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RETHINKING GLOBAL WAR

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Introduction

In the last century there were two types of 'global war': the problem of inter-imperialist rivalry, of war between major Western powers, which was commonly understood to underpin the global destruction of the two World Wars, and the global conflict of class struggle and threat of communist revolution, which shaped policy-making in both the domestic and international arenas. These two global struggles were contained through the framework of the Cold War - with US hegemony forging new frameworks of international institutional management, such as the United Nations and the Bretton Woods financial institutions - and the marginalisation of internationalist politics with the defeats of the Left and the bureaucratisation of the Soviet experiment in the inter-war period. Today, few commentators would argue that war between the major world powers was a pressing threat. In fact, as the discourses of human security and state failure, discussed in the opening chapters, attest, for most policy-advisors, it is the threats posed by weak and failing states which top the international policy agenda, not those of strong and well-armed ones. Similarly, few commentators would argue that class struggle and revolutionary or nationalist movements posed a threat to international stability. Nevertheless, global war appears to be back at the forefront of academic and policy thinking.

The imagery of the global or 'total wars' of the twentieth century has recently been revived through government and academic discussion, particularly in relation to the global 'war on terror', which has often been described in similar terms of absolute enmity and unlimited violence. Critical theorists have reinforced this understanding of the globalisation of security through taking the political claims of global policy-making and intervention at face value. Theorists such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2001; 2006) and Giorgio Agamben (1998; 2005) have been important in popularising critical frameworks, discussed earlier in this book, under the rubric of the global ideology: asserting the radical centrality of global conflict to modern political life. The power of their work has heavily relied upon their reinterpretations of two earlier theorists, Michel Foucault - particularly the reinterpretation of his concept of biopolitics and its application to international relations (see Chapter 4 and Selby 2008) and Carl Schmitt – particularly the reinterpretation of his concept of the 'state of exception'. Both Foucault and Schmitt problematised liberal frameworks espousing Enlightenment or progressive aspirations – the former from a poststructuralist perspective, seeking to reveal the divisions and hierarchies concealed by it, the latter from a conservative one, arguing that liberal evasions risked undermining stability and preventing the bracketing or limitation of war. The reinterpretation of the work of these historically-grounded political theorists has resulted in the formulation of highly abstract frameworks of all encompassing global conflict, without territorial or legal bounds.

This chapter argues that today's frameworks of global war, advocated as much by governing elites as by their academic policy-supporters and their radical critics, take the inflated rhetoric of struggle, and claims of contestation and meaning, at face value - cohering the globalised perspective that the stakes of the international sphere today are at least as much 'life and death' as they were in the middle of the last century. A good example of the shift towards the framing of war in global terms has been the revival of interest in the work of German legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt. President George W. Bush has been seen to be inspired by Schmitt's understanding of

the centrality of the 'friend and enemy' distinction to portray the international sphere as one of global struggle between 'civilisation and barbarism' and studies purport to demonstrate that Schmitt's influence on Leo Strauss was central to the neo-conservative ideologies behind the US administration policy in the war on terror (Bishai and Behnke 2007: 107). Whether or not Schmitt's view of global war is argued to inspire the US administration, there is little question that his framing of the nature of global conflict has been regularly melded with post-Foucaultian frameworks of global governmentality to set up an influential approach to understanding the apparent excesses of modern conflict - especially the abuses of the global war on terror, where America's denial of rights to 'illegal combatants' in Guantanamo Bay and abuses of prisoners, such as at Abu Ghraib, have been held to be exemplary examples of the new liberal order (see Koskenniemi 2004).

The following section outlines the dominant critical thesis that locates the global war on terror and earlier proclamations of human rights intervention as part of a new liberal 'global war' to control and regulate the globe, either in the interests of neoliberal capitalism or as the essential workings of global biopolitical governmentality. There then follows a short section on the revival of interest in the work of Carl Schmitt as a way of giving a more grounded framework to abstract perspectives which link 'global war' to liberal universalism in unmediated ways. The concluding sections of this chapter work through an alternative analysis, capable of analysing 'global wars' in a more contingent and mediated framework. Firstly, through a discussion of Carl Schmitt's analysis of the development of partisan struggles from territorialised or *telluric*, national struggles, to globalised deterritorialised struggles, in which conflict becomes unending and unlimited. The application of an understanding of global war as disconnected from socially-rooted contestation against a clear or 'real' enemy is then developed in relation to both modern terrorism and projections of Western power in abstract frameworks of the war on terror and the promotion of liberal values. The chapter concludes that 'global war' can be better understood in relation to the social dislocation of international actors than in historical frameworks of power and hegemonic control and ordering.

Liberal War

Perhaps the most well known radical academic advocates of the return to global war are Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who argue that modern war has exceeded the territorial boundaries of international law and should be seen as globalised or imperial civil wars (2006: 4):

> The world is at war again, but things are different this time. Traditionally war has been conceived as the armed conflict between sovereign political entities, that is, during the modern period, between nation states. To the extent that the sovereign authority of nation states, even the most dominant nation states, is declining and there is instead emerging a new supranational form of sovereignty, a global Empire, the conditions and nature of war and political violence are necessarily changing. War is becoming a general phenomenon, global and interminable. (Ibid.: 3)

They argue that there is a 'general global state of war' which erodes the distinctions of modern territorialised frameworks of politics and law: between the domestic and

the international, war and peace, and combatant and civilian (ibid.: 5). War, in this framework, becomes the key to understanding power relations in liberal governmental or biopolitical terms of regulation. Based on, and reflecting upon, the declarations of US authorities, Hardt and Negri understand global war as unending and unlimited:

> One consequence of this new kind of war is that the limits of war are rendered indeterminate, both spatially and temporally. The old-fashioned war against a nation state was clearly defined spatially… and the end of such a war was generally marked by the surrender, victory, or truce between the conflicting states. By contrast, war against a concept or a set of practices, somewhat like a war of religion, has no definite spatial or temporal boundaries… Indeed, when US leaders announced the 'war against terrorism' they emphasized that it would have to extend throughout the world and continue for an indefinite period, perhaps decades or even generations. A war to create and maintain social order can have no end. It must involve the continuous, uninterrupted exercise of power and violence. In other words, one cannot win such a war, or, rather, it has to be won again every day. War has thus become indistinguishable from police activity. (2006: 14)

Here, global war is understood to encompass the very framework of global politics, a war which the dominant elites are alleged to need to wage to maintain their system of biopolitical order. The shift from national defence to global security, discussed in the earlier chapters of this book, is seen at face value as demonstrating the construction of a new global and deterritorialised order which depends on: 'actively and constantly shaping the environment through military and/or police activity. Only an actively shaped world is a secure world.' (Ibid.: 20) Hardt and Negri draw freely from the Foucaultian problematic which reads politics to be merely the extension of, or another form of, war; thereby inversing the Clausewitzian proposition that war is the continuation of politics by other means (see Foucault 2003: 15). War becomes then a generalised concept for political struggle and the reproduction of power relations.

Foucault, in inverting Clausewitz, was intentionally deconstructing the division between war and politics to draw out the inequalities and power relations which are hidden behind the façade of liberal frameworks of political and legal equality; demonstrating that it is these frameworks themselves which are produced by and reproduce hegemonic relations of domination (see ibid.: 15-6). For Foucault, the argument that politics is a form of war was intended to overcome what he saw as the narrow economic determinism of the Marxist political movement of his day (ibid.: 13-4). However, the conflation of law with politics has allowed theorists working within the Foucaultian framework to make war a central rather than a secondary factor in the constitution of power relations. Vivienne Jabri, for example, emphasises that it is global war itself that is constituting global politics and transforming global space (2007a).

For poststructuralist theorists, the global war on terror reveals the essence of liberal modernity and fully reveals the limits of its universalist ontology of peace and progress, where the reality of Kant's 'perpetual peace' is revealed to be perpetual war (Reid 2006: 18). Perhaps the most radical abstract framing of global war is that of Giorgio Agamben. In his seminal work *Homo Sacer* (1998) he reframed Foucault's understanding of biopower (discussed more fully in Chapter 3) in terms of the

totalising control over bare life, arguing that the 'exemplary places of modern biopolitics [were] the concentration camp and the structure of the great totalitarian states of the twentieth century' (1998: 4). Agamben's view of liberal power is that of the concentration camp writ large, where we are all merely objects of power, 'we are all virtually *hominess sacri*' (ibid.: 115).

The point about global war is that it is unmediated domination by power. As power becomes abstractly viewed - in terms of neoliberal governance, liberal power, or biopolitical domination - so war becomes little more than an abstract metaphor for the operation of abstract power, in the terminology of many radical critics today. This war is a global one because, without political subjects, frameworks of meaning become deterritorialised and the world becomes literally one large concentration camp (ibid.: 171) where power can be exercised regardless of frameworks of rights or international law (2005: 87). Agamben's use of the concept of the permanent 'state of exception' to describe the nature of control under democracy as much as dictatorship has little in common with Schmitt's who argued that 'not every extraordinary measure, not every police emergency measure or emergency decree, is necessarily an exception. What characterizes an exception is principally unlimited authority, which means the suspension of the entire existing order.' (Schmitt 2005: 12)

For Julian Reid, the global war on terror can be understood as an inevitable response to any forms of life which exist outside, and are therefore threatening to, liberal modernity; revealing liberal modernity itself to be ultimately a 'terrorising project' arraigned against the vitality of life itself (2006: 124). For Jabri, and other poststructuralist critics, the liberal peace can only mean 'unending war' (see also Duffield 2007):

> The discourse from Bosnia to Kosovo to Iraq is one that aims to reconstruct societies and their government in accordance with a distinctly Western liberal model the formative elements of which centre on open markets, human rights and the rule of law, and democratic elections as the basis of legitimacy. The aim is no less than to reconstitute polities through the transformation of political cultures into modern, self-disciplining, and ultimately self-governing entities that, through such transformation, could transcend ethnic or religious fragmentation and violence. The trajectory is punishment, pacification, discipline, and ultimately "liberal democratic self-mastery". Each step in turn services wider, global remits so that the pacified, the disciplined, the self-governing of the liberal order can no longer pose a threat either to their own or to others. (Jabri 2007a: 124-5)

The Foucaultian critics of global war take at face value the problematisation of the non-Western world - seen as a threat to the needs of the liberal biopolitical order - and the policy responses, which are seen to have the global aims asserted by their proponents. Where the critics of global war differ from its advocates appear to be essentially on whether these liberal values and aspirations are worth fighting for, rather than on the context of the globalised struggle itself. For the radical Foucaultian and poststructuralist critics, it is liberal values and frameworks which lead to war and construct the non-Western 'other' as an object of intervention, whether through military means or non-military frameworks of development (Duffield 2007).

The ad hoc, counterproductive and often irrational interventions of Western states and international institutions are understood and rationalised through the framework of an essentialised liberal teleology of progress and Western mission. Beate Jahn, for example, argues that the global policy rhetoric of the post-Cold War period is not exceptional but inherent to the expansionist dynamic of liberalism with its teleological approach to history and development - with liberal frameworks held to be the pinnacle to be reached by all, once the barriers to progress have been lifted - which is implicitly global in conception (Jahn 2007a; 90-94; see also 2007b). Furthermore, Jahn argues that the 'totalizing ideology of liberalism' is an essential driver of interventionist foreign policy (2007a: 103). This is an ideology so powerful that it is held to explain Western policy however irrational and hostile to the facts on the ground (2007b: 226):

> In sum, the reason for the repetition of these counterproductive policies lies in the length, breadth and depth of the power of the liberal ideology… Ultimately, the length and breadth of the power of liberalism lies in its depth: providing the foundational world view for liberal societies in general and for their social sciences in particular… [T]he liberal ideology has been able to reassert itself in spite of a host of scientific analyses questioning every single one of its claims – resulting in studies in which conclusions stand in blatant contradiction to the analysis itself. (Ibid.: 226-7)

For the radical critics of global wars, these wars reveal the contradictory essence of the liberal biopolitical order, in which governance is organised around a teleological view of liberal peace and progress. The failures or counter-productive nature of many of these interventions is seen to merely confirm the contradictions and limits of liberalism. It is these limits and contradictions which are seen to be fully expressed in the globalisation of liberal frameworks, particularly with the end of the Cold War. This is a new liberal order, where traditional 'Westphalian' distinctions between 'inside and outside', war and peace, combatant and civilian, and army and police, become eroded: where international law and civil liberties are sacrificed to a permanent state of exception (see, for example, de Benoist 2007; Ulmen 2007; Bishai and Behnke 2007; Odysseos 2007). The global war on terror is held to be a regulatory framework which '(re)creates fearful and disciplined subjects both inside and outside liberal polities' (Odysseos 2007: 138). For Linda Bishai and Andreas Behnke, the rhetoric of global norms and global war is taken literally to argue that:

> …liberal war is ultimately an ontological war, a war against a different form of being, rather than a war against a strategic enemy. Its most consistent formulation defines the foe simply in term of its adherence to allegedly universal definitions of 'popular sovereignty' and dispenses with any kind of consideration of the extent to which such a county produces a manifest strategic threat. (2007: 117)

The 'liberal' global wars of humanitarian intervention and the war on terror are seen to have undermined the UN Charter order of international law on the basis of the unleashing of the inner essence of liberal modernity, which is understood as less concerned with the strategic interests of state security and more with the drive towards global governmentality: the reshaping of a global order on the terms not of security and sovereignty but on the biopolitical impulse of securing liberal forms of

life itself. While these critical denunciations of military adventurism are certainly radical they tend to be highly idealised and abstract, essentialising 'global war' as the new liberal or biopolitical mode of international governance.

Carl Schmitt's Critique

Where these critical frameworks are weak is in explaining why liberal governance should need or choose to take such a militarised form in the absence of apparent challenges. The growing popularity of critical academic frameworks, which understand conflict in the framework of global war and the new global liberal order, has been reflected in the revival of interest in the work of Carl Schmitt. Schmitt's work seems to offer a much more grounded connection between liberal universalism and 'unending war' or unlimited conflict. Critical theorists, who rely on the fragile grounds of an essentialised connection between liberalism and global war, therefore tend to rely heavily on Schmitt to provide theoretical substance to their rather abstract theoretical framework. A recent collection of essays, for example, fêtes Schmitt as a theorist whose international theory, particularly his key work in this area, *The Nomos of the Earth*, can provide us with 'a deeper understanding of the present international relations of crisis and epoch-making change in the normative structures of international society' (Odysseos and Petito 2007: 3). The editors are not alone in asserting that Schmitt's work:

> …helps to analyse the rise of global terrorism, the current international political environment of the global 'War on Terror', the crisis of international legality, the emergence of US 'imperial' hegemony, and the prevalence of a global interventionist liberal cosmopolitanism. (Ibid.)

Schmitt was writing during the intense inter-imperialist rivalry of the inter-war period and *Nomos* was published in the wake of the destruction of the Second World War. Schmitt's context was one in which 'global war' was a pressing reality. It is for this reason that Schmitt highlights the problematic and divisive nature of inter-imperialist rivalry, sharpened by clashes over universal moral claims, which he saw as making it impossible to legitimise a working arrangement between the Great Powers.

Schmitt presents a powerful set of arguments about conflict and its management. He argues that politics is at heart about conflict (the distinction between 'friend and enemy') and how to handle it. For Schmitt, the management of conflict becomes easier the more transparent the relations of power are and the more 'objective' our understanding of them. He critiques liberal universalism on the basis of its abstract character, its lack of material grounding, highlighting instead that there is no political unity of mankind - there is no world unity and therefore attempts to achieve such a unity through 'ideological short-circuits' can only suggest 'fictional unities' (2003: 335). His critique of liberalism (both in the domestic and the international realms) is that it artificially seeks to abolish conflict without being able to practically contain it (see, for example, 1988: 12). Of course, at some future point conflict might be eliminated:

> A world in which the possibility of war is utterly eliminated, a completely pacified globe, would be a world without the distinction of friend and enemy and hence a world without politics… For the definition of the political, it is

> here even irrelevant whether such a world without politics is desirable as an ideal situation. (Schmitt 1996: 35)

However, in a world where states exist as autonomous political subjects (i.e. where more than one state exists) there is always the possibility of conflict and of war. In which case, any claim to represent the 'interests of humanity' could only be an ideal, contingent, one, dependent upon there not being disagreement; i.e., on there not being the politics of friend and enemy. Once politics returns, 'humanity' disappears; by definition therefore: 'Humanity is not a political concept.' (Ibid.: 55) Schmitt seeks to make similar points about international law. Beyond administrative matters, where there is the possibility of a genuine global consensus, international law can only be contingent unless there is a global sovereign capable of enforcing it; in which case, it would not take the form of international law but of domestic law. Schmitt recalls Hobbes' fundamental political ontology, reflected in the injunction that there can be no law without a sovereign (ibid.: 67).

Schmitt's critique of the liberal internationalist Just War doctrine of intervention was that in a divided world who decides what is just? Justice could have no meaning outside power relations. For Schmitt though, unlike for poststructuralist theorists, this was not a critique of the concept of universal justice, for maintaining structures of domination, but a way of understanding how law could either operate to maintain order or to undermine it. Schmitt's concern was reading the development of international law in the context of inter-imperialist conflict. Like Hedley Bull (1966) he had a fine and balanced grasp of the distinctions between the contexts in which Vittoria and Grotius developed Just War approaches to limit war and the 20th century revival of their work in a context which extended the possibilities of conflict. In a world with no global sovereign and no consensus over 'justice' and law, approaches based on 'justice' institutionalised disorder and conflict rather than order and the mitigation of conflict. Clearly, portraying an inter-imperialist rivalry in terms of absolute values of right and wrong, good and evil, could lead to an intensification of the struggle and the undermining of negotiations and the possibility of unleashing terrible levels of destruction (2003: 321).

Schmitt saw the growth of American hegemony as undermining the European framework of international law based on sovereign reciprocity amongst imperial equals which 'bracketed' or limited war between them. His was a conservative and one-sided reappraisal of the past. European decline was already manifest in the playing out of the First World War within Europe and the breaking down of the European 'amity lines' that were racially as well as territorially institutionalized (ibid.: 219; see further, Chandler 2008). America was as much the benefactor as the cause of European decline. Of course, it suited European elites to focus on the role of this 'upstart' power in the post-war peace settlements and the shaping of a new international order, rather than look for failings closer to home. Schmitt's conservative political perspective is apparent in his tendency to see American claims to universalism as responsible for the unlimited nature of conflict in the 20th century. Part of the key to Schmitt's modern appeal to critical theorists is the fact that the global conflict of the World Wars is redescribed in terms of the problem of American hegemony. At the descriptive level, Schmitt associates the universal claims of American power with the development of absolute enmity, where the enemy is demonised as 'inhuman' and war is unlimited.

Taken out of context (see Chandler forthcoming), Schmitt is read as arguing against universalism per se, as if universal claims automatically equated with barbarism while claims based on particularist national interests were somehow more civilised (see also Devetak 2007). Schmitt is ill-suited to the essentially descriptive, critical poststructuralist 'critique' of empire, understood as US hegemonic sovereignty, equipped with 'decisionist' power and the normalisation of the state of exception. His point was not so much that America was exercising global hegemonic power but rather the opposite: that this universalistic version of international law was abstract and, in fact, powerless to create order. As the Italian theorist Alessandro Colombo notes, with regard to Just War: 'In comparison to its medieval precedent, it lacks reference to a concrete institutional order, an adequate bearer of such an order (as the Church was before the civil wars of religion) and also a substantive idea of justice.' (2007: 32-3) Schmitt was not arguing against universalism *per se*, but illegitimate or fictional universalism, as an idealised form without material content.

The problem, as articulated by Schmitt, was not that there was a new *nomos* of American hegemony but that America was strong enough to undermine the old European order but not strong enough to found a new global one. The world was still divided, but with no agreement on methods of international regulation. The inter-war order of the League of Nations may have proclaimed a global order but it reflected merely the destruction of the old spatial order into 'spaceless universalism, [while] no new order took its place'; the League conferences could not create genuine enforceable law 'because they had neither the content of the old, specifically European spatial order nor the content of a new global spatial order' (Schmitt 2003: 192). The US could undermine the old order, but the League, excluding the main powers, America and the Soviet Union, could not give content to a new one (ibid.: 245). Schmitt was not concerned with limiting exercises of hegemonic imperial power abroad but with the bigger picture of global order between Great Powers, where he normatively hoped for the emergence of an imperial balance of power (ibid.: 355).

What today's critical theorists take from Schmitt is the contingent reading that universalist claims lead to unlimited war and the transformation of the enemy into a 'criminal'. In fact, Schmitt becomes re-read as a pluralist poststructuralist, warning against the dictatorial hegemonic power of American or global neoliberal empire (for example, Mouffe 2007; Petito 2007; Ojakangas 2007; Prozorov 2007). The post-Foucaultian critique of sovereign power is transferred to a critique of America, as the hegemonic sovereign of the international sphere. Extensions of and, more often, the undermining of international legal agreements are seen, therefore, as sovereign acts of deciding upon the exception and of normalising the power of exception (for example, Jabri 2007a: 95, 99). Paradoxically, Schmitt, the founding theorist of a 'geo-political' framework of international relations, is essentially conscripted to wage a highly abstract critique of 'power', 'empire', or 'the liberal project', which is seen as steamrolling over resistance on the grounds that it is not valid; that those who resist should be 'eliminated' as 'inhuman' or 'criminal' (see further, Selby 2007).

Deterritorialised Conflict: Global War without Enemies

The critical opponents of liberal global war understand the globalisation of war as stemming from the perceived security interests of Western actors: the need to enforce

liberal governance domestically and internationally. They argue that the liberal outlook can only see the world in bifurcated terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’; where the act of intervention is necessary to transform – through war, development or democratisation – societies or individuals to fit the Western liberal image. In effect, this global war of liberal governance has no specific enemy, but appears to be a generalised or free-floating drive to war. War without enemies is a far cry from the central concerns of theorists of the last century, such as Carl Schmitt, for whom the enmity of class conflict or inter-imperialist rivalry threatened to become absolutised (where ‘real enemies’ were turned into absolute enemies).

Today, it appears that global war is becoming absolute without the prior existence of a ‘real enemy’, without the fundamental political clash of social or class forces which can clarify the existence of war against an enemy. In one of his later works, *The Theory of the Partisan* (2004) Schmitt touches on the problem of war without real enemies, which he understands in terms of deterritorialised conflict. Schmitt argues that war in the 19th Century was increasingly fought in ways which blurred the distinctions of classical martial law, particularly in the role of irregular fighters or partisans which resisted enemy or colonial occupations. For Schmitt, the ‘genuine’ partisan had a *tellurian* character and the fact that the partisan’s struggle was tied to a specific territory made the struggle a defensive and limited one (2004: 13).

Schmitt seeks to counter-pose the ‘genuine’, territorialised, or *telluric* partisan to the development of more dangerous and deterritorialised partisan struggle:

> The partisan will present a specifically terrestrial type of the active fighter for at least as long as anti-colonial wars are possible… However, even the autochtonous partisan… is drawn into the force-field of irresistible technical-industrial progress. His mobility is so enhanced by motorization that he runs the risk of complete dislocation… A motorized partisan loses his tellurian character. All that’s left is a transportable, replaceable cog in the wheel of a powerful world-political machine. (2004: 14)

Schmitt, the conservative theorist, sought to argue that the romantic legitimisation of revolutionary movements of national liberation, rooted in the land and in the people and fighting a limited war of defence, had enabled the development of a much more problematic type of partisan. This type of partisan – ‘the motorized partisan’ – could easily become a deterritorialised ‘aggressive international revolutionary activist’ fighting an unlimited war (2004: 21). Schmitt’s fear was that the deterritorialised communist threat was worse than the threat of national liberation struggles or of conventional inter-state war because the class war of the communists against the capitalist order was a ‘war of absolute enmity’ which ‘knows no containment’ (2004: 36).

He argued that Lenin’s Bolshevik theory of partisan - or party - war was the most extreme form of deterritorialised politics, where even the state served the global interest of the party (ibid.: 66). In deterritorialising war, he argued that: ‘Lenin has something abstract and intellectual in his definition of the enemy.’ (Ibid.: 43) For Schmitt, the territorialised partisan was a ‘national and patriotic hero’ with a real enemy but not an absolute one, whose legitimacy was rooted in the public support of his political community (ibid.: 52). In contrast, the motorised, deterritorialised

partisan was dependent on external, foreign backers for support. Schmitt sought to argue that those who were unpatriotic and challenged their governing elites under the banner of revolutionary struggle were illegitimate and externally manipulated as ‘replaceable cogs in the wheel of a powerful world-political machine’, i.e., the Soviet Union.

Schmitt’s work expressed fully his understanding of the ‘absolute’ threat seen to be posed by the revolutionary movement, backed by the funding of the Soviet Union. However, going beyond Schmitt’s conservative political conclusions, he made some fundamentally important points regarding social and collective political ties and the nature of political conflict, which are essential to draw out here. The shift from the telluric partisan to the deterritorialised combatant - whose struggle is not based on the support of the people - is a crucial one. He argued that deterritorialised struggle, which is aggressive and potentially unlimited, depended on a break from social ties. This break from the combatant’s society, for Schmitt, largely depended on the reliance on an interested third party, which could underwrite the struggle, although he also indicates that, with technological developments, the means could be available for the motorised partisan to provide his own tools of destruction, thereby freeing him from any social community restraints and enabling him to wage his own individual ‘war’ on the world (ibid.: 56).

For the purposes of understanding the inversion of reality of current framings of global war, the most interesting section in Schmitt’s study of the partisan is the discussion of General Salan - a French military officer who formed his own underground irregular unit, undertaking bombings in France and Algeria in opposition to French government policy. Schmitt argued that the deterriorialised, individualised war waged by Salan could not replicate the partisan war of opposition to French colonialism and inevitably had an abstract character to it. Schmitt made the point that it took more than being an irregular combatant to wage a war. Salan’s act lacked a grounding in a partisan relationship to society or any external legitimisation and therefore was merely a crime. His was an act of protest, of self-expression, but not the waging of a war against a real enemy (ibid.: 60). Schmitt argues that without a real enemy there can not be real war in the sense of a politically meaningful struggle. The partisan defence of homeland against an invader or occupier clearly provides a real war and a real enemy. For Schmitt, a deterritorialised war for abstract ideas such as the revolutionary struggle against capitalism lacked a real enemy and therefore became global rather than territorial (ibid.: 66).

The implication of Schmitt’s argument is that global war becomes ‘unlimited’ or ‘absolute’ in the sense that there is less that is strategic or instrumental about the waging of it. Global wars become ‘wars of choice’, rather than necessity, because the enemy becomes an abstraction rather than a concrete opponent. For Schmitt, the deterritorialisation of war - the loss of the telluric character of the partisan - was problematic because conflict became free-floating. As he argued:

> Annihilation thus becomes entirely abstract and entirely absolute. It is no longer directed against an enemy, but serves only another, ostensibly objective attainment of highest values, for which no price is too high to pay. It is the renunciation of real enmity that opens the door for the work of annihilation of an absolute enmity. (2004: 67)

Schmitt argues that waging war without a real enemy is likely to be make violence more indiscriminate rather than less and that posing war in global terms rather than limited national ones makes war more abstract and less grounded in necessity. In this framework, 'global war' does not necessarily mean war which is more destructive than inter-state war or war that is highly instrumental; rather it indicates a war that is fought without real enemies: war that is driven by ideas of self-expression rather than imposed necessity, and war which is disassociated from any clear social grounding in the struggle between the conflicting interests of collective political subjects.

Reading the violence of 'global war' as 'unlimited' due to its abstract and ungrounded, ad hoc, contingent character provides a useful way of understanding the motorised partisans of deterritorialised terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda (for example, de Benoist 2007). Perhaps the most insightful of such analyses is that of Faisal Devji's *Landscapes of the Jihad* (2005). Devji argues that the abstract, deterritorialised nature of Al-Qaeda's struggle is what has given it its globalised nature:

> It was indeed the [disproportion] between Al-Qaeda's severely limited means and seemingly limitless ends that made a global movement of its jihad… This jihad is global not because it controls people, places and circumstances over vast distances, for Al-Qaeda's control of such things is negligible… but for precisely the opposite reason: because it is too weak to participate in the politics of control. (2005: 1-2)

Devji makes the compelling point that the violent excesses of Al-Qaeda stem precisely from their lack of connection to a territorial struggle. Once 'the politics of control' are renounced or given up, then struggle is de-territorialised or globalised. For Devji, as for Olivier Roy (2004), Al-Qaeda's 'global war' can only be understood in relation to the defeat of political Islam; as a product of defeat and marginalisation rather than a growth of radical purpose, capacity and meaning. For Devji, the global jihad 'has little to do with American malignity and everything to do with the fact that a politics based on national causes is being made increasingly irrelevant'; it is therefore global through weakness and social disconnection rather than through strength: 'a perverse call to ethics in an arena where the old-fashioned politics can no longer operate – because it can no longer control' (2005: 156).

This lack of territorial grounding, or social relationship to a clear constituency, frees 'globalised' combatants, such as Al-Qaeda, from the need for a real, concrete, strategic enemy. The fight against an abstract enemy is not a 'war', properly understood, because there is no political relationship, no social engagement, no intentionality relating means to the ends. Gary Ulmen insightfully argues that fundamentalist terrorists do not engage in war understood politically: i.e., they are not engaged in a strategic or instrumental use of violence and: 'seek to appeal to no other constituency than themselves' (2007: 103). For Devji, the deterritorialised nature of Al-Qaeda's 'global war' can be better understood in comparison to the atomised protest of modern 'global social movements' than in the context of political struggle, where the high stakes and social mobilisation of society make destruction inevitable:

> [Al-Qaeda is] characteristic of global movements more generally… These are movements whose practices are ethical rather than political in nature because they have been transformed into gestures of risk and duty rather than acts of instrumentality. However instrumental their intentions, the politics of such movements are invariably transformed into ethics at a global level… Like such movements, Greenpeace, for instance, the global effects of the jihad bring together allies and enemies of the most heterogeneous character, who neither know or communicate each with the other, and who in addition share almost nothing by way of a prior history. (2005: 11-12)

However, it is not just modern terrorism which is dislocated from social engagement and has an abstract enemy rather than a real enemy. There has been no shortage of commentary acknowledging the abstract and problematic nature of the US-led 'war against a concept'. Devji himself notes that: 'By its very abstraction, the "War on Terror" leaves behind all enemies of a traditional kind to contend with something more metaphysical than empirical.' (2005: 156) Clearly it is the abstract, metaphysical nature of the war on terror which lends itself to being understood and critiqued within the frameworks of 'unending', 'unlimited' or 'total' war. For these radical commentators, the discursive framing of the war on terror in abstract terms is seen purely as an assertion of power and global hegemonic intent. The next section seeks to stress that the wars of today, waged by America and other major Western powers, are no less 'global' than those of the fundamentalist jihad.

Grounding the Abstraction of Global War

Western governments appear to portray some of the distinctive characteristics which Schmitt attributed to 'motorised partisans', in that the shift from narrowly strategic concepts of security to more abstract concerns reflects the fact that Western states have tended to fight free-floating and non-strategic wars of aggression without real enemies at the same time as professing to have the highest values and the absolute enmity which accompanies these. The government and critical frameworks of 'global war' have been so accepted that it is assumed that it is the strategic interests of Western actors which lie behind the often extreme policy-responses, thereby understanding 'global war' as merely the extension of territorial struggles for control. This perspective completely misses the fact that it is the lack of a strategic desire for control that drives and defines 'global' war today.

Very few studies of the war on terror start from a study of the Western actors rather than from the international sphere itself. This methodological framing – of the global ideology (described in Chapter 1) – inevitably makes assumptions about strategic interactions and grounded interests of domestic or international regulation and control, which are then revealed to explain the proliferation of enemies and the abstract and metaphysical discourse of the war on terror. For its radical critics, the abstract, global discourse reveals the global intent of the hegemonising designs of biopower or neoliberal empire.

One of the few studies which stand out in this respect is that of sociologist Frank Furedi's *Invitation to Terror* (2007). He argues that it is Western elites' disconnection from their own societies that drives the discursive practices of the global war on terror and can help explain the drive behind both military adventurism abroad and the

heightened domestic focus on security restrictions. For Furedi, the abstract and de-territorialised global war flows from the fact that it derives not from sharpened political conflict but from the dissolution of political and social connections.

Furedi argues that 'the expanding empire of the unknown', the permanent war against insecurity, is waged precisely because liberal government can no longer 'secure itself' through its immersion and its relationship to its own society. Furedi's work implicitly suggests that modern governments are in a similar situation to Foucault's pre-modern Machiavellian Prince, who lacked a sense of a 'fundamental, essential, natural' connection with society and therefore, correctly, perceived the relationship as 'fragile and constantly under threat' (Foucault 2007: 91). In this respect, Furedi gives greater attention to some of the themes of government weakness and disconnection from society, raised in the work of liberal cosmopolitan theorists, such as Mary Kaldor (2007). However, where, for many liberal International Relations theorists, the breakdown of state-society coherence and state weakness are consequences of globalisation, for Furedi, it is the attenuated nature of social collective engagement which shapes perceptions of state weakness and the cultural consciousness of globalised threats.

Liberal cosmopolitan critics of the war on terror, such as Kaldor, argue that the war on terror is a conscious strategy of re-establishing domestic elite authority, through public manipulation via the moral crusade of 'spectacle war'. Poststructuralist and radical critics argue that the war on terror has been instrumental in strengthening and institutionalising biopolitical regulation at home and abroad. For both, the war on terror serves an instrumental purpose of control. Taking a different approach, Furedi argues that it would be a mistake to understand the war on terror in narrowly instrumental terms, reflecting the coherence and control of domestic elites. The fact that there is little clarity of the aims of the war or of who it is against leads Furedi to persuasively argue that the 'problem is not merely one of presentation, but of meaning' (2007: xiii). He suggests that: 'Western political elites lack a web of meaning through which they can make sense of the threat of terrorism'; the threat of insecurity seems so overwhelming that 'the enemy has acquired an increasingly diffuse and abstract character' (ibid.: xiv).

Rather than the confidence of governing capacity, extending the 'sovereign frontier' of Western domination deeper into the postcolonial world, Furedi focuses on the lack of confidence and apparent defeatism of Western elites. In the past, security threats were minimized by governments, keen to demonstrate their capacity to uphold national security. Today, there is an overwhelming mood of helplessness and fatalism - summed up by the government mantra of 'its not a matter of if but when' and 'its only a matter of time' before the terrorists achieve an attack of widespread devastation of an urban centre - as governments constantly imagine the worst.

Furedi argues that critics of the war on terror tend to miss the demoralization and even defeatist aspects, explicit in the projection of this conflict as an 'unending war' (ibid.: 10). The official rhetoric of American vulnerability to asymmetric attacks by motivated individuals, inverses the power relations between the West and the postcolonial world, whereby Western technological advances are seen as 'dependency' and 'weakness' - providing targets rather than coping capacity. Rather than taking these statements as assertions of the desire for biopolitical control, Furedi

seeks to investigate why there has been 'a radical reversal of the way that modern, relatively open industrial societies make sense of themselves' (2007: 14). Why should Western societies view the world from the perspective of their vulnerabilities rather than their strengths; from the passive perspective of the helpless victim rather than that of a pro-active agent?

His central theme is that the idea of terrorism gives coherence to Western elites' sense of existential threat. The threat is not important in itself; the threat of instability held to stem from diverse causes - such as underdevelopment, state failure, terrorism, global crime or global warming - tends to reflect the incapacity of Western policy-making and instrumental strategic planning rather than facilitate it. For Furedi, the Western sense of existential threat is a free floating one, able to attach itself to any cause, which can then be interpreted through the lens of 'worst-case scenarios'. This is because the sense of global insecurity does not stem from what is 'out there' but rather from Western society itself: it 'is the product of society's inability to give meaning to human experience' (2007: xvi).

Furedi argues that the sense of insecurity is so strong that our fears are expanding with little relationship to any increase in objectively measurable threats or risks. In fact, what is changing is our understanding of risk itself - from a measurement of the probability of success or failure to a speculative exercise, emphasising the limits of knowledge; a shift from 'probabilistic' to 'possibilistic' thinking (ibid.: 67). Rather than human knowledge and capacity being emphasised, the focus is upon the dangers that we do not know about. The less certain we are about our own judgement and capacity the more insecurity becomes the dominant cultural outlook.

This sense of uncertainty is seen to derive from the breakdown of collective political engagement, which means that societies are less sure of societal goals. Without social goals, communities lack a collective sense of shared meaning and political elites find it difficult to give their policy actions meaning – to generate social consensus around government policies and initiatives. The sense of vulnerability has meant that the war on terror has become an introspective framework through which elite feelings of vulnerability have been extended to a much deeper cultural pessimism which has impacted on policies both at home and abroad. This sense of incapacity has exaggerated the impact of the terrorist threat and, through expressing their powerlessness against the military threat and weakness in the 'battle of ideas', political elites have further weakened their sense of policy coherence and purpose.

In locating the shift from inter-state security to global insecurity in the domestic sphere of attenuated social relations, Furedi avoids the problems faced by radical and poststructuralist critics in trying to explain the vagaries of Western policy-making in relation to the postcolonial world as part of a clear and coherent agenda of containment, regulation and control. Furedi also implicitly raises critical questions over the prevalent catch-all use of globalisation as a deterministic explanation for political elites' lack of capacity to take on policy leadership and the break down of territorial forms of community consciousness. In focusing on elite insecurity, and the policy uncertainties and overreactions which stem from this, a much more socially-mediated understanding of Western approaches to security and the problematic of 'global war' becomes possible.

Rethinking Global War

Radical critics have no problem grounding global war in the needs of neoliberal or biopolitical governance or US hegemonic designs. These critics have produced numerous frameworks which seek to assert that global war is somehow inevitable, based on their view of the needs of late capitalism, late modernity, neoliberalism, or biopolitical frameworks of rule or domination. From the declarations of global war and practices of military intervention, rationality, instrumentality and strategic interests are read in a variety of ways. This book seeks to argue that these frameworks of explanation generate their power by reading off the interests and rationality directly from the declarations and actions themselves (see further, Chapter 8). Global war is taken entirely on its own terms, with the declarations of Western governments explaining and giving power to radical abstract theories of the global power and regulatory might of the new global order of domination, hegemony or empire.

The alternative reading of 'global war' rendered here seeks to argue that the declaration of global war is a sign of social dislocation rather than a sign of global domination. We increasingly see Western diplomatic and military interventions presented as justified on the basis of value-based declarations, rather than in traditional terms of interest-based outcomes. This was as apparent in the wars of humanitarian intervention, in Bosnia, Somalia and Kosovo - where there was no clarity of objectives and therefore little possibility of strategic planning in terms of the military intervention or the post-conflict political outcomes – as it is in the war on terror campaigns, still ongoing, in Afghanistan and Iraq. As Zaki Laïdi explains:

> [W]ar is not waged necessarily to achieve predefined objectives, and it is in waging war that the motivation needed to continue it is found. In these cases – of which there are very many – war is no longer a continuation of politics by other means, as in Clausewitz's classic model – but sometimes the initial expression of forms of activity or organization in search of meaning … War becomes not the ultimate means to achieve an objective, but the most 'efficient' way of finding one. (1998: 95)

In this sense, global wars are the idealised projections of global values – i.e., the lack of cohering values (see Chapter 5) - rather than political struggles against 'real enemies'. The mainstream critical approaches to global wars, with their heavy reliance on the readings of Foucault, Schmitt and Agamben, appear to inverse the reality; portraying the implosion of international law as a product of the high stakes involved in global struggle, rather than the lack of clear contestation involving the strategic accommodation of diverse powers and interests.

International law evolved on the basis of the ever present possibility of real war between real enemies. Taken out of historical context, it would seem that European approaches to international law, which sought to treat the enemy as a *justus hostis* - a legitimate opponent to be treated with reciprocal relations of equality - can be counter-posed to the wars of the current period of humanitarian intervention and the war and terror. This counter-position then seeks to explain the lack of respect for international law and seemingly arbitrary and ad hoc use of military force in frameworks which rely heavily on analogies with the past. For example, as comparable to inter-imperialist or colonial wars, which similarly were unregulated

and unrestricted in their use of force. Agamben's argument that classical international law has dissipated into a 'permanent state of exception', suggesting that we are witnessing a global war machine - constructing the world in the image of the camp and reducing its enemies to bare life to be annihilated at will - appears to be given force by Guantanamo Bay, extraordinary rendition, and Abu Ghraib.

Yet, once we go beyond the level of appearances, the dynamic of Western elite weakness and insecurity reveals a Hollow Hegemony. For example, far from criminalising fundamentalist terrorists, the US has politically glorified them, talking up their political importance. Here, the concept of criminalisation needs to be reconsidered. The leading example of the dehumanising and criminalising of the terrorist enemy is held to be Guantanamo Bay, where terrorist suspects were held in legal suspension as 'illegal combatants' and denied Geneva Red Cross conventions and prisoner of war status. The criminalisation of the captives in Guantanamo Bay was not a case of reducing their status to criminals but the development of an exceptional legal category.

Guantanamo Bay can be seen instead as an attempt to create an enemy of special status. In fact, to inverse Agamben's thesis it would be better to understand the legal status of the 'illegal combatants' as sacralising them rather than reducing them to the status of 'bare life'. In acting in an exceptional way, the US attempted to create a more coherent and potent image of the vaguely-defined security threat. This approach is very different, for example, from the framework of criminalisation used by the British government in the fight against Irish republicanism, where the withdrawal of prisoner of war status from republican prisoners was intended to delegitimate their struggle and was a strategic act of war. Ironically, whereas the criminalisation of the republican struggle was an attempt to dehumanise them – to justify unequal treatment of combatants – the criminalisation of global terrorists has served to humanise them in the sense of giving coherence, shape, and meaning to a set of individuals with no clear internally-generated sense of connection.

Far from 'denying the enemy the very quality of being human' it would appear that the much publicised abuses of the war on terror stem from the Western inability to cohere a clear view of who the enemy is or of how they should be treated. It is this defensiveness that can be seen to lie behind 'extraordinary rendition', where the US contracted out the task of interrogation, in much the same way as much of the fighting has been contracted out to local forces. Even the abuses of Abu Ghraib occurred in the context of multi-cultural awareness training and appeared to stem from frustration over the lack of purpose or sense of meaning of the war, rather than the strategic need to defeat an enemy (Devji 2005).

Conclusion

Global war is a product of social dislocation and disconnection rather than an expression of new universalising hegemony fighting a war of annihilation against alternative ways of life. The concept of 'control', articulated by authors such as Carl Schmitt and Faisal Devji, seems to be key to understanding the transition from territorial frameworks of conflict to today's unlimited, arbitrary, expressions of violence. Wars fought for territory, with a socially-grounded telluric character, are limited by the needs of instrumental rationality: the goals shape the means deployed.

Wars fought in the deterritorialised, abstract fashion of today's Hollow Hegemony, lack a clear relationship between means and ends and take a dangerous, destabilising, arbitrary character. To mistake the arbitrary and unlimited nature of violence for a heightened desire for control fails to contextualise conflict in the social relations of today.