DRAFT Background Paper for Working Group 2:

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CAUSES OF WAR

By Alexander Nikitin

IT is over 2000 years since Thucydides wrote of the Peloponnesian war (431-404 BC): "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta"[1]. Studying wars ever since historians have frequently reached similar conclusions about the key characteristics of the political and economic causes of war.

War can be characterised as a critical stage of contradiction between political actors in the form of violent armed struggle. As von Clausewitz pointed out, war is a continuation of politics through additional means. War is always a clash of interests. In most cases such confronting interests are of a political nature, which means they relate to various forms of power and domination of some political actors over others. But in their turn, political interests are often motivated by or rooted in the economy, distribution and redistribution of various resources, money, industrial potential or territory.

There are almost no purely "political" or purely "economic" wars. "Economic wars" are also intensive clashes of economic interests, only resolved through mostly economic means (and almost always with the involvement of political moves such as economic sanctions, territorial blockade, embargoes, etc.). Quite often "economic wars" could lead to or co-act with armed violence - full-scale war.

There are traditional political schools of thought that consider conflicts as being unnecessary exceptions from otherwise harmonious social surroundings. At the same time, modern political science rather recognises conflicts of interest in the political "universe" as inevitable and even natural. Conflicts of interest are unavoidable because they proceed from and reflect differences in social positions, roles, power, capabilities, and characteristics of the political actors. Conflicts of interests are a reverse side of political and economic diversity. But conflicts of interests should not be confused with the conflicts of subjects, actors themselves, such as individuals, social groups, states and alliances of states.

Conflicts of interests can be manifested in various forms, from the irreconcilable (resolvable only through the elimination or destruction of one of the conflicting sides) to the negotiable and compromise-oriented. Conflicts of interests are inevitable in any social setting, but what is avoidable is the violent, armed form of conflict resolution.

It is not worthwhile considering political differences as such (differences of political interests or politically-manifested economic interests) to be the deepest cause of war. Such a definition makes the "adversary" unbeatable: to eliminate the causes of war would be impossible, in the same way that it is impossible to eliminate political or economic diversity.

The political causes of war lie not in the difference (or even clash) of interests but in the elaborated political will; the readiness, organisational and psychological ability of one, some, or all sides in the conflict to try to resolve the conflict violently, to gain more than is achievable through dialogue, limited pressure and compromise. And that is already something that could and should be worked on.

Correcting von Clausewitz

ALBERT Einstein and Sigmund Freud, two great minds of the passing century in their known exchange of letters expressed quite opposite views on the ability of the humankind to abolish war as a phenomenon. Freud skeptically stressed that aggressiveness is an in-built characteristic of a human nature. It cannot be deprived and separated from man as such, and a war is a kind of converted instinct behavior.

Freud's only recipe was not to suppress this "natural aggressiveness", but rather de-form, re-shape in less brutal forms through imposing moral and cultural limitations. Society and culture work as an oversized "super-Ego" which is able (at least partially) to control and regulate manifestations of aggression.

Comparable views on the inevitability and "natural" character of wars as a kind of "social struggle for survival" were expressed and developed by the social-Darwinist school of thought, and later by proponents of sociobiology (G. Wilson and others) so fashionable after the mid-century.

Actually, from the methodological point of view the majority of schools of thought, social and political theories considering the causes of war are based in this or that way upon the assumption that war is naturally rooted in human, or social nature. Some modern approaches add a new colour to this palette and root modern hi-tech war in the scientific and technical progress itself. They stress that industrial and post-industrial development create a disproportionally grown demand for

resources, and simultaneously produce an abundance of effective means of destruction and fighting power. An overused argument that nuclear weapons (as well as powder and guns) could not be dis-invented is borrowed from the same line of reasoning.

Existing approaches could be summarized as in Table 1.

The assumption that war is rooted in the natural characteristics of human or social reality is still much wider spread than the alternative pacifist views. Of course, pacifism in itself is also quite pluralistic and consists of various historically, politically and philosophically different paradigms. But what unites all pacifist approaches in contrast to the theories of the "natural causes" of war is precisely a principal belief that war is an <u>unnatural</u> phenomenon. Social progress and scientific and technical development are not necessarily interconnected with war, as people can continue using less brutal means to overcome controversies.

Table 1: **Causes of War**
(Methodological Approaches)

| "WAR IS NATURAL" Theories (Theories of natural causes of war) Wars have natural causes, reasons. These causes are built-in human and/or social nature. Causes are indestructible, thus wars are unavoidable. | PACIFISM Theories (Theories of unnatural essence of war) War has no "eternal" or natural causes. War is a violation of human and social nature. It could and should be abandoned. |

HUMAN NATURE as a main cause of war.
In-born, instinctive aggressiveness in an individual is an unavoidable parameter of human nature. War is biologically approved. It is a continutation and a development of a "struggle of species for survival' from a biological world to a social world.
(Freudism, neo-Freudism, etology, Social-Darwinism, sociobiology, etc.)

SOCIAL NATURE is a main cause of war.
Structure of social relations, group contradictions, division and sub-division of humankind into ethnic entities, nation-states, alliances and empires presuppose wars as one of "natural" and functional ways of social interaction between them. Some wars are more justified and functional, some less, but as a whole wars are a "dialectical" way of resolving contradictions. Progress and social development sometime occurs in the form of wars. Wars could be modified, controlled, but could not and even should not be eliminated as a social phenomenon.
(Hegelianism, Marxism, Leninism, Trotskyism, national liberation ideoloies. Modern structural-functionalism and system theories in political science)

TECHNICAL (MAN-MADE) NATURE is a main cause of modern and future wars.
Scientific and technological progress, industrialization and post-industrial development created, firstly, great demand for resources and redistribution of them, and secondly, huge arsenals of modern means of destruction and fantastic abilities of a modern man to influence through technology (weaponry, computers, communication & propaganda) other men and states. Scientific thought couldn't be stopped. Weapons and dual-use technologies couldn't be dis-invented.

Modern technologically supported wars (as well as futuristic nuclear, space, electronic and so on wars) are a "natural" and unavoidable companion of a scientific and technological progress.

The United Nations Charter in the middle of the century codified the unacceptability of war as a means of normal politics. At the same time the UN left two "holes" in this rule: the unquestionable right for self-defence (which is used as a justification for the continuation of the existence and development of the military machines of the states and creating new weaponry), and the right of the

international community (embodied by the UN) to interfere with military means, under certain circumstances, in the affairs of its member-nations.

The advisory opinion of the International Court elaborated in the mid-1990s on the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons also left quite a wide area of exceptions, allowing nations to rely upon nuclear weapons if the very existence of the state is in danger.

The legal "assault" on the phenomenon of war is to be continued. War should be negated, banned by law (national and international), and banished from culture. An attitude to war which considers it as unnatural and thus unacceptable, and as an uncivilized means of social activity, should be cultivated. The phenomenon of war in all its manifestations should be surrounded by alienation and cultural, legal and social negation.

The time has come to correct von Clausewitz: *war is an unacceptable continuation of politics by illegal means!*

Wars: who gets what, when and how?

ALL wars are born from a contradiction of interests. What are people and nations fighting for, what do they try to redistribute? Rephrasing G. Laswell: who, by waging war, gets what, when and how? The various causes of war, rooted in material, social and cultural worlds could be grouped and presented in the form of the following typology:

Table 2: **Causes of War (Typology)**

	Source of contradiction and controversy	*Causes of war (sphere where specific causes of war originate from)*	*Suject of change and redistribution through war*
Material world	**RESOURCES**	Natural resources	Territory, water, sea resources, soil (better lands), mineral resources, etc.
		Industrial (economic) resources	Industrial infrastructure, sources of energy, cities and ports, financial resources, manpower, etc.
		Post-industrial resources	Information, computer networks; advanced technologies, hi-tech and scientific resources; hi-tech military (nuclear, space, missile) capabilities

	Source of contradiction and controversy	Causes of war (sphere where specific causes of war originate from)	Suject of change and redistribution through war
Social world	**POWER**	Internal (intra-state) politics	Redistribution of power between groups, classes, elites, clans, leaders; federative relations, self-determination of regions: level of democratization, forms of governing and political regimes
		International (inter-state) politics	Borders and territory, access to all kinds of resources; alliances, treaties and legal obligations; integration/disintegration
		Ethnic relations	Level of autonomy, political representation of minorities, structure of governing, access of ethnic groups and nations to power and resources, self-determination, secession
Cultural-spiritual world	**IDENTITY, INFLUENCE**	Culture	Protection from unwanted external influences, proportions in mixture of cultures, controversy between culture of rulers and culture of populous, etc.
		Religion	Conversion/reconversion, mainstream vs. sects, redistribution of power and influence between religious and civil state leaders
		Ideologies	Access of social, ethnic, cultural groups and leaders to minds and more material resources

Of course in reality most wars occur on the basis of a combination of various causes and immediate reasons. The fight for natural, economic and post-industrial resources in most cases is interfaced with political interstate contradictions, as well as cultural and ideological contradictions which often represent on the surface deeper rooted political and economic reasons. But for analytical purposes the typology of the causes of war helps to work with and compare concrete conflicts and their roots.

"Just Wars" Are there causes and goals which justify the means?

M<small>ANY</small> existing approaches while differing in details are united by the attitude that, in principle, war is functional. Almost every nation and almost each methodological school select and specify "positive" or "acceptable" exceptions from the "politically correct" criticism of a war. Some introduce the notion of a "revolutionary war" where "goals justify means". Religious crusades of various kinds also bless bloody means in the name of holy goals. "National liberation" movements, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, elaborated argumentation for another category of "just wars", referring, among others, to the slogans, rhetoric and logic of the "founding fathers" of the secessionist American revolution.

Theories of "just wars" could thus be historically grouped into several types:

- Religious crusades and wars with supporting ideologies and religious dogmas;
- Revolutionary wars (wars justified by the goals of democratization, change towards a more just or relatively progressive social, political or economic order);
- National liberation and self-determination wars (argumentation is elaborated within various nationalist and ethnic ideologies);
- Self-defence wars and military actions (legally justified by Article 51 of the UN Charter);
- War waged by the international community (represented by the UN) against an aggressive or "unjust" nation or regime (legally justified by Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and used in practice, for example, against Iraq, and under the name of "peace enforcement" in other parts of the globe);
- Humanitarian intervention (interference by the international community with military means against a regime abusing human and ethnic rights on a massive scale or in situations where ethnic cleansing and genocide take place).

One more type of the modern justification of a war action could be found in the theory of nuclear deterrence under the name of "retaliatory nuclear strike". At first glance this is just an application of the traditional right for self-defence as part of nuclear strategy. But it is a preliminary fear of retaliation that deters the potential aggressor from the first nuclear strike. If a first strike occurs, retaliatory devastation of the other nations cities does not in practice serve as self-defence (insofar as in most strategies second strike is counter-value, not counter-force, e.g. is directed not against empty missile silos but against the population, cities and industrial infrastructure). So the "just" character of the retaliatory nuclear strike should also be placed under a question mark.

It is not possible to eliminate war effectively while setting aside in parentheses so many "untouchable" types of war actions and armed violence. It is also to be understood that in most wars at least one side (if not both) consider "their side" of

the war to be "justified". To eliminate most types of war it is necessary to reconsider notions of "just", "holy", "democratizing", "humanitarian" and other types of wars. Finally, there should be no exceptions for the agreement among nations on the illegal and unacceptable character of any war.

Globalization and Interference of the International Community

HISTORICALLY, wars have occurred mostly between nation-states or groups (alliances) of states. The globalization of political and economic processes in the second half of the twentieth century, growing inter-state integration in some parts of the world, and the establishment of regional and global (United Nations) political institutions, has led to new situations in which wars are considered not as the local business of the warring parties, but as an open challenge to the international community. Many international structures including the UN globally, OSCE in Europe, ASEAN in Asia, OAU in Africa, CIS in Eurasia, have positive experiences of not only interfering and stopping or seizing local wars, but also of providing mediation, negotiation, and economic assistance, thus directing conflict resolution from violent to non-violent means. Further internationalization of conflict resolution is an important path towards a world where use of armed violence by states or social groups would be not a "normal" state of affairs as in past times, but a crime against the international community. And the international community should learn to disengage warring parties and provide alternative non-violent means of conflict resolution.

If two political (or social, ethnic, national, cultural) entities are self-organized into two separate systems (say, nation-states) their conflicts and controversies have more chances to convert into the format of a war. That is because on the level of relations between nation-states, between large cultures, alliances or empires there is not a strong and clear arbitrary force to mediate in disputes, and international law has only a semi-obligatory character.

If, alternatively, conflicting entities are mixed inside one and the same self-organized system (say, a federative state), then contradictions and conflicts will be tackled through means of the internal regulation of a state, culture or a *socium*, and such an arsenal is much more developed. Normally, there are authorities interested in regulating and ending hostilities, and such authorities have some arsenal of administrative, legal, and economic sanctions. It is worth considering as a working example that the Dayton agreements based conflict resolution between conflicting ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina on the principle of uniting and mixing them in one state, rather then giving to each ethnicity a separate statehood status.

Both the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, while being far from truly democratic federations, still provided various mechanisms for regulation and

balancing between the interests of its ethnic parts. Further back in the history of Europe numerous examples could be found of how feudal separatism and the endless wars of kingdom-states have been overcome through the creation of larger nation-states with stronger central mediatory authorities. Of course then the question arises as to what degree central authorities were democratic and how to provide checks and balances between the autonomy of regions and the power of the centre. But that was a task for a next step in a social progress.

The contradictions of warring parties could only be reconciled through the system of going up one level. In the historic perspective contradictions between nation-states in the form of wars could be reconciled and regulated through the developing transnational institutions of the world community, e.g. through moving one step up in the social organization of society.

Supranational mediatory and regulatory authorities already exist and effectively help to provide peaceful solutions to controversies between the member-states of the European Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States, NATO, ASEAN and other regional entities. But the former risky juxtaposition between the Warsaw Pact and NATO which balanced on the edge of war for decades showed that regional integration is important but still only a partial and transitory solution.

Economic Disparities and Inequality

THE economic gap between rich and poor in every society, as well as between rich countries and poor countries, is enlarging faster than we may think. The GNP of 15% of the richest countries amounts to 80% of the total world figure, while that of 20% of the poorest countries is only about 2%. There are countries where GNP is decreasing, not only African countries but also many new independent states born from the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. A convincing comparison could be made were a researcher to create and combine two maps using UN data: a) the distribution of countries according to number of calories consumed per person; and b) the distribution of countries by population growth. Obviously, there is a tropical zone of under-development. At its borders there are areas of particularly striking contrast. In these areas societies with high living standards and low birth rates are next to other societies with the reverse correlation: very poor living standards and a fast growing population. Such lines of contrast can be found between Mexico (Central America) and the USA; between Europe and Northern Africa; between present Russia and South-western Asia; and between Australia and Indonesia.

Some analysts claim that there exists a direct correlation between these "lines of disparity" and exploding conflicts: Afghanistan and Chechnya, Iran and Iraq, East Timor, significant legal and illegal immigration from Mexico and Caribbean area

to the USA, Moslem-Western clashes - all of these correspond to the above drawn scheme.

Political globalization motivates some small and medium-sized ethnic groups and nationalities to assert their identity, to defend strongly their local cultures and traditions, but at the same time to develop racism, xenophobia, exclusion, violence, and intolerance of "others". Moreover, the industrialized countries, the richest and most powerful ones, under the pressure of powerful lobbies (oil, industries, weapons, diamonds, drugs, etc.) could well be able, with their sophisticated weapons, to preserve their advantages by using violence. It is only weak countries that are punished by the large powers for violation of conventions and "rules," while great powers change rules when they need the freedom to violate them.

Competition for Natural Resources as one of the Economic Causes of Wars

IN the industrialized world, possession of resources such as territory is of relatively little economic significance. Industrial production based on modern know-how can be relocated reasonably easily to any country where the political system is stable and a reliable labour force can be found. Service industries are even more "footloose." If a service or assembling factory finds a country politically unsatisfactory, on account of unrest or a hostile tax regime, it can move to a more predictable part of the world. Rarely has it any interest in contributing to a war to retain its foothold in a particular country.

Possession of rare and valuable natural resources, such as oil, gas, minerals, gold, uranium, copper, etc., changes the situation. These assets, often of immense value, are immobile: the gain or loss of territory containing them is a matter of economic and geopolitical interest to powers.

In the Third World, for example in Africa and in the Middle East, income from the exploitation of natural resources often accounts for the greater part of the national income and nearly all the income of the state. Striving for resources converts into geopolitical clashes and wars between states. Iraq invaded Kuwait in order to gain oil fields; the fighting in the Congo, started long ago, has an in-built connection to the uranium assets in this country, which are a prime source for the West. Clashes of interests in various parts of Africa - Liberia, Angola, Sierra Leone - double because of the diamond fields. Robert Fowler, the Canadian ambassador to the UN recently completed a report on Angola stressing that the UNITA rebels had raised, over the years, at least £2 billion through the sales of diamonds with which to buy arms.

The point shouldn't be oversimplified: it is rarely the case that the proclaimed goal of a war is "diamonds" or "oil." But the possession of natural resources can

provide a "fuel" for conflicts by providing the means for buying weapons, achieving power, getting rich foreign "supporters," and so on.

Natural resource-oriented Third World countries often do not have an interest in developing and modernizing the economy, or in raising the standards of education of the labour force. Neither have they an interest in establishing an efficient and honest administration and civil authorities.

Thus, without world-scale efforts to upgrade Third World resource-oriented countries to the modern industrial level, the "battles for resources" will define the nature of relations in the resources-rich parts of the globe.

Military-Industrial Complex, Arms Trade and "War Money"

DESPITE the end of the Cold War, the world still spends roughly a trillion US dollars a year on armaments.

The military-industrial complex is the skeleton of war, weapons and arms are its muscles, and money is its blood. Systems of arms control and arms reduction agreements, regimes of non-proliferation and elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and measures to make the international arms trade transparent and limited, all contribute to the prevention of wars. Economic conversion of oversized military-industrial complexes is to be promoted.

While looking for causes of any concrete war always ask a question as old as the war itself: "In whose interests?" Look for the actual or potential beneficiaries of war. They might be political leaders, parties, movements or structures that gain (initial or additional) power, resources, money or influence as a result of a war. The task is to reduce the attractiveness of war to those acting parties, or to make the potential losses more significant than the potential gains.

Chekhov's Law

THE internationally-known Russian writer Chekhov wrote once that if in the first act of a theatrical play there is a rifle hooked on the wall, it is there to fire in the last act of the play. This rule in theatrical drama composition can be applied to the drama of life. Accumulating arsenals of rifles, tanks, missiles, and nuclear warheads, the presence of growing and training armies, the existence and development of the whole military organization of society and of the military-industrial complex are by themselves one of the self-fueling causes of war. They are there to fire in the last act of a drama.

Arsenals and armies are developed under the name of "defence", "protection", "stability", "peace". Is it possible (and is it necessary?) to abolish them? A partial solution does not work here. It was Trotsky who in the course of World War I initiated the slogan: "Neither war, nor peace, and the army is to be dismissed!" In circumstances when other armies were ready for war such an approach could only lead to the redistribution of military balance, and not to abandoning war.

The full and simultaneous elimination of the arsenals and military organization of societies is preferable, but unrealistic at this modern stage of social development. What is possible though is to place the military organization of society under clear and developed civil democratic control. The mechanisms of such a control are known: they include promoting transparency and accountability, a strong parliamentary oversight over military structure and defence budgets, the involvement of the media, society, and NGOs in the control of the military, and open and wide debates on national security policy goals and means. As for now only a few societies demonstrate the developed application of such mechanisms.

From the wider point of view, the international community should create and develop international mediatory and supervisory mechanisms and institutions, legal agreements and conventions (with means of verification and implementation) which would not allow military machines and arsenals to be driven only by their own internal inertia and motivations.

If a rifle cannot be removed from the wall, it should be supervised and guaranteed to stay on the wall during all the acts of the historic drama.

"Early warning" Indicators for Coming Wars

WAR rarely explodes unexpectedly. Crisis management studies show that conflicts grow stage by stage and some indicators could be used as an "early warning." A system could be developed which would alert the United Nations of impending crisis situations within nations so that preventive diplomacy and preventive action can be undertaken in time. The following indicators have been cited by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing of Deadly Conflict as particularly relevant to the identification of states where the political and economic causes of war grow and make conflict or collapse inevitable:

- Demographic pressures: rapid changes in population, including refugee movements, insufficient food or access to safe water.
- Unresponsive regimes and the lack of accountable governing practices.
- The criminalization of the civil system or delegitimization of the state.
- Gross human rights violations.

- A significant difference in the ethnic (or tribal) composition of the ruling elite from the population at large.
- Sharp and severe economic distress: uneven economic development along ethnic and social lines.
- A legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance.
- Massive, chronic or sustained human flight.

Surely, almost every state might have at least one of the above characteristics. However, a critical mass of these symptoms could very well serve as a reliable warning signal of the seeds of coming violence, state collapse, or war.

Political Democracies, International Community and War

Democratic societies in most cases enter into wars less easily than authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, concentrate less societal resources on war, and remain more open to reaching political compromise. General democratization of the world's political landscape is important for the elimination of the political sources of war.

But not everybody shares this belief. Arnold Toynbee in "A Study of History" claims that both Industrialism and Democracy "increased horrors of war."[2] Democracy, he writes, not only was unable to prevent wars, but also strengthened the institution of war, converting war from the low-intensity "sports" of eighteenth century kings into horrifying "Total War".[3] Democracy sometimes turns into an "instrument of nationalist fanaticism", warns Toynbee pointing at the example of the French Revolution.

But the way out suggested by Toynbee's concept of the "cycles of history" comes back to the idea of world governance which, in its turn, requires some democratic procedures. Separate states should be deprived of the right to wage wars, and this is to be done by imposing the will of the world community. Nuclear weapons especially need to be placed under international rather than national control, Toynbee argues, in a dialogue with Daisaku Ikeda. "Effective world power controlling the use of nuclear energy requires effective world government."[4]

Paradoxically, in the 1990s and on the eve of the twenty-first century, attempts by the world community to act in conflict areas as a unified "force of Justice" led to the overuse of force and created a steady trend towards violent "peace enforcement". A system of international peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations has been established. The international community has interfered in local and regional wars and conflicts on about 50 occasions over the last 50 years. Nine hundred thousand men participated in these international operations aimed at stopping wars and providing humanitarian relief. Eighty countries provided forces.

The cost of international peacekeeping fluctuates between $2 and 4 billion annually, far exceeding the UN budget. All this shows that the international community has started to be concerned about conflict resolution among its members and has created a system to deal with conflicts as a "neutral third party," disengaging warring parties and bringing them to the negotiating table.

At the same time, some tendencies of international peacekeeping over recent decades raise concerns that the international community does not work on the elimination of the causes of war, but rather treats the symptoms. More than that: surgical instruments aimed "to heal" conflicts are becoming more and more forceful and violent.

The changes in modern international operations in conflict areas are so significant that the notion of "Second Generation Peacekeeping" was coined to stress the semi-enforcement character of these new practices.[5]

As American analyst John F. Hillen recognizes, for example, considering recent UN and NATO peacekeeping missions, especially those in former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda and Timor, "the basic distinction between peacekeeping and enforcement action...has been blurred..." In recent missions the rules of engagement have been substantially expanded to allow peacekeepers to impose a solution on the local parties through the use of force. Recognizable political dividends have yet to be harvested from the concept of "peacekeeping with teeth."[6]

The main changes in the international peace implementation practices could be summarized briefly as follows:

- o The shift to earlier involvement (even if not all the preconditions are observed) in an attempt to prevent mass violence rather than stabilize the situation after bloodshed has already occurred.
- o Disengagement often starts before a cease-fire is achieved thus demanding war-like tactics from the disengaging contingents (Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo provided enough examples up to "surgical bombing").
- o Use of force not only for self-defence of the UN troops but forceful (though with attempts to minimize force) pressure on the sides to clear the area, respect the cease-fire, or give up weaponry and other missions.
- o Advanced structural composition and more heavy weapons used for peace support purposes (including tanks, artillery, air force support, radio frequencies jamming, means of technical reconnaissance etc.) providing UN-mandated forces not only with "diplomatic" but with real combat capabilities.

The international community is trying to develop "collective security" mechanisms. It mainly succeeds with the "warring against war" technique, and disengaging of national military forces with international military contingents. But

it is less successful with preventive diplomacy, early political and diplomatic measures, with mediation and post-conflict peace building.

Creating a permanent international peacekeeping force under UN authority is considered by many experts to be a realistic option for stopping wars and conflicts. Such forces should be able to:

- Reduce states' dependence on their own armed forces for security.
- Enforce the rule of international law at all levels.
- Base their military objectives on impartial interpretation of international law.
- Prevent any possible misuse and inspire universal confidence.

There is a growing understanding in the international community that *a war* which has been interpreted as a *universal problem* (it faces every society and state but is tackled individually and differently by each of them) is rather a *global problem* (it faces every society and state but can be adequately tackled only through the combined global efforts of the international community).

Ideological factors: Tolerance/Intolerance and a Culture of Peace

P OLITICAL contradictions and clashes of interest do not lead to war until they are manifested, sharpened and pushed to the extremes in ideologies and propaganda. Conflicting political interests are still interests of limited social groups (more often - elites), while wars require involvement and participation, concentration and starvation of whole nations, much broader masses of people.

The "Us versus Them" mentality, intolerance towards other nations, religions, systems of beliefs, are artificially inflated and skilfully employed by all political leaders going to war since the epoch of ancient wars and medieval Crusades. In the time of mass media, television and multi-billion propaganda empires, ideological pressure on the population could become more direct and effective. But by the same token, a pluralistic media and individual access to information provide the prerequisites for a less manipulable citizenry.

The spreading of a culture of peace, based on tolerance towards the "other", values of pluralism and co-existence, and development of social immunity to war-oriented propaganda and ideologies, is an important resource for a peaceful future.

Wrong questions

WHILE looking for answers for the difficult and uneasy questions it is useful sometimes to reconsider whether the questions are formulated in the right way.

We, the scientists, are considering and analyzing wars in the European traditions of Cartesian rationalism, and linear determinism. "There should be a traceable cause of any war. We must find and remove it, and then the war is not gonna happen".

What should cool down any rational "reasoneur" is the fact that when war has already broken out, very often simple elimination of its initial reason does not lead to the end of hostilities. Once it has started, war is hard to stop. War gives birth to hostages and refugees, the psychology of "us-them", and striving for revenge. Propagandistic campaigns, which inevitably accompany any war from the sides of all warring parties, make a war self-fueling. New wounds, physical, moral and social, which accompany any armed violence, contribute to continuation of a war. Once started, war by itself becomes one of the major causes of a further war. And often once they are over wars freeze in-built causes for future wars. So any attempt to figure out the clear and isolated source or cause of war is to some degree a simplistic attempt.

Wars, as in any other complex social phenomenon are multi-factorial processes. Territorial claims or religious divergences are in most cases just the visible top of a hidden iceberg. War is always useful and even profitable to certain clans, strata, groups, elites, leaders. There are various forces interested in any concrete war, for them the war (not even a victory, but just the process of engaging in war) resolves some of their problems, and removes obstacles. It is not unknown for regimes to try to concentrate their nations on external hostilities and start wars when they have internal difficulties, instability or economic failures.

Most wars are conglomerates of a myriad of social, national and individual controversies, hostilities, and psychological and occasional factors, which are constantly changing, developing in a process of war, self-fueling and reproducing.

What comes out of such a holistic perception of a war? First of all, the recognition of the inability to deal with the multi-factor chaos of war through one pre-elaborated and centrally coordinated external action. "Elimination of the causes of war" is to be understood as an endless and dialectical process of creative and difficult interaction by the international community with constantly reproducing old and new, known and yet unknown reasons and causes of armed hostilities. The causes of war cannot be eliminated once and forever.

Secondly, the institution of war cannot be dealt with in a mechanical way through "linear causality". The "Causes of war" are to some degree a philosophical abstraction, an indivisible part of a bigger puzzle. Dealing with the phenomenon of war requires the interaction with all the components and levels of this social

institution, including social and legal rules and norms, the availability of weaponry and the technologies of destruction, the psychology and ethics of an individual and of social and ethnic groups, mechanisms of mediation and conflict resolution, etc.

Political and Economic Factors Producing Peace

FOR at least partial elimination of some major causes of war in the twenty-first century several priorities are to be agreed between nations.[7]

- Recognition that Peace is Indivisible.
- Equity and Social Justice.
- Global Thinking.
- Non-violence in National and International Relations.
- Cultivation of Moral and Ethical Attitudes in International Affairs.
- Overcoming Disproportional Economic Disparity and Inequity Between Nations.

Thinking of the elimination of the causes for war one should reverse the problem and ask: What are the political and economic factors that produce peace? What can be done to promote dialogue and tolerance, equality and stability, just living standards and good social administration? Peace is not simply an absence of war, not a short interim period between regular conflicts. Peace is a complex texture of positive relations inside societies and between the states in the international arena. The most effective way of "fighting against war" is to work for peace, justice, dialogue, mutual understanding. And such positive work cannot be accomplished once and forever. It is an ongoing and endless process, which requires every generation to combine its best efforts to gain peace, to create peace and to enjoy peace.

Back to List of Background Papers

Notes:

1. Thucydides (transl. By R.Warner), The Peloponnesian War, Penguin, 1954, p.49.

2. A. Toynbee. A Study of History, London-Oxford, 1971, p.283.

3. Ibid., vol. IV, p.157.

4. Toynbee-Ikeda Dialogue: Man Himself Must Choose. Tokyo, 1976, p.178.

5. See J.Chopra. "The Second Generation Peacekeeping". J.Th.Watson Institute Paper presented at the Moscow Conference on the UN Role in the International Conflict Resolution, October, 1993.

6. "UN Collective Security: Chapter Six and a Half" by John F.Hillen III. USAWC Carlile, 1994, p. 3.

7. Elaborated by Noel Baptist in "Some Humanist Priorities for the XXIst Century in International Affairs".