

SECURITY COMPLEX AND NEW WARS

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ABSTRACT

The end of cold war brought an upsurge in new, and it seems especially atrocious civil conflicts in the Balkans, the Caucasus and several places in Africa. Scholarly community and the mass media shifted much of their attention from great power rivalry to the new civil conflicts. This development came as a result of new wars. The debate that followed pointed out that new wars came to be identified as “new” in the nature of contemporary conflicts. However, findings are indicative of the fact that the nature of new wars has given currency to the issue of security complex. This paper shall examine the relationship between new wars and security complex; test the hypothesis of security complex; ventilate on its consequences and finally reconceptualize the issue of security complex to suit the current global security challenges typified by the new wars.

KEY WORDS: *Security, complex, challenges, new wars, reconceptualize.*

INTRODUCTION

The last two decades saw a plethora of contribution to the academic debate on the shifting character of contemporary warfare and security issues. Some of the debates sampled the notion of unique features in the nature of contemporary violent conflicts and thereby coined new terms and approaches such as new wars, postmodern wars, people wars, privatized wars or hybrid wars.¹ The most prominent and hence the most commonly addressed among the aforementioned terms is the new war.

Since 1989 and the breakup of Soviet Union, both the threat of nuclear war and the threat of large scale, interstate conventional war have receded. Yet, during the 1990s millions have died in wars in Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia, and millions more have become refugees from war-torn regions.² Mary Kaldor therefore argues that in the context of globalization, what we think of as war that is war between States in which the aim is to inflict maximum violence is becoming an anachronism. In its place is a new type of organized violence which is called new wars- a mixture of war, politically-organized crime and violation of human rights. The actors are global and local, public and private. These wars are fought for particular political goals using tactics of terror and destabilization that are theoretically outlawed by the rules of modern warfare. An informal criminalized economy otherwise known as capitalism is built into the functioning of these new wars. This trend has made security challenges more severe and threat more difficult to contend.³

NEW WARS AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

Consequently, political leaders and international institutions have been unable to deal with the spread of these wars mainly because they have not come to terms with the logic or systematic approach to analyze these issues. However this challenge has given rise to another approach known as the ‘security complex’ approach. Mary Kaldor’s analysis offers a basis for a cosmopolitan political response to these new wars on

which the monopoly of legitimate organized violence reconstructed on a transnational basis should face international organization reconceptualized as cosmopolitan law enforcement.⁴ Her analysis emphatically challenges political institutions both at the state and system levels to focus on the unseen hands in these new wars rather than expend efforts on the combatants.

The reason for the speculated emphasis lies on the evidence that new wars often begin as civil wars within states and spill over into adjoining neighbour states, creating a mass diasporas and refugee crisis because rather than the soldiers civilians are often the targets, genocide typically the aim and funding is very different. Instead of coming from a vibrant economy it comes from extortion through insidious taxes on illicit drugs, alcohol, arms and weaponry.⁵ However, there is a new contention which seems correct that the new wars are those with hypertensive links to super powers that occurred after the fall of Berlin wall such as those in Easter Europe, Rwanda, Congo, Sudan, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and so on. As a result of this contention there is a need to conceptualize a phenomenon in order to tackle the security challenges. For this reason, there is need to think in terms of security complex.

SECURITY COMPLEX: AS A METHODOLOGY

The idea of security complex arises from the need to find some systematic framework within which to consider the problem of a state or region. This approach can be used to analyze the situation of conflict, threat or warfare and to ascertain the security devices involved.⁶ In a common analysis, security complex can be considered as the core pattern of emotions, memories and perceptions about the security of a nation or region from internal and external threat and conflict. It can also be seen as the totality of the ideas, tactics, facilities, personnel which are mobilized by a state or region in safe-guarding its state against threat or conflict.

Security complex is about the relative intensity of interstate security relations that lead to regional pattern shaped by both the distribution of power and historical relations of amity and enmity. For instance during reduction talks which serve as security complex methodology for the super powers, arms reach from top-down approach in utter proliferation and end up in the hands of non-state actors that terrorize both super and weaker states motivationally. The aforesaid is the ultimate reason why Herfried Munkler opines that

Security complex is defined as a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot be analyzed or resolved without one another.⁷

Most national security problems faced by policy makers today involve attempting to understand, predict, or affect the behavior of complex systems from border and immigration security to financial markets to transnational terrorist organizations. As mentioned earlier, security complex provides a conceptual frame that captures the emergent new structure of international security. Security complex analysis enables current developments to be linked to both cold war and post cold war patterns in the international system. It contains a model of global, regional or state security that enables one to analyze, and up to a point, anticipate and explain development within global and regional sphere.

Security complex as a methodology or a theory provides a more nuanced view than strongly simplifying ideas such as unipolarity or center-periphery. It provides considerable theoretical leverage of its own. In an anarchically structured international system of sufficient size and geographical complexity, security complex will be a expected theory and one that begs important mediating efforts on how the global dynamics of great powers polarity actually operate across the international system.⁸ This means that security complex theory offers both a vision for the emerging World order and a method for studying specific regions. Implicitly, failing to understand the nature of conflict and threat with its spillover effect in specific regions such as MiddleEast and Africa, and having discrete decision will have impact on the security as a whole and can produce unintended and counter-productive consequences on regional and global peace and order. Security complex as a methodology is the method of understanding the complex nature of conflict in the current dynamics of warfare known as new wars.

SECURITY COMPLEX: AS A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO WARFARE

Security complex can be seen technically as security facilities of a state or region. These security complexes are weapons and weaponry channeled to safe-guarding a state against threat. For the fact that qualitative changes have occurred in the nature of violent conflict there has been an evolution in the perception and technologies of security. These technologies however have given impetus to “new wars” trends.⁹

A typical example of a security complex technology is the Y-12 owned by United States. The Y-12 security complex is a national complex and a premier manufacturing facility dedicated to making the World a safer place and it plays a vital role in the Department of Energy nuclear security enterprise.¹⁰ The Y-12 helps ensure a safe and effective United States nuclear weapon deterrent. It also retrieves and stores nuclear materials, fuels the nation’s naval reactors. The Y-12 plays a key role in strengthening US national security and reducing global threat from weapons of mass destruction.¹¹ It looks for support in protecting America’s future, developing innovative solutions in manufacturing technologies, prototyping, and technical security support. These complexes evolve as a desire to meet with the current security challenges of the new wars era but fails chiefly because it leads to more imperializing of the third world thus initiating conflicts which breeds more insecurity towards United States and other allying powers through terrorism which is the product of new wars.

SECURITY COMPLEX AND NEW WARS: THE CONSEQUENTIAL ANGLE

As mentioned earlier, new wars describe international or civil wars of low intensity that involve myriad of transnational connections so that the distinctions between internal and external, aggression and repression, local and global are difficult to sustain. Consequently, new wars are stimulated by personal or group interests and greed. The idea of security complex covers how the security of a few translates into insecurity to many. Newman suggests that in the new wars era, it is valuable for drawing attention to the complex notion of security with its political, social, economic and human dimension.¹²

Considered in details, the new wars theories suggest that modern conflicts no longer have geopolitical or ideological backgrounds. Kaldor states that the contemporary wars are based on identity politics, on movements which mobilize around ethnic, racial or religious identities for the purpose of claiming state power. It is associated with state-dismantling processes. Hamas and ISIS are typical instances in the Middle East question.

In new wars, legitimate violence is not the state’s monopoly any longer. As Stanley Karnow suggests, new wars are characterized by a multiplicity of types of fighting units, public and private, state and non-state. There also appears to be different autonomous paramilitary groups, party militias, bandits, warlords, insurgents, private military companies and foreign mercenaries all lacking military order and discipline, all committing severe atrocities and being more likely to use light weapons rather than heavy artillery.¹³

Consequently, this kind of revolutionary warfare alters the objectives of violent struggle that now aim to gain the support of the local population either through coercion or propaganda instead of capturing territory from enemy forces. This shifted strategy of new wars entails that the authorities no longer seek popular support instead they pursue deliberate targeting and forced displacement of civilians. It leads to situations which the effects of these new conflicts are even more devastating than in the case of traditional cross border wars. They strike at the very heart of a nation’s social fabric threatening its political and economic development.

In other words, the authorities create an unfavourable environment for those they cannot control. It is done either through ethnic cleansing or population expulsion through the use of force or systematic murder of those with different labels, different opinions and identities, for instance, political, religious or ethnic.¹⁴ Another technique available is rendering an area uninhabitable which can be done physically by attacking civilian targets (hospitals, homes, water sources, markets, etc) and psychologically through systematic rape and sexual abuse. In addition, the new type of warfare is a predatory social condition where violence spreads very easily especially across borders into neighbouring countries creating several economic and political effects for the region such as lost trade, spread of illegal circuits of trade, spillover of identity politics and the burden of refugees.

CRITICAL ANALYSES

It is against this background that a new idea of security complex globally or regionally should evolve to meet up with the security challenges of the new war era. Security complex has given new idea and tactics to the defense of some states. Like this work stated earlier, it is a way of understanding the immediate nature of global threat which however has given room for the research of defense security technologies such as the strategic defense initiative. But how far had these defense initiatives gone to prevent the negative effects of new wars?

Since the advent of nuclear weapons every nation has sought to minimize the risk of nuclear destruction by maintaining effective forces to deter aggression, and ironically by pursuing complementary arms control agreement. But the fact still remains that this approach has not brought security in the world but rather multiplied the new war phenomenon.¹⁵

However it is perceived that arms control initiatives have rather proliferated arms in such a way that those arms keep falling into bad hands who use it at will to threaten the peaceful existence of the state; because instead of destroying arms, states in order to avoid economic loss, sell them through global grey markets which circulate them to friends and foes as well. How then can one finally state that the idea of security complex has promoted global peace? Instead, it has triggered a new style of international and regional conflict. It is to this end that one can state that there is a serious debate on the effectiveness of the security complex idea.

CONCLUSION

Whereas a shift in contemporary warfare seems to be undisputed, the idea of a fundamental change in the security complex is needed. This shift can be measured in the security perception and technological requirements. With the end of cold war and the emergence of new wars, the state has lost its monopoly of military force. Its authority is being challenged by various non-state actors with increased violence and increased civilian to military casualties. In this environment there emerged security complex with the idea of arms control. However, these initiatives have not worked in many ways as effectively as presumed. Therefore a historical perspective beckons on this security dialogue.

Conclusively this work suggests that the international community is in dire need of a Strategic Arms Demolition and Destruction Talks (SADDEST) because the challenge of security complex in the face of the new wars has rendered limitation and reduction talks anachronistic. SADDEST is therefore a re-conceptualization per excellence for security complex which is strongly recommended for the system in general and for the UN Security Council in particular.

ENDNOTES

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