversaries and the breath of the campaign that includes the post-conflict phase. States are no longer the only players on the field. It is fitting to look back at history to look to one of the great military thinkers for sage insight about the future. Liddell Hart elegantly summarized the debate when he wrote: “If you concentrate exclusively on victory, with no thought for the after effect, you may be too exhausted to profit by the peace, while it is almost certain that the peace will be a bad one, containing the germs of another war.”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Liddell Hart, *Strategies...*, 366.

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