

# War and Military Power Reconstructed - The Revolution in Military Affairs and the Global War on Terror as American Projects to Reconstruct the Constitutive Elements of War and Military power

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## Abstract

With the demise of the Cold War the traditional sedimented foundations of estimating and generating military power within the international system became challenged. Similarly, the very 'essence' of war has undergone a change during the last two decades. As the probability of large-scale military invasion decreased significantly at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, states had to come to terms with the emerging nature of 'new' military conflicts and the related 'new' rules for generating military power. During the post-Cold War era the US has constructed and thus proposed two wide-ranging politico-military projects through which it has assessed the essence of new conflicts and the new requirements for the military: The discourses concerning the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and the global War on Terror (GWOT). This paper analyses these two discourses and their influence on the shared understandings concerning the nature of contemporary war and the effective and credible military power within the developed west.

## Introduction

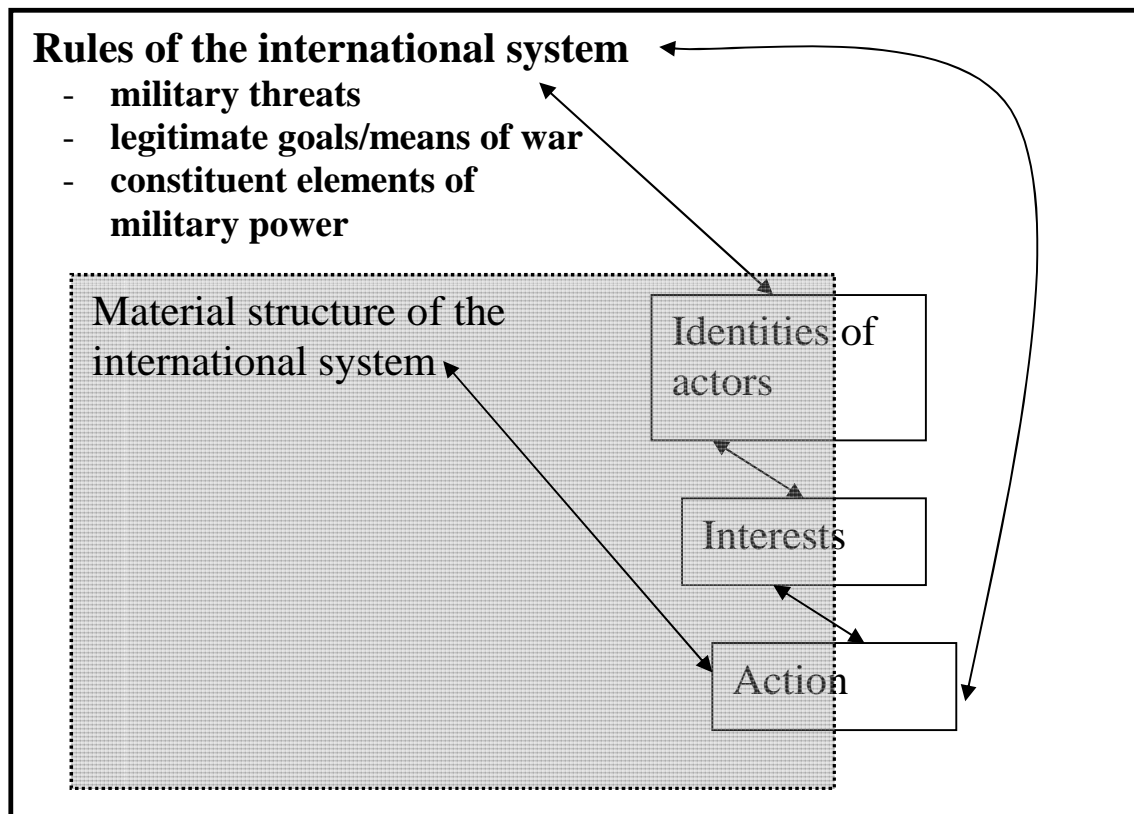
This paper takes a constructivist approach to international politics asks, how has the United States attempted to redefine the rules of the international game and particularly the 'essence' of war and military power in the post-Cold War era. The perspective taken emphasises the intersubjectively constructed institution of war within the broader rule-structure of the international system. The aim of this paper is to arrive at a contemporary shared 'definition' of war – a shared western understanding of war – rather than to begin from a stipulated definition. The paper suggests that the post-Cold War era change in the shared western understandings of war and military power can be accessed through the analysis of the several discourses of war. These discourses have touched upon 'the end of the Cold War', 'the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA)', 'new wars', 'military crisis management and humanitarian interventions', 'the privatization of war', and 'the Global War on Terror'. Of these discourses, the influence of the United States has been paramount concerning those of the Revolution in Military Affairs and the Global War on Terror.

The proposed constructivist understanding of the rules of the international system in general and war particularly conceptualises the 'essence' of war being 'negotiated' constantly in the interaction of states and other agents related to the use of physical violence. The prevailing shared understanding of war is thus path-dependent and contingent – not controllable by any single agent, although some agents are better positioned in the process of giving meaning to war. Today the United States holds such a privileged position. Path dependence implies that *in order to analyse the effects of the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs and the American-declared Global War on Terror upon the shared western understandings of war and military power – the theme of this paper – one has to also analyse the larger process of post-Cold War era redefinition of war, and indeed the Cold War era institution of war, out of which today's shared under-*

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*standings of war have grown out.* The Cold War institution of war thus casts a shadow of history on today's 'reality' of war.<sup>1</sup> But as time progresses, the influence of the Cold War can be assumed to wane.

*This paper focuses on the institution of war – and as a derivative of it the shared western understanding of effective military power – during the post-Cold War era, and particularly after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 from a western perspective.* The starting point for the analysis of war in this paper is the sedimented Cold War era institution of war – a rather stable set of shared understandings of 1) what constituted the *threat* necessitating the preparations for waging war; 2) what was the 'nature' of war – i.e. the legitimate goals and means in war; and 3) what constituted *military power* among agents.<sup>2</sup> This set of shared understandings was rather uniform among the 'main' belligerents of the Cold War – the American-led west and the Soviet Union dominated east – but also more generally throughout the international system. However, this Cold War era institution of war was challenged and thus not totally shared. The most articulate challenge to the leading east-west shared conceptualisations of war was expressed under the titles of revolutionary war, low intensity conflict, or asymmetric war. They all provided an alternative and a 'competing' model for understanding war vis-à-vis the force and terrain oriented shared conceptualisations of war that matured during the 'tight' superpower confrontation.



**FIG 1.** Framework of this paper.<sup>3</sup>

After the Second World War – during the threat-penetrated years of the Cold War – *Pax Americana* described the western take concerning the security situation in the interna-

<sup>1</sup> Humans thus pursue practical activity (e.g. formulate security policies) within *material* and *social* contexts, which constrict and enable these activities. See Deudney (2000), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> See Raitasalo and Sipilä (2004).

<sup>3</sup> Modified from Jepperson – Wendt – Katzenstein (1996).

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tional system. Under the cover of American nuclear umbrella and its overwhelming military power, the west had rather uniform shared understandings concerning the nature of war and the constitutive elements of military power. On both sides of the Atlantic, western governments conceptualized war mainly within the framework of massive mechanized forces clashing in a demarcated battlefield. The possibility of a nuclear war loomed over this view of conventional war, although its consequences would have been unimaginable. The threatening enemy was the Soviet Union and its politico-military instrument – the Warsaw Pact.

With the end of the Cold War and the demise of the bipolar world order, (western) states were faced with a challenge: what were the constitutive rules of the international system *à la* post-Cold War era? With the old Soviet threat gone, the shared western conceptualisations of war and military power became challenged. Furthermore, the ‘emergence’ of new wars and the subsequent ‘need’ for humanitarian interventions added to the challenge faced by the warriors of the Cold War.

Two post-Cold War era *discourses* that have transformed the cold war era institution of war have been explicitly formulated within the United States – those concerning the *Revolution in Military Affairs and the Global War on Terror*. They have been ‘used’ to redefine the shared western understandings of war and military power in the post-Cold War era on US terms. The American discourse concerning the Revolution in Military Affairs picked up speed in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf war. At the core of this discourse has been the idea of revolutionary change in the nature of war with the use of advanced military technologies combined with new military organisations and operational concepts. Within five years of its inception, RMA provided new momentum and guidelines for the development of US Armed Forces in a situation where the Soviet threat had evaporated and the ‘essence’ of traditional military confrontations had become questionable. During the late 1990s the US started to ‘export’ its RMA conceptualisations, particularly within the framework of NATO. Also the lessons-learned from the military operations of the 1990s supported the view that modern technology is changing the nature of western warfare. Particularly Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999) showcased the American preponderance in the field of techno-warfare.

The other particularly American discourse of war during the post-Cold War era has been that of War on Terror. It has built upon the foundation of RMA – changing the way America conceptualizes war in the post-Cold War era – but has gone deeper. It has reconceptualised the threats necessitating the preparations for war. Terrorist organisations and even individual terrorists have become adversaries in war on the side of states. In addition, the American discourse of War on Terror has proposed new rules of war – unilateral and pre-emptive military action if necessary. Thus, while the RMA discourse has focused mostly on the new requirements and capabilities of the armed forces, the discourse of War on Terror has embraced the institution of war more broadly. In a way the Cold War era maintenance and development of armed force in order to deter aggression – Pax Americana – has thus mutated into a more assertive use of military force in order to prevent threats from emanating and in order to arrive at valued outcomes – *Bel-lum Americanum*.

#### *The Shadow of the Cold War – Pax Americana*

During the Cold War, the ideological rivalry between the two super-power blocs armed with nuclear weapons ‘produced’ a two-fold shared conceptualisation of war. On the

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one hand, the existence of nuclear weapons and the development of nuclear deterrence theorising kept the idea of a nuclear war possible. Its consequences would have been unimaginable and beyond the calculations of interests sought by war. On the other hand, the view of conventional war – more tangible and imaginable than a nuclear war – was based on large-scale clashes of mechanised armed forces on the battlefield. This view was force-oriented, accentuating mass (quantity) and terrain, and was based on the hypothetical possibility to separate the battlefield from the civil society. This two-fold characterisation of western Cold War era conceptualisations of war – nuclear and conventional – does not argue that the ‘reality’ of guerrilla warfare or unconventional warfare did not have any effects on the shared conceptualisations of war and the related thinking of how to prepare for future wars. Rather, it means that the Cold War era nuclear threat environment, super-power rivalry, and the intra-alliance dynamics overshadowed the significance of smaller-scale, ‘peripheral’, and unconventional warfighting scenarios.<sup>4</sup>

The Cold War era was particularly fertile ground for the ‘emergence’, consolidation, and sedimentation of a force-oriented and terrain-emphasising view of war. The ‘tight’ atmosphere of the superpower confrontation and the clear and present danger posed by the opposing ideological-military bloc ‘necessitated’ a clear-cut and simplified view of the enemy and the way to contain or battle its hostile intentions. According to the language of the constructivist perspective of war as an institution of the international system, at least three discourses had a major impact on the shared western understandings of war during the Cold War:

- 1) the discourse of an *all-penetrating multifaceted ideological threat* posed by the opposing hostile Soviet-dominated bloc,
- 2) the discourse of *nuclear war and nuclear deterrence*,
- 3) the discourse of a *large-scale conventional war* (in Europe).

In order to analytically approach the post-Cold War reconstruction of shared western understandings of war and military power, one needs to analyse the general process understood as *the end of the Cold War and its effects on the international system in general*. From the late 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s the *discourse concerning the end of the Cold War* started to become widely accepted. With the demise of the superpower confrontation and the quick erosion of the bipolar international system – features that were characterising the Cold War era rules of the international system – states and other international agents found themselves in a situation where the old rules of the international system became questioned and ‘new’ or ‘altered’ rules of the system had to be figured out.<sup>5</sup> *The immediate post-Cold War era was a generally acknowledged time of transition, while the end point of this process of transition was not in sight.*

In addition to leading to the redefinition of the logic of the international system, the celebrated end of the Cold War was thus also a beginning for a process – both implicit and explicit – of reconceptualising the ‘logic’ of the nature of war in the international system and the determinants of military power. Concerning the latter, the simultane-

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<sup>4</sup> Owens (1998), p. 64; Lock-Pullan (2003), p. 135; Jablonsky (1994); See also Kaldor (2001); About the ‘mismatch’ between developed states’ (the ‘East’ and the ‘West’) conceptualisations of war and the reality of war, see van Creveld (1991), pp. ix-x, 25-32.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Rules of the system’ refer here to constitutive norms of the system. With the transformation of these rules, the nature of the system changes. See e.g. Koslowski and Kratochwil (1995), pp. 127, 134-139, 144-159. See also Nye and Owens (1996), p. 26 and Shalikhvili (1995).

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ously occurring 1991 Gulf War also challenged the Cold War era understandings of military power – at least in part. Especially the increasing role of advanced information technology became the focal point in estimations of future determinants of military power, although the war in the Gulf was conceptualised and waged in a rather familiar Cold War era way: large scale mechanised armed forces in decisive battles. Thus, the end of the Cold War and the subsequent events of the 1990s posed a challenge to states operating in the international system.<sup>6</sup> The end of the Cold War in itself started a process of change that called into question the traditional missions and resources allocated to national armed forces.

*Prologue to the Global War on Terror – The post-Cold War era Discourses of War*

The *end of the Cold War* – itself a discourse emphasising the changing nature of security in the international system – thus challenged the matured and cemented Cold War institution of war. With the Cold War over, how relevant were the shared conceptualisations of the threat of a massive military invasion in Europe? As government after another recognised the rapidly declining military threat of the Soviet Union/Russia in the beginning of the 1990s, the utility of the Cold War era nuclear and conventional military forces became questionable. The ‘immediate’ result of the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union was the increased significance of regional conflicts and the focus on regional aggressors. With the global superpower confrontation gone, the west shifted its security focus towards rogue and failing/failed states. With the unfolding of the 1990s, several new security themes rose in standing vis-à-vis the use of military force within the international system.

The second post-Cold War era western discourse of war was related to the 1991 Gulf War and the lessons inferred from the conflict. Precision weapons – in connection with sophisticated sensors and control and communications systems – promised effective military operations against ‘traditionally’ equipped and trained Cold War era armed forces. The mainstream western interpretation of Iraq’s quick and total collapse in Operation Desert Storm was based on the understanding about the rising importance of high-tech weapons, new operational concepts, and innovative military organisations. The catchword “*Revolution in Military Affairs*” (RMA) was embraced by the US defence community and by the mid-1990s the US DoD had included RMA into its official vocabulary. With the rapidly declining traditional military threat, the vision of high-tech warfare gave sufficient potential to the development of armed forces. It provided a rationale for maintaining and developing armed forces in a new and potentially less threatening era of “New World Order”.

The February 1992 *Annual Defense Report* by Dick Cheney – the first Annual Defense Report after the end of the Gulf War – made the link between success in the Gulf War and the military technological revolution official. In addition, the lessons of the Gulf War were seen to provide proof of the benefits of a technological edge vis-à-vis potential enemies:

“The Gulf War provided the world with a vivid demonstration of *the revolution in military technology that is shaping the nature of warfare*. ... In large part this revolution has resulted from the development of new technologies, ... The *exploit-*

<sup>6</sup> See Koslowski and Kratochwil (1995).

*tation of these new technologies promises to change the nature of warfare significantly.”<sup>31</sup>*

*“[T]he United States must continue to maintain a technological edge over potential adversaries. ... as was demonstrated in Operation DESERT SHIELD/STORM, a technological edge enables us to prevail quickly.*

*Maintaining this technological edge requires a continuing emphasis on technological superiority.”<sup>32</sup>*

By the mid 1990s the potential inherent in the concept of RMA for maintaining and increasing America’s military edge had matured. In 1995 Undersecretary of Defense, Paul Kaminski stated explicitly a view of the RMA as a DoD vision. He noted that:

*“Today, America has precision strike capability due to a vision some 20 years ago. Today, we are developing a vision for other major changes in warfare – it is called the Revolution in Military Affairs, or RMA.”<sup>67</sup>*

In 1997 RMA was turned into an official American defence initiative to *transform* the Cold War era armed forces into a more effective fighting force.<sup>7</sup> Not only has inspiration for the RMA thesis been flowing from the 1991 Gulf War, but also other American-led military campaigns of the 1990s have been interpreted through the RMA lenses: Bosnia (1995) and Kosovo (1999) being the most obvious examples.<sup>8</sup>

In 1999 NATO launched its project – The Defence Capabilities Initiative, DCI – to keep the American allies capable of cooperating with the sole remaining superpower, which had realised its RMA implementation strategy implicitly and explicitly for almost a decade. After all, the European inability to wield military power had become apparent during the wars of Yugoslavian succession. Later, in 2002, NATO started its transformation process and started ‘creating’ the NRF – NATO Response Force – equipped, organised, and trained in the American RMA model for high-tech expeditionary warfare. As president George W. Bush noted in May 2002 – few months before NATO launched its transformation-project:

*“[W]e need to work within NATO to make sure that NATO has got the capacities to - - to better use capabilities, define capabilities and strategies ... We’re transforming our [US] military or trying to transform our military rapidly. ... And NATO must transform as well in order to meet the true threats. ... I’m optimistic about NATO changing.”<sup>9</sup>*

Similarly, the process of defining, creating, and making operational the required European Union capabilities has followed the main tenets of American RMA discourse once the European Union decided – in 1999 – to augment its military capability. Small, mobile, well-trained, and rapidly deployable professional forces with technologically ad-

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<sup>7</sup> Annual Report to the President and the Congress by Secretary of Defense William Perry (1995), part IV; Annual Report to the President and the Congress by Secretary of Defense William Cohen (1997), ch. 8; See also Quadrennial Defense Review Report (1997); National Security Strategy for a New Century (1998), p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Cohen (1999). It can be argued that the discourse of the Revolution in Military Affairs provided the US a military vision to guide the development of its armed forces in a situation when the traditional military threats had almost evaporated and the security political landscape of the globalising world did not provide clear direction for the establishment of the military’s new role. See Raitasalo (2005).

<sup>9</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (2002), p. 869. My italics.

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vanced military systems engaged in out-of-area operations captures this emerging European ‘RMA logic’.<sup>10</sup>

The third post-Cold War era discourse of war has been that of *new wars*. The manifestation of wars as ‘new wars’<sup>11</sup> during the 1980s and 1990s has been very problematic for many developed states in their attempts to comprehend the post-Cold War international order. These mainly ethnic-religious conflicts have not fitted the Cold War era lenses of conceptualising wars particularly well. The emphasis on non-state agents in the discourse on new wars has not been new. Low Intensity Conflicts (LICs) were part of the Cold War period understandings of warfare. LICs were understood to be located in the non-developed world. They involved irregular fighters – such as guerrillas and terrorists – who did not rely on high technology for pursuing the goals of war. New wars have challenged the state-focused and high-tech based RMA discourse as the belligerents of new wars are not conceptualising war in the rather traditional fashion of armed forces battling each other in the battlefield. New wars have channelled battlefield right into the civil society.<sup>12</sup>

The fourth post-Cold War era discourse of war is related to *military crisis management and humanitarian interventions*. It has been connected to the ‘emergence’ of new wars during the 1980s and 1990s. A key feature of this discourse has been the emphasis on the humanitarian justifications for intervening militarily on the territory and affairs of other states. The rules of the international system have been reinterpreted within this discourse – mainly touching on the institution of sovereignty and norms concerning universal human rights. Humanitarian operations have mostly been multinational in character – despite the fact that the United States has been the lead-agent in most of those operations in which offensive military capabilities have been called for. Simplifying somewhat the complex issue of defining and categorising different manifestations of war, and the reasons that different agents have for using physical violence, it can be argued that as the frequency of ‘new’ large-scale violence raised to or stayed on a high level after the Cold War, the conventional threats faced by developed states dissolved, and the effects of modern communications technology brought global affairs into the living rooms of average people, humanitarian use of military force became a real possibility – or even a ‘necessity’.

The discourse of military crisis management and humanitarian interventions was ‘ignited’ by the follow-on operation to Operation Desert Storm. Subsequently humanitarian crises throughout the world (e.g. Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Rwanda, Bu-

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<sup>10</sup> The ‘emerging European RMA logic’ refers to the increasingly accepted shared European notion that usable and credible military power today is based on advanced technologies related to information.

<sup>11</sup> Kaldor (1999). See e.g. pp. 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> See van Creveld (1991), pp. 18-32, 57-62; Olson (1989), p. 75; Cohen (1986); Also the concepts of ‘privatised wars’, ‘informal wars’, ‘post-modern wars’ and ‘degenerate warfare’ have been used to describe ‘new wars’. See Kaldor (1999), pp. 2-3; Note that Asymmetric response to RMA means a denial to accept the rules of war that have been set by those actors that master RMA. See e.g. Krepinevich (1994), p. 20. Also traditional methods of guerrilla warfare within a long timeframe has been conceptualised as an asymmetric response to the RMA exploitation strategy of the developed west (particularly the US). Operations in Somalia, Haiti, and Chechnya have been conceptualised as asymmetric conflicts where RMA – or at least a gap in the technology of war between the belligerents in the case of Chechnya – has not led to the outcome that the post-Gulf War RMA theorising has in many cases presumed. In addition, the recent wars in Afghanistan (2001->) and Iraq (2003->) have cast a shadow over the optimistic RMA propositions of the possibilities to reach a quick victory by relying on high-technology military systems and equivalent forces. See Raitasalo and Sipilä (2004).

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rundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and East-Timor) have directed the evolution of the discourse. Although humanitarian reasons have not been sufficient for the promulgation of a general western strategy of military interventions, the western states have become under severe pressures to do something militarily in order to stop or contain large-scale human rights violations. The case of Darfur (Sudan) is the most recent example of this.

The fifth post-Cold War era discourse of war is related to the process of the *privatisation of war*. While the discourses of new wars and asymmetric wars have mostly been focusing on the ‘other’ side of war – i.e. non-state actors as belligerents and non-traditional means of war – the growth of the privatised military industry in the wake of the Cold War has been mostly a western phenomenon.<sup>13</sup> This despite the fact that a large fraction of the ‘services’ of private military firms related to providing security and even waging war have been executed in the third world.

The post-Cold War outsourcing of traditional military missions for improved effectiveness and lower costs have been connected to the culmination of declining defence budgets and the increased need to harness high technology systems as modernisation has been deemed essential. In addition, related to the end of the Cold War, the rising frequency and destruction caused by new wars, and the equivalent change in the ‘nature’ of civil wars have increased the business possibilities of privately operated military companies. This development has been connected to the publicly expressed ‘need’ for humanitarian interventions in ‘difficult’ locations and situations that have been only vaguely – if at all – connected to the security interests of the intervening parties. Together these developments have caused a shift – partial, but still a shift – in focus of war from the traditional referent object of state-operated military establishment toward the private sector. Thus the processes of privatisation, outsourcing, and competition have been linked to the proposals concerning modernisation and transformation of the defence establishments on the one hand, and the rewriting of the post-Cold War era western definitions of war on the other hand.

While the trend of shifting supporting military missions to the private sector has been under way at least for a decade, it has been during the recent US-led campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq that have publicly surfaced the *increased scope and domain* of the privatisation of war. This means that ‘new’ mission-types have been ‘transferred’ to the private sector – among others military training, logistical support, protection duties, and ultimately actual fighting – while at the same time increasing the share of privately executed missions vis-à-vis the missions carried out by the ‘actual’ militaries. As *The Guardian* reported in December 2003, “Private corporations have penetrated western warfare so deeply that they are now the second biggest contributor to coalition forces in Iraq after the Pentagon ... the proportion of contracted security personnel in the firing line is 10 times greater than during the first Gulf War [1991].”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, a 2002 concluded study revealed “the existence of at least 90 private military companies that have operated in 110 countries worldwide.”<sup>15</sup>

Thus, by the turn of the millennium, five ‘new’ discourses of war had started to redefine the Cold War era institution of war – tacitly as during the 1990s western governments

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<sup>13</sup> E.g. Singer (2004).

<sup>14</sup> Traynor (2003).

<sup>15</sup> Making a Killing: The Business of War (2002).

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started cautiously to adjust to the emerging reality of the post-Cold War era warfare. These five discourses are:

- 1) the discourse of the end of the Cold War,
- 2) **the discourse of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA),**
- 3) the discourse of new wars – ethnic-religious conflicts by mostly non-state actors – which has been related to an asymmetric approach to warfare,
- 4) the discourse of military crisis management and humanitarian interventions – as a western ‘necessity’ in order to dam the rising tide of new wars and to curtail their brutal effects,
- 5) the discourse of the privatisation of war – the outsourcing of traditional military tasks to privately managed companies in order to streamline national defence establishments.

By September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, then, the shared western definition of war had already undergone some transformation – at least if the Cold War era institution of war is conceptualised as the reference point for the ‘emergence’ and ‘development’ of the five post-Cold War era discourses of war. This transformation had occurred on at least three areas of shared understandings related to war within the west. First, threats to be encountered with physical violence – war – shifted from traditional state-organised mechanized armed forces towards ‘new’ non-state actors using asymmetric means. Warlords, clans, ethnic groups, and criminal organisations were all included in the list of potential adversaries in the post-Cold War era new wars and humanitarian interventions.

Second, the shared western conceptualisations related to the nature of the post-Cold War era war shifted from defence of territory-missions towards humanitarian interventions and military crisis management operations. With the Soviet threat gone, the west could and indeed had to start contemplating an additional rationale for the maintenance and development of armed forces. *The possibilities of emerging military (RMA) technologies and the increasing need for humanitarian military missions led to the western emphasis on the precise application of military force, minimal collateral damage, and zero friendly casualties.* In addition, private contractors have started to rise in standing in the western war fighting force. The ‘renegotiated’ new legitimate goals and means of war mean that today an individual soldier can more ‘easily’ cause strategic-level outcomes. Similarly, potential adversaries of the west have gained new strategic-level ‘tools’ as amounting collateral damage and civilian casualties strain any western war effort. And as the American experience in Somalia showed, few friendly casualties may be enough to abort an ongoing military mission.

*Third, concerning the shared western understandings related to the constitutive elements of military power, the American sponsored RMA logic best describes the ‘new’ means through which actors can ameliorate or sustain their relative power positions within the international ‘ranking’ of military power.* Small, professional forces ready for expeditionary warfare is highlighted in the estimations of post-Cold War era military power. This has not only been ‘caused’ by the emergence of the American dominated RMA discourse, but also by the changing nature of military threats and the nature of western military engagements throughout the 1990s and after. So-called RMA capabilities provide states with increased opportunities in the new post-Cold War era wars of choice – when public opinion and support are vital for the sustained execution of operations in faraway theatres.

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*Bellum Americanum – The Global War on Terror*

By the time of the 9/11 attacks in the United States, the Cold War era institution of war had already gone through a process of incremental change. This became apparent in the brief analysis of western security and defence strategies after the demise of the Cold War. The conduct of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the subsequent response to them has been described in similar terms than the tectonic shift from the Cold War era into the post-Cold War epoch – at least in the United States. As the 9/11 Commission Report stated,

“In the post-9/11 world, threats are defined more by the fault lines within societies than by territorial boundaries between them. ... National security *used to be* considered by studying foreign frontiers, weighing opposing groups of states, and measuring industrial might. To be dangerous, an enemy had to muster large armies. Threats emerged slowly, often visibly, as weapons were forged, armies conscripted, and units trained and moved into place.”<sup>16</sup>

The US Senate and House of Representatives responded quickly to the 9/11 attacks by passing a joint resolution concerning the “Authorisation for Use of Military Force” on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2001. In the name of self-defence and in order to protect US citizens home and abroad, the resolution noted that:

“[T]he President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, *organizations, or persons* he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.”<sup>17</sup>

President George W. Bush declared the War on Terror on September 20<sup>th</sup> 2001 in his address before a joint session of the Congress. As a response to the 9/11 attacks, the first military phase of the War on Terror commenced in Afghanistan. This took place in the beginning of October 2001 – with UN Security Council approval. Although the attack on Afghanistan was claimed to be justified on the grounds of finding Osama bin Laden and getting rid of the Taliban regime – the agents responsible for the training of international terrorists – the first battle of the War on Terror was rather traditional in nature: military campaign against a state-agent. After this immediate reaction to the 9/11 attacks started to lose momentum on the ground – because of the ‘victory’ achieved by the end of 2001 – the longer term American strategy for waging the War on Terror started to emerge.

Already in January 2002 president Bush coined the “axis of evil” consisting of Iran, Iraq, and North Korea. Terrorism was connected to weapons of mass destruction, and moreover to traditional state agents. The rogue states of the 1990s became transferred to the discourse of War on Terror:

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<sup>16</sup> The 9/11 Commission Report – Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (2004), pp. 361-362; Note also that still in June 2001 US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asserted that in the post-Cold War era “the new and different threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have not yet fully emerged, but they are there.” After three months the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century emerged. See Rumsfeld (2001).

<sup>17</sup> Senate Joint Resolution 23 (2001).

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“*Weapons of mass destruction* pose a grave danger. ... Some *rogue states*, including several that support terrorism, already possess WMD and are seeking even greater capabilities as tools of coercion. ... For *terrorists*, WMD would provide the ability to kill large numbers of our people without warning. ...”<sup>18</sup>

Advocating in favour of attacking Iraq in the fall of 2002, president Bush relied on the ‘logic’ related to the risk of catastrophic international terrorism, but presented his preferred policy option in a rather traditional way: military offensive against an old state-level adversary: Iraq.

“America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, *we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun, that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.* ... Understanding the threats of our time, knowing the designs and deceptions of the Iraqi regime, *we have every reason to assume the worst, and we have an urgent duty to prevent the worst from occurring.*”<sup>19</sup>

Within a year of the 9/11 attacks, the far-reaching influences of the American promulgated War on Terror were beginning to emerge. These were explicitly codified in the National Security Strategy-document, made public in September 2002. At the core of the American War on Terror were the following four points:

- 1) Terrorism is a military threat [although not solely a military threat],
- 2) It is acceptable and even necessary to use military force against rogue states in order to defeat terrorists and to prevent terrorists from gaining access to WMDs,
- 3) As the stakes are high, pre-emptive military action is acceptable and in certain circumstances even preferable,
- 4) Unilateral use of military force is acceptable if others are not willing/capable of neutralising the US-defined threat.

The American defined global War on Terror has thus been presented in an ambivalent manner: on the one hand, terrorism is the gravest threat requiring states to reconfigure their doctrines on the use of military force and to transform their armed forces. Terrorist organisations and even individual terrorists have been added to the list of military threats in addition to states – nowadays mainly under the labels of failed (failing) states and rogue states. Similarly, there has been a convergence in the conceptualisations of war and crime – the internal and external realms of security.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, the very nature of war is purported to change. On the other hand, the use of military force ‘within’ the global War on Terror have been conceptualised according to the traditional – Cold War era – formula of states combating each other on the battlefield. *The abstract risk of terrorism has thus facilitated the attempt to rewrite the rules for the use of military force, but this rewriting has still reverted to the traditional state-centric formula.* The ‘new’ US-proposed rules for the use of military force in the post-9/11 era – according to the American discourse of War on Terror – could be crystallised in the following manner: *pre-emptive use of military force against rogue states in order to access the scourge of terrorism – unilaterally if necessary – is legitimate after the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001.* The American need to alter the international rules concerning legiti-

<sup>18</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (2002), pp. 2150-2151.

<sup>19</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (2002), p. 1718.

<sup>20</sup> Lutterbeck (2004), p. 63.

mate use of force were made explicit with the invasion of Iraq without UNSC approval after having been trying to get that approval for months.

There are at least two compelling reasons why the practical execution of American War on Terror has reverted to rather traditional state-centric scheme. First, although the discourse of War on Terror proposes a ‘new’ kind of war – an indefinitely ongoing war against terrorists – the legacy of the past still has a firm grip on today’s organising principle of the international system’s structure. The globe is still territorially divided among states and any war against non-state agents is bound to undermine the sovereignty of one or several states. Second, by focusing on state agents, the declared War on Terror is easier to comprehend – particularly by the domestic general publics. A state-centric War on Terror can rely upon centuries long tradition of war – states battling each other in the battlefield. At the same time, *focusing upon states directly and on non-state agents in a more indirect way, enables the US to define war in a way that offers a promise of victory*: the collapse of the formally organised opposing armed forces and the toppling of a hostile regime can be interpreted as *signs of victory*. Defining victory in a war against non-state actors that most of the time cannot be seen or even properly identified is an insurmountable task. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that War on Terror against a traditional state agent can turn into an asymmetric conflict or a ‘quagmire’ – making the definition of a victory difficult. As the United States has recently found out in Iraq, defeating opposing formally organised armed forces and toppling the adversary’s regime is not enough to qualify for a victory. Senator Harry Reid stated this bluntly, commenting the prolonging war in Iraq in 2005:

Thus, what in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 started as the promulgation of a “new war of the 21st century”, has since then become more closely associated with the traditional state-centric conceptualisations of war. This does not mean that the US-defined War on Terror is a reproduced ‘version’ of the Cold War institution of war. Rather, it is the latest manifestation of [incremental] transformation in the institution of war. The ‘nature’ of the post-Cold War era institution of war had already been transformed by the identified five discourses of war. War on Terror has been build upon the ‘foundation’ of these overlapping and partially contradictory discourses of war – all challenging the Cold War institution of war to a certain degree.

*From the perspective of the armed forces, the American discourse on War on Terror is explicitly linked to the leading military power discourse of the 1990s – the Revolution in Military Affairs.* Accordingly, this new kind of war requires a revolution in the military as war becomes protracted; conducted within the territory of many states; and directed against targets that need to be engaged rapidly, precisely, and effectively by means of new weapons and related innovative means of using them. According to President Bush, the need to transform the US Armed Forces was obvious before the “dividing line” of September the 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. Already in 1999 he noted – concerning the possibilities of rewriting the essence of war through the exploitation of advanced military technology:

“My third goal is to take advantage of *a tremendous opportunity* – given few nations in history – to extend the current peace into the far realm of the future. *A Chance to project America’s peaceful influence, not just across the world, but across the years. This opportunity is created by a revolution in the technology of war.* ... This revolution per-

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fectly matches the strengths of our country – the skill of our people and the superiority of our technology. *The best way to keep peace is to redefine war on our terms.*<sup>21</sup>

In order to succeed in the new kind of war after 9/11 – the War on Terror – new thinking and new modes of warfare seemed even more pressing than before. And according to President Bush, this could be delivered by the Revolution in Military Affairs.

“We are a nation at war. America must understand we’re at war. ... This generation of Armed Forces has been given two difficult tasks, fighting and winning a war and, at the same time, *transforming our military to win the new kind of war.* ... *Defeating this enemy [terrorism] requires fighting a different kind of war,* what we call the first war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ... a war we are going to win.”<sup>22</sup>

“America is required once again to change the way our military thinks and fights. ... Yet we are finding new tactics and new weapons to attack and defeat them. This *revolution in our military is only beginning, and it promises to change the face of battle.* ... an innovative doctrine and high-tech weaponry can shape and then dominate an unconventional conflict.”<sup>23</sup>

The explicit American definition of war within the discourse on War on Terror departs radically from the Cold War era conceptualisations. Waging war against terrorist organisations and even individual terrorists like Osama bin Laden is very different from the Cold War era military preparations against Soviet invasion. The changing nature of war within the discourse of War on Terror is also implicitly expressed in a shift from a threat-based conceptualisation of international system towards a risk-based set of possible future scenarios. In order for the threat not to materialise, pre-emptive wars against ‘observed’ risks need to be waged within the general framework of War on Terror: “[W]e must adapt the concept of imminent threat to the capabilities and objectives of today’s adversaries”<sup>24</sup> In addition, the War on Terror is global in nature. As president Bush has explained, “[n]o nation can be neutral in this conflict”.<sup>25</sup>

From the perspective of the shared western understandings of war, the American promulgated War on Terror has been problematic. What had matured under the pressures of the Cold War, and ‘survived’ even the ‘external’ challenges of the post-Cold war era – particularly how to react to the new wars after the demise of the Cold War – became challenged from ‘within’ as the Europeans have been struggling to balance between the abstract risks related to international terrorism on the one hand and the militarised American response to it on the other.

Europe has supported and been actively engaged in the process of operating against the threat of catastrophic terrorism in the aftermath of 9/11. However, with lacking military resources and different strategic imperatives vis-à-vis the US, the explicitly stated Euro-

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<sup>21</sup> Bush (1999); See also Weekly compilation of Presidential Documents (2001), p. 226 “we will begin creating the military of the future, one that takes full advantage of revolutionary new technologies. We will promote the peace by redefining the way wars will be fought.”

<sup>22</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (2002), pp. 2112-2113. My italics.

<sup>23</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (2001), pp. 1776-1777.

<sup>24</sup> National Security Strategy of the United States of America (2002), p. 15 (quote). See also p. 6 “we will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists”. On President’s preface: “America will act against such [radicals seeking to get weapons of mass destruction] emerging threats before they are fully formed.”

<sup>25</sup> Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (2001), p. 1605.

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pean responses against terrorism have focused upon ‘internal’ – not external – security instruments: cooperation in the fields of law enforcement and judicial affairs. This is not to say that the American response to 9/11 would have neglected the internal dimension of fighting terrorism. Rather, with its vast military resources, global strategic interests, and the long tradition of offensive and expeditionary warfare, the American military response to terrorism has been much more ‘visible’ and tangible than its non-military means. In the case of Europe – with almost no usable military instruments under its<sup>26</sup> control – the focus has ‘naturally’ been on the non-military side, although the European Union and NATO have taken international terrorism into their agenda also as a military threat. But as military capabilities take years and even decades to develop, the manifest European focus has for the most part been on the non-military side.

### *The Global War on Terror and NATO*

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 caused a quick NATO response: within 24 hours of the attacks, the Alliance invoked article 5 of the Washington treaty – declaring that the attacks against the United States were attacks against all the 19 member states.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, terrorism and the connected threats related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the existence and emergence of failed states within the international system became the defining threats and risks in NATO assessments. With the becoming of these new threats – ‘creating’ a new post-9/11 security environment – the logic of recreating NATO became of primary importance.<sup>28</sup>

One of the raging debates within the Alliance throughout the 1990s – the one concerning the out-of-area operations – became tamed as the post-9/11 ‘reality’ showed the dangerousness and the novelty of the threats of terrorism, WMDs, and failed/rogue states. While NATO had been engaged in out-of-area operations in Bosnia and Kosovo during the 1990s, moving beyond the continent of Europe was facilitated by the newly surfaced strategic imperative of countering terrorism in a globalised world. As threats and risks have become global in nature, the ‘logical’ response has been to move beyond the geographically defined regional approach to security.<sup>29</sup> This new perspective of international security and NATO’s role in the world facilitated a reinterpretation of the Alliance’s needed military capabilities and the timeframe for acquiring lacking capabilities. While this reinterpretation was deemed necessary already before 9/11, the impetus provided by the rapid reinterpretation of the post-Cold War era due to the terrorist attacks of 2001 has been clearly visible.<sup>30</sup> This momentum for change within NATO has been expressed most explicitly through the process of transforming NATO.

When the explicit reinterpretation of the international strategic environment and the role of NATO in it were called for in the aftermath of the 9/11, there were already two ongoing American discursive ‘projects’ that the NATO had and could take into account in moulding its own perspective upon the post-9/11 world. First of these American projects was the exploitation of RMA for transforming the US military establishment. This project had been embraced for several years within the US. In addition, the US had pressed for a more intensive RMA exploitation strategy within NATO – appealing to the lessons of the Gulf War, Bosnia, and Kosovo. The second project – still in its very

<sup>26</sup> This refers to national governments, NATO, and the EU.

<sup>27</sup> NATO Press Release (2001a).

<sup>28</sup> See e.g. de Hoop Scheffer (2004a); NATO Press Release (2004).

<sup>29</sup> de Hoop Scheffer (2004b).

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. NATO Press Release (2001b); NATO Press Release (2001c).

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formative ‘phase’ – was the War on Terror, declared on 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 by George W. Bush. This project was maturing and advancing rapidly as president Bush promulgated almost daily the new nature of this new war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and prepared the American public for this war – first in Afghanistan and after its ‘successful completion’ in Iraq. The rapid and determined response of the George W. Bush administration concerning the War on Terror was affected by the fact that the destructive attacks took place on US soil. This was conceptualised through the precedent of Pearl Harbour and turning the territory of the United States into a battlefield.<sup>31</sup>

The combined effect of the American declaration of the War on Terror and the NATO invocation of article 5 of the Washington treaty placed some of the American allies into an uneasy position. As was promulgated by George W. Bush, the declared War on Terror would last indefinitely and those not on the American side would be against it. This meant, in political terms, that the post-9/11 need for showing solidarity and support for the US administration in its efforts to undermine future terrorist capabilities, NATO allies were ‘tying’ themselves to the process of waging war against the terrorists. This despite the reluctance of some of the member-states of the Alliance in committing military troops to the War on Terror. The secondary role of NATO in the Afghanistan campaign did not totally erase this logical connection of the NATO members to the American-led militarised response to terrorism. Anyhow, after being declared, the American global War on Terror became something that all NATO members had to align themselves to. While the American approach to global terrorism has been through the concept of ‘war’ – though also noting the multidimensional character of this war by emphasising political, economic, military and diplomatic means – in Europe this has been more through the concepts of ‘fight’, ‘campaign’, or ‘struggle’. The secretary general of NATO did espouse the characterisation of War on Terror at the North Atlantic Council meeting at the end of 2001. He did, however, couch this military outlook to terrorism by accentuating the political and economical aspect of this war:

*“NATO is one player in the war against terrorism. ...”*<sup>32</sup>

In a more elaborated way, the Secretary General of NATO formulated the changing role of the alliance during the year 2002:

*“The context for our security is changing, and everybody in the security business has to adapt. What NATO's critics do not seem to know is that we are already on the job. For instance, the *Alliance is becoming the primary means for developing the role of armed forces to defeat the terrorist threat.*”*<sup>33</sup>

*“Defense against terrorism was already one of the new tasks highlighted in our 1999 Strategic Concept. Now it's front and center - a main focus of our activities.”*<sup>34</sup>

When the initial military responses to 9/11 were formulated and begun to be implemented – attacking the Taliban regime in Afghanistan on 7 October 2001 – the Bush administration had received wide-ranging political support and expressions of solidarity

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<sup>31</sup> E.g. Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (2001), p. 1776.

<sup>32</sup> Robertson (2001) (my italics).

<sup>33</sup> Robertson (2002a) (my italics).

<sup>34</sup> Robertson (2002b) (my italics).

throughout the world. Within and without NATO, many states<sup>35</sup> were willing to send military forces to the war in Afghanistan – a war of self-defence according to UN Security Council resolution.<sup>36</sup> Based on the Bush administration’s decision to allow for maximum freedom of manoeuvre and to avoid the Kosovo-war type of ‘war by committee’, NATO as a transatlantic military alliance was not participating in the war against the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, while individual NATO member-states offered to commit troops to the operations. Taking into consideration the lessons of the Kosovo war – highlighting the capability gap between the US and the rest of NATO members, and the American expressed difficulties in waging war with the associated political bargaining concerning targeting and operational matters – and the obviously limited role of NATO in Afghanistan, the possibility of NATO derailment as the post-9/11 western security framework became voiced as a threat to the future significance of the Alliance.

In Prague 2002, NATO launched its process of *transforming* the alliance in order to meet the new security environment. Particularly this meant reinvigorating the process of creating European military capabilities for expeditionary operations. NRF and Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) were both directed to fulfil this objective. And both of them may also be construed to facilitate the creation of European military capabilities to counter the post-9/11 terrorist threat. The acceptance of the *NATO’s military concept for defence against terrorism* in Prague spelled out the evolving nature of terrorism and its implications for the alliance. The Concept identifies four different roles for military operations for Defence against Terrorism. According to the document these roles are:<sup>37</sup>

- Anti Terrorism, essentially defensive measures.
- Consequence Management, which is focused on dealing with, and reducing, the effects of a terrorist attack.
- Counter Terrorism, primarily offensive measures.
- Military Co-operation.

Similarly, the development of the PfP programme to confront the terrorist threat was given momentum by the 2002 Prague *Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism* – which has meant the intensification of cooperation with partner countries concerning e.g. force planning, exchange of information, development of armaments, training and exercises, and logistics.<sup>38</sup> With the Prague *Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism* the military implications of American declared War on Terror were presented to NATO’s partner countries as demands and proposals for military transformation.

While NATO as an alliance did not participate in the offensives against Afghanistan (2001 →) or Iraq (2003 →), it has since then participated in the stabilisation and reconstruction phases in both countries. The launching of the *ISAF-operation* and its subsequent enlargement to cover the whole of Afghanistan in October 2006, as well as *NATO’s Training Mission in Iraq* have both tied the alliance’s European Members (and Canada) closer to the US and its War on Terror. In addition, many NATO member states have felt the pressure to commit more troops to both operations. It is noteworthy that currently NATO troops are in actual combat situation in Afghanistan.

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<sup>35</sup> E.g. the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Turkey, Canada, and Australia. See Lansford (2002), pp. 83-107.

<sup>36</sup> See UN Security Council resolution 1368 (2001); UN Security Council resolution 1373 (2001).

<sup>37</sup> NATO’s military concept for defence against terrorism(2002).

<sup>38</sup> See Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism (2002).

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*The Global War on Terror and the European Union*

Shortly after the decision to develop the EU's assets in the field of military crisis management was taken, the effects of 9/11 – and the subsequent American declared War on Terror – were felt also in Europe. When the extraordinary European Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2001 was held in order to evaluate the effects of the terrorist attacks on the international security environment, President Bush had already declared the global War on Terror. In addition to expressing full solidarity to the United States, the European Council raised fight against terrorism into a priority of the Union. The 'external' dimension of this fight fell into the domain of CFSP:

“The Common Foreign and Security Policy will have to integrate further the fight against terrorism.”<sup>39</sup>

With a new threat of destructive terrorism facing the “open, democratic, tolerant and multicultural” western societies, the international role of the Union was to be heightened. And the means to do so were conceptualised to lie within CFSP in general and ESDP particularly:

“The fight against terrorism requires of the Union that it play a greater part in the efforts of international community to prevent and stabilise regional conflicts. ... It is by developing the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and by making the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) operational at the earliest opportunity that the Union will be most effective.”<sup>40</sup>

“[T]he *ESDP* must take fuller account of the capabilities that may be required, in accordance with the Petersberg tasks and the provisions of the Treaty, *to combat terrorism*.”<sup>41</sup>

Also the *European Security Strategy* – adopted in December 2003 – emphasised the priority assigned to the threat of terrorism. Putting aside the threat of large-scale military aggression against any Union members, the strategy raised the threat of terrorism to a pivotal place. Of the five named threats facing the Union in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, terrorism was the one that had links with all the other threats – WMDs, failing states, regional conflicts and organised crime. In the document terrorism is conceptualised as the new determinant of early 21<sup>st</sup> century threats facing Europe. In order to counter the terrorist threat – and the other non-traditional threats – new modes of operations are called for: “the first line of defence will often be abroad.” With the adoption of the *European Security Strategy*, the member states of the Union accepted the general notion of transforming national militaries in order to address new threats and included new feasible Union missions on the side of Petersberg tasks. Concerning the threat of terrorism, support for third countries in combating terrorism reflected this “wider spectrum of missions”.<sup>42</sup>

After the March 2004 Madrid terrorist attack, the member states of the Union declared solidarity to each other faced with the terrorist threat. In the spirit of the draft Treaty of the Constitution of Europe, the member states agreed to:

<sup>39</sup> Conclusions and Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting (2001).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Presidency Conclusions – Seville European Council (2002), Annex V, paragraph 6 (my italics).

<sup>42</sup> A Secure Europe In a Better World – European Security Strategy (2003). Quotes on p. 7, 12.

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“[M]obilise *all the instruments at their disposal, including military resources* to:

- prevent the terrorist threat in the territory of one of them;
- protect democratic institutions and the civilian population from any terrorist attack;
- assist a Member State or an acceding State in its territory at the request of its political authorities in the event of a terrorist attack.”<sup>43</sup>

The boost of 9/11 to the development of ESDP has not meant that the European response to terrorism would have been dominated by military action. While the EU has increased the sense of urgency related to the development of ESDP after the 9/11, the European response to the threat of international terrorism has been centred within the frameworks of police and judicial cooperation.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, within the framework of the developing defence dimension of the Union – the ESDP – the attacks of 9/11 and then Madrid provided at least a two-fold new momentum within the Union. First, it was acknowledged that the Union should play a more active role within the entire international community. Second, the already agreed-upon provisions of Helsinki, with the subsequent modification and rearticulation of them, were conceptualised to need rapid implementation and development.<sup>45</sup>

In the aftermath of Madrid bomb attacks, the Union declared its position “on combating terrorism”. While retaining a primary position on the non-military aspects of counter-terrorism or anti-terrorism, the member states agreed to “do everything within their power to combat all forms of terrorism”, taking into account the UN Charter and particularly the UN Security Council Resolution 1373, which was adopted before the American-led attack on Afghanistan 2001.<sup>46</sup> The resolution reaffirmed that the terrorist attacks of 9/11 – and all acts of international terrorism – “constitute a threat to international peace and security” and that terrorism needs to be combated by all means.<sup>47</sup>

It had been the lessons of Bosnia – particularly IFOR and SFOR – and Kosovo – the implementation of KFOR – that affected mostly the framing of the 1999 promulgated Helsinki Headline Goal and the related capability goals.<sup>48</sup> More generally the west had been confronted throughout the 1990s with a multitude of potential crisis management operations and humanitarian military missions. In order to deal with the increasing post-Cold War demand for military crisis management capabilities, the EU progressively moved towards common policies concerning defence and related capabilities, first defined on the Union level at the Helsinki European Council.

The Helsinki Headline Goal – with its implementation mechanisms – provided practical tools for the Union in the process of developing European military capabilities from the national military assets that were inherited from the Cold War. The developed European capabilities have been defined to serve the Petersberg tasks, thus making them most useful in military crisis management missions. With the attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent American launched War on Terror – and the European fight against terrorism – the new military requirements of the post-9/11 era have been somewhat different from

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<sup>43</sup> Declaration on Solidarity Against Terrorist (2004) (my italics).

<sup>44</sup> See Declaration on Combating Terrorism (2004), pp. 3-17.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> UN Security Council Resolution 1373 (2001).

<sup>48</sup> E.g. Haine (2004), p. 46.

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the accumulating lessons of the 1990s crisis management operations. Rapidly deployable effective military force has become even more highlighted during the post-9/11 era. Similarly increasing emphasis on quality instead of quantity has marked the recent efforts to develop European military capability. However, these trends of the post-9/11 era have not compromised the Union's project to generate military capabilities according to the Helsinki goals. Rather, the 2004 promulgated Headline Goal 2010 continues the development of existing and projected military capabilities and thus builds upon the preceding half-a-decade of defining and constructing European military capability.

The battlegroup concept is the most telling example of the new momentum provided by the Headline Goal 2010. Although the Helsinki formulations already contained the notion of "smaller rapid response elements available and deployable at very high readiness"<sup>49</sup>, it was not until the Franco-British initiative in early 2004 – with the adoption and development of this initiative during the first half of the same year – that quickly brought into fruition a concrete project of developing effective multinational European rapid response forces. Already in November 2004 – less than a year after the official acceptance of the European Security Strategy – it was agreed that 13 battlegroups would be committed by the member states, nine of which will be of multinational quality. Initial operational capability was set to be reached in 2005, paving the way for full operational capability in 2007.

#### *Bellum Americanum – Implications for the West*

The declaration of a global War on Terror by the Bush administration can be construed as an attempt to redefine the institution of war – particularly within the west, but also more generally throughout the international system. *War on Terror can be understood as a sustained American attempt to broaden the normative framework of legitimate use of force.* The concepts of pre-emptive – even preventive – self-defence and unilateralism symbolise this attempt. While the 'nature' of war has been changing after the demise of the Cold War – this change being expressed by the 'new' discourses of war – *the immediately post-9/11 US-defined War on Terror made an explicit and fundamental break with the traditional conceptualisations of war.* This proposed change in the institution of war was equivalent to Thomas Kuhn's notion of a paradigm change within science.<sup>50</sup> *At the time when preparations for invading Afghanistan were made in the autumn of 2001, the American discourse of War on Terror fundamentally redefined the threat to be countered with war, the legitimate goals and means of contemporary war, as well as the constitutive elements of military power.* All of these themes had become subject to redefinition with the emergence of the post-Cold War era discourses of war. However, none of these discourses has challenged the traditional conceptualisations of war to the extent that was the case with the 'first phase' of War on Terror.

The revolutionary – or paradigm changing – character related to the declaration of War on Terror was able to build upon the post-Cold War era discourses of war. Thus, *while proposing a fundamental redefinition of shared conceptualisations of war within the international system, it did so by explicitly articulating those themes related to war that had already been implicated implicitly or had explicitly been discussed in more 'moderate' fashion.* For example, moving 'below' the state in the construction of the threats

<sup>49</sup> Presidency Conclusions – Helsinki European Council (1999), Annex 1 to Annex IV.

<sup>50</sup> Kuhn (1975), p. 111 "Led by a new paradigm, scientists adopt new instruments and look in new places. Even more important, during revolutions scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before."

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necessitating the preparation for and waging of war, the discourse of War on Terror was preceded by the post-Cold War discourses of new wars, asymmetric wars, and humanitarian interventions. They had all brought non-state agents into the post-Cold War era ‘reality’ of large-scale physical violence<sup>51</sup> – although they had not moved the primary focus away from state agents and their formally organised armed forces.

What the discourse of War on Terror offered during the first six months after being declared, was to direct state-organised warfare to confront primarily non-state agents. With the fall of the Taliban regime the process of focusing on non-state agents took a turn back towards states – the process being explicitly articulated by the ‘axis of evil’ State of the Union-address in the beginning of 2002. By that time, it seems, the US administration had come to terms with the difficulties of concentrating mostly on non-state agents. Thus, the focus on terrorist organisations and even individual terrorists as most pressing threats and risks to western/American security gave way to more traditional agents – states. However, while invading Iraq became the next phase in the American War on Terror – first in the diplomatic and then in the military field – the motivating force behind this war still remained in the abstract risk of catastrophic terrorism. It just had to be put into a context that statesmen and the general public had become accustomed to – the state-centric international system. And this is where the rogue states – Iraq, Iran and North Korea – became connected to the agenda of the global War on Terror. *Rogue states, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction was a ‘cocktail’ that facilitated the traditional state-centric focus, while at the same time offered a ‘new’ outlook to international affairs and war.* In other words, the more concrete threat of rogue states and weapons of mass destruction made the abstract risk of terrorism meaningful and controllable. This way, *the potential dangers inherent in the rather ambiguous risk of catastrophic terrorism were turned into a recognisable threat that could be eliminated with war.* The combining of terrorism with rogue states and WMDs facilitates a particular definition of victory in the War on Terror. Without this move, one could not under any circumstances know whether we are winning or losing the global War on Terror.<sup>52</sup> Now we have some – though still very ambiguous – signifiers of victory in the new war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the elimination of rogue states, and recovering WMDs from the hands of rogue states and terrorist organisations.

The discourse of global War on Terror has turned the traditional distinction between war and peace – although never completely clear – into a more confused one as the ‘grey area’ of no-war and no-peace has widened between the conventional boundaries of war and peace. This has happened despite the tendency of waging war in the rather traditional state-centric terms within the broader political framework of War on Terror. Similarly, the mostly American-led definition of global War on Terror has strained the shared western understandings of war between the US and many European Countries. European member-states of NATO and the EU have acknowledged the increased threat related to catastrophic international terrorism, but their practice-related warfighting doctrines, forces, and operations have remained at a practically ‘modest’ level vis-à-vis the United States, which has invaded Afghanistan and Iraq within the framework of War on Terror. The United Kingdom has been the most prominent and active European ally to the US in the global War on Terror – taking part in the operations in Afghanistan and

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<sup>51</sup> Although Low Intensity Conflicts (LICs) accounted for millions of deaths during the Cold War, they were not at the core of western (and eastern) conceptualisation concerning the reality of war).

<sup>52</sup> With the sole focus on terrorist incidents, the lack of such incidents could not represent ‘victory’ since one can never know for certain why something has not happened – although during the Cold War deterrence theorising purported to have the answer to why a nuclear war did not break out.

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Iraq – and has tried to bridge the gap between the American and the [continental] European diverging conceptualisations of how, when, and where to use military force in the name of War on Terror.

There are not so much divergences between the European and the American understanding of threats requiring the preparations for war at the general level. Both conceptualise *terrorism as the main threat* to security in the globalising post-Cold War and post-9/11 world – although the connection between war and anti-terrorist operations is clearly looser in Europe. At the level of threats, the different interpretations become visible when analysing the understandings concerning threats and the ‘required’ practical policies needed to tackle this threat – terrorism – on both sides of the Atlantic. This means that the *shared conceptualisations of the nature of war – legitimate goals and means of war – have become contested*. The post-9/11 American declared policy of assertive use of military force pre-emptively, and if necessary unilaterally, has not been accepted in Europe generally. This became painstakingly clear between autumn of 2002 and spring of 2003, when the west was contemplating and debating the case for attacking Iraq. With diverging conceptualisations about for what purposes to use military force and when, the Europeans and Americans share understandings of what constitutes military power among agents – still mostly states.

Although there has never been a RMA frenzy in Europe, *the military capabilities ‘needed’ for today’s and potential future military missions are conceptualised according to the American dominated discourse of the Revolution in Military Affairs*. And both within NATO and the EU, national armed forces have been assigned with transformation tasks accordingly. Smaller, interoperable, and more mobile forces with information technology-intensive equipment is the way for any state to increase its power position in the international ranking of military power. Large and static military formations *à la* Cold War have been losing their significance in the wake of the Cold War – and after the first ‘techno war’ fought in the Persian Gulf in 1991.

From the perspective of this paper, the War on Terror is thus ‘only’ one discourse among many in the post-Cold war era process of redefining war. It has been an ‘influential’ discourse, however. In its name hundreds of thousands of soldiers have been sent to the battlefield and post-war stabilisation and reconstruction duties from dozens of countries. For the many states that have not ‘accepted’ the American defined terms of War on Terror, the reality of this new war of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has still been something that has had to be taken into account. The reluctance of many [western] states to ‘accept’ War on Terror on the terms provided by the George W. Bush administration has meant that *so far* the American War on Terror has not constituted a Kuhnian revolution in the ‘reality’ of war. Rather, War on Terror is best understood as one influential discourse of War, in a wider body of overlapping and at least partially contradictory discourses that define war in a manner that is never totally unambiguous or unproblematic. Moreover, War on Terror is an American promulgated definition of war in the aftermath of 9/11 – in a situation where the end of the Cold War had already a decade earlier ‘opened up’ the sedimented shared western understanding of war.

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