

War inevitability

War



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War is unpredictable and must be studied based on individual circumstances, actions taken, and reactions. States are disagreeing with each other on many subjects and conflicts arise often. War has always occurred. The problem of war has been continually examined from Ancient Greek philosophers to 21st century political theorists. Different cultures, religions and nations have continually clashed over territory, politics and resources. The seeming inevitability of war has been widely discussed among philosophers and political scientists throughout history.

Many theories have attempted to answer whether war is inevitable, often offering an apparently conclusive opinion. Body Realists would argue that war is inevitable simply because of the biological makeup of the human race, and high capacity of anger. From a socio-biological perspective this violent nature could impact on how we execute international politics. We can also say that war is inevitable from a psychological perspective. Many psychologists theorise that human aggression can develop into frustration, aimed at something unobtainable and irresolvable, and so therefore displaced onto civilians.

Human nature are also inherently natural differences of opinion could escalate into war. Of course, it is not just about violence. According to Morgenthau the ' selfishness of man has limits. His need for power has none. ' We can theorise from this that war is inevitable due to man's natural need to dominate others, success in conflict being perhaps the easiest way to achieve subordination. However, human nature is not the one and only factor in the decision to declare war. Most political leaders are less influenced by instinct.

More political and economic gains, and though anger and disagreements may be inevitable, the existence of treaties and compassion negate the notion that human nature causes war to be inevitable. Neorealist concept, conjectures that war is inevitable due to the uncertainty of another state's actions and intentions. Oftentimes the line between a position of defence and a position of offence is blurred, for example the 1983 NATO exercise that the Russian security system believed to be real. Misperception such as this is a basic fact of human life.

Perceptions rest on individual experience, with catastrophic implications for the international system when applied to war as can be seen in World War II. The relationship between Germany and the UK was one based on ignorance; Hitler believed the UK would not fight, and Churchill underestimated Hitler's military clout. We can assume that this mix of insecurity and, hypothetically, a misperceived threat could make international war inevitable. However, there is one very simple argument against the notion of misperception, and that is that war is not an ad-hoc decision made rashly.

Leaders often deliberate and consider many factors, not simply make a knee-jerk reaction. True, misperception during the course of war may be an accelerator for further action, but we cannot cite it as the sole reason for why war is inevitable. Also, one could suggest that the modern intelligence technology able to seek out weapons of mass destruction have made the idea of an anarchical world archaic. Many states now have the power to anticipate an attack, suggesting war is not inevitable in a practical sense.

According to Clausewitz's 'On War' describes war as a 'continuation of the political intercourse'. The connotations of this is war is inevitable because of <https://assignbuster.com/war-inevitability/>

it is a political tool to be used rationally. Miller alludes that war could be analysed as a 'cost-benefit' equation; increase the gains, increase the inevitability. Since the world has effectively gotten smaller war could be seen as more inevitable, considering the 'spoils' we now know about, for example oil in the Middle East.

However, it must be said that war is not a rational action in and of itself. Perhaps this argument had more relevance in the sixteenth century, with Henry VIII viewing wars in Europe to be important for filling his coffers. But in the modern international community, the cost-benefit analysis is usually completely out of favour. Nowhere is this more relevant than in Vietnam, where both sides suffered damning blows with little successes.

This negates the view that war is inevitable due to its rational nature, and the benefits it brings. Speaking in a historical context, there is a strong case for modernity making war inevitable; the modern world itself is more conducive to violence. Modern capitalist society can be seen as inherently violent, as it promotes an individualistic culture, with everyone fighting for power. Indeed, Ron Robins speculates that this could lead to trade tariffs and restrictions, and 'a 21st century global trade war'.

Also, one could argue that if war is seen as easier, the likelihood of its occurrence will grow exponentially. Modern warfare is not only easier than the past, with nuclear weapons deployed at the mere push of a button, but vastly superior, evident in the ever-evolving technology available to the armed forces. One can view the modern world as small, given the advances in communications and travel, and the lack of land and resources for an

overpopulated nation, adding to the tension inherent in the modern international system.

According to Jones, if we apply the theory of modernity to every state in the international system, it is no stretch of the imagination to view war as inevitable. Nevertheless, war is considered incompatible in modern society. Most states are now in intergovernmental groups, such as the UN, which have strict policies on warfare. The UN Charter states that, if a member state persists in disrupting peace, the Security Council will 'take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security'.

Even in groups where no rules on security are present, like MERCOSUR, the interconnected trade links and coordination of policies mean that, if one member did pursue a line of war, the other countries would be in a position of power to oppose them, and it would arguably be in their interest to do so. This cooperation could arguably be applied to the global stage, democratic nations favouring negotiations over the demonstrations of hard power through war. In the main, wars are viewed as horrific, costly, and ultimately not beneficial for a state's wellbeing.

Booth and Dunne support this argument, stating that the war against terror was met with caution and anxiety, due to the fact that the 'Kosovo wobble' was still fresh in the public's minds. This move from the noble and honourable European wars of the sixteenth century to the unfavourable, unwanted wars of the modern world is reinforced in the media, with newspapers predominantly focusing on the negative side of war, thereby

reinforcing the idea that it is not as inevitable as some would argue. Many would pose the question: how can a state go to war without the support of its people? There is sufficient evidence to suggest that war is inevitable, especially when we consider that often all of these factors are present when war is being deliberated. However, one need only look at the modern international system to see that war is costly, difficult and not inevitable. Alliances systems mean that support for war is difficult to gain, for example the EU and Libya. Most countries now offer support by other means, rather than engage in conflict themselves. The capacity for war is large, but capacity does not equal certainty.

The ' stalemate ' over nuclear weapons and cyber-warfare between countries such as China and the USA illustrate this; both waiting for the other to move. Meanwhile, sufficient deterrents exist in the form of security agreements, negotiations and the threat of public dissatisfaction (the UK public's reaction to the Iraq War) to eradicate war as an inevitability, and reduce it to a mere possibility. Furthermore, if we accept peace as the desired model for the international system, the very notion of war becomes obsolete.