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War in the age of intelligent machines and unintelligent government

by Ian Buchanan

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> Doubtless, the present situation
> is highly discouraging.
> - Gilles Deleuze and Félix
> Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*
> (422)

The 2004 US election must have caused hearts to sink everywhere in the Third World. The bloody insurgency in Iraq only strengthened the position of the 'War President', giving him greater license to continue his campaign of terror. At the time of the election the death toll of US soldiers was nearing a thousand with the number injured seven times that. To which toll one must add the haunting fact that of the 500 000 plus US servicemen and women who served in the First Gulf War some 325 000 are now on disability pensions suffering a variety of acute maladies generally attributed to the toxic cocktail of radiation and other pollutant chemicals from the hundreds of oil fires they were exposed to during their tour of duty. Those who fight in Iraq today can scarcely look forward to a healthier future given that it is effectively twice as irradiated now as it was in 1991.[1] Yet still the minority who vote voted in the main for the man who put these soldiers in harm's way; but then it isn't as though John Kerry was promising to bring the troops home. As important as Tom Frank's *What's the Matter with Kansas?* is as explanation of conservatism in the heartland of the USA, it doesn't answer this question - why did the war on terror fail to ignite anti-Bush sentiment?[2] More to the point, why was it impossible to vote against the war? This is militarism at its peak - you cannot decide between going to war or not, only which is the most desired (least worst?) way of handling the conduct of the war.

Problem: Is today's militarism really new?

Militarism has always been with us, like a dark shadow, but its history is not continuous. The idea that war should be considered a logical and necessary extension of politics was given expression by Clausewitz, but he was merely putting into philosophical form what was already accepted thinking in government: arms are a legitimate means of achieving political goals. Militarism is not always as unabashed about its existence, not to say its intentions, as it is now when - as Debord so presciently put it - it has “its own inconceivable foe, terrorism” to bedazzle a frightened, confused, and misinformed public.[3] But out of the limelight does not mean out of the picture; militarism has not been officially questioned since the end of the first world war when disarmament had its last genuine hurrah. World War Two, which caught the US and the UK, in particular, underarmed and underprepared for conflict, eliminated in a stroke the very concept of disarmament - strategic arms limitation and force reduction are essentially fiscal notions, decisions made in

the interest in preserving a militarist posture in the face of rising costs, not disarmament. Neither should we delude ourselves that anti-war is anti-militarism. As we shall see, the very opposite is true.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, it is generally thought that a paradigm shift in the nature of militarism has occurred, and as the violence in the Middle East continues with no sign of abatement in sight (the running-sore that is the Israel/Palestine conflict, the smouldering fires of Iraq and Afghanistan and the gathering storm in Iran all forebode ill for a peaceful future) any doubt that a new era of 'hot' war has been ushered in tends to vanish. What is less certain, however, at least from a philosophical perspective, is the conceptual nature of the change. Those who demur that the present era is substantially different enough to warrant the label 'new' do so on the grounds that what we are seeing today is merely the continuation of an older struggle, or struggles, as it might be better to say given the tangled mess of multiple rivalries and resentments on both sides. Obviously, many of the struggles fuelling the present war are legacies of the Second World War, the Yalta summit in particular (many of course predate that by hundreds of years).[4] On this score, I am persuaded by Immanuel Wallerstein's thesis that the first and second world wars should be treated as a single thirty year struggle for global hegemony between Germany and the USA, but it seems to me the militarism we are faced with today is different to the one spawned in 1945 in the aftermath of victory; the militarism of today no longer thinks in terms of winning and losing - it has another agenda.[5] So even if the origins of the present crisis are to be found in the wash-up of WWII, as Wallerstein and many others have rightly argued, the nature of the response to this crisis is not similarly located there.

Historians generally agree that the Vietnam War put paid to that 'victorious' mode of militarism the US knew following WWII when it was briefly the lone nuclear power.[6] Following its demoralising defeat at the hands of a comparatively puny third world country, however, even the idea that it was a superpower was questioned. Amongst the decision-makers in Washington there took hold a moribund and risk-averse mentality that came to be called the 'Vietnam Syndrome'. This syndrome allegedly explains the US's failure to act on a number of occasions when it might have been prudent - or, as perhaps would have been the case in Cambodia, humanitarian to do so - culminating in the embarrassing mishandling of the Teheran Embassy siege in the last days of Jimmy Carter's administration. It also explains the tactics used on those occasions when the US has acted, as in Clinton's decision to initially restrict the engagement in the Balkans to airpower alone and use aerial bombardment where deft geopolitical negotiation was needed. On this occasion, as has now become routine, an alleged ethical imperative combined powerfully with a rhetoric of 'surgical strikes' and 'smart bombs' to stall protest and garner support from even those who ought to have known better.[7] Taken at face value, this would seem to confirm the existence of the 'Vietnam Syndrome', but when in political analysis is it sensible to accept something at face value? I would argue the 'Vietnam Syndrome' is a convenient cover story not a genuine explanation of US foreign policy. What makes anyone think, for instance, that a peaceful settlement to the Israel/Palestine conflict (as much a potential Vietnam as Iraq) is on the US agenda? Countless commentators have pointed out that the US backing of Israel can but inflame the Middle East situation as though this was news to the ones responsible, or, more to the point, as though winning or losing, peace or war, are the only options open to US foreign policy. Isn't the answer staring us right in the face: perpetual unrest is the solution that present action is achieving.

The 'Vietnam Syndrome' is an optical illusion, a wish-fulfilment on the part of those who would like to see an end to US imperialism.[8] In philosophical terms, the 'Vietnam Syndrome' was the negative needed by militarism to resurrect itself. What the military realised in Vietnam is that the US public will not tolerate a high casualty rate amongst its own troops unless there is a pressing need. While saving freedom might be construed as a pressing need, stopping communism in a country most people hadn't heard of before the war started couldn't. Lacking ideological support, the US military publicly adopted a zero-casualty approach to its 'elective wars' (to continue with the surgical trope) and banked on technology to achieve it. The anti-war sentiment ignited by the Vietnam conflict played a large part in

securing public acceptance for this strategy in spite of the escalating costs it entailed. The US showed it was anti-war only to the extent that war put its people in harm's way, but had no strong opinion on the matter when it was merely a question of unloading deadly ordinance from a high altitude on faceless peoples far from the homeland. Whatever the eventual cost, and the figures for military expenditure are always astronomical (consider the 2004 budget of $400 billion a year to wage war in Iraq), technology was to become the solution to what is essentially an ideological problem, the US population isn't willing to commit its body to the US's military causes.[9] After Vietnam, no administration of the future could afford to be soft on military spending (if they lost spending $30 billion a year, they could hardly afford to spend less in the future is the presiding logic).[10] The spin-doctoring that has gone into talking up the capabilities of the new class of so-called 'smart' weapons is worthy of Madison Avenue.[11] Its effect has been to persuade the American people that technology has made them invulnerable. Thus war has entered the age of intelligent machines and unintelligent government.[12]

In any case, the present conflict proves beyond any shadow of a doubt that the US will not hesitate to embroil itself in a potentially Vietnam-like conflict if the conditions are ripe. I have read reports that US soldiers based in Iraq are writing 'Is this Vietnam yet?' on their helmets, sadly they're not asking the right question. Given the admission that the insurgency problem may never be resolved it plainly *is* another Vietnam. If this isn't the view of the Hawks in Washington who orchestrated the war, and I don't believe for a second that it is, then it begs the question: what makes the present conflict *not* another Vietnam in the eyes of its architects? What are the conditions under which the US will engage in a potentially protracted foreign war? To answer this we have to ask what were the lessons of Vietnam? Behind the smokescreen of the 'Vietnam Syndrome', the US has taken on board two hard lessons learned in Vietnam which shape its foreign policy: (1) It can win battles, but it can't necessarily win wars; (2) It can afford battles, but it can't pay for wars. Both of these lessons were heeded by Bush the elder who pointedly decided not to take Baghdad though it was there for the taking precisely because he didn't want an expensive quagmire.[13] It is tempting to think Bush the younger is simply Bush the dumber and that's the reason why he felt emboldened to go where his daddy dare not, but I believe there is an even more sinister explanation. Whereas daddy figured out how to get someone else to pay for the battles that needed to be fought to dislodge Saddam's forces from Kuwait, he didn't solve the problem of how to pay for a long war so he avoided it. Neither did the son, but he figured out how to get the loser to line the pockets of the victor and transform a costly war into a privateer's mother lode.[14] The father's expensive quagmire is the son's reconstruction goldmine. Reconstruction is the surplus value of war. If, as Chalmers Johnson suggests the US military has gone Hollywood, then war has gone Wall St.[15] Profit is put before everything.[16]

But we still haven't articulated what turned out to be the greatest change to militarism. This occurred in the late stages of the Vietnam War, past the point when anyone - not even the President of the United States - could say there was any worthwhile military reason to continue the fight, apart from the need to defend the credibility of the fighting forces. The last years of the war saw the first outing of what has now become standard procedure, the use of airpower as a substitute for diplomacy. At the time it was narrated as being a necessary complement to diplomacy to insure proper attention at the bargaining table, but its effect was to make the North Vietnamese dig their heels in harder. And yet the US persisted in spite of its obvious failure as a tactic, convinced no doubt that there had to be a limit to the willingness of the people of North Vietnam to endure the terrible toll of death its B52s were able to lay upon them. Ho Chi Minh's bravado claim that Vietnam had struggled against China for a thousand years before winning its freedom, and had carried the fight to the French for one hundred and fifty years, and therefore felt unthreatened by the US who had only been on their soil a mere fifteen years plainly fell on deaf ears in Washington. The cost in lives of this tactic has never been officially toted up, but doubtless it was not inconsiderable. It is generally assessed as a military and diplomatic failure, but this is where I think history is being a little hasty. The determination that it was the credibility of the fighting forces that was at stake in the final years of the war is no doubt correct, but as with all political manoeuvres it

shouldn't be taken at face value.

For Wallerstein, the Vietnam War represented a rejection by the Third World of the ' Yalta accord', the less than gentlemanly agreement between the two superpowers, the USA and the USSR, to divide the planet into spheres of interest (the USA grabbing two-thirds and the USSR a third). He treats America's willingness to invest all its military strength into the struggle and more or less bankrupt itself in the process as testament to the felt geopolitical significance of the conflict. And yet, as he puts it, they were still defeated. While I accept the first part of his thesis, I disagree with his conclusion because I think the very premise on which it rests lost its validity in the course of the war. A pragmatically conceived intervention designed to stop the spread of revolutionary communism became the US military's own equivalent of a 'cultural revolution' as it underwent a profound rethinking of its mode of acting in the world.[17] I do not mean to claim as military revisionists have done that Vietnam was actually a victory for the USA (the right wing rhetoric on this, so resonant of the early days of the Nazi party, is that the government and the people back home betrayed the soldiers on the front line and didn't allow them to win).[18] With Baudrillard, I want to argue that there occurred a paradigm shift during the course of that protracted and bitter struggle which resulted in the concepts of victory and defeat losing their meaning.

> Why did this American defeat (the largest reversal in the history of the USA) have no internal repercussions in America? If it had really signified the failure of the planetary strategy of the United States, it would necessarily have completely disrupted its internal balance and the American political system. Nothing of the sort occurred.
>
> Something else, then, took place.[19]

Baudrillard's answer to this question is that war ceased to be real, it ceased to be determined in terms of winning and losing and became instead 'simulation', a pure spectacle no less terrifying or deadly for its lack of reality. The consequences of this metaphysical adjustment are shocking and go a long way towards explaining the rise of terrorism in recent years. As Andrew Bacevich writes, it is not only the superpowers like the US that have relinquished the concept of victory. It is as though war itself has jettisoned it as so much extra baggage. “The typical armed conflict today no longer pits like against like - field army v. field army or battle fleet v. battle fleet - and there usually is no longer even the theoretical prospect of a decisive outcome. In asymmetric conflicts, combatants employ violence indirectly. The aim is not to defeat but to intimidate and terrorise, with women a favoured target and sexual assault often the weapon of choice.”[20] The B52 pilot unloading bombs on an unseen enemy below knows just as well as the suicide bomber in Iraq that his actions will not lead directly to a decisive change, that in a sense the gesture is futile; but, he also knows, as does the suicide bomber, that his actions will help create an atmosphere of fear that, it is hoped, will one day lead to change. Deprived of teleology, war thrives in an eternal present.

Terror is not merely the weapon of the weak, it is the new condition of war, and no power can claim exception status. For Clausewitz and his spiritual tutor Machiavelli the only rational reason to wage war is to win where winning means achieving a predetermined and clearly prescribed goal. Britain's colonial wars are an obvious case in point. The self-serving claim that Britain acquired its empire in a fit of absence owes its sense to the fact that it never set out to gain its eventually quite considerable empire (it was at least geographically true, albeit not historically true, that the sun never set on the British Empire, encompassing as it did territories in virtually every region of the world) all at once as Hitler and Hirohito were later to do, but built it one territory at a time over a two century-long period. Through a sequence of limited wars it was able to deploy its limited means to obtain colossal riches. The first world war essentially started out in the same way. Germany's goal was to secure a European empire before it was too late, but the machine-gun put paid to that ambition and instead of a quick war returning a specific prize there irrupted a global

conflagration that was to consume the wealth and youth of Europe. As Wallerstein argues, the true victor of the first world war wasn't Britain or France, but American industry, and by extension the true loser wasn't Germany and its allies but Europe itself. Eric Hobsbawm has defined the twentieth century as the age when wars of limited means and limited aims gave way to wars of limited means and *unlimited* aims.[21] The twenty-first century appears to be the age of wars of unlimited means and no precise aim.

This, according to Deleuze and Guattari, "is the point at which Clausewitz's formula is effectively reversed". When total war - i.e., war which not only places the annihilation of the enemy's army at its centre but its entire population and economy too - becomes the object of the State-appropriated war machine, "then at this level in the set of all possible conditions, the object and the aim enter into new relations that can reach the point of contradiction." In the first instance, the war machine unleashed by the State in pursuit of its object, total war, remains subordinate to the State and "merely realises the *maximal conditions*"[22] of its aims. Paradoxically, though, the more successful it is in realising the State's aims, the less controllable by the State it becomes. As the State's aims grow on the back of the success of its war machine, so the restrictions on the war machine's object shrink until - scorpion like - it effectively subsumes the State, making it just one of its many moving parts. In Vietnam, the State was blamed for the failure of the war machine precisely because it attempted to set limits on its object. Its inability to adequately impose these limits not only cost it the war, but in effect its sovereignty too. Since then the State has been a puppet of a war machine global in scope and ambition. This is the status of militarism today and no-one has described its characteristics more chillingly than Deleuze and Guattari:

> This worldwide war machine, which in a way 'reissues' from the States, displays two successive figures: first, that of fascism, which makes war an unlimited movement with no other aim than itself; but fascism is only a rough sketch, and the second, postfascist, figure is that of a war machine that takes peace as its object directly, as the peace of Terror or Survival. The war machine reforms a smooth space that now claims to control, to surround the entire earth. Total war is surpassed, toward a form of peace more terrifying still.[23]

It is undoubtedly Chalmers Johnson who has done the most to bring to our attention the specific make-up of what Deleuze and Guattari call here the worldwide war machine.[24] His description of a global 'empire of bases' is consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's uptake of Paul Virilio's concept of the 'fleet in being'. This is the paradoxical transformation of the striated space of organisation into a new kind of 'reimparted' smooth space "which outflanks all gridding and invents a neonomadism in the service of a war machine still more disturbing than the States".[25] Bases do not by themselves secure territory, but as is the case with a battle fleet their mobility and their firepower mean they can exert an uncontestable claim over territory that amounts to control. This smooth space surrounding the earth is, to put it back into Baudrillard's terms, the space of simulation. The empire of bases is a virtual construct with real capability. Fittingly enough, it was Jean Baudrillard who first detected that a structural change in post-WWII militarism had taken place. In *Simulacra and Simulation* he argues that the Vietnam War was a demonstration of a new kind of will to war, one that no longer thought in terms of winning or losing, but defined itself instead in terms of perseverance.[26] It demonstrated to the US's enemies, clients and allies alike its willingness to continue the fight even when defeat was certain, or had in a sense already been acknowledged (the US strategy of 'Vietnamising' the war which commenced shortly after the Tet offensive in 1968, and become official policy under Nixon, was patently an admission that the war couldn't be won - in the short term it was Johnson's way of putting off admitting defeat until after the election so as to give Hubert Humphrey some chance of victory; in the longer term it was a way of buying time for a diplomatic solution).[27] It was a demonstration of the US's reach, of its ability to inflict destruction even when its troops were withdrawing and peace talks (however futile) were under way. It also demonstrated to the American people that the

fight *could* be continued as the troops were withdrawn, a factor that as I've already pointed out would become decisive in re-shaping militarism as an incorporeal system.

It was also a demonstration to the American domestic population that the country's leaders were willing to continue to sacrifice lives to prove this point.[28] The contrary view, that Nixon wanted to end the war sooner but was unable to do so because domestic politics didn't allow it, in no way contradicts this thesis. If anything it confirms it because if true it would mean, as Deleuze and Guattari have said of fascism, “at a certain point, under a certain set of conditions”, the American people *wanted* Vietnam, and, as they add, “it is this perversion of the desire of the masses that needs to be accounted for.”[29] While there can be no doubt Vietnam was an unpopular war that was eventually brought to a halt by popular pressure, it is a sobering thought to remind oneself that it was a war that lasted some 10 years. If one takes 1967 as the decisive turning point in popular opinion, the moment when protest against the war became the prevailing view and support for it dwindled into a minority murmur, then one still has to take stock of the fact that it took a further 6 years for US troops to be fully withdrawn.[30] The kind of sustained popular pressure that brought the Vietnam War to a close has not yet even begun to build in the US in spite of the fact that the death toll has passed 1500 (as of March 2005).

Wars are spectacles in the traditional sense of being events staged to convey a specific message, but also in the more radical or postmodern sense that spectacle is the final form of war, the form war takes when it takes peace as its object. Hence the military's facilitation of the media (this backfired to a large degree in Vietnam, but the lessons learned then are put to good use today). Ultimately, though, as Baudrillard rightly argues, the “media and official *news services* are only there to maintain the illusion of an actuality, of the reality of the stakes, of the objectivity of the facts.”[31] Chomsky's analyses of current trends in US imperialism confirm this thesis. As he argues, 'preventive' wars are only fought against the basically defenceless.[32] Chomsky adds two further conditions that chime with what we have already adduced: there must be something in it for the aggressor, i.e., a fungible return not an intangible moral reward, and the opponent must be susceptible to a portrayal of them as 'evil', allowing the victory to be claimed in the name of a higher moral purpose and the actual venal purpose to be obscured.[33] At first glance, waging war to prevent war appears to be as farcical as fucking for virginity, but that is only if we assume that the aim of the war is to prevent one potential aggressor from striking first. Or, rather, given that it is alleged that the putative enemy, Al Qaeda and its supposed supporters, took first blood (the Rambo reference is of course deliberate), we are asked to believe the current war is being fought to prevent a second, more damaging strike. The obsessive and suitably grave references to Weapons of Mass Destruction by the various mouthpieces of the Bush regime (Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Rice, but also Blair and Howard) is plainly calculated to compel us to accept that any such second strike will be of biblical, or worse, Hollywood proportions.

As one joke put it, the Americans could be certain that Iraq had at least some Weapons of Mass Destruction because they had the receipts to prove it. The grain of truth in this joke reveals the true purpose of the war - it was a demonstration to all of America's clients that it wouldn't tolerate 'price-gouging'. Obviously I am speaking metaphorically here, but the fact is that Iraq is a client of the US, it purchases arms and consumer goods and sells oil at a carefully controlled price. Why this arrangement suddenly became so unsatisfactory is subject to a great deal of speculation which centre on two basic theories: (1) when Iraq switched from the dollar to the euro it posed an intolerable threat to the stability of the US currency; (2) the US is positioning itself to monopolise oil ahead of growing Chinese demand. Either way, if one wants a metaphor to describe US imperialism it wouldn't it wouldn't be MacDonald's, a comparatively benign operator, but the predatory retail giant Wal-Mart.[34] In other words, today's wars are fought to demonstrate will. The age of gunboat diplomacy has given way to the age of gunboat commerce.[35]

When war changed its object it was able to change its aim too and it is this more than anything that has saved 'real' war

from itself. Baudrillard's later work on the spectacle of war misses this point: through becoming spectacles the fact that real wars (i.e., territorial wars) are no longer possible has not diminished their utility - the US isn't strong enough to take and hold Iraq, but it can use its force to demonstrate to other small nations that it can inflict massive damage and lasting pain on anyone who would dare defy it. Baudrillard's lament that the real Gulf War never took place can only be understood from this viewpoint - although he doesn't put it in these words, his insight is essentially that war in its Idealised form is much more terrifying than peace. Again, although Baudrillard himself doesn't put it this way, the conclusion one might draw from the paradigm shift in war's rationalisation enumerated above - from pragmatic object (defeating North Vietnam) to symbolic object (defending the credibility of the fight forces) -is that war has become 'postmodern'.[36]This shift is what enables the US to ideologically justify war in the absence of a proper object and indeed in the absence of a known enemy. The Bush regime's 'War on Terror' is the apotheosis of this change: the symbolic (terror) has been made to appear instrumental (terrorism), or more precisely the symbolic is now able to generate the instrumental according to its own needs.

This is the moment when the war machine becomes militarism, the moment when doxa becomes doctrine. What is a war machine? The answer to this question must always be, it is a concept. But because of the way Deleuze and Guattari create their concepts, by abstracting from the historical, there is always a temptation to treat the war machine as primarily descriptive. More importantly, the war machine is only one element in a complex treatise which is ultimately a mordant critique of the present. Deleuze and Guattari's analysis proceeds via a threefold hypothesis: (1) the war machine is a nomad invention that does not have war as its primary object, war is rather a second-order objective; (2) the war machine is exterior to the State apparatus, but when the State appropriates the war machine its nature and function changes, its polarity is effectively reversed so that it is directed at the nomads themselves; (3) it is only when the war machine has been appropriated by the State that war becomes its primary object.[37] Deleuze and Guattari are careful to clarify that their main purpose in assigning the invention of the war machine to the nomads is to assert its historical or 'invented' character. Their implication is that the nomadic people of the steppes and deserts do not hold the secret to understanding the war machine. We need to look past the concrete historical and geographical character of the war machine to see its eidetic core.[38] Clearly, it is not “the nomad who defines this constellation of characteristics”; on the contrary, “it is this constellation that defines the nomad, and at the same time the essence of the war machine.”[39]

In its nomad origins, the war machine does not have war as its primary objective. Deleuze and Guattari arrive at this conclusion by way of three questions. First of all they ask, is battle the object of war? Then they ask if war is the object of the war machine. And finally they ask if the war machine is the object of the State. The first question requires further and immediate clarification, they say, between when a battle is sought and when it is avoided. The difference between these two states of affairs is not the difference between an offensive and defensive posture. And while it is true that at first glance war does seem to have battle as its object whereas the guerrilla has nonbattle his object, this view is deceiving. Dropping bombs from 10 000 metres above the earth, firing missiles from a distance of hundreds of kilometres, using unpiloted drones to scout for targets, using satellite controlled and guided weapons, are the actions of a war-machine that has no interest at all in engaging in battle. The truism that the Viet Cong frustrated the US Army in Vietnam by failing to engage them in battle should not be taken to mean the US Army sought battle and the enemy did not. The Viet Cong frustrated the US Army by failing to succumb to its nonbattle strategies and forced them into seeking battles with an elusive army with a better understanding of the terrain. If operation “Rolling Thunder”, or any of the many other battle-avoiding stratagems the US attempted had worked, they would not have sought battle at all.[40] Ironically, too, as Gabriel Kolko points out, the more strategic the US tried to make its offensive operations, i.e., the more it tried to disengage from face-to-face encounters on the battlefield, the more passive its posture became because of its escalating logistical support requirements and increasing reliance on high maintenance technology.[41]

By the same token, it is clear that the guerilla armies of the Viet Cong did in fact seek battle, but did so on their own

terms. As Mao said, the guerrilla strikes where the other is weak and retreats whenever the stronger power attacks, the point being that the guerrilla is constantly on the look out for an opportunity to engage the enemy.[42] Battle and nonbattle "are the double object of war, according to a criterion that does not coincide with the offensive and the defensive, or even with war proper and guerrilla warfare."[43] For this reason the question has to be pushed further back to ask if war is even the object of the war machine? Too often the answer to this question is automatically 'yes', but this reflects a precise set of historical circumstances and not an essential condition. It is true, throughout history, the nomads are regularly to be found in conflict situations, but this is because history is studded with collisions between war machines and the states and cities which would grind them into the dust. War is thrust upon the war machine, but its actual occupation is quite different. It could even be said to be peaceful were we not suspicious of that term. And as I have already argued, it is when the war machine takes peace itself as its object that it enters its most terrifying phase.

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FOOTNOTES

1. By 'twice' I mean twice over - what the actual new level of radiation is compared to pre-invasion levels are I don't actually know. Given that we know that more depleted uranium ammunition has been used in the most recent Gulf War than was used in the first Gulf War it is reasonable to assume the situation has deteriorated.

2. In one sense, Frank's (2004) answer is precisely that the war was not as significant to the voters in Kansas, particularly the religious right, as other more morally urgent issues such as abortion.

3. Debord 1990: 24.

4. Long duree historians of the future may well conclude that the most historically consequential meeting that took place following the European side of World War II was the one between Roosevelt and Saudi King Ibn Saud. As Matthew Yeomans (2004: 15-18) argues, this meeting sowed the seeds of US predominance in the region.

5. Wallerstein 2003: 14-15.

6. The common consent that Afghanistan was the USSR's ' Vietnam ' tends to confirm this.

7. See Anderson 2005 for a critique of the support given to the US's military actions of the past two decades by Rawls, Habermas and Bobbio.

8. It should be clear, then, that I don't share Frances Fox Piven's (2004: 121) optimistic view that the Iraq conflict will induce a return of the Vietnam Syndrome.

9. Michael Mann (2003) extends this point and argues that the US is incapable of supporting an empire because it has proved much less adept than Britain in getting its 'allies' to fight its wars on its behalf.

10. Kolko 1994: 356.

11. As Deleuze wrote in response to the first Gulf War, “Did the Americans themselves believe that they could wage precise, rapid war without innocent victims?” Deleuze and Scherer 1998: 170.

12. Written as it is from the perspective of a robot, the complex and ambiguous element of desire is lacking in Manuel DeLanda's *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* making it less useful for our purposes than one might have supposed from the title. For DeLanda, an arms race can be understood as a feedback loop within a closed system. But to put it this way is to take no account of desire - it doesn't explain why we should want to pursue that path. Deleuze and Guattari do not assume we are automata; on the contrary, as desiring individuals we have a range of choices before us. Our desire has to be rendered susceptible to capture. This was the basic purpose of the first volume: the diatribe against psychoanalysis had as its purpose the analysis of the way Oedipus operates to seduce desire into monitoring itself. DeLanda's closed system approach is false in another way as well. For Deleuze and Guattari technology is the product of a lifeworld. Metallurgy is not merely a trade, or technique, it is an entire way of life.

13. As Christian Parenti (2004: 15) rightfully reminds us, Dick Cheney in his capacity as secretary for defence during the first gulf war used precisely this word in defence of the decision not to take Baghdad.

14. As Retort have argued, the control of oil is only one of the stakes in the Gulf War conflict. Just as important are the arms sales to Third World countries and the lucrative construction contracts that go with the development of military capacity. “The invasion of Iraq was about Chevron and Texaco, but it was also about Bechtel, Kellog, Brown and Root, Chase Manhattan, Enron, Global Crossing, BCCI and DynCorp.” Retort 2005: 16.

15. As Chalmers Johnson (2000, 2004) has shown, the old model of the military that did everything itself (ie the 'studio system') has given way to a vast interlocking network of private enterprises (' Hollywood ' as it is today).

16. The justification for war is brazenly Wall St. too inasmuch that the conception of freedom it propounds is only the meagre stuff entailed in its free market ideology. As the troops were preparing for war, the military's procurements people were busily recruiting post-war reconstruction privateers. Come to Iraq, they said, and make your fortune. So far that particular promise hasn't quite panned out as scripted.

17. I use 'cultural revolution' here in the sense that Jameson has given the term, namely to describe the oftentimes painful process of changing a way of thinking. I specify the 'spread of revolution communism' because as Baudrillard (1995: 85) points out, the Vietnam War stopped when a bureaucracy had replaced the revolution.

18. As I have argued elsewhere, the theme of betrayal is the basis of what is essentially a redemption narrative Rambo.

19. Baudrillard 1994: 36.

20. Bacevich 2005: 26.

21. Hobsbawm 1994: 29-30.

22. Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 421.

23. Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 421.

24. See Johnson 2000 and 2004.

25. Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 480.

26. Baudrillard 1994: 37.

27. Kolko 1994: 321.

28. That this position chimed with the government's position on welfare, which was to become similarly hard-hearted, is scarcely likely to be a coincidence. The current regime has shown the truth of this. As Frances Fox Piven (2004: 89) has recently pointed out, in contrast to the Johnson Administration the Bush II regime has offered nothing to its domestic population to ease the burden of war. In fact, it seems hell-bent on brutalising the people at home too as it clamps down on welfare and intensifies surveillance.

29. Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 29.

30. In 1967 more Americans opposed sending troops to Vietnam than supported. By 1973, the ratio of opposition to support was 2 to 1. Officially, the last US troops pulled out of South Vietnam in March 1973, but the US maintained a military presence in the form of 'advisers', Embassy staff and CIA operatives right up until April 1975 when the North Vietnamese tanks rolled into Saigon. Kolko 1994: 172.

31. Baudrillard 1994: 38.

32. By defenceless Chomsky means not only that the country in question has less military capacity than the US, which is true of *every* country on earth, but also that its terrain offers no natural resistance to US weapons-systems. Iraq is a perfect case in point - its empty, flat desert terrain is ideally suited to blitzkrieg tactics. By contrast, Afghanistan's mountainous terrain is highly resistant to this kind of warfare, as the failed campaign to capture Bin Laden in Tora Bora proved.

33. Chomsky 2003: 17.

34. Did not the Bush-Cheney campaign manager glibly describe the US action in Iraq as getting it “ready for Wal-Mart”? (Cited in Retort 2005: 13)

35. Brecht once asked who is the bigger criminal, the bank robber or the banker? In Iraq today that question would have little meaning. The bankers are the ones who do the robbing. As Private England and her colleagues were administering electric shock treatment to the genitals of prisoners in Abu Graib, so Paul Brenner and his were administering shock therapy to the Iraqi economy. While we pretended to be shocked about the former, we barely raised an eyebrow at the latter. As Naomi Klein (2004) has pointed out, these two forms of shock treatment are not entirely unrelated. Inasmuch as the current aim of the occupying forces is to make Iraq a safe place to do business one may well be justified in concluding they are directly related. It is an open question as to which of these two forms of shock treatment are producing the greatest amount of blowback, but one can be sure that is precisely what they are doing.

36. In this regard, what follows can be regarded as a pendant to Jameson's famous essay which despite its encyclopedic grasp of its subject matter leaves out militarism. The companion essay, (1984) “Periodizing the 60s”, deals with some of the geopolitical issues missing from the postmodernism essay, but advances no thesis decisively connecting militarism and postmodernism as I propose to do.

37. Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 418.

38. For an extended account of this aspect of D&G see my??

39. Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 422-3.

40. Christian Parenti (1999: 18) confirms this by showing how the US utilised refined techniques of nonbattle on the homefront in the development of its policing of inner city crime - control the population, control the resources, are the watchwords of nonbattle.

41. Kolko 1994: 193.

42. De Certeau's description of everyday life in terms of strategy and tactics bears this out: the tactical is defined by kairos, the ability to seize a moment and turn an unfavourable set of circumstances to their own benefit. Strategy, meanwhile, which for de Certeau is typified by Foucault's account of discipline is defined by its immobility.

43. Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 417.

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