2022 Grey Oration: the Past, Present and Future of War

Professor Beatrice Heuser, General Staff College of the Bundeswehr

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# Introduction by CDRE Rick Bolton

Ladies and gentlemen, Commodore Rick Bolton the chief fire warden around here by the sounds of it. A very warm welcome to the Australian Defence College this evening. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which you're meeting today. The Ngunnawal people. And pay my respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

I'd also like to pay my respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have contributed to the Defence of Australia in times of peace and war. Good evening, and thank you for joining us tonight for the 2022 Jeffrey Gray Oration. I'm delighted to welcome back to the College, Mrs. Emigre and Mr. Sebastian Gray, the wife and son of late Professor Jeffrey Gray.

A warm welcome also to Victoria and Duncan Gray, who are joining us by the video link. We're also joined this evening by Lieutenant General John Fruin, chief of Joint Capabilities and Advice, Marshal Stephen Edgley, commander of the Austra

lian Defence College. I welcome current students of the Australian War College, as well as the Australian Defence College alumni and members of the Canberra National Security Committee, who are either in the theatre this evening or watching via the video link.

We're deeply appreciative of you remaining engaged with activities of the College. Some minor housekeeping announcements. If a fire alarm happens to go off this evening, please follow me and my staff into the central courtyard again. The Jeffrey Gray Distinguished Visiting Chair was established by the Australian Defence College in 2018 to honour the legacy of Professor Jeffrey Gray.

Professor Gray was one of the finest military historians our nation has produced, starting with his thesis on the Korean War. Over the course of three decades, Professor Gray personified intellectual excellence in the profession of arms. This excellence led to appointments such as the prestigious Major-General Matthew C Horner, Chair of Military Theory at the United States Marine Corps University and president of the Society for Military History.

However, it is through his tutelage of thousands of midshipmen and cadets in the Department of History and later the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Australian Defence Force Academy, the Professor Gray's legacy to the Australian Defence Force is most recognizable. Many of the Australian Defence Forces present leadership have benefit greatly from Professor Gray's teachings that the Jeffrey Gray Distinguished Visiting Chair is recognition of Professor Gray's contribution to intellectual excellence in the profession of arms, and acknowledgment of Professor Gray as a luminary.

His work will continue to inform and shape Australia's national security discourse for generations to come. I'm delighted to welcome a guest of honour this evening, Professor Beatrice Heuser, professor of International Relations at the University of Glasgow, and secondly, to the Bundeswehr Command and Staff College in Hamburg, Germany. Professor Heuser was awarded the Jeffrey Gray Distinguished Visiting Chair in 2020, and has held the position for two and a half years due to the Covid pandemic.

After a few false starts, I'm very delighted that Professor Heuser has been able to travel to Australia for the duration, this evening. Professor Heuser is a graduate of the University of London with a Bachelor of Arts from Bedford College and a master of Arts in the London School of Economics and Oxford University, where she attended Saint Anthony's College and Saint John's College and graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy.

She also holds a higher degree, a habilitation degree, from the University of Marburg. Professor Heuser has taught at King's College London of the Department of War Studies, and has taught or held visiting professorships at several Parisian universities as well as University of Reims and Potsdam, the University of Rome, the Bundeswehr University near Munich, and the Russian Foreign Ministry's University of MGIMO.

She spent a year at night headquarters as a consultant and intern, and has worked as director of Studies of the German Bundeswehr Military History Research Office. Professor Heuser has been affiliated to or is a visiting honorary professor at a number of institutions throughout London, France and Germany. Professor Heuser, a very warm welcome to the Australian Defence College.

The floor is yours.

# Professor Heuser

General Fruin, Commandant, ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Emma Grey, Sebastian, Duncan and Victoria, virtually. First of all, it also behoves me to pay homage to the eminent historian of military history, the late Professor Jeffrey, a worthy successor to Robert O'Neil, as historiography of Australia's wars since 1945.

I am sure he still had very important books to write, but was prevented by his premature death. I did not have the privilege to meet him personally, all the more regrettably, but I had the opportunity to talk to Professor Robert O'Neill, who I believe was the examiner of his PhD, and to Professor Michael Evans about Jeff Grey’s very impressive work.

Jeff Gray was, as the author, has already heard, of the definitive reference work of Australia's military history and of more detailed studies of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. Editor of a long list of works on Australia's contributions to warfare in the 19th and 20th centuries. He was, I am told, an historian’s historian, somebody who like to get his fingers dirty in the archives, get stuck into the documents, engaging with war as seriously as any civilian could.

With his father, a major general, he had considerable respect for the profession of the soldier, and showed this in his dedication to his teaching, particularly, but not only of officer cadets. He was, however, sceptical, I am told, about strategic studies. I could have reassured him that the British tradition of strategic studies, following Captain Basil Liddell Hart, would have been entirely to his liking. What a shame we never met.

I might also have learned more about the fortune of the Wallabies. In all Jeff Gray was a prolific writer and outstanding editor, whose contribution to Australian military history has rightly been honoured with this chair in military history, of which I am presently have the honour of being the incumbent. This oration is very aptly dedicated to his memory.

Coming from the UK. I cannot address a topic such as this without talking about the *Changing Character of War* program, which Sir Hew Strachan bequeathed to the University of Oxford. The title is roughly derived from Clausewitz's *On War*, passages of which can be boiled down to emphasize that there is something that is eternal, is the essence of war, for example, its destructiveness is its tendency to escalate, to get out of hand, to be extremely dangerous, to be all about suffering. And then the particular form that war assumes at any given time and context.

In Professor Strachan's *Changing Character of War* program, I once gave a talk at Oxford on insurgencies and counterinsurgency, but I put my foot in it in a very big way. When I argued that this was a form of war where over millennia of recorded history, little had changed. After all, his was the *Changing Character War* program.

I had previously worked on nuclear strategy, where the key argument is always made that the invention of nuclear weapons has changed war, and thinking about war, fundamentally. I was thus myself quite surprised to find that in spending some years on reading about small wars and the sense of insurgencies and counterinsurgency, I saw so much continuity across time and space. And that leads me to today's subject, that there is change as well as continuity in war, something that may strike you as a platitude. But, as you will see, this recognition is of considerable consequence for all of you in the armed forces. More still, change itself has taken different forms.

Some of it has been unidirectional, not quite but almost linear, and for the sake of simplicity let’s call it linear. Some has been… most of it actually been non-linear. Not quite cyclical or periodical like a sinus curve, but definitely up and down, backwards and forwards, without a clear trend in either direction.

Perhaps the causes of wars are the most enduring part of war.

Explanations of the causes of war have included leaving aside the gods, or the devil, or the innate evil in humans. The biology of humans, particularly of the individual male - the selfish male gene - the male quest for more wives to bear more of their offspring, thus depriving others of their wives, leading to violent competition for women. We still see traces of this in large scale rape going on in the wars of particular cultures.

While I won't deny that particularly young men of all cultures, in their early encounter with their own testosterone can be inclined that way, in our day, that seems to be at least in part, a cultural thing. The research done on the Second World War in Europe, for example, showed that the soldiers of the Red Army raped on a very much larger scale, including women from allied countries than the US, British and French soldiers.

There must therefore be other variables intervening, such as discipline, especially the attitude of commanding officers. American officers, for example, ensured the rapists on the European continent were hanged in the presence of their victims.

Collective evolutionary psychology is another factor that is always quoted. Evolutionary psychologists claim humans have a time in prehistory, have in fact got stuck in a time in prehistory, in the context of tribal competition for natural resources. In any case, the scramble for natural resources is likely to remain with us as the world population continues to grow terrifyingly. Thus, there are external physical forces influencing war, causing war; climate change, drought, don't think the climate change is not now talked about and drought only started now. We think that major population movements of the past millennia have been due to these factors. Resource shortages caused by them leading to human migration and conquest of new lands by force. We could all also call these negative economic drivers.

Then there are positive economic drivers. The quest for beauty… sorry… the ‘booty’. The aim to extend commerce, the capture of slaves, the conquest of productive territory with natural resources that could be anything from wheat to oil… diamonds… whatever. The seizure of strategic position, for example, access to the sea, access to trade routes.

Then there are social conditions which keep cropping up as causes of war, a youth bulge, i.e. an excess of young people who can't find jobs, who can't find a future for themselves. Young men and sometimes young women trying to escape what seems like a predetermined life of poverty, or a life with their parents in cramped conditions. The quest for adventure. Veterans unable to reintegrate into civilian society and to pursue alternative professions. We're told with large proportions of the homeless in central London are former soldiers.

Then there are political structures of a polity that might allow an elite to harness the collectivity to their own expansionist group and personal interests, at the cost of the lives and treasure of the large majority of people who waging their wars for them, with a little extra benefit for rising entrepreneurs.

War has, for a long time and recurrently, also been an excuse for internal repression, with simultaneously allowing groups to stay in power while repressing the rise of other groups. Every cause that I've mentioned so far has existed throughout recorded history and has surfaced periodically. By contrast, what has changed fundamentally over time is the influence of ideas, ideologies, and religions.

And interestingly they tend to have had as consequences, or as aims, in war, two quite separate things which might, bottom line, have had similar effects. One is to say that you're trying to extend your own group’s or nation’s or race’s power over other inferior groups with the assumption that you can even kill them and massacre them, because the only interest you have is to preserve and to enhance your own group's power.

The other one is the ideal of converting them in some way, assimilating them to your own group, converting them to the only beatifying church, religion or social order. Which is suppose supposedly in their interest, even when in reality, bottom line, that can be also terrifying. This dimension has included fundamental changes, as these religions and ideologies were new in their own time and created new ideational principles for the treatment of others.

Then there is the international order, or the order between states, or between polities. The distribution of power, control of territory, and wealth between polities. The positive establishment or emergence of rules of behaviour among them observed or ignored by some of them, has changed over time. These are things that have in fact changed fundamentally. Inter-entity systems have expanded over millennia to become global.

While there were some relations between the earliest hunter gatherer groups, or between the Ngunnawal and the Gundungurra, or the Ngarigo, indigenous populations of Australia, I've been given a wonderful map where I looked up some of the names of the people in this area. The sheer geographic extension of relations has become transformed entirely by transport and technology.

Today, confrontations take place between imagined communities more than neighbouring villages. Europeans could not have settled in Australia before the invention of global navigation. And before the invention of aircraft, Australians would not have feared an air attack. You cannot separate between the behaviour of states amongst themselves and their governments behaviour internally. There may be a tension between the mission to protect the state's own population and furthering its interests, and respecting the human rights of all humanity.

Generally, governments presented with this dilemma will put their own populations first, but you certainly won't have a government that persecutes minority within its own state borders, putting general human rights first in inter-state conflicts. A sober consciousness of one's own limited means can create limitations, but ideological firma and structural dysfunctionality, for example, realistic analysis not being presented to the Supreme Leader can override such self-limitations.

And a few more observations. Note that economic motivations and aims straddle criminality and political ideological motivation. On an economic level, we are prepared to pay less for the well-being of others than for the well-being of our own populations. Therefore, economic and political aims can clash. Examples include the reluctance of the European governments currently to cut off oil and gas imports from Russia to strangle the Russian war effort.

Which would be very sensible. Our relations overall with Saudi Arabia, our relations with China, where as a student of this college pointed out to me, we are balancing prosperity versus security, or perhaps one should rephrase that slightly and say, ‘prosperity versus our freedoms and independence from foreign interference’.

The British diplomat Sir Robert Cooper, in a brilliant book, has explained today's world as one in which modern, pre-modern and postmodern states coexist, and that makes life so very hard for postmodern states. Let me explain what he means. He defined modern as state governments that claim the sovereign freedom to act as they please. Overriding limitations on war established in international law while ensuring that other actors within the state do not have the right or means to resort to violence, ie they monopolize violence in their own society, and he explained that this approach is still widespread. It is shared by a number of countries which will disregard international organizations and international law when these conflict with national interests. And also, as we just see, demonstrated by Russia and by China in their disregard for international law and in the case of China, disregard for the international Court of Justice pronouncement on the South China Sea, and in case of Russia, that even disregard the Helsinki agreements that were included by their own predecessors about not changing of frontiers by force.

Meanwhile, some pre-modern states of the world are still struggling to establish a domestic monopoly on violence, while in Europe, the post-modern states have agreed to surrender a part of their sovereign freedoms in reciprocal commitments to settle conflicts peacefully.

At the global level, the enforcement mechanism for the United Nations Charter is dysfunctional. Given the key authority of the United Nations Security Council and the rights of the permanent five, this reflects a clash of ideals that of sovereignty versus that of subordinating the national interests of the Great powers to the interests of the world community of nations.

A different angle on this is to point to the interplay between political and technological factors. Even if we imagine a United Nations Security Council in which no rogue state held the veto power, states in possession of nuclear weapons and bomber fleets or missiles can actually do what they like, can't they? In the case of Ukraine or the war in Ukraine, we are self paralysed in Europe by our fear of nuclear war.

And perhaps even I'm speculating just of any war that might lead to the bombing of our cities.

Turning from causes of war to the evolution of war, let us look at what has changed with the general trend in one direction, and what has gone up and down without any clearly distinguishable pattern. So let us start with looking at legal progress, which I think is in some way being extremely slow but mainly linear.

Legitimate authority is a key to legitimate war, and that has existed. The insistence that you need a legitimate authority has been, has been expressed over millennia, but only beginning with the spread of Christianity. Yet we see a very slow revolution in legal protection of human rights in the war through customary law and finally into the laws of armed conflict.

I was myself quite surprised by this. But if you look at pre-Christian Rome or pre-Christian, the Greek sphere, the idea of compassion seems to have been very underdeveloped. People were not compassionate with slaves. They were not compassionate even with each other. They were not compassionate with a conquered community. They were very happy to expel entire communities from their cities and burned to the ground, exposing the people who'd been expelled to a death by starvation and exposure.

In cold climates. And it's curiously only with, Christianity that the idea came in that all souls being equal to God, one should actually have some charity towards other people and including that very, very gradually, really over centuries and centuries, for example, to the abolition of slavery, first within Europe and then also with polities that were not Christian.

So there was this linear progress and international law. I've, I've written on that, which is I'm shortcutting here simply much could go on much longer. I'll spare you that. There is this linear progress, at least on paper, that is with regard to this progressive limitation of what one could do to civilians in war. The law, however, is often not reflected in reality.

The Global West's territorial satiation and in theory universal commitment of all states signatory to the UN charter and of those signatory to the Helsinki Final Act not to change borders by force is not taken seriously by all. Just as Japan, having signed the Kellogg pact banning war in 1928, cavalierly ignored it in its expansionist campaigns, beginning only three years later. So there is an analogy there.

The rules based international order, which includes the key elements of the renunciation of the use of force as an instrument of state power and respect for human rights, even in war, is not shared universally. Yet in 1966, the governments of all the UN's member states signed up to two conventions. Those were the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

I'm sure you all know them, but let me remind you that they include such things as

the right to political self-determination, the right to life without any distinction of any kind, such as

* Race,
* Colour,
* Sex,
* Language,
* Religion,
* Political or other opinion,
* National and social origin of the citizens, race, or the people on the territory of a state.
* Equal rights for men and women.
* The free choice of a profession.
* Equal pay for equal work.
* Equal right to promotion.
* Safe and healthy working conditions.
* Paid holidays.
* The right to form trade unions.
* Marriage by consent only.
* The right to food, clothing, housing.
* The banishment of slavery.
* Free primary school education,
* Freedom of research

And all the countries that sign up to this, (ie all member states of the United Nations), also committed themselves to adopt such laws and adopt them into their own legislation.

Many societies the world over whose government at this point signed up to these covenants, do not agree with them and do not comply with them. Instead, they are willing to sacrifice individual human rights and entire of entire groups and minorities to the interests of the majority, as defined by their own ideology and religion, or of a ruling elite.

Note that many self-critical people in the Global West contribute to the undermining of these covenants by preaching cultural equivalence and echoing critiques of the West, claiming that the rights recognized in the two abovementioned covenants the right to life equality, non-discrimination, education should not apply to all humanity. While I am all for the self-criticism, which is essential for democracy, I find this argument that the human rights captured in these covenants that we have fought for, for centuries should not apply and should not benefit all humans, utterly despicable. I think that is actually a form of racism.

Turning secondly to the non-linear evolution of states and the interstate system. It is worth noting that the state’s power in pursuit of sovereignty only really grew again after the long period of the Middle Ages since the Reformation, as states cast off the papacy’s claim to moral supremacy. But then it has shrunk again, as states in the late 19th and 20th century signed up to international conventions and covenants.

Note, incidentally through our history, the existence over the many centuries of a vast array of different forms of states. This idea that the world over should be constituted by nation states that they should be have a contiguous territory and a homogeneous, ethnically homogeneous population is something that is extremely recent in European history and in world history.

In fact, the world over, there have been so many different forms of states from island principalities, from the city states of ancient Greece to the Hanse to Venice or Singapore.

There have been empires that were multicultural and multilingual with multi-ethnic to the Ummah and the Caliphate of Islam, the imagined community of the Christians and the Universitas Christianorum patchworks of territories of multi-ethnic inhabitants belonging to dynasties. The Southeast Asian mandala realms, non sedentary tribes and Africa. What that also means is that you've had phenomena of states existing in different parts of history, sometimes in different parts of the world, which were much more similar to much more recent entities than they were to the ones immediately after them or before them.

For example, Greek city states and late medieval Italian city states had much in common. By contrast, the Roman Empire was so much more unitary, organized, and sophisticated than the medieval monarchies that immediately followed it. Yet there were also continuities; you had the Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire and the European Union striving to create at least a domestic peace between its various components.

Accordingly, there have been various forms of inter entity orders the Universitas Christianorum. This Christian universe, even as a notional construct, disappeared after the Renaissance, allowing the rise of the sovereign state. Some idea, yet some idea of rules observed by civilized nations, later referred to of the family of nations, persisted. We had consecutively, even then, another model coming up, which is the model of the Pentarchy model, an international order in which five powers, for some reason, thought they had the right to dominate all others.

We found that manifest itself three times. It was created three times. Once in the Congress system after the defeat of Napoleon, once in the League of Nations, which of course was founded with the Second World War. And it has been recreated in the United Nations with the United Nations Security Council. And that really only worked for a relatively brief period in what I call the interglacial, the period between the Cold War and the new tensions with Russia, that we are now in.

Despite this multiplicity of different orders and different periods and different state structures, etc., another myth of linearity existed, and that is the myth of a linear evolution of war. There was recurrently in history a perception of war, that war was becoming ever larger in terms of numbers of people involved, geographic spread, firepower, all sorts of things. We find it, incidentally, in the first version of Clausewitz’s *On War*, which some of the students in this course discussed at great length today.

These ideas also came up again around the time of the two world wars. The reality is much more complex. Indeed, it is true that major war has changed enormously over time. It has changed in scale, in numbers involved in that geographic dimensions, the military industrial involvement and complex, and that has changed, the technology has changed. It's changed so much that two people, more or less at the same time in the 1920s, thought that one should rephrase the terminology for talking about strategy and warfare.

The Soviet strategist Alexander Svechin in the 1920s rightly concluded that in order to grasp the many levels of the complexity of war, you should introduce something new between tactics and strategy. And he introduced the term of ‘operational art’, the use of battle for the purpose of the campaign, at much the same time, Basil Liddell Hart in Britain, introduced the notion of ‘grand strategy’ to reflect a higher level of strategy making, which uses military as well as non-military tools available to a state, or a coalition.

But at the same time not only major war continued to exist. Earlier forms of war, anything from booty raids to small wars of various forms, economic expansion, insurgencies, large or limited land grabs continue to exist side by side with this large scale interstate war, or indeed were interspersed with it. The whole range of politically driven violence exists even today, from terrorism to the threat of nuclear war. Other instruments of grand strategy are also deployed in peace and war, especially economic levers with costs to both sides, and propaganda war.

Conversely, economic motivations still make war the continuation of economic contests, booty raids, etc., with the in mixture of other means. Cyber war, you might say, is new, but most of what it is, or what it does existed before in other forms, propaganda, rumour, espionage. There have always been multiple drivers and motivations for war. This is again something that is not a new departure.

The very slow, but in Europe, linear development of the laws of armed conflict and the respect for human rights and international law are thus not paralleled by any linear respect of these, in reality. Nationalism, racism and other ideologies led to civilians of other groups being declared subhuman, enemies, and to be targeted in war, in air warfare, in reprise killings, in massacres and genocide, even as law was progressing and trying to protect civilians ever more.

As the conduct of war has changed in scope and effects through changes in societies, politics, economies and technology, albeit not always in a linear fashion. So has its conceptualization, i.e. the way in which humans think about war. Don't get me wrong, I do not belong to the “it's all in the mind” brigade. The world is made of hard, tangible matter and death, destruction, the deliberate infliction of violence - all these hard, tangible facts do exist. When people kill other people, when there is pain and suffering? These are hard facts, not airy-fairy constructs.

The words with which humans describe events, however, are constructs. The same word can mean different things to different people and more still to different groups of people. And I'm not just talking about a word having multiple meanings and usages.

A university strategy for attracting more students, the strategy of a business, has little to do with the strategy of a general - the commander in war, in preparing, in conducting a war. I mean construct also in the sense that humans construct criteria for something to fit a particular concept. Different civilizations have defined the phenomenon of war according to whether they fulfilled certain criteria, certain rules, or even limitations, whether they were regular and whether they fit into the constructs and the concepts of their idea of their time.

If these boxes were not ticked, something would be seen as organized crime, as rebellion, or even as chaos. And yet, the very word ‘war’ that we use in English as the word ‘guerre’ in France derives from a Germanic word which is ‘werra’, which was used in the Middle Ages alongside the Latin word ‘bellum’ to denote chaos, disorderly fighting, while ‘bellum’ was originally used as the only word for a rules bound process of settling a dispute between parties that were recognized as legitimate consstence.

Bear with me, as this is actually important for you.

It is important because over time, rules governing what is regular war and what is not have been constructed. Here again that word, noting that it is not nature or physics, let alone God given, but something made up by humans for better or worse, rules criteria then have been constructed by humans to draw a line between what you may do to a regular enemy who respects rules and whom you respect, and what you may do to an irregular adversary.

That second category might be that of criminals, rebels, or pirates. It's the Romans used to say, and until quite recently this would be used as an excuse to make no prisoner, to excuse [sic] prisoners without trial, an excuse made not just by the Wehrmacht or the SS in Nazi Germany's Second World War.

Depending on the fulfillment of criteria, which in turn changed over time, armed conflicts have been seen as legitimate and bounded by rules, or else declared illegitimate by one side, and accordingly conducted with great brutality over centuries. Some of these criteria have enjoyed great longevity. The most long lived one is that of the legitimate authority required to declare a proper war. This is simple to explain. Those in power always fear that they might be toppled, and thus use all means available to them to enhance their standing, claiming legitimacy only for themselves and grudgingly to peers and other polities, denying it to potential contestants.

In short, rulers for millennia have claimed that any war is proper only if they undertake it, but not if anybody challenging them undertakes it. Another criterion has come and gone, namely, the idea that only a formally declared war counts as a proper war. Over time, this has yielded to ultimatum being proclaimed. A grievance would be articulated. If it were not addressed, that would automatically bring on war, thus putting the blame for the war on the side that had not redressed the grievance. Again, not an entirely linear development. There was a period in the 18th to the 19th centuries when the reasons for going to war were at best given to gild the lily, the lily itself being that the sovereign state claimed the sovereign right to go to war whenever it pleased.

Other criteria have also varied. Let us return to the word war, derived from ‘werra’. As I have said, it was introduced in the Middle Ages to stand alongside the word ‘bellum’ for war of the most formal regulated sought. But in the Middle Ages, despite its original meaning of chaos, ‘werra’ was also soon taken as a category with its own rules, also referred to as vendetta or feud or private war.

The crucial difference here between ‘bellum’, the most formal of public and private war, was that the latter was not authorized by the highest authority around either pope, the emperor, or monarch, but took place on a lower level between barons and their retainers. While popes, emperors, and kings from at least the middle Ages sought to stop the nobility from going to war against one another and, of course, from rising up against their betters, they found this very difficult to enforce.

Even in the mid 14th century, legal authority still held that such private wars were fully legitimate, as long as only noblemen started them. One wise pope found a way to outlaw such lower level wars, and he was copied by a number of his successors, and that way was to proclaim a holy defensive war against an external aggressor, against Christendom as a whole, the crusade.

And to argue that this could only be fought if those going on crusade could rest assured that in their absence, their lands would not be attacked by rival claimants to their positions. This worked substate level war was fairly successfully banished, albeit initially only for periods during which crusades took place. As noted for another hundreds of years, private wars continued to be seen as legitimate forms of warfare when no crusade was on.

Even in the 18th century, in *la bataille* and in the 19th century, the American lawyer Henry Wheaton still distinguished between public and private war, even though the latter was by now no longer practiced or was supposed to not be practiced. It is astonishing to think that the Romans had outlawed private war, family vendettas two millennia earlier.

Again, here a very non-linear development. It is sometimes been argued that genocidal total war is new. Frank Tallett, an historian whom I worked with in Reading, however, has argued that it has existed throughout history and only the growth of the state and technology made the scale so much larger in the 20th century than in previous centuries. He's given plenty of evidence, and there is evidence, also particularly from the confessional wars, that the intention was not very different in some of the conflicts there. Then let us turn to a criterion that is used to differentiate between war and organized large scale criminal activity.

As I've noted in antiquity, it was often referred to as piracy. The criterion is that war should be politically motivated. Ah here's the rub! Wars are often begun with multiple aims, and one aim that has been recurrent and prominent in resorting to war throughout history has been that of making economic gains or preventing economic losses, to the point where one can question whether the aims articulated were not, at best, secondary or at worst, a disguise for more important aims of enrichment of sorts.

What aims were followed by the Huns, the Mongols, the Vikings and the Seljuk Turks, in what we do not hesitate to call their wars? Plunder, extortion, domination, territorial aggrandizement. The last of these can be called the extension of power, but it is difficult to differentiate clearly between the extension of power and simple enrichment. This is complicated by the blurred line between politically motivated insurgencies and organized crime.

In asymmetric wars between state forces and insurgents, state forces try to cut off insurgents from arms and other vital supplies. As a consequence, insurgents need to turn to criminal networks to assure their supplies and access to weapons, creating dependencies and the blurring of interests. Show me one insurgent movement, in modern times that has no links with organized crime.

This is complicated even further by the well-studied fact that large scale criminal organizations, especially mafia type organizations that incorporate many features of the medieval system of a lord-retainer patronage system have constructed for their own self-perception a notion of legitimacy, virtuous aims pursued in the interests of greater justice, and of rules bound behaviour. For example, you can kill adult males, but you mustn't kill children.

This can indeed raise the question whether drug wars might become regulated in the not too distant future, in practice, if not formally. Think of collateral damage in such conflicts, which both sides may want to avoid, and think of the precedent of insurgencies and counter insurgencies, where rules have been established in the past. For example, for both paramilitary parties in Ireland ringing a specially designated phone line to announce that they had planted a bomb to avoid collateral damage.

Then, of course, very importantly, there's a distinction between internal and external war. This is in reality difficult to draw. Already the Peloponnesian War… in the Peloponnesian War… Thucydides described this as having an element of civil war, of factions in all belligerent states favouring either the political system Athens democracy or that of Sparta monarchy.

Most insurgency have an element of ideological differences to them, even if it is just a question of whether it is right for the rich to enrich themselves further by selling grain at very high prices during a famine, or whether the rest of the population should be able to afford their bread. More often than not, a neighbouring polity will have an interest in helping insurgents, if only to weaken the government to gain some influence perhaps to support or rival the ideology that both it and the insurgents support.

Show me one insurgency that does not have help from abroad. Over the last decade or so, a supposedly new category of war was all the rage: hybrid war. It emphasized the multiple tools of statecraft and conflict, especially on the lower end of one action or below violent action. However, only the use of the internet and mobile phones was truly new.

Propaganda war who has existed throughout recorded history and already in the cold War, we had the definition of this Cold War itself by Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, as ‘all mischief short of war’. Why am I telling you all this? To demonstrate that what people have called war and what they have seen is a legitimate form of war, has very greatly over time, and can change again in future.

I hardly need to elaborate that this, by implication, means that what falls under the remit of the military to deal with, and indeed the rules for dealing with it, may change, possibly even during your careers.

Closely related to all this is another element in the definition of war that is changing. It is the definition of the contestants. It requires for something to be called a war and not a rebellion, and its repression or banditry. This definition is linked with the supreme authority needed to declare a proper or formal war. Also, this definition postulates that wars fought only between such components: States, recognized states. This definition goes back to Cicero, and subsequently emperors and kings were mighty keen on it, simply because it meant, that they, their own positions, were protected by it. And the more recent times, of course, state governments. Pope Innocent IV around 1245 issued the decretal *alii in caesis intervallis*, where he said, ‘war, properly speaking, can only be declared by a prince who does not have a superior’.

From the 16th century onwards, the ‘prince’, as incarnation of sovereignty, was gradually replaced by the state as the sovereign and concomitantly definitions of proper war would centre on states as actors. Classically, in the late 19th century. Henry Wheaton defined a contest by force between independent sovereign states is called a ‘public war’ that is, a proper, legally recognized war in which the laws of war tend. Even in the 21st century the Israeli law professor, Yoram Dinstein, building on Lassa Oppenheim’s work, still insisted that ‘only a hostile interaction between two or more states could be defined as war’.

This insistence that only states can be actors in war is derived from the desire of those in power to preclude others from challenging it. Reality has challenged the state centric conceptualization of war many times, forcing non-state actors to vie for recognition as states. For example, as breakaway regions or states, or as legitimate princes and governments, claiming that the actual prince or government in office was in fact illegitimate, a pretender or a tyrant, or practice of government. It is only after the Second World War that this part of the definition of war has been soften up to include organized violence involving one or more non-state actors.

It is the reason we now speak of the law of armed conflict, rather than about the laws of war. Again, pointing to this change is important as it highlights the possibility of future change, further change, particularly if you follow me on the next argument.

Not only is history replete with examples of non-state groups engaging in armed conflict and not always against states, we should also note the power of states has been waning over the last quarter or even half century. As already noted by Susan Strange in her seminal book *The Retreat of the State*. This was published in 1996, when that of international corporations has been on the rise. Note Elon Musk's support of the Ukrainian side in the Ruso-Ukrainian war in the form of providing space intelligence, or Jeff Bezos pledge of 2 billion U.S. dollars to mitigate climate change effects at the Glasgow Cop 26.

These are payments on the scale of contributions made by entire smaller states. Corporations hire private military companies to protect the assets. In other words, they have private armies to protect them. We are seeing the development of relations between the English and Dutch East India companies and their respective states in reverse. Where in the 17th to the 19th century it was these corporations and by and by drew in states and state militaries for their protection.

We now see corporations increasingly assuming the roles which in the intervening time were thought to be state monopolies. And these are what we r egard as legitimate international corporations. Think now of criminal organizations that have the budget and turnover of a corporation. And the clout they can develop. Just as easily as states, they can hire mercenaries to start or intervene in ongoing conflicts, blackmail a government, or deterred from intervening in their criminal activities.

In short, alongside the states that normally are taken to be the strategic actors in armed conflict or the mainly politically motivated non-state actors, we may increasingly see non-state, mainly economically motivated actors and rebel groups as combatant parties. We may also see individual tycoons owning large corporations, or organized international crime with clout comparable to states involved in armed conflict.

This has direct consequences for the combatants you are likely to face in the future.

Conscripts. Conscript forces have throughout history existed alongside professional soldiers, and before the 19th century and the invention of nationalism, no one postulated that professional soldiers must fight only for their native polity. Britain's today are still shocked if it is suggested that Gurkhas are ‘mercenaries’, let alone if they are compared with the Wagner Group of private military companies.

Yet both clearly stand in a tradition outside that of citizen soldiers. France, alongside her 1500 year old tradition of obligatory military service for men, has a multiethnic foreign legion against standing of the tradition of hired foreign professionals, that goes back to ancient Greece. In short, private military companies are anything but new, nor is the fact that states draw on their services alongside that of their own national armies.

The good news is that not all of them are necessarily less professional than regular state employed soldiers, in fact, some recruit from among retired personnel of states. The bad news is that in this current state, the law of armed conflict does not afford much protection to mercenaries, which in turn means that they have little incentive to abide by it.

Either way, private military companies, soldiers hired by entities that might try to deny any responsibility for their behaviour may well be growing in numbers and in frequency of employment. Then there are, of course, irregular forces that you might find yourselves confronting, not in the sense of special forces or mercenaries, but in the sense of insurgents, fighters of all sorts, who have not been trained by any state-owned military that emphasizes discipline, rules, and observance of the laws of armed conflict.

This is, again not a new phenomenon, even though it was falsely proclaimed to be new in the 1990s by authors of journalistic disposition lacking historical knowledge. It is incidental, an old phenomenon that people regard as new or even unprecedented, something that they can't remember from their own experience. What is important to note is that despite allowances made for such irregular combatants since the 1977 Geneva Conventions, additional protocols, generally are thinking about the conduct of military operations are still dominated by the assumption that regular forces will be fighting regular forces, and that, notwithstanding military academy sessions on asymmetric, irregular, small, low intensity conflict or operations other than war, and whatever the terminology of the day is.

Then when it comes to dealing with gangs of criminals, there is the presumption that this is a phenomenon to be left to the police, gendarmerie, border protection forces, and not something that regular forces should be involved in. This is not a wise assumption to make. If, as I have argued, the distinction between large scale criminal operations and insurgencies or other non-state actors are blurred, they may become more blurred still, because some new military technologies think particularly of the ones, ‘What you can do with cheap drones’, are so low and costs that they can bring considerable advantage to parties, to an armed conflict operating on a low budget.

Which brings us to technologies in general and new technologies in particular. You don't need me to tell you that this is where the unprecedented change lies. Several revolutions in military technology, from the stirrup to the crossbow and gunpowder to missiles have, of course, in the past already transformed warfare. So military technology revolutions and such are not new, but each of them has led to its own particular transformation of warfare.

This will also be the case with robots on the battlefield, in the air, and in the oceans. The human soldier of the future will confront machines that, to a greater or lesser degree, are acting autonomously, are no longer just a bullet, a shell, or a missile fired by human, or a landmine placed by human, or even a drone steered by a human from afar.

No doubt you have been pondering the consequences of these as well over other areas in which artificial intelligence is deployed on the future conducted of war. In respect to its particular consequences., this is indeed an area of unprecedented change.

Technology also blurs the division between the civilian and the combatant. Again, this is not entirely new. Over centuries, philosophers have debated the question whether the enemy’s prince’s subjects, or the enemy state's population should be regarded as enemies themselves. Thinkers from Christine de Pizan in the 15th century to Hugo Grotius and Cornelius van Bynkershoek in the 17th and 18th century, argued that the subject of an enemy prince or hostile state were to be seen as enemies if they supported that enemy government.

That did not necessarily mean that one should massacre them, but that they could be pushed about and their possessions could freely be confiscated by the victor. Ethnic nationalism in good part a German invention of the 19th century, that spread like a bushfire to other parts of Europe and then of the globe, transformed this attitude into also seeing civilian populations as enemies one could target directly, notwithstanding the almost linear advance of customary laws of war and the international of law prohibiting just that and increasing the protection for civilians, just then.

The result was that gaps in international law, the absence of legislation against bombing from the air, and the Soviet Union's non signatory status to the Hague rules of warfare facilitate the horrendous, quantitatively unprecedented and unique excesses against civilian populations of the Second World War. This debate between those seeking to protect civilians and those questioning their innocence had been given a new twist by new technologies.

Already in the Second World War, one could legitimately ask whether the engineers building the V rockets could be classified as innocent, and whether children operating flak were non-combatants. In the Second World War, the Catholic Oxford Don G. E. M. Anscombe could postulate that a distinction between those contributing to the war effort and those who did not could be made. She said a farmer growing wheat, which may be eaten by the troops, is not supplying them means of fighting.

The question remains whether this is so easily said. In a democracy, do those who have voted for a government and voted the government into power, or kept it in power, when it clearly followed an agenda of war, not bear responsibility for the war. Things might look different in a totalitarian dictatorship, but even there should citizens be willing and morally expected to risk imprisonment to protest against the government's war.

Then let us consider action taken by a government of a belligerent state against citizens of an adversarial state. The Russian government not only poisons its own dissidents and defectors when they flee abroad, and its journalists at home. With its trolls and bots, it clearly already targets foreign civilians who have publicly criticized Russia so far in a nonviolent way.

While all governments impose sanctions on Putin’s oligarchical followers, Russians have declared individual Westerners persona no n grata to Russia. Think about the possibilities, new cyber technology, combined with clever algorithms, opens up for such individual targeting or the targeting of selective groups. Targeted interference in an adversarial state might, in the very near future, mean blocking or hacking into the bank account, say, of all officers in the armed forces, all civil servants working in the defence sector, and may easily be identifiable or even identifiable individuals beyond that. In the 1990s, we were worried about biological weapons that might be developed to target people with a particular DNA. I think that hasn't really worked out, and I'm very glad of it. But tomorrow, a Swiss style internet based voting system might be the key to interfering in a non-kinetic fashion with all who voted for a particular party with a program critical of a particular foreign power.

Will that be war? It could certainly be very disagreeable. I recommend to you that you do not go for a centralized system in your household, in which you manage your heating, your refrigerator, your cooker, your garage, and the burglar alarm, all with one remote control. On a much larger scale. Russia has already interfered with the internet of whole countries think of the cyberattack on Estonia in 2007.

Economic sanctions also target connectivities, but that is an old hat, which we already found in sieges and blockades going back to antiquity. But in our just-in-time economy, the effects can be new, of course. The subject of change and continuity in warfare is not exhausted by this talk, but your patience must be. Fortunately, my summary will be brief.

Given all that I told you, no extrapolation of long-term trends can lead to the conclusion that the future will be only more of the same of past and present. What particular forms of armed conflicts the students of this defence college will encounter during their careers? I cannot predict in detail. We have recently been surprised to encounter one war, fought in good part as though it was an episode out of World War Two. Or a non-kinetic cyber war might be in store for us with massive collateral damage in the form of a famine as food spoils, at least for a city when the refrigeration in storage facilities breaks down as hackers cut off power supplies. Will the belligerents include insurgent? Will they include private military companies?

Will criminal organizations be involved? Will they be conscript forces or professionals? Will civilians be the main targets of military action in breach of international law? Will they be fervently supporting a bellicose government? We might see anything between these extremes and beyond. In any case, I urge you to prepare for a rethink of what much of what you have hitherto thought about war.

To do so, however, you have to come to it from as many disciplinary angles as possible. And I shall end with paraphrasing Jeff Grey, one of the observations he made. ‘What War Studies doesn't need is to be colonized by a single approach or single point of view. It won't benefit from being appropriate in service of a particular theoretical perspective’.

I could not agree more. Thank you very much for your attention.