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The Changing Middle Eastern Wars and China's Evolving Response

Introduction

The Middle East is known to be one of the world's most volatile regions. During the period between 1945 & 1991, all the states within the Greater MENA region, from Morocco to Afghanistan, have fought at least one conflict with each other or with a Middle Eastern non-state actor, and thousands of people suffered the consequences. In the Cold War years, efforts to conceptualize and understand these interstate, intrastate, and extrastate wars of the Middle East reached the conclusion that the scope of those conflicts seems to be limitless, and thus, huge data sets were set up in the 1960s to code and determine the causes, the events, and the implications of these armed conflicts. According to one of those approaches to war, the *Correlates of War Project List of Wars Database V.4.0.*, the number of those three abovementioned categories of wars between the years 1816 and 2007 in the Middle East exceeds 100, and most of them were coded as either colonial conflicts, wars over territory and resources, or rebellions.¹

However, a glance at the post-Cold War military conflicts reflects that there seems to be a change within the nature of the wars of the new millennia, and it is possible to observe that the world's militarized disputes has moved away from large scale–short duration interstate wars to more long duration–regional and local intrastate, extrastate, nonstate, or civil wars, where rather than Cold War politics, such as domino theory, deterrence failures, or spiral security dilemmas, new issues such as ethnicity, religious identity, sectarianism, illegitimacy, and terrorism lay at the core of those armed quarrels.² This “shift” is being argued and deeply scrutinized by an approach called the New Wars Theory, which is a novel argumentative standpoint that juxtaposes itself with Critical Theory, Constructivism, and Emancipatory IR Theory, and is worked upon by political scientists that rather implements

¹, Meredith Reid Sarkees and Frank Wayman. *Resort to War: 1816 - 2007*. (Washington DC: CQ Press 2010).

² Herfried Münkler, “The Wars of the 21st Century,” *IRRC* 85(2009): 7-22.

hypothetical theorizing and abstract theory building, methodologically employ Area Studies and field work.³ By following the framework of this New Wars approach and observing that this novel war studies standpoint has examined cases from Europe, the Balkans, Africa, and the Caucasus, but not the Middle East, this paper, aims to test this approach's assumptions against this untested region, examining its armed conflicts in the post-Cold War temporality, and examines whether the nature of these conflicts has changed. To complement the findings, the paper also scrutinizes on how a non-regional power, the People's Republic of China, responds to these changes of war-making in the Middle East and tries to find variations considering the Chinese policy towards the Middle Eastern conflicts by comparing the Cold War and post-Cold War years.

The preliminary results indicate that China does not directly respond to varying warring typologies within the Middle East per se but particularly considers the changing balances after the wars and how external powers tries to influence those balances in their favor; thus displaying a form of relative gain sensitivity. This further indicates that not only as China increases its constructed linkages vis a vis the Middle East, it is prone to be more responsive towards the disruptions witnessed in the key locales of the region, such as the Persian Gulf, East Mediterranean, and the Arabian Peninsula, but also towards the expected gains and losses of other powers as well with regards to their interaction or interference within the Middle Eastern conflicts.

Research Question

The research question that is intended to be analyzed here rests on the query of whether or have the armed conflicts of the Middle East has witnessed a fundamental change with the new millennia. And if so, did such a transformation had an impact on China's Middle East policy. This former question was also the main starting point of the New Wars hypothesis, which, under this inquirial framework, has examined cases other than the MENA region and reached confirming results. In line with this research question, the paper also further conceptualizes the scope of its inquiry to include other sub-questions that builds upon four issues which are whether the type of participants or actors of the Middle Eastern wars has underwent any change, whether the implementation or execution of Middle Eastern wars has changed, whether the causes or purposes of the armed conflicts of the Middle East has

³ On the relations between New Wars Theory and International Relations Theory, see: Mary Kaldor. *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. (Malden: Polity Press, 2012).

changed, and whether the magnitude of the wars have changed in the post-Cold War period. Such a research question was selected since it was observed that further scrutiny on other regional conflicts such as South Asia, South and Central America, Eastern and Central Africa, and the Middle East would either contribute on enhancing the explanatory potential of the theory and demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of this novel wars studies approach, or reach refuting argumentations which would challenge the validity of the New Wars Theory.

I. The New War Theory and Literature Review⁴

It is observed that even though the abstract theoretical development of the New Wars approach is quite recent, this standpoint seems to have created a strong trend, and it is possible to argue that the existing literature on its academic scrutiny is absolutely immense, with studies ranging from high-tech weapons systems analysis to child soldiers are included within the scope of this type of investigation.⁵ In addition, various International Relations approaches, such as International Political Economy or Critical Theory, and its variants, are also interested in using the New Wars hypotheses in their studies, using this approach to develop argumentations regarding human security and emancipation.⁶ Within the International Relations Theoretical Paradigm, the seminal works that scrutinizes on this theory are Chris Gray's "Postmodern Wars", Edward Rice's "Wars of the Third Kind", Kalevi Holsti's "People's Wars", and Kaldor's "New Wars" that provides different argumentations in analyzing the nature of warfare in the post-Cold War era; though, among the four standpoints, it was in Kaldor's conceptualization that the Post 1990 wars were directly defined as "New Wars", in which the author specified that "during the last decades of the 20th century a new type of organized violence developed in Africa and Eastern Europe,... which I describe this type of violence as 'new war'."⁷

Concerning the works mentioned above, this paper provides a critical literature review on the assertions of these studies on new wars and argues that even though these approaches produce interesting argumentations, some possess fragile hypotheses which renders their overall remarks on the change of the typology of wars within the Post-Cold War era as

⁴ This section is still under developmental scrutiny, therefore it currently gives a non-detailed account of the literature, and excludes analyzing the case study approaches of variant standpoints within the New Wars Theory.

⁵ For the list of works on the literature of New Wars see: Mary Kaldor, "In Defense of New Wars," *Stability* 2(2013):1-16., or Patrick A. Mello, "In Search of New Wars: The Debate about a Transformation of War," *European Journal of International Relations* 20(2010):1-13.

⁶ Heinz Welsh, "Resource Abundance and Internal Armed Conflict: Types of Natural Resources and the Incidence of New Wars," *Ecological Economics* 67(2008): 503-513.

⁷ Mary Kaldor. *New and Old Wars*. 1-17.

problematic, whereas other provide a coherent framework which is applicable to the Middle East. Hence this paper aims reveal those frailties within these diverse interpretations and offers to provide a clearer and more comprehensive framework that sets up a foundation for a more opaque conceptualization and operationalization to measure change in the nature of wars.

Gray's Postmodern War

One major interpretation of New Wars is the concept of Postmodern War of Chris Gray, who, through a Post-modern International Relations approach states that “war is undergoing a crisis that will lead to a radical redefinition of war itself, and...this is part of the general worldwide crisis of postmodernity”.⁸ Gray uses that term since he argues that technological advancements, especially in the computerized weapons systems and in militarized artificial intelligence has altered “the logic and culture of modern war”, in which, computer processed information, which he calls “technoscience” is the “single most significant military factor” in today’s armed conflicts.⁹ Therefore, he argues that the emergence of numerous and sophisticated human-machine weapons systems, changes the face of war and the conditions of peace. Gray examines several case studies, and assert that World War II and Vietnam Wars attract particular attention and can be identified as direct instances of Postmodern Wars, since they are the examples of major conflicts where weapons of mass destruction, computers, strategic bombing, systems analysis, and artificial intelligence were firstly and extensively used, displaying a change in the character of warfare.

Rice's Wars of the Third Kind

Rice labels new wars as “Wars of the Third Kind” since he focuses on the non-conventional intrastate wars in the postcolonial, that is, in the third world countries, and argues that only in underdeveloped countries or in regions of rural economy these kinds of wars take place, in which, through that atmosphere, “radicalized initiatives” can be pursued by insurgents that employ asymmetric warfare, and are distinguished from conventional (first kind) and nuclear wars (second kind).¹⁰ He carefully examines the Chinese Communists' campaigns against the Japanese and the Chinese Nationalists, Guatemalan and Philippine

⁸ Chris Gray. *Postmodern War: The New Politics of Conflicts* (London: Routledge, 1997), 21.

⁹ Gray. *Post-Modern War*, 21.

¹⁰ Edward Rice. *Wars of the Third Kind: Conflict in Underdeveloped Countries*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

insurgencies, Vietnam War, and the Algerian revolt, demonstrating that the failure of governments to understand their nature led to military and political catastrophe (e.g., the US and France in Vietnam, France in Algeria, The Nationalists in China); however, successful counterinsurgency campaigns result only when state's operational capacities are suited to respond to the situation.

Holsti's People's Wars

This standpoint displays that these wars are “primarily guerilla campaigns fought by militarized communal groups against either government forces or other militarized groups within the states” in which “the line between combatant and noncombatant is blurred” and “there are no explicit fronts, uniforms, or territorial limits” that enables singling out objectives and purposes other than asymmetric warfare and instigating terror.¹¹ Holsti points out that since there exists “a growing problem of increasing weak states”, “interstate wars have been declining”, and “the number of internal wars has been on the rise”.¹² Holsti argues that many weak states have risen due to the lack of a uniting identity and their administrations have little legitimacy. Legitimacy is crucial to the strong state, Holsti believes, and it hinges on ideas and sentiment. Democratization and federalism have been put forward as solutions to the startling growth in the number of internal conflicts, but Holsti believes that the solution ultimately is that weak states simply must become stronger or that some alternative to the state be devised.

Kaldor's New Wars

According to Kaldor, if several parameters were investigated, the difference between new and the old types of armed conflicts can be made explicit. The first parameter that she scrutinizes is the status of the warring actors, in other words, their identity, and it is stated that while the actors in the Old Wars were mainly states and wars were fought between the “regular troops” of states, new wars, she argues, are armed clashes between or among a combined “network of state and nonstate actors”,¹³ that is, “regular armed forces, mercenaries, jihadists, warlords, paramilitaries”.¹⁴ The second parameter that distinguishes new from old wars is the goals or purposes of the combatants. Kaldor argues that while the

¹¹ Kalevi Holsti. *The State, War, and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹² Holsti, *The State, War, and the State of War*, 119.

¹³ Kaldor, interestingly is definite that the old wars were “fought by the regular armed forces of states” thus disregarding irregular troops, guerillas, mercenaries, pirates, and militia. This stipulation is questionable.

¹⁴ Kaldor. “In Defense of New Wars,” 2.

old wars were “fought for geopolitics”, new wars “are fought in the name of identity”, in which the parties, rather than aiming to pursue “programmes and policies in the broader public interest”, fight “to gain access to the state for particular groups” such as in the name of tribe, sect, religion, or ethnicity.¹⁵ The third parameter that helps us differentiate new wars from the old ones is the methods employed in war. According to Kaldor, in the old encounters, battles and capturing territory through military means were essential, though in new wars, “battles are rare and territory is captured through political means, through control of population,” displacing populations, and directing violence against civilians rather than enemy armed forces.¹⁶ The last determinant which Kaldor uses to separate new wars from the old is the “forms of finance”, that is, arguing that even though “old wars were financed largely by states through taxation” and mobilizing the population, new wars revolve around “private finance, including loot, pillage, kidnapping, smuggling of oil, diamonds, drugs, and people” together with the continuation of violence.¹⁷

A Critique

After examining the argumentations of the four major works and their hypotheses regarding the concept of New Wars, it is possible to observe that all of these standpoints has their strengths and weaknesses in analyzing the concept of change that is occurring in the nature of wars of the post-Cold War era; hence granting the leeway to assert that there stands a potential for refinement of operationalizing the perception of change in analyzing the armed conflicts after the 1990s. Thereby, this critique aims to assess those argumentative pros and cons so to lay the ideational foundations of a more comprehensive research design that could mend those frailties that resides within the argumentations of these New Wars approaches that could produce a clearer picture in measuring the transformation of the character armed conflicts.

Firstly, if the arguments of Gray is scrutinized, it is possible to state that although he touches upon a significant factor, that is, the condition of technology, at least when the developments in military history is examined, this variable does determine a shift in the nature of wars; though, its condensed rest on this single type of variable displays that any attempts of its applications to a larger framework would produce incomplete or frail deductions. The

¹⁵ Kaldor. “In Defense of New Wars,” 2-3.

¹⁶Kaldor. “In Defense of New Wars,” 3.

¹⁷ Kaldor. “In Defense of New Wars,” 3.

argument revolving around the issue of technological advancements changing the nature of armed conflict seems sound at an initial look, since, when the evolution of the implementation of wars are examined, the amplifications in firepower, mobility, communication, and transportation systems has made an impact on the nature of wars, increasing their magnitude, destructivity, and economic repercussions. For instance mass production technologies during World War I has enabled the complete utilization of the concept of total war, granting industrialized states the ability to amass huge resources of material and manpower over lengthy frontlines, making rapid victories to be impossible since huge artillery and infantry reserves stood well behind the lines waiting to react to any breakthrough. However, the development of the tank and mechanized armored personnel carriers in the 1930s triggered a change from static warfare to mobile warfare, enabling the conduct of offensive operations with a lesser cost of human lives. Given this framework, does this type of argumentation accurately indicate that technology has prompted a shift in the nature of warfare? With a closer look it is possible to argue that rather than the sole technology itself it was the presence of other factors, that is, the perception of the military-political elites, their war aims, and the creative utilization of production capacities has actually changed the course of the war, since it should be remembered that it is the ideational element that triggers a change in technology and its effective utilization in warfare. As another critique, it is possible to provide a counter argument that during the Cold War and the conflicts of the post-Cold War era, it was possible to observe that, through the sales in the global arms market or through the capture of weapons caches, some combating groups were able to use both obsolete and sophisticated weapons in combination, that is, those actors were able to use both new and old types of arms through utilizing them without changing their fighting styles. Afghan guerrillas using high-tech missile systems against Soviet troops in Panjshir Valley is an example to this counter-argumentation. Thence, it is possible to observe that Gray uses a single type of variable, giving too much emphasis on technology and technoscience, mainly disregarding the variation of the actors and their political aims under the conditions of war, and misinterpreting the issue that technology is merely a tool in war which is only a single factor that makes an impact on the character of war.

Secondly, when the stipulations of Rice is examined it is possible to observe that he has a somewhat successful grasp of the insurgencies or wars that took place during the Third World countries during the Cold War with special analysis given to the nature of the wars, that is formulated as being state vs. non-state in character, with detailed scrutinization given

upon the goals and methods of non-state actors fighting the state actors, and a vivid description on the implementation of asymmetric conflicts. Though Rice's analysis sounds solid for the wars of the post-colonial wars of the Cold War, he neither provides an argument concerning the changing typology of wars that would occur after the Cold War, nor it is possible to observe an account on how those new types of wars occurs between states, or between developed states with sophisticated technologies and conventional troops. In other words, Rice, while accurately capturing the Wars of Third kind, fails to give an account on the post-Cold War conflicts of the First Kind, which, for instance was seen during the Gulf Wars. In addition, it is possible to argue that Rice's approach is also incomplete, since it is possible to assert there is a disregardment of the fact that those groups employ those asymmetric methods only due to external and internal pressures, such as material, personnel, training, tactical vision, and logistical incapacities, and that, they would turn to symmetric warfare when they acquire adequate military & ideational substance (training) that would elevate them to fighting on the terms of their superior enemies. There are enough examples to support this assertion such as ISIS' capture of US and Iraqi Army material in Mosul, the defection of Syrian military staff which possessed armored or mechanized forces and forming the Free Syrian Army, the Islamic Front's capture of Syrian military bases which included tanks or other sophisticated conventional weapons, and the material capacity of Tamil Tigers, whom even possessed airplanes and submarines. This would mean that war would turn from third kind into first kind when the actor's capacities change, which disrupts Rice's argument. Hence, deeper factors lying at the fundamentality of wars are needed to be examined so that a more comprehensive methodological framework could be assembled that could be used to produce argumentations that displays variation in armed conflicts.

When the interpretations of Holsti and Kaldor are examined, it was observed that these works, when compared to the argumentative frameworks of Rice and Gray, provide a clearer and a more comprehensive approach to explain the wars of the post-Cold War era, since they scrutinize upon many factors that has an affect on the character of wars. It was observed that Holsti, to explain the novelty in these post-Cold War conflicts, investigates the actors, that is whether they are states or militarized communal groups, examines the nature of the war, which he argues to be mostly guerilla campaigns, discusses the magnitude of wars, which seems to be limitless with borders and territories without meaning, assesses the objectives of the combatants which are mainly terror and fear, and inspects the methods used by the warring sides. Even though producing a frail argumentation concerning the origin of these

wars, claiming to be weak states, or the inability of states in preventing or stabilizing domestic violence, and disregarding external factors, socio-economics, or ideology, Holsti's framework provides a coherent interpretative context in which wars of the post-Cold War conflicts of the Middle East can be examined to assert that whether their characteristics have changed.

Kaldor provides a similar interpretative framework of Holsti, in which she also examines the nature of the actors, their goals and purposes, and their methods employed in war. Although her hypotheses arising from such assumptions seem to be weak, for instance arguing that battles are rare, territory captured by political means rather than military action, or addition of a financial variable which seems difficult to assess accurately without any field research or intelligence report, her approach to the changing characteristic of war is still applicable and does overlap with Holsti's design, thence providing an opportunity for application to investigate the change in the wars of the Middle East.

II. The Research Design

This paper aims to assess whether the wars of the Middle East has underwent a change as the scholars of the New Wars argue so considering other regions. However, taking into consideration that the existing conceptualizations and operationalizations regarding the observation of variation in the types of wars within the Post-Cold War domain are somewhat problematic in their application, this paper aims to produce its own methodological framework that builds upon or resembles Mary Kaldor & Holsti's approaches with various modifications, and implements a data set based case study approach to observe whether the military conflicts of the Middle East did change and whether there are clear patterns of change that signify a variance in the concepts of the nature of the participants, the goals of the combatants, the methods used in wars, and the magnitude of the armed conflicts.

Methodology

Embracing a hypothesis-testing case study, within which the main aim is to test the assumptions of the New Wars Theory on the post-Cold War conflicts of the Middle East, and observe whether there has been a change in the characteristics of war, for the sake of precision and exactitude, the paper aims to use a framework that resembles that of Kaldor and Holsti's interpretations of the New Wars approach, and it also aims to make use of a simple data analysis approach by constructing its own data table as a means to testing the validity of the

new wars hypotheses. This data analysis begins by examining the wars and conflicts of the Middle East from 1945 to 2015. Such a temporal domain was selected so that it would be possible to observe the changes in the characteristic of war by looking at whether within that time frame, actors, their methods, their goals, and the magnitude of wars, has underwent any change. The spatial domain for the paper is determined to be the Middle East and North Africa region, that is, it encompasses an area from Morocco to Iran, including Turkey as its northernmost edge and Yemen as its southernmost edge. Lastly, the paper aims to examine the cases in an overall manner not in detail; hence, it intends to find a changing pattern or simply staticity in the character of wars of the Middle East between the aforementioned years.

Conceptualization and Operationalization

As it was mentioned above, the paper examines the variation of the characteristic of wars using four determinants. These are the actors/participants, the goals/purpose of war, the patterns of prosecution & methods of war, and the magnitude of war. These four factors were selected since it was observed that Holsti's and Kaldor's frameworks granted an applicable foundation, in which they have also examined the change of the nature of wars occurring within these dimensions. This research disregards Kaldor's financial variable since it subjectively perceives that this type of variable is unoperationalizable, that is, this issue can not be measured accurately as it is difficult to trace the funding of the combatants and their sources of revenue.

This research takes the actors or participants of wars as sides who are engaging in the conflict. These sides are conceptualized as being three in nature, that is, they are elaborated as being tribes, states, or non-state in character. Those three concepts were selected since it was observed that other than state and non-state actors, tribes did actually constitute an important place in the dynamics of wars in the Middle East, taking part in many of the armed conflicts. Additionally, for reasons of clarity and cohesiveness, the paper disregards dividing the non-state actors into further groups, however a more comprehensive study can, through the framework that is developed here, detail out the non-state actors according to their religious identity, political alignment, or social community.

Concerning the goals of the participants, the paper assumes that there exist five diverse reasons behind the purpose of wars that are taking place in the Middle East, and these were conceptualized as being political, ideological, geopolitical, economic, or territorial in nature.

Political wars are conceptualized as conflicts that erupt for political reasons such as independence, challenging the existing order, to change the political order, or for alliance commitments. Ideological wars determined to be as clashed arising from divergence from ideologies such as religious differences or ideological fractions such as Islamist vs. secularist etc. Geopolitical wars are coded as wars that are triggered by both sides aspiring to conquer or capture a critical geography, such as islands, straits, oases, etc. Reasons for economic wars were conceptualized to be for economic resources, such as oilfields, water resources, or trade routes. And lastly territorial wars are armed conflicts that arise from pure greed of conquering territory or to settle territorial disputes by reclaiming them.

Patterns of prosecution and the methods employed in war is the third parameter used in this research framework and it is conceptualized to be implemented between regular troops or irregular troops, that is, it looks at how the actors employ their warring capacities against each other through troop character. Regular troops are combat soldiers who are trained and equipped using conventional battle standards, whereas irregular troops are groups of combatants that embrace a fighting style that does not fit into conventional military doctrine displaying guerrilla or terror acts to subdue their enemies. The methods used in warfare is conceptualized to be either symmetric warfare, that is taking place between armed groups possessing similar weapons systems and doctrinal styles, or asymmetric conflicts where a huge discrepancy exists between warring sides in terms of military equipment which prompts the weaker party to adopt actions pertaining to guerrilla warfare, terror bombings, hit and run tactics, or ambushes, and display different military doctrines.

Lastly, the paper conceptualizes the magnitude of war in the sense that its range of impact, that is the war's scope, its duration, meaning its lengthiness in temporal scale, and its degree of causing casualties are taken as main parameters. These parameters can be local or regional in scope, short or long in duration, and may have caused low, medium, high, or massive casualties. The war being local indicates that it takes place in a single country in a confined manner, that is if there is no spillover or direct outside intervention by regional powers. The conflict being regional displays that its impact radius spreads to the region affecting other countries as well. Temporality is operationalized to be short if it is less than 5 years, and long if it is longer than 5 years. The degree of casualties is operationalized to be low if the number of dead, wounded, captured, missing to be less than 3000, medium to be if

it is between 3000 and 10,000, high to be if it is between 10,000 and 50,000, and massive if it exceeds 50,000.

III. Preliminary Findings

The data analysis indicates that, within the constructed framework, there existed or already exists 39 Middle Eastern armed conflicts in the between the years 1945 and 2015. Among these conflicts, 24 of the wars occurred during the Cold War (1945-1991), and 15 of them has occurred or already ongoing in the post-Cold War era (1991-).

When the actors or participants of the wars were analyzed, so to observe any change between the periods of the Cold War and post-Cold War, it was revealed that during the period of 1945-1991, there existed 8 inter-state wars compared to 3 inter-state wars of the post-1991 period; whereas, during the Cold War it was observed that there has occurred 14 state-nonstate conflicts compared to 15 of the post-Cold War period. This indicates that although there exists a temporal imbalance in correspondence of the number of wars during these two periods -46 years compared to 25- there has, as the New Wars Theorists has stipulated, there actually occurred a diminishment in the number of inter-state wars. When the state-nonstate wars are compared it was revealed that the New Wars hypotheses of wars occurring within states seems to in a trend of crescendo, constituting 75% (12 out of 25) of the wars of the post-Cold War period, even exceeding those of the Cold War within this 25 year period, which was 58% (14 out of 24).

When the goals or purpose of wars within these two periods were scrutinized through the data table, it was observed that all of them had political means, that is 24 out of 24 wars of the Cold War and 15 out of 15 wars of the post-Cold War period witnessed political goals of the actors. This indicates that contrary to the New Wars hypotheses which stipulates that new wars are wars of identity, politics is still the main reason. The paper attempted to detail out the purpose of war as much as possible and hence it was revealed that even though all of the wars in these time frames were political, they differed over what other reason followed political aspirations. Concerning this, it was observed that wars which had ideological backgrounds that accompanied wars of political nature was 66% (16 out of 24), displaying that Cold War issues such as left vs. right, revolutionary vs. conservative, or pro-US vs. pro-Soviet did seem to have a grate impact on the character of wars. Whereas, regarding the wars of the post-Cold War it was observed that only 53% of the wars accompanied political reasons were still

ideological, indicating that wars having ideological backgrounds still constitutes an important segment in the post-Cold War conflicts, challenging the New Wars hypothesis. Additionally it as observed that while there existed wars in the Cold War that had economic purposes accompanied by political aspirations, 25% of the wars (6 out of 24), the data table displays that the post-Cold War conflicts did not present a case where there was a war that had an explicit economic background. Another conclusion asserted from the research was that wars that occurred in the post-Cold War era did actually had a territorial motive, 33% of them (5 out of 15) had territorial aspirations compared to 25% of the conflicts of the Cold War, an interesting finding, displaying that control of territory still constitutes an important element in the new wars.

When the patterns of conflict and methods of war was analyzed it was possible to reach interesting findings. Firstly it was revealed that among the 24 conflicts in the Cold War Era 41% of them were symmetric conflicts that is occurring between materially balanced parties employing conventional warfare, 37,5% of them were asymmetric conflicts in which guerilla warfare, bombings, terror actions were evident, and 20% of them were wars that included both fighting styles, that is, it was revealed that there were wars that included both guerilla warfare style clashes and conventional warfare, an interesting remark which was missed by the New Wars Theorists. When the fighting troops were examined in the Cold War it was observed that contrary to the large number of symmetric conflicts the degree of the usage of combined troops, that is, both regular and irregular troops actively fighting in these conflicts were high 37,5 % when compared to regular vs. regular troops fighting (20%), regular vs. irregular troop confrontation (29%), and irregular vs. irregular troop combat (12,5%). This remark is also interesting since it signifies that the blurring of or the combined usage of regular and irregular troops in modern wars had already begun in the Cold War era, and hence it was not a unique feature in the new wars, a point that challenges the New Wars standpoint. When the conflicts of the post-Cold War are examined it was possible to observe that there was a change, asymmetric conflicts had increased composing of 80% of the total number of armed clashes whereas, as the New Wars Theorists has stipulated symmetrical conflicts were low with 6% among the total and only 13,3% of the wars of the post 1991 period had witnessed both asymmetric and symmetric conflicts, a low number compared to 20% of the wars of the Cold War. This indicates that the New Wars Theorists has actually captured the changing pattern of war, and wars of the Middle East do seem to follow a trend of asymmetric conflict. When the fighting troops were examined in the post-Cold War period

there seems to be a change as well. Among the 15 of the armed clashes 12 of them were between regular and irregular troops indicating that the majority of the wars were taking place within states, with state troops representing regulars and insurgents employing irregular troops. Another changing pattern which was in line with the New War hypotheses was that fighting between regular and regular troops were decreasing, that is wars between states are in a state of decrescendo, representing only 2 of the 15 were between professional armies.

Lastly, when the variation in magnitude of war is examined, it was observed that the scope of the wars were nearly even (13 compared to 11) in the Cold War period, that is, the wars of the Cold War had regional spillovers as well as were confined clashes, taken place in a single country without any affect on regional actors, whereas it was possible to observe a locality pattern in the wars of the post-Cold War %80 of the clashes taken place were within states that had a minor impact radius on the region. This indicates that New Wars hypotheses had captured the change in the scope of wars and their range of impact accurately. If the duration is examined however, it was possible to observe mixed results, that is, while the conflicts of the Cold War were mainly short in duration, the wars of the post-Cold War period in the Middle East seems to have a balanced temporal domain 8 out of 15 were long and 7 out of 15 were short, indicating a lengthening trend in wars, as the New Wars hypotheses has envisioned. Finally, when the casualty conditions are examined it was observed that there was no variation, the ratio number of low, medium, and high casualty wars of the Cold War is similar to the post-Cold War with near equal number of low, medium, and high casualty degrees, displaying that examining casualty in war was a dummy variable, that is, it does not have an affect in predicting change in the nature of wars.

Main Remarks

This paper provided a research to test the New Wars Theory's assumptions against the cases of the Middle East, a spatial domain that was neglected by the application of this theoretical framework, and displayed an observation on whether the armed conflicts of the Middle East has witnessed a fundamental alteration in character in the post-Cold War period. After reviewing the four major literary works on the concept of New Wars within the International Relations scholarship, it reached the conclusion that while the first two conceptualizations of novelty in wars provided interesting remarks, their reliance on single type of variables and limited scope has rendered them to produce problematic, fragile, or

incomplete argumentations, hindering their use in application to the Middle East. The second two however, the works of Kaldor and Holsti, was assessed to provide a better and more complete methodological framework that enabled their incorporation of the hypotheses testing-case study approach embraced in the herein paper. Thus similar to the structure of the latter studies this paper, with particular assessment given to the status of the actors, the patterns of prosecution in wars, the purpose of wars, and the magnitude as main parameters, examined the degree of change in the Middle East wars. By introducing a data table based statistical construction it compared the types of wars of the Cold War with the ones of the post-1991 period. The results reached by the paper were mixed. It was revealed that under some parameters the wars of the Middle East has underwent change while under the others there was not observed any particular change.

As the findings implied, it was observed that concerning the actors involved in the new wars of the Middle East there seems to be a diminishment in the number of interstate wars and an increase in the degree of intrastate wars, findings that are in line with the stipulations of the New Wars Theory, and thus indicating that when compared to the type of wars and the actors taking in place in the Cold War it was possible to measure a change in the nature of the post-Cold War Middle Eastern wars.

Secondly, it was observed that ideology seems still to have a large impact on the reason of wars in which political purposes also constitute an important cause. The presence of ideology as a significant element in the purpose of wars indicate that such a trend did not change in the post-Cold War period as it was also the case in the Cold War era. Though, concerning economic purposes the paper found out that there was a change, since fighting parties did not possess an explicit economic reason for the wars of the post-1991 period while they were explicit in the Cold War period. It was also revealed that territory is still a significant driver for wars in the post-Cold War Middle East, displaying that this pattern has not changed as the world entered a new international systemic order.

Thirdly, when the patterns of prosecution of wars were elaborated it was observed that similar to the predictions of the New Wars Theorists, asymmetric conflicts did increase during this period in which (%80) of the wars were asymmetric in essence while only one conflict was symmetric. This displays a change in the nature of the wars in the post-Cold War since even though asymmetric conflicts still took place in the Cold War there were also a large number of symmetric ones.

Lastly, concerning the magnitude of wars the results obtained were mixed. The paper displayed that while the duration of the conflicts did seem to increase in the post-1991 period when compared to the previous era, its spatiality has also witnessed an alteration where the conflicts of the Cold War did seem to have a large regional impact though the armed clashes of the post-Cold War were mainly local in its scope. The last finding, concerning casualty rates displayed that this parameter does not provide a satisfactory measurement indicator since it did not have an impact in assessing change in the wars, since both the wars in the Cold War and post-Cold War has a balanced distribution of low, medium, and high casualty rates.

IV. The Case of China¹⁸

This section discusses China's response to the changes it has witnessed within the Middle Eastern war-making. This type of scrutiny requires an analysis of Chinese responses to every conflict in the Middle East from both the Cold War and the post-Cold War so to assess or observe any patterns with respect to the changing warring conditions. Such data elaboration is still in progress however, and the complexity of the Middle Eastern wars demands close examination and assessment of the types of Chinese response. Therefore, it is intended to work through a similar data set presented below in the Middle Eastern wars appendix with an additional assessment considering China's reactions to the list of Middle Eastern wars. China's reactions are intended to be categorized under certain standpoints such as military support, nonmilitary support, direct intervention, indirect intervention and others with regards to the typology of the armed conflicts.

These findings are general observations that have been detected whilst working on the study, yet they interestingly stipulate that Chinese responses towards war-making in the Middle East were not in reaction to the changing patterns of armed conflicts in transformation from symmetric to asymmetric but rather its impact to the overall region and the general international system that China aspired to take active part in.¹⁹

In the Cold War years, it was witnessed that China was not aloof from the events of the Middle East, especially wars and other strategic interactions, however, for various

¹⁸ This section is still in development.

¹⁹ For a similar interpretation see: Andrew Scobel & Alireza Nader *China in the Middle East: The Wary Dragon* (RAND Corporation 2016).

rationales, was not an active interventionist player such like the other great powers Soviet Union, Britain and France, or the United States, on the contrary, China aspired the Middle East to be a non-interference zone, without any direct intervention of the great powers thereby aspiring to counter not only the United States' containment of communism strategy but also supported regional countries, especially anti-imperialist and socialist states such as Syria and Egypt that sought greater room of maneuver in the region without any external involvement.²⁰ This Chinese approach was evident within the state vs. state wars of the Middle East, such that China through diplomatic and non-diplomatic channels "expressed support" in a solely ideational way and no hard of soft type intervention, or military reaction was examined.²¹

In the post-Cold War period, Chinese sensitivity towards the stability of the Middle Eastern region and its environs had increased in conjunction to its economic, military, and political dealings. China have not only become an active player in the Middle Eastern economic markets but also shown concern for destabilizing issues that might damage its energy as well as commercial security. Hence, with regards to such Chinese value attribution to certain significancies concerning the region, Chinese activeness incrementally increased demanding further involvement. As the Middle Eastern wars and conflicts become more protracted with more destabilizing nonstate actors and constant state failures, China's involvement on conflict de-escalation, conflict termination, or peacekeeping activities may be witnessed together with troop presence or military and political advisory missions.

²⁰ On China's counter to US and Soviet intereference to the Middle East see: John F. Cooper "Chinese Objectives in the Middle East" *China Report* (January / February 1969): 8-13.

²¹ Yitzhak Shichor *The Middle East in China's Foreign Policy 1949-1977* (Cambride: Cambridge University Press: 1979) :50-51.

Appendix

Cold War Conflicts of the Middle East Data Table (1945-1991)				
Iranian Crisis of 1946 ²²	State (?) vs. State	Political, Ideological	Irregular vs. Regular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Regional 1 Year Low Casualties (?)
Civil War in Palestine (1947-1948) ²³	Political Group (Community) vs. Political Group (Community)	Political, Ideological, Economic	Irregular vs. Irregular Troops Asymmetric & Symmetric Warfare	Local 1 Year Low Casualties
Arab-Israeli War of 1948 ²⁴	State vs. State	Political, Ideological, Territorial	Regular vs. Regular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Regional 1 Year Low-Medium Casualties
Jebel Akhdar War (1954-1959) ²⁵	State vs. Non-State(?)	Political, Economic	Regular Troops vs. Irregular & Regular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Local 5 Years Casualties (?)
Algerian War (1954-1962) ²⁶	Nonstate vs. State	Political (Independence)	Regular Troops vs. Irregular & Regular Troops Asymmetric	Local 7 Years Massive Casualties

²² Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*. 174-184.

²³ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 210-215.

²⁴ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 234.

²⁵ Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*. 681-684.

²⁶ Alistair Horne. *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962*. (New York: NYRB Classics, 2006).

			Warfare	
Suez War (1956)²⁷	State vs. State	Political, Economic, Territorial	Regular Troops vs. Regular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Regional 1 Year Medium Casualties
Intercommunal Violence in Cyprus (1955-1967)²⁸	State & Non-state vs. Non-State	Political, Economic, Territorial	Irregular Troops vs. Irregular Troops Asymmetric Warfare	Local 10 Years Low Casualties
1958 Lebanon Crisis²⁹	State vs. Non-State (Domestic Political Group)	Political, Ideological	Regular troops vs. Irregular Troops Asymmetric Warfare	Local 1 Year Low Casualties (?)
1958-1959 Iraq Crisis³⁰	State vs. Non-State in 1958 & State & Tribes vs. Non-State & Tribes in 1959 (?)	Political, Ideological	Irregular vs. Irregular Troops & Regular vs. Irregular Troops Symmetric Warfare (?)	Local 1 Year Low Casualties (?)

²⁷ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 297.

²⁸ William Mallinson, *Cyprus a Modern History*. (London: I.B.Tauris. 2005). 125-134.

²⁹ Douglas Little, "His Finest Hour? Eisenhower, Lebanon, and the 1958 Middle East Crisis", *Diplomatic History* 20 (1996): 27-54

³⁰ Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, Westview Press: 2003) 151-159.

North Yemen Civil War (1962-1970)³¹	Initially State vs. Non-State; then Non-State & State vs. State & State	Political, Ideological	Irregular vs. Irregular Troops & Regular vs. Irregular Troops Symmetric & Asymmetric Warfare	Regional 8 Years Medium Casualties
Dhofar Rebellion (1962-1976)³²	State vs. Non-State (Domestic Political Groups)	Political, Ideological	Regular & Irregular Troops vs. Irregular Troops Asymmetric Warfare	Regional 15 Years Low Casualties(?)
1963-1967 Aden Crisis³³	State vs. Non-State	Political (Independence), Ideological	Regular Troops vs. Irregular Troops Asymmetric Warfare	Regional 4 Years Low Casualties
Six Day War (1967)³⁴	State vs. State	Political, Territorial	Regular vs. Regular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Regional 1 Year High Casualties
War of Attrition (1969-1970)³⁵	State & Non-State vs. State	Political	Regular & Irregular Troops vs. Regular Troops Symmetric & Asymmetric Warfare	Regional 1 Year High Casualties

³¹ Kenneth M. Pollack. *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948–1991*. Studies in war, society, and the military. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002) 698.

³² Lenczowski, *The Middle East in World Affairs*. 684-685.

³³ Peter Hinchcliffe & John Ducker. *Without Glory in Arabia: The British Retreat from Aden* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006). 108.

³⁴ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 362.

³⁵ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 376.

Black September (1970-1971)³⁶	State vs. Non-State & State	Political, Ideological	Regular Troops vs. Irregular & Regular Troops Asymmetric & Symmetric Warfare	Local 1 Year Low Casualties
Yom Kippur War (1973)³⁷	State vs. State	Political, Economic, Territorial	Regular Troops vs. Regular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Regional 1 Year High Casualties
Turkish Operation to Cyprus (1974)³⁸	State & Non-State vs. State & Non-State	Political, Territorial	Regular Troops vs. Irregular & Regular Troops Asymmetric & Symmetric Warfare	Local 1 Year Low-Medium Casualties
Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990)³⁹	Non-State vs. Non-State & Non-State vs. State	Political & Ideological	Irregular vs. Irregular Troops & Irregular vs. Regular Troops Asymmetric Warfare	Local 15 Years High Casualties
Syria Crisis (1979-1982)⁴⁰	State vs. Non-State (Domestic Political Group)	Political, Ideological	Irregular vs. Regular Troops Asymmetric Warfare	Local 3 Years Medium Casualties
1979-1980 Iran Crisis⁴¹	State vs. Non-State	Political, Ideological	Irregular vs. Regular Troops Asymmetric Warfare	Local 2 Years Medium Casualties

³⁶ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 378.

³⁷ Morris, *Righteous Victims*, 431-432.

³⁸ Mallinson, *Cyprus a Modern History*, 138.

³⁹ Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A Modern History of Lebanon* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 290.

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⁴¹ Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between the Two Revolutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 529.

Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988)⁴²	State vs. State	Political, Ideological, Geopolitical, Territorial	Regular & Irregular vs. Regular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Regional 8 Years High Casualties
Turkey-PKK Conflict (1984-)⁴³	State vs. Non-State	Political, Ideological, Territorial	Regular vs. Irregular Troops Asymmetric Conflict	Regional Ongoing High Casualties
South Yemen Civil War (1986)⁴⁴	Non-State (State Political Faction) vs. Non-State (State Political Faction)	Political, Ideological	Irregular vs. Irregular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Local 1 Year Medium Casualties
Gulf War (1990-1991)⁴⁵	State vs. State	Political	Regular vs. Regular Troops Symmetric Warfare	Regional 1 Year High Casualties
1991 Iraqi Crisis⁴⁶	State vs. Non-State	Political, Ideological	Regular vs. Irregular Troops Asymmetric Warfare	Local 1 Year High Casualties

⁴² Charles Tripp. *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴³ Aliza Marcus. *Blood & Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: New York University Press).

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⁴⁵ Alastair Finlan. *The Gulf War 1991*. (London: Osprey Publishing, 2003).

⁴⁶ Eric Goldstein, Andrew Whitley, *Endless Torment: The 1991 Uprising in Iraq and its Aftermath*. (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992).

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