

EVOLUTION OF THE PHENOMENON OF WAR

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Abstract. The aim of this article is to analyze the evolution of wars over the centuries, and the reasons for their occurrence. The author raises issues forming the basis of thinking about armed conflicts from the perspective of researchers, state governments, the world of business and ordinary citizens. A number of selected concepts of warfare by the most important authors of various eras were presented. Investigation of factors having influence on armed conflicts also contributed to the attempt to determine the impact of such factors as technological progress, geographical, political, social and other conditions, causing or reducing the likelihood of war. In addition, four schools of warfare were presented regarding the sources of advantage between the parties of the conflict. An analysis of a number of cases, examples and views allowed specifying the author's own view, leaning towards a rationalistic theorem, propagated inter alia by J.D. Fearon. According to him, armed conflicts mainly break out when they are profitable or more favorable than other, peaceful alternatives. An important difference between the "old" and "new" wars is primarily the asymmetry of conflicts resulting not only from the technological, economic or social disproportion, but rather the possibility of remote impact, as some world powers do. This allows for a cheaper war with a limited use of military force.

Keywords: evolution of wars, armed conflicts, asymmetry of conflicts.

Introduction

It often happens that the common perception of the nature of the events that surround us is different from reality. It can be similar in the case of the sources, way of conducting, and the evolution of wars. The outbreak of armed conflict can be compared to an accident, unexpected consequences of events that have spiraled out of control. In the consciousness of ordinary citizens war usually appears as an unnecessary shedding of blood that should never take place. In practice, however, military conflicts can also be used as a political instrument, a tool for exerting influence onto opponents. The history of Europe has proved many times that the war served as a chance to check the power of states, as well as an opportunity to gain prestige, fame and wealth. The wars were carried out in order to acquire new territories, defend honor, or push for individual efforts to maintain high position at the international arena. It is worth mentioning the words of Charles Tilly, who claimed that "war made the state, and the state made

war”¹. Just like centuries ago, the military potential, size of army and population contribute to the power of the states. However, this is not the only determinant of strength or root of success. There is a much wider spectrum of factors affecting whether a given country is more powerful than its adversaries, and thus is more inclined to expand its influence by entering into armed conflicts.^a This tendency of warfare has been determined by the technological superiority of the arsenal, the organization of armed forces and the natural geostrategic position². The problem accompanying the deliberations is focused on the two questions: what are the reasons for waging war, and what factors reduce or increase the probability of an armed conflict.

1. Causes of wars

Looking back at the human history, wars have become an inseparable part of our civilization, although the accompanying customs, warfare style or tactics have been constantly changing over the centuries³. Due to the wide variety of their nature, circumstances, and manner of conducting, it is worth discussing this topic more broadly. In the opinion of S. Van Ever, several key elements contribute to a number of factors that accompany the emergence of wars:

1. Optimistic and confident assessment of the resources and capabilities of the state, and, consequently, overestimation of results in the event of a war;
2. The natural advantage of the initiator of a potential conflict. In other words, circumstances favoring the first to mobilize forces and strike;
3. Decisive and rapid changes in the geopolitical arena in given conditions which may generate significant profits or benefits difficult to achieve by other means;
4. Accumulation of resources, possession of which favors the control of ever larger quantities;
5. The conquest is easy to implement, and the prevailing circumstances favor an expansive policy⁴.

In the context of the above, numerous researchers, including S. Van Evera, look for answers for the question of the basic reasons for waging a war. The fulfillment of these considerations is an attempt to find regularities conducive to conflict in specific circumstances and time. S. Van Evera distinguishes the basic sources of wars, also using own subjective perspective as a researcher. This is a kind of synthesis and supplement of the five, aforementioned points. First of all, the cause of armed conflict may be conviction of the community of impending serious danger. Additional circumstances favorable in the form of hostile policy of adversaries only

¹ Ch. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1990*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, p. 32.

² T.C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1966, p. 234.

³ L. Stomma, *Antropologia wojny*, Iskry, 2014, p. 10-21.

⁴ p. V. Evera, *Causes of War, Power and the Roots of Conflict*, Ithaca, London, 1999, p. 4.

fuel this anxiety, increasing the likelihood of conflict. Additionally, if the conquest seems easy and the war is relatively cheap, the force policy turns out to be the most effective strategy. This drives the self-belief in the need for a sustainable development of the armed forces, which increasingly gain a stronger position in the state and gradually protect their own interests by proclaiming their autonomy. The second fundamental cause is the frequent phenomenon of building the national spirit based on the glorification of its own history and the creation of myths about the glory of past centuries, while the other adversaries are presented in a different, often overly critical manner. The message created in this way is strengthened and maintained by the state education system, which once again contributes to the overly optimistic assessment of the future and results of potential conflicts. The third pillar of wars is the attitude of the state apparatus and bureaucracy incapable of a reliable self-assessment of own actions. Here also appears the role of researchers and experts who fearing criticism do not assess reliably, serving indulgent flattering evaluations. As S.V. Evera concludes – “speaking the truth about authorities is rarely rewarded and punished often, so the important truths are often unspoken”⁵. The dominant states are eager to provoke crises in order to multiply profits and impose their own primacy on the opponents. The effects, difficult to assess, combined with excessive optimism contribute to the emergence of armed conflicts. As JS Levy believes, there would be much less of them if the basic determinants of decision were money and costs associated with the war, let alone defeat⁶. Another important prerequisite is the already mentioned accumulative nature of resources, the concentration of which encourages war. Paradoxically, it is also a circumstance to simultaneously promote and inhibit the expansionist tendencies. On the one hand, countries wishing to increase their influence and possession will try to expand, and at the same time to make analogous actions challenging for adversaries. This power can be expressed mainly through the ability to mobilize forces, attack and effectively retort in case of external aggression. A powerful counterbalance to this state of affairs is the atomic weapon, allowing the holder to a strong counterattack and destruction of the opponent⁷.

In summary, there are many factors that may affect the potential outbreak of armed conflict, while the most important are: the disproportion of forces, faulty estimation of resources, rapid changes in the international arena. However, it should be remembered that these are only favorable circumstances, not certain determinants resulting in war. What's more, the opinions of researchers on this subject are strongly diversified. In subsequent chapters, the author will try to identify additional aspects of the influence, such as technological progress, social factors, and others.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 257.

⁶ Jack p. Levy, *The Frequency and Seriousness of War. An Inverse Relationship?*, “Journal of Conflict Resolution”, 1984, no. 4, p. 731-749.

⁷ S. Van Evera, *Causes of War...*, p. 108-115.

2. Technological development and the “new” wars

One of the most important aspects determining the defense potential of the state, and hence its sovereignty, is the possession of a well-functioning defense industry. Basically it boils down to the possibility of self-determination and avoidance of dependence on other countries in the context of technology, availability of weaponry, and other related issues. In some cases, countries characterized by economic and military dominance, try and attempt to strive for globalization and to benefit from the proliferation of self-produced technologies⁸. Maintaining market competitiveness is, by its very nature, associated with globalization (including the armaments industries). Autarky, on the other hand, narrows down the spectrum of using own technological innovations⁹.

The use of technological innovations in the field of military is not a new phenomenon. It is particularly important in modern times, when broadly understood IT used for the needs of the armed forces can be treated as one of the key elements of military potential¹⁰. Researchers are inclined to describe this state as a revolutionary in the field of military, meaning a significant, qualitative return, thanks to which war takes on a completely different meaning and course. With the use of weapons characterized not only with a greater firepower, but rather with precision supported by highly advanced technology, the core of warfare is rapidly changing. The next stage is transferring armed conflicts to cyberspace where the conditions are drastically different from the battlefield. The threat to the lives of human soldiers disappears, and the enemy is visible only on the computer screen. This change has its irreversible influence also on the causes of the outbreak of conflicts, mainly because they are much cheaper and easier to implement than conventional operations. Ultimately, the deterrence strategy known to us primarily from the Cold War period may prove to be useless¹¹. There is also another, relatively new dimension of war – the IT war. The first known IT war was the conflict in the Persian Gulf, where it has been proved that technological progress, in this case the use of modern electronics allowed the victory of the American army over the Iraqi forces¹².

On this basis, it can be assumed that technological progress is an important factor influencing the qualitative return both in shaping the military potential of states and the way of waging war. The defense industry, although still important, may be insufficient in the face of an intangible enemy in cyberspace. In addition,

⁸ J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe, współczesne koncepcje*, PWN, Warsaw, p. 42.

⁹ B. Cravford, *Hawks, Doves, but No Owls. International Economic Independence and Construction of the New Security Dilemma*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 151.

¹⁰ P. Sienkiewicz, *Wojna informatyczna*, Computerworld, 2007, Internet: <https://www.computerworld.pl/news/WOJNA-INFORMATYCZNA,291172.html>, access: 12.02.2019.

¹¹ M. Ignatieff, *Virtual War*, „Prospekt Magazine”, 2000, no 51, p. 1.

¹² P. Sienkiewicz, *Wojna informatyczna*, op. cit.

the influence of computerization of the “battlefield” allows a real impact regardless of distance and geographical conditions.

3. The social dimension of warfare

The country’s military involvement can be perceived by its citizens in a variety of ways. In general opinion, people do not want wars, which are associated with death, destruction and cruelty. From the point of view of governments, the legitimacy of military operations plays an important role in waging war. It gives a strong mandate of trust in relation to power, which in turn allows for more decisive action, raises soldiers’ morale and mobilizes the nation. The Third Reich from the period preceding the outbreak of the Second World War may be an example of such strong support of the people, indirectly driving the state to wage war. The crises of the early 1930s, the collapse of democracy and a series of side events along with the masterful rhetoric able to raise the crowds led Hitler to power. As R. Kaczmarek argues, support for the leader grew fast enough to reach almost ninety percent of support in 1933¹³.

Critics, on the other hand, point out that the elections in Third Reich were not democratic. The first military successes of 1939/40, especially the clashes with France contributed to euphoric moods, which clearly strengthened Hitler’s war doctrine in the eyes of compatriots. An example of the opposite course of action may be the involvement of the US forces in Vietnam in 1960s. The vital engagement of pacifist movements, as well as others – the clergy, students, war veterans and recognized personalities caused a number of tangible results¹⁴, including the collapse and ultimately cancellation of conscription for the war in Vietnam, undermining of morale of the soldiers already involved, significant drop in support of the president L.B. Johnson, and finally withdrawal of the American troops from Vietnam¹⁵. The influence of pacifism as a representation of the public opinion condemning war was also noticed by the Polish author B. Balcerowicz. This author emphasized its important role in shaping the socio-political movements, as often a spontaneous manifesto of citizens and their attitude towards an unfair war¹⁶.

In the contemporary practice of waging war, the support of military engagement outside the country is a real factor favoring or hindering war policy. According to the research propagated by H. Perl, public opinion is more favorable to combat operations which prove higher probability of preventing losses or opposing threats. By analogy, this support falls when the purpose of the warfare is

¹³ R. Kaczmarek, *Hitler straszyl i fascynowal*, nto.pl, Internet: <https://nto.pl/hitler-straszyl-i-fascynowal/ar/4008951>, access: 20.11.2018.

¹⁴ D. Mayer, *The Politics of Protest: Social Movements in America*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 11-15.

¹⁵ H. Schuman, *Two Sources of Antiwar Sentiment in America*, The United States and the Vietnam War: Significant Scholarly Articles, New York, Garland Publishing, 2000, p. 127-150.

¹⁶ B. Balcerowicz, *O pokoju, o wojnie, między esejem a traktatem*, Rambler, Warsaw, 2013, p. 23-39.

mainly profit or when the war is carried out for something tangible or valuable¹⁷. Thus, the statement above confirms the aforementioned thesis that ordinary citizens are not favorable to wars as such and accept them only in specific and justified circumstances.

As it is clear from the considerations above, not only military potential affects the course of the armed conflicts. An additional, important factor is the support of the nation, which shows a clear influence on soldiers' willingness to fight and morale, as well as the freedom of action of the authorities. The indicated dependence also has a bearing on the contemporary "new wars". In place of costly and numerous conscription armies, modern countries are trying to invest in specialized technologies and professional units, capable of conducting precise operations with similar effectiveness¹⁸.

4. Four schools of warfare

Reflections on the causes of the armed conflicts, as well as the revolution in their course may be concretized by specifying four important ways of thinking about the progress of warfare¹⁹. The first of these is the so-called "school of systems", according to which the development of communication means, including information and computer systems, improving the integration of applied offensive and defensive weapon systems is of paramount importance. The second school of "dominant knowledge of the fighting space" complements the above-mentioned variant with the need to improve military intelligence and reconnaissance, which is to contribute to even more accurate strategic decisions. A third school of "global reach and global power" by accepting the claims of both predecessors supplements them of the need for a mobile, long-range weapon with a significant firepower available to maintain the primacy of the world. The last, fourth school of "sensitivity" focuses on the assumption that along with the development of technology on one side, in this case western countries, similar development will also occur on the side of the opponent. Thus, he will use advanced technology acquisitions such as sea mines, ballistic missiles, attacks in cyberspace, satellite weapons and others²⁰.

In the context of the above, the theoretical causes of armed conflicts can be classified differently depending on the level of analysis. The systemic assumptions highlight the importance of the international system's structure impact. One of the researchers representing this trend is R. Gilpin, who believes that the varied

¹⁷ Hector Perle, *Expanding Public Support for the Use of Military Force: The Impact of Reference Point Framing and Prospective Decision Making*, International Organization, 2011, no. 1, p. 139-167.

¹⁸ A. Plaw, *Practice Makes Perfect? The Changing Civilian Toll of CIA Drone Strikes in Pakistan*, Perspectives on Terrorism, 2011, no. 5, p. 51-60.

¹⁹ J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe...*, p. 42.

²⁰ M. Hanlon, *Technological Change and the Future on Warfare*, Washington, Brookings Institution Press, 2000, p. 7-31.

pace of development of individual countries leads to a state of natural imbalance. Then it is possible that the benefits of sudden expansion and waging the war will be higher than in the case of long-term reforms aimed at alleviating the crisis²¹. Theories regarding the causes of wars focused on systemic issues indicate that the malfunction of market mechanisms, or their limitations, is a strong premise for a possible outbreak of war. On the other hand, the growing economic interdependence of states is the factor that counteracts the emergence of armed conflicts.

Another category of causes of wars is the very nature of the state and statehood. The most important features in this case are the system of state formation, the social moods prevailing in it and the sense of the national spirit. All these factors create a specific mix that can lead to conflict or counteract it. While using specific examples, it is worth pointing out a number of conditions contributive to war. These are primarily all strongly differentiating religious, racial, national and other similar antagonisms. On the other hand, among the forces that reduce the risk of an armed conflict are social consent, prosperity and harmony of the state. It is also worth adding that the attitude of the authorities can play a significant role. War used as a political tool may be helpful to consolidate the society in the fight against the common enemy or strengthen the position of those in power. During the war, even irrational behaviors are accepted or escape the assessment of society. The decision to start a war may additionally have many reasons for a number of various motivations – from the private benefit of the decision maker to the cold calculation of the political costs, and then it is a rational choice²².

Researchers also look at the causes of wars lying at a completely different level of the decision-making process. Then, the way the bureaucratic mechanisms work, the war doctrines in force, mobilization plans and accompanying procedures have a significant impact on the final shape of international policy. The presented point of view was particularly strongly developed in the context of the First World War²³. Additional premises supporting the described view are misunderstandings between the parties of the conflict resulting from inaccurate information and consequently a flawed assessment of the opponent's forces and intentions²⁴. A good summary of the above-presented "mono-causal" theories of the occurrence of armed conflicts was cataloged by J. Czaputowicz where he presented the views of chosen authors and the period of their creation. To better illustrate the problem, the information is demonstrated in the form of a table below.

²¹ R. Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 22-30.

²² J.D. Fearon, *Rationalist Explanation of War*, International Organization, 1995, no. 3, p. 379-414.

²³ See: S.D. Sagan, *1914: Revisited: allies, offense and instability*, "International Security", 1986, no. 2, p. 151-175.

²⁴ R. Jervis, *Perception and misperception in International Politics*, Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 2-5.

Table 1. Causes of war

| The cause of the war | Author of the concept | Year of the theory |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Capital surplus | V.I. Lenin | 1917 |
| Economic cycles | S. Secerov | 1919 |
| The will to create power | H.J. Morgenthau | 1948 |
| National state of mind | F.L. Kilinberg / D. McClelland | 1952/1961 |
| Conquer of territory | R. Ardrey | 1966 |
| Aggression | K. Lorenz | 1967 |
| Strength | A.F.K. Organski | 1968 |
| Misconceptions | R.K. White | 1968 |
| Perception of relations | G. Blainey | 1973 |
| Sensual impulse | F. Fornari | 1974 |
| Fight for natural resources | N. Chourci | 1975 |
| Views of the elite | JG Stoessinger | 1978 |
| Maintaining hegemony | R. Gilpin | 1981 |

Source: J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe, współczesne koncepcje*, PWN, Warsaw, 2012, p. 45

The table presented above is a summary and synthesis of the earlier discussed theories of the formation of wars in the eyes of selected researchers of different epochs. Such a large variety of concepts makes it difficult to identify the main reasons, if they even exist. It is also worth noting how the circumstances and different times shaped opinions on the reason for conflicts. J.D. Fearon proposed his own rationalist explanation of the causes of wars, later called the negotiation theory²⁵. According to it, the cause of a dispute between states is usually a certain value. It may be, for example, territory, access to raw materials and others. Usually, each side sees a different way of resolving the conflict by proposing the most favorable consensus for them. In the event of escalation and clash, the final conditions are determined by the winner. It is worth mentioning that the settlement depends on the winner's abilities, the distribution of which is also determined by the severity of the conflict itself and its costs. Assuming that the existing situation, the so-called *status quo* has to be changed, there are two ways to do it – negotiation or fight. The first case is much more likely if the overall costs of the war are high, not proportionate to the benefits of victory²⁶. The mere willingness to negotiate is not the only premise

²⁵ J.D. Fearon, *Rationalist Explanation of War*, International Organization, 1995, no. 3, p. 379-414.

²⁶ D.A. Lake, *Two Cheers for Bargaining Theory. Assessing Rationalist Explanation of the Iraq War*, "International Security", 2010, no. 3, p. 10-12.

to avoid the escalation of the conflict. It is assumed that the fundamental requirement to enter into negotiations is the high credibility of the partners combined with the likelihood of keeping their promises. In addition, it would be worthwhile that the mentioned partners were equal or represent comparable potential. Usually, superpowers rarely negotiate with weak opponents and just impose their will. If the above assumptions are not covered in reality, the costs of war become secondary. It is worth mentioning that estimation of conflict's costs is not an easy undertaking, and history knows many cases of incorrect assessment of the situation, usually in favor of a strongly optimistic attitude, which was further verified by reality and the opponent. It also happens that warfare costs are not misjudged and even deliberately misrepresented by the opponent in order to exert additional pressure and force their own point of view. The war in Iraq was an example of a contemporary conflict that also represented flawed negotiation as well as an underestimation of the costs of war. Saddam Hussein was unable to prove that his commitments would be observed. The Americans, in turn, estimated the costs of the combat operation too optimistically. Unfortunately, it is difficult to say whether the cause of war was false information, deliberate data breach or excessive optimism²⁷.

Several opinions of various authors on the subject of evolution armed conflicts were presented above. The most important views include the leading role of communication means and information systems empowering the army, the advantage of military intelligence, and the ability to put pressure on enemies with long-range weapons. However, it should not be forgotten that technological development gives only a temporary advantage, because the adversaries will certainly strive to make up for losses. On the other hand, other categories are non-military factors – a diversified pace of economic development, the nature of statehood, and the existence of religious, racial or ideological antagonisms that may increase or reduce the likelihood of escalation of an armed conflict.

5. The evolution of wars over the centuries

Having the appropriate theoretical bases on the causes of wars, it is worth referring to their evolution over the centuries. In simplified terms, one can speak of “old” and “new” wars. The traditional view of the nature of armed conflicts reflects the ideas proclaimed by Carl von Clausewitz. According to the author, despite the progress of technology and its unavoidable impact on the nature of skirmishes, the meaning of war remains unchanged²⁸. However, there are also critics of this assumption, who advocate that the modern weapons and available solutions cause a qualitative evolution of armed conflicts. The effect resulting from the progress of technology also affects the probability and profitability of conflicts between states. It is impossible to ignore the unprecedented use of nuclear weapons against Japan

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 40-50.

²⁸ C. von Clausewitz, *O wojnie*, Test, Lublin 1995, p. 12-44.

during the Second World War. The destructive power of nuclear weapons and the entirety of costs exceeding the potential gains of analogous actions have forever changed the way of thinking about war. Events like this are proof of the undeniable evolution of wars over the centuries.

The generally understood risk of direct military confrontations drastically decreased after the confrontation of world powers during the Cold War. Political transformations along with uneven technological advances among countries have brought new types of threats²⁹. One of the most important was the occurrence of asymmetric conflicts characterized by a one-sided predominance. As a consequence, opponents used different strategies and methods of warfare towards each other. It is worth adding that in the broader sense of the asymmetric war, entities using them may also be states and countries. In the narrower understanding, there are also non-state entities, distinct from each other³⁰. Practice shows that liberal democracies that promote views of freedom, respect for human rights and different religions give a much wider scope to actors who pose asymmetric threats³¹. The increasing flow of goods, migration of people, and transfer of capital translate into building transnational and cross-border structures capable of reacting and thus securing their interests in remote areas of the world. The concept of a “global village” brightly depicts the nature of changes that have occurred on the earth not only in the creation of conditions of susceptibility to the occurrence of asymmetric conflicts but also in many other spheres – mainly the speed of information circulation. The natural evolution of states in their regions together with known threats from neighbors resulted in appropriate preparation for threats coming from the closest environment. One can assume, however, that their readiness to face asymmetric threats is completely different, in other words, those, which source lies on the other side of the globe³². They are usually used when there is a visible disproportion of military potential. The element of surprise, different strategies along with modern arsenal give a big advantage. Attacks against civilians are then a tool for weakening the adversary’s will, and the attacks resemble a one-sided aggression without spectacular clashes on a larger scale. A confrontation with such an enemy often surpasses the defensive capabilities of the victim. Asymmetry in some areas means that the uniform line of the frontier does not exist, and the manner and the type of weapon used can be diversified. Circumstances cause that the attacked party cannot effectively take a symmetrical clash, so that the military strength of the adversary does not wear out. The costs of waging a war are falling significantly, and the overall balance of profits and losses benefit escalation of war³³.

²⁹ J. Pawłowski, *Zagrożenia asymetryczne w wojskowej myśli strategicznej*, WNPiD UAM, Poznań, 2009, p. 129-130.

³⁰ M. Madej, *Zagrożenia asymetryczne bezpieczeństwa państwa*, WSAS, Warsaw, 2009, p. 123-127.

³¹ J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe...*, p. 59.

³² Ibidem.

³³ H. Munkler, *Wojny naszych czasów*, WAM, Kraków, 2004, p. 35-38.

It is worth noting that the discussed phenomenon of asymmetry occurs not only on the military ground but also in the spheres such as the will to fight, political commitment, readiness of the public to sacrifice and many others, hardly tangible variables. A contemporary example of a conflict characterized by an uneven distribution of military power was already mentioned involvement of the US Army in Vietnam. This thesis is complemented by a special consideration of the different political, social, and economic conditions of North and South Vietnam in the perspective of war. In addition, for the defenders it was a struggle for survival, biological existence, and sovereignty of the country. For US soldiers, the motives and involvement were different³⁴.

Asymmetric threats, including those that cannot be classified as military operations are often the result of advances in information technology and their usage by the armed forces. Leaders of technology advantage, such as the armies of the United States or Western countries, constitute a completely different quality compared to developing countries. These, on the other hand, have no chance to realistically confront conventional combat operations, and resort to alternative methods, often brutalizing the entire dispute. Such a procedure is justified because it leads to the leveling, at least in part, of the adversary's advantage. The consequence is a gradual abandonment of rules and humanitarian law. Counteracting asymmetrical threats is as complex as their nature. It requires cooperation at the international level, with the involvement of various types of armed forces, intelligence, counterintelligence as well as diplomacy with the administration and the police. An interesting phenomenon is the visible decline in frequency of international conflicts in favor of those within the state, also designed and coordinated by external forces. As a consequence, the nature of the usage of armed forces has also changed. They are used less frequently for a direct aggression against a neighboring state, or as part of a defending strategy of the borders. Instead, their adoption against insurgent groups and international terrorists increases. A specific example of this qualitative change in the context of the evolution of wars is the way the US acts in the conflicts with the Al-Qaida group, the Taliban in Afghanistan, and organized crime in Colombia. It is worth adding that the United States is not the only actor of such activities. Analogous methods are used by Israel in the confrontation with the Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Palestine. Ultimately, the circumstances surrounding the course of the conflict in Libya should be included in the same category³⁵.

Despite many discrepancies in opinions about the causes and circumstances of armed conflicts, it is impossible to ignore the significant change in the warfare that has taken place over the centuries. Confrontations of world powers and the invention of nuclear weapon have changed the face of modern wars. The economic factor is very important, namely the cost of the operation and its cost-effectiveness.

³⁴ M. Madej, *Zagrożenia asymetryczne bezpieczeństwa państw obszaru transatlantyckiego*, PISM, Warsaw, 2007, p. 36-39.

³⁵ M. Sheehan, *Military Security, Contemporary Security Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010, p. 171.

In addition, each and every country have been struggling with the threats specific to their geographical situation, thus, they learned to control them in the most effective way. The breakthrough is therefore an asymmetric warfare, and long-distance warfare, i.e. a conflict between forces with considerable disproportion. Modern wars are much more likely to happen when the aggressor does not encounter an equal opponent.

6. New wars

From the considerations above, the vision of the “new” wars, so different from their “old” predecessors is becoming more and more crystallized. The differences lie primarily in the number of opponents involved and motivations for their engagement. The manner of conducting operations results not only from the progress of technology but also the structure of the army, or external support from the international community. War understood in a traditional way was characterized by a block of power. It was easy to distinguish sides of the conflict and divide them into political adversaries and private stakeholders. Military operations were carried out on a wide scale using the entire spectrum of weaponry. The goal was to defeat the opponent, forcing him to surrender. The hierarchical system was also applied, with a clear division of roles and responsibilities. The key to success and the imposition of one’s will were victorious battles, and support coming from clearly declared allies³⁶. Nowadays, wars look quite different. Clashes of symmetrical, regular armies are increasingly a relic of the past. Currently, interventions by private international organizations, security companies, mercenaries, terrorists or local leaders seem to be much more popular method of warfare. Such clear division between public and private parties of the conflict, as well as soldiers and civilians are gradually disappearing. Ultimately, due to the previously described international modes of influence, the interstate and domestic war often looks similar and it is easy to lose unambiguous insight into its causes and course³⁷.

The “new” wars are decentralized. Their goal is to take control of the state. Their form is similar to the creation of an internal ethnic or religious upheaval³⁸. Motivation, though different, is often caused by the desire to access raw materials, division of the territory, and other practical reasons. Thus, war is a frequent effect of the collapse of the economy, drop of state revenue and internal fraud in the form of corruption and crime. Also, the financial support of war can be diversified, coming from illegal activities and looting. As mentioned earlier, rampant chaos could be a legitimization of violent actions that are impossible to achieve during peacetime.

³⁶ J. Czaputowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe...*, p. 60.

³⁷ H. Munkler, *Old and New Wars*, [in:] M. Dunn Canelty, *The Routledge Handbook of Security Studies*, London, Routledge, 2010, p. 191-194.

³⁸ M. Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organised Global Violence in a Global Era*, Cambridge Polity Press, Cambridge, 2001, p. 5-6.

Summary

In conclusion, the “new” wars do not constitute a substitute for the “old” wars. The increasing diversity of activities and accessibility of the new generation of weaponry allow for the co-occurrence of many types of wars conducive to the occurrence of both state and private actors, army and civilians, as well as asymmetrical operations. The forecasts of contemporary and future armed conflicts can be reduced to a few basic categories – wars caused by dictatorships against the Western world, successive wars for power, wars against Western societies in the form of terrorist attacks, and finally wars in a classic inter-state perspective³⁹.

Subjective view of the author, which is also the answer to the main thesis of the following article regarding causes and manner of waging wars inclines to rationalistic claim, propagated among others by J.D. Fearon. According to him, armed conflicts mainly break out when they are profitable or more favorable than peaceful alternatives.

The second important aspect is the range of factors that may affect the potential outbreak of armed conflict, the most important of which are: the disproportion of forces, erroneous estimation of resources, and rapid changes on the international arena.

An important difference between the “old” and “new” wars is primarily the asymmetry of conflicts resulting not only from the technological, economic or social disproportion, but rather the possibility of remote impact, as some world powers do. This allows for a cheaper war with a slight use of military force.

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³⁹ A. Gruszcza, *Hybrydowość współczesnych wojen – analiza krytyczna*, [w:] W. Sokal, *Asymetria i hybrydowość – stare armie wobec nowych konfliktów*, BPN, Warsaw, 2010, p. 9-17.

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EWOLUCJA FENOMENU WOJNY

Streszczenie. Celem artykułu jest analiza ewolucji wojen na przestrzeni wieków i przyczyn ich występowania. Autorka porusza kwestie stanowiące podstawę myślenia o konfliktach zbrojnych z perspektywy badaczy, rządów państw, świata biznesu i zwykłych obywateli. Przedstawiono wiele wybranych koncepcji dotyczących działań wojennych najważniejszych autorów z różnych epok. Badanie czynników mających wpływ na konflikty zbrojne przyczyniło się również do próby określenia wpływu takich czynników jak postęp technologiczny, warunki geograficzne, polityczne, społeczne i inne, powodujące lub zmniejszające prawdopodobieństwo wojny. Ponadto przedstawiono cztery szkoły walki dotyczące źródeł przewagi między stronami konfliktu. Analiza wielu przypadków, przykładów i poglądów pozwoliła określić własny pogląd autorki, skłaniającej się ku twierdzeniom racjonalistycznym, propagowanym m.in. przez J.D. Fearona. Według niego konflikty zbrojne wybuchają głównie wtedy, gdy są opłacalne lub bardziej korzystne niż inne, pokojowe alternatywy. Ważną różnicą między „starymi” a „nowymi” wojnami jest przede wszystkim asymetria konfliktów wynikająca nie tylko z dysproporcji technologicznych, ekonomicznych lub społecznych, ale raczej z możliwości zdalnego oddziaływania, jak robią to niektóre światowe mocarstwa. Pozwala to na tańszą wojnę z ograniczonym użyciem siły wojskowej.

Słowa kluczowe: ewolucja wojen, konflikty zbrojne, asymetria konfliktów.