
ЗНАТЬ, ЧТОБЫ ПРЕДВИДЕТЬ...

TO KNOW SO THAT TO FORESEE...

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ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ ВОЙНЫ В СОВРЕМЕННОМ МИРЕ: ВЫЗОВЫ В БОРЬБЕ ЗА МЕНТАЛЬНОСТЬ

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Аннотация. На основании концепции К. Клаузевица и исторических типов научной рациональности, предложенных отечественным философом В. С. Стёпиным, раскрывается эволюция войны и выделяются основные ступени ее трансформации: классическая война, неклассическая война и постнеклассическая война. В качестве критериев выделения данных ступеней используются вооруженные силы, территория и воля противника, субъект военных действий, территория, экономика, линия фронта, мирный договор и другие. Отмечается, что постнеклассическая война коренным образом отличается как от традиционных классических войн, так и от неклассических, в частности тем, что, несмотря на многообразие определений, она может быть описана как культурно обусловленный вид деятельности и в меньшей степени зависит от производственно-экономической сферы. Анализируются специфика и природа современной войны как консциентальной, направленной на захват и трансформацию сознания за счет перекодирования ценностной системы, исторической памяти и паттернов поведения, утверждается связь консциентальной войны с политикой идентичности. Рассматриваются возможные механизмы противостояния консциентальному оружию.

Ключевые слова: классическая война; неклассическая война; постнеклассическая война; консциентальная война; гибридная война; постнациональная война; насилие.

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THE TRANSFORMATION OF WAR IN THE MODERN WORLD: CHALLENGES IN THE BATTLE FOR MINDSPACE

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Abstract. In this article, based on the concept of K. Clausewitz and the definition of historical types of scientific rationality by the Russian philosopher V. S. Stepin, the evolution of war was revealed and the main stages of its transformation were identified: classical, non-classical and post-non-classical wars. As selection criteria, such components as the armed forces, the territory and will of the enemy, the subject of military actions, territory, economy, front line, peace treaty and others were used. It was noted that the post-non-classical war is fundamentally different from both traditional classical wars and non-classical ones, in particular, in that, despite the variety of its definitions, it can be described as a «culturally conditioned type of activity» and is less dependent on production and economic spheres. The author of the article analyses the specifics and nature of modern war as a consensual war aimed at capturing and transforming consciousness by recoding the value system, historical memory and patterns of behaviour. The connection between the consensual war and identity politics is asserted. Possible mechanisms of countering consensual weaponry are studied.

Keywords: classical war; non-classical war; post-non-classical war; consensual war; hybrid war; post-national war; violence.

The early 21st century confronts humanity with transformations unprecedented in their radicalism, intensity, and planetary scale. These shifts permeate individual existence, heightening visceral awareness of physical and spiritual vulnerability, existential anxiety, and premonitions of civilisational rupture – evoking what might be termed «end-times» dread. The contemporary condition mirrors an anticipatory «explosion», fostering pervasive uncertainty while amplifying fear and disorientation. The dissolution of the bipolar order in the 20th century constituted a tectonic realignment, fundamentally altering not only global geopolitical architecture but the very ontology of military violence. Novel risks, challenges, and threats have emerged from this rupture. Today's multipolar world manifests chaotic centrifugal and centripetal forces, generating proliferating zones of instability that simultaneously escalate threats to nation-state security, erode established international norms, and barbarise social practices through normalised aggression. Consequently, critical examination of the drivers transforming political processes, military violence, security paradigms, and sovereignty itself becomes imperative. As military historian professor M. van Creveld of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem trenchantly observed: «Many of our so-called advanced civilisation – including its highest decision-making echelons – have persistently misunderstood war's essential nature. If this epistemic failure endure, civilisation's viability stands imperiled»¹ [1, p. 14]. Thus, societal and state security within this fluid global order hinge upon recognising that both politics and war have undergone fundamental metamorphosis. This conceptual reckoning is not merely academic, it is an urgent prerequisite for formulating effective responses to evolving threats. To elucidate the essence of contemporary conflict, we must therefore trace warfare's evolution and analyse its ongoing transformation.

In this article, a distinction is maintained between war as a political and historical phenomenon and warfare as a mode of organised violence and a set of practices through which war is conducted. This distinction allows for a more precise analysis of the transformation of contemporary conflicts.

The seminal contributions of C. von Clausewitz (the preeminent German military theorist and philosopher) established the foundational nexus between politics and armed conflict, profoundly shaping the development of modern war theory. Central to his analysis is the proposition that war's outcome hinges upon a triad of determinants: armed forces, territory, and the adversary's will [2]. The contemporary recalibration of these components' relative significance fundamentally reconfigures warfare's rationality, compelling us to recognise its structural transformation.

Building upon C. von Clausewitz's framework and integrating V. S. Stepin's typology of historical scientific rationalities [3], we deem it methodologically sound to advance a tripartite evolutionary schema that includes classical, non-classical, and post-non-classical warfare.

Classical warfare fundamentally integrates all Clausewitzian components (force, territory, and will) operating unequivocally as an extension of politics through armed conflict. Its decisive instruments remain formal armed forces and paramilitary formations, while its essential substance resides in organised combat. We owe this conceptualisation substantially to C. von Clausewitz, who in his seminal treatise «On war» defines warfare as «an act of violence intended to compel our adversary to fulfill our will» [2, p. 35]. The theorist analogises this to a duel between wrestlers, each imposing their will through violence [2, p. 34–35].

War thus constitutes violence in its most radical form: simultaneously the product and instrument of statecraft

¹Here and further translated by us. – I. S.

that exchanges diplomatic engagement for militarised coercion. From C. von Clausewitz's framework, we derive a critical axiom: the political objective stands as the supreme criterion by which classical warfare must be measured.

We contend that the World War I and World War II, alongside the Cold War, constitute archetypal manifestations of non-classical warfare. It bears emphasis that the Great Patriotic War remains classified within the classical paradigm, distinguished by its unequivocal objective: national survival and the attainment of peace. Within non-classical warfare, will and spirit assume paramount importance. Technology, meanwhile, serves dual purposes: securing tactical superiority to enhance prospects of victory, most critically in the nuclear domain, establishing the paradoxical foundation for conventional stability – effectively deterring full-scale conflict during the bipolar era of the latter 20th century. This represents a fundamental departure from pre-20th century conflicts, where war functioned as the groundwork for peace. Historically, the affirmation of peace as war's terminus endowed conflicts with inherent rationality and containment. By contrast, 20th-century warfare – inaugurated by the Great War – introduced an unprecedented and ambiguous peril: the decoupling of peace as war's ultimate objective, thereby engendering cyclical recurrence. A defining characteristic of non-classical wars is their resistance to rationalisation. This epistemic rupture progressively erodes boundaries between private and public spheres while blurring the distinction between war and peace. Having relinquished peace as its telos, war ceases to function as the «crucible of nationhood» or an instrument of state renewal. Consequently, it constitutes a fundamental error (and grave strategic miscalculation) for nation-states to assess 21st-century military threats through the conceptual framework of classical warfare.

Encompassing low-intensity conflicts, irregular warfare, hybrid operations, and conventional clashes among others, this modality constitutes a «culturally conditioned activity» [1] with diminishing dependence on industrial-economic foundations. Critically, traditional armies adhering to classical war rationality demonstrate structural disadvantage against irregular forces in localised conflicts. Their predictable failures often precipitate state disintegration. German philosopher H. Hofmeister offers a pivotal theoretical departure from C. von Clausewitz: contemporary war represents not the instrument of politics but its negation born from political impotence [4]. Here, impotence denotes not the absence of power, but the elite's inability to wield power as political means. Given H. Hofmeister's conceptualisation of politics as bounded by discursive parameters, warfare emerges as violence supplanting verbal discourse. This epistemic shift compels us to recognise modernity itself as a transformation in the sociocultural character of armed conflict.

A hallmark of post-non-classical warfare is the dissolution of war's necessary coupling with armed con-

frontation. As Russian military scholar I. S. Danilenko observed, contemporary warfare may now proceed without direct combat [5, p. 30]. This view is reinforced by V. P. Gulin, philosopher and Rear Admiral, who notes the ascendance of bloodless, painless, and civilised warfare – wherein objectives are achieved not through kinetic intervention but via alternative vectors of coercion (economic, diplomatic, informational, and psychological) [6, p. 15]. Consequently, military strategy undergoes fundamental reconceptualisation: indirect action now predominates, manifesting as political and economic coercion, moral-psychological manipulation, systematic disinformation campaigns, internal subversion of adversarial polities. This marks a radical inversion of strategic paradigms. Where force-centric strategies – premised on numerical superiority and decisive annihilation – once dominated, indirect approaches historically occupied subsidiary roles. Now, they assume primacy in contemporary conflict.

We now turn to the fundamental catalysts underpinning warfare's metamorphosis. The primary causal factor resides in the hybridisation of social orders and practices, which reconstitutes contemporary conflict at its core. The transition from traditional to modern society entails the erosion of monolithic world-representations. This dissolution not only fuels ideological competition over futural visions but also destabilises legitimate regimes controlling violence. Consequently, consolidated authority over armed forces and destructive technologies becomes institutionally unattainable.

A secondary determinant manifests in the emergence of multipolarity, characterised by following points:

- 1) new non-state actors (transnational corporations) undermining the nation-state's monopoly on violence;
- 2) collapse of systemic checks and balances wherein contemporary international politics, having invalidated prior norms, fails to establish viable alternatives – generating novel risks;
- 3) deconventionalisation of global order, rendering strategic forecasting increasingly untenable.

Historically, both classical and non-classical warfare operated within conventional frameworks, their conduct constrained by international norms. Even Cold War dynamics relied on nuclear arsenals as counterweights enabling strategic agreements. Today, however, the fragile equilibrium sustained through such conventions disintegrates. War now transcends its instrumental political function: it becomes politics itself, reframed as a «new convention» purporting to salvage – yet fundamentally reconstituting – the global order [7].

A defining feature of the emergent political order is the ascendancy of force and economic power over ethical and legal frameworks. This paradigm manifests conceptually as militarised humanism that is a term introduced by American linguist N. Chomsky to denote the co-option of humanitarian rhetoric for coercive ends [8]. Militarised humanism constitutes the inverse of democratic expansion: it legitimises both threats and kinetic force, deployed either through international institutions

(including UN sanctions) or unilaterally. This operational logic suggests the modern democratic order fundamentally relies upon humanitarian intervention as its organising principle. Such humanism emerges from policies leveraging military threats to engineer «peaceful» global change, thereby eroding the distinction between war and war preparedness. Diplomatic instruments become functionally equivalent to perpetual militarisation. While one might counter that democracies exhibit greater peace-seeking tendencies than authoritarian regimes, late 20th and early 21st century praxis reveals a contrary dynamic: democracies demonstrate marked aggression in promoting democratic expansion, readily instigating conflicts with non-democratic states.

One more driver of military transformation involves the reconfiguration of war's objectives without abandonment of utility. Post-non-classical warfare now prioritises creating zones of tension to facilitate: economic coercion, covert resource appropriation, manipulation of adversarial states. This shift perverts international humanitarian assistance which is often achieving outcomes diametrically opposed to its stated aims. Top-down conflict resolution frequently bolsters belligerents' legitimacy while enabling their consolidation. As British scientist M. Kaldor warns, aid risks subsidise war economies [9]. Functionally, such warfare operates as perpetual political mobilisation through manufactured instability. Herein lies the paradox: the elites must foment military hysteria to sustain mobilisation, yet stabilising high-risk regions undermines their authority. Whereas classical wars forged nations, post-non-classical warfare engineers identities. This identity-construction freedom enables commensurate freedom in manufacturing enemies. Consequently, powerful states exploit flexible enemy designations to launch preemptive wars under «self-defense» pretexts and impose emergency powers.

Conversely, identity politics permits the tyranny of identity. As British scientist M. Kaldor aptly observes: «Identity politics concerns claims to power through label appropriation... directly tied to idealised, nostalgic representations of the past» [9, p. 40]. Unlike unifying political ideologies, identity politics operates through exclusion, thereby fragmenting social space. Alignment ceases to matter, opposition becomes paramount. Consequently, identity transforms into both the foundation for military mobilisation and the exclusive justification for warfare.

This brings us to conscientious warfare (*консциентальная война*) which is a modality where post-non-classical conflict manifests. This paradigm emerged gradually in the early 20th century, evidenced during World War I when military propaganda systematically distorted reality. It reached maturity in the Cold War,

substituting kinetic engagement between nuclear superpowers with cognitive confrontation – its objective being mental polarisation when «hot» war proved untenable. Regarding 21st-century conflicts, a critical distinction must be emphasised: conscientious warfare functions not as autonomous conflict but as the substrate and core constituent of war's evolving nature. Modern warfare cannot be waged solely on battlefields, all operations are preceded or accompanied by information campaigns targeting hearts and minds. This cognitive orientation confirms war's hybrid essence, defined by two synergistic dimensions: 1) fusion of kinetic and symbolic violence integrating physical attacks with informational coercion; 2) threat displacement subjecting nation-states to simultaneous external aggression and internal destabilisation, dramatically increasing risks of interstate conflicts devolving into civil wars [7].

The term «conscientious warfare» (derived from Latin word *conscientia* which means consciousness), was pioneered by Russian scholars Yu. V. Gromyko and Yu. V. Krupnov². This novel conflict paradigm exhibits a defining paradox: while involving geographically bounded, low-intensity «hot» combat, it simultaneously unleashes unbounded violence upon social systems through informational attacks on consciousness. Crucially, such warfare transcends mere media representation, it actively shapes kinetic events through incendiary narratives amplifying hatred, strategic preconditioning of military operations, systemic dismantling of international conventions.

Its operational vectors generate distinct societal hazards:

- illusory expansion of consciousness whereby media saturation produces an «informational overdose» that fragments cognitive autonomy;
- manufactured consensus in which fabricated civil solidarity conceals eroded social cohesion;
- the dominance of collective mythology whereby ideological constructs supersede empirical reality;
- the mass production of consciousness in which standardised narratives replace critical engagement;
- pseudo-rationalised rhetoric whereby fear-driven discourse pathologises dissent;
- manipulation of historical memory through the ideological reframing of cultural heritage.

A further hallmark of conscientious warfare lies in its temporal indeterminacy: commencement is elusive, termination is equally problematic. Consequently, the critical question shifts from ending such conflicts to countering their cognitive aggression. Drawing upon Yu. V. Gromyko's work³, we identify two defensive mechanisms: 1) authentication cultivating a culturally-anchored identity core to arrest the infinite regress of arbitrary self-identification; 2) meta-screen technologies. Deconstruction of event representations aimed

²Gromyko Yu. V. Conscientious weapons and conscious war. Lecture // Humanities portal. URL: <http://gtmarket.ru/laboratory/publicdoc/2007/782> (date of access: 24.03.2017) (in Russ.) ; Krupnov Yu. How Russia can prevent World War V // Yu. Krupnov : website. URL: <http://kroupnov.ru/pubs/2005/02/09/10403/#1-14> (date of access: 24.03.2017) (in Russ.).

³Gromyko Yu. V. Conscientious weapons and conscious war...

at «purifying» constructed narratives and revealing mediated reality as artificial construct.

Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that effective implementation of these mechanisms requires cultivation of critical thinking and imaginative capacity, alignment between culturally sanctioned identity and individual self-perception (a condition profoundly compromised in societies fragmented by conscientious weaponry). Counterpropaganda may offer tactical mitigation against conscientious warfare's informational assaults, yet comprehensive cognitive defense remains

contingent upon rigorous analysis of the operational conscientious weapons logic, the epistemological architecture of conscientious warfare itself. Absent such foundational understanding, developing robust countermeasures against cognitive threats proves unattainable.

Regrettably, military violence persists as an enduring feature of human civilisation, perpetually adapting its manifestations. In the 21st century, warfare evolves into a grandmaster strategically maneuvering actors across the chessboard of a multipolar world order.

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