

Klaudia Wizimirska

New International Order - Analysis of Trends and Alternatives of Future Visions in International Conflicts

Summary. Currently, when the world is no longer divided into two political-military blocks, local conflicts have ceased to be a surrogate training ground of rivalry between two superpowers. In most cases, they do not therefore constitute a direct threat to the world peace. Although, after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, local conflicts have lost their strategic dimension, we still have to deal with increasing number of new trends among the conflicts in the world. They cause political instability in various regions and bring substantial suffering to the people, and death, famine and epidemics. Their development brings new challenges, and thus the new visions of the future of the world around us.

Keywords: international conflicts, armed conflicts, international relations, cultural studies.

Klaudia Wizimirska, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wrocław, email: k.wizimirska@gmail.com.

Introduction

The last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century brought new kinds of armed conflicts – new in terms of the scale of the phenomenon. In classic terms war can be understood as the use of military force in the international arena against the territorial integrity and political independence

of another state or states.¹ As more and more research shows, the vast majority of today's wars are conflicts whose essence is not a duel between the participants of international relations. Therefore, we can talk about the disappearance of the concept of war in its classic sense.

It is worth noting that modern wars and armed conflicts do not have a uniform origin, or a precisely specified purpose or location. An important fact is the phenomenon that, beyond a war zone, they also affect (to a lesser or greater extent) the entire international community. This is due to the deepening economic ties, greater access to new military technologies and increasing migration. What's more, the media make information about conflicts or wars take on the characteristics of immediacy and globalism.²

Sources of Conflict

The source of many tensions in the world today should be identified as the rivalry between the new powers that are able to impose authority on other countries or to take action aimed at such solutions. Many conflicts have an historical background. The borders set in Africa in the nineteenth century do not coincide with tribal or family territories and this often resulted in transforming an internal conflict into an international one. The course of the conflicts is also strongly influenced by the presence of resources or water in the disputed areas. When it seems that the ethnic conflict has been suppressed, and it turns out, however, that in the area of interest there are rich deposits of raw materials, the conflict erupts again with a vengeance.³ The structural factor is also not without significance. Especially bearing in mind the structure of the state. The erosion of state sovereignty is defined in the literature as when the resources that a state power can bring to bear turn out to be very weak. Elites are limited, the infrastructure is at a low level and the administration is ill-prepared to perform their functions. In addition, there tends to be a lack of political culture, or the presence of significant cultural and civilization differences, etc. The idea of the functioning of a democratic state is in practice quite limited, which in turn causes the limited alternation of power. Therefore, the change of power is brought about by means of violent activities, thus violence becomes a natural means of doing politics.⁴

¹ R. Łoś, J. Regina-Zacharski, *Współczesne konflikty zbrojne*, Warszawa 2010, p. 9.

² Ibidem.

³ J. Regina-Zacharski, *Wojna w świecie współczesnym. Uczestnicy. Cele. Modele. Teorie*, Łódź, 2014, p. 241.

⁴ R. Łoś, J. Regina-Zacharski, *Współczesne konflikty zbrojne*, PWN, Warsaw 2010, pp. 10–12.

When considering modern conflicts, one cannot forget about asymmetric dangers, in which the main role is played by non-state entities. To highlight the problem and the essence of these conflicts, it is worth quoting Krystian Piatkowski, who through *asymmetric conflict* understands armed conflict as „when the state and its armed forces are confronted with an opponent whose objectives, organization, measures to combat and methods of action are not within the conventional concept of war”. Asymmetric war does not recognise concepts such as a battlefield or a front, as it happens in isolation without observing certain geographical continuity and time.⁵

A relatively new factor that we can take into account is the analysis of applied cultural studies, the field dealing with diversity in models of human behaviour or society. The human motivations, efforts and aspirations of specific people, and groups of people, are some of the main factors causing conflict between communities with different views and different interests. The nature of the world, society of a given culture, or even one person, affects the points of view, principles, motives and aspirations. Due to the large diversity of cultures, traditions and beliefs of contemporary society throughout the world, confrontation on the ground – not only religious, ethnic, but also economic and political – seems to be inevitable. Applied cultural studies is concerned with the position of human in the context of social interactions that occur nowadays.⁶ At the head of each country is a person, and with them a group of people – the government, consultants, specialists, on whom the fate of the society and the state depends. It should be noted that their decisions stem from traditions and culture from which they originate, on the goal which was determined on the basis of specifically formulated needs, on possible development, and on the desire to strive to achieve maximum profits or more territory. Therefore, when considering the sources of the conflicts in the modern world, one should not reject the theory of culture and cultural reality, which has a huge impact on the dialogue.

New Quality of Armed Conflict at the Turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries - the Clash of Civilizations

The analyses and assessments of the state of international relations at the threshold of the new century quite often point to the numerous threats to the security, sovereignty and stability of countries. Especially important became the risk result-

⁵ K. Piątkowski, *Wojna nowego typu?*, „Polska w Europie” 2002, vol. 1, pp. 23–24.

⁶ P. Rotengruber, *Man in a World of Values. What is Applied Cultural Studies?*, „Journal of Applied Cultural Studies” 2015, vol. 1.

ing from the effects of „countries in decay” and escalations of quite aggressive nationalism, ethnic tensions and fights. One cannot forget the brutal violation of the rights of national minorities.⁷ All this in the opinion of S. Huntington contributed to a paradigm shift to a form of anarchy in the world. And what characterizes this world is: „the collapse of the authority of the government, disintegration of states, the intensification of tribal and religious conflicts, formation of the international mafias, a growing number of refugees, reaching tens of millions, the spread of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction, the spread of terrorism, massacres and ethnic purges.”⁸

The existing concepts concerning the assessments of international relations required not only verification, but also adapting to the conditions of the new situation. However, it turned out that determining the degree of threat and its causes is an extremely difficult procedure. Furthermore, identification of the conflicting parties also caused many difficulties, especially as the dividing lines are blurred, and the motivations of opponents are difficult to read and ambivalent. There are therefore doubts about the fundamental principles of international law, i.e.: sovereignty, self-determination, territorial integrity, non-intervention in the internal affairs of a state, or the ban on the use of force. Unfortunately, it should be noted that the institutions created in the past for the needs of the international community have been unsuccessful. It has become apparent that the maintenance of international security also requires, and perhaps above all, the protection of entire communities and individuals against internal violence.⁹

In many cases, they lacked not only the desire but also the mental preparation to meet the demands of a more anthropocentric security policy in the world. Som times they also maintained the fictitious assumption that the eruption of conflict and the great cruelties associated with them are inevitable.¹⁰ This has contributed simultaneously to the creation of alibis and excuses for inaction to prevent conflicts, while at the same time encouraging the initiators and participants of the armed conflicts further and giving them a sense of impunity.¹¹

The possibility of the outbreak of a conflict in places and regions with intensive and constant political and military *turbulence*, the weakness of some governments,

⁷ W. Malendowski, *Zbrojne konflikty i spory międzynarodowe u progu XXI wieku. Analiza problemów i studia przypadków*, Wrocław 2003, p. 17.

⁸ S. P. Huntington, *The Clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*, New York 2003, p. 208.

⁹ W. Malendowski, *Zbrojne konflikty i spory międzynarodowe u progu XXI wieku. Analiza problemów i studia przypadków*, Wrocław 2003, p. 17.

¹⁰ R. Smith, *The utility of force. The art of War in the Modern World*, London 2006, p. 124.

¹¹ S. Serfaty, *Nieuchwytny pokój*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 1993, no. 3, p. 33.

the emergence of new great powers, the gathering of high-tech weapons in conflict regions, intensifying migrations, asymmetric conflicts, ethnic-religious disputes – all these factors give rise to claims about the need to maintain military forces, controlled by nation-states cooperating with international security structures.¹² Conflict has intensified, caused by the disintegration of multinational states, and which was accompanied by the eruption of nationalism, chauvinism and xenophobia. Often, nationalism reflects economic problems and the desire for independence. In different regions of the modern world, the phenomenon of awakening national consciousness or a specific collective consciousness has evolved or even intensified. This in turn has led to a resurgence of efforts to demarcate and emphasize the borders of the territorial settlements of homogeneous communities. An example of this would be the Catalans, who are demanding special treatment as they consider that the best solution would be to obtain a status comparable to Canadian Quebec and the transformation of Spain into a multinational state. The effects of extremely rapidly escalating separatist tendencies are being experienced by the UK in Wales and Scotland, but especially in Northern Ireland.¹³

In terms of the individual or the collective consciousness mentioned above, it would be fruitful to deepen the methods of research on the factors triggering specific human behaviour – i.e. in applied cultural studies. Motives and decisions are only apparently under the control of the individual. Often they arise from the nature of cultural reality, and today this is subject to examination within applied cultural studies. Culture is a conglomeration of fixed patterns in the tradition and customs of a given community. An attempt to replace this diversity with a uniform picture of the whole is doomed to failure. And thus, any diversity or difference, especially considering the political interest will cause conflicts (of different kinds).¹⁴ In the framework of cultural studies it is no longer about the old controversy regarding the role of ideal and real factors. In this way, political and economic phenomena cease to have an extra-cultural character and do not determine the social structure from the outside. References to the humanistic tradition in economics, which is almost the science of human action, correspond to these phenomena very visibly. Culture consists of certain patterns of behaviour, norms, values, beliefs shared by a specific group. Without these elements, the word „culture” could be replaced by any other. You can talk about the community, group, people etc., who have something to devote themselves to. Culture, therefore, connects people and – a vast field for discussion opens up

¹² E. Budge, K. Newton, *Polityka nowej Europy. Od Atlantyku do Uralu*, Warszawa 1999, p. 475.

¹³ P. Kennedy, *U progu XXI wieku (przymiarka do przeszłości)*, Warszawa 1994, p. 147.

¹⁴ A. Mencwel, *Wyobrażenia antropologiczne. Próby i studia*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 12–13.

here – distinguishes them from other people. Given that nothing is eternal and unchanging, this circle of culture may be getting wider and, for example, the effect of differentiation resulting from the existence of national cultures, can sometimes be less important than the effect of assimilation with a common European culture and identity. But the concept of European culture implies the existence of non-European cultures, meaning that the mechanism of differentiation is still running. Cultural studies therefore determines the radius of these circles, acknowledges the inevitability of diversity and possibilities of communication between cultures, but is aware, however, that people of actually different cultures fail to fully agree on issues; and if an agreement is possible, it means, that they belong to a common culture – that the mechanism of assimilation dominated the mechanism of differentiation.¹⁵

In the 1990s there was a big qualitative change in terms of conflicts and wars. Generally, one can find that the number of started, completed and ongoing wars has increased. The data for 1995 shows that in the mid 1990s war was taking place in 32 countries, and with some countries such as Iraq, Colombia and the Philippines it was present in several provinces. To this should be added 15 further conflicts of an internal nature that have been partially internationalized and were close to warfare. Since 1945, the largest cumulative wars occurred in 1992, when there were as many as 52. Gradually, however, they were limited.¹⁶

Is this the new quality of today's conflicts? If so, what steps to take, what to create and what tools to use to prevent them?

Alternative Visions of the Future

International relations are currently the realm of „self-help“, in which states are struggling primarily with the dilemma of security, and strength plays a significant role. Although there are various limiting tools, such as the balance of forces or international standards, law and organizations, they do not prevent all wars.¹⁷

The twentieth century accelerated, but also deepened the process of transforming wars and conflicts into the sphere of legal regulations. It is true that in the 19th century, war was addressed by international agreements, both general and bilateral,

¹⁵ L. E. Harrisona, S. P. Huntingtona, *Kultura ma znaczenie. Jak wartości wpływają na rozwój społeczeństw*, Poznań 2003.

¹⁶ E. Cziomer, L. W. Zyblikiewicz, *Zarys współczesnych stosunków międzynarodowych*, Warszawa-Kraków 2001, pp. 216–217.

¹⁷ J. S. Nye jr., *Konflikty międzynarodowe, Wprowadzenie do teorii i historii*, Warszawa 2009, p. 359.

but they were only concerned with *ius in bello*. Issues related to *ius ad bellum* were considered to be the prerogative of sovereign states, which were reluctant to accept suggestions to abandon this „privilege“. It seems that as long as war was seen as a permanent and natural part of the relationship between nations and states, a deeper reflection on the need to define it would not appear. The debate about what is a just and unjust war is a long lasting and on-going. War remained a matter of concern primarily for military theorists, like Clausewitz. However, their discussions addressed the question of how to conduct war and win it, not how to avoid it.¹⁸

With enormous conflicts of such intensity in various regions of the world, special attention is focused on specific interference, which consists of two overlapping waves. On one hand, the erosion of sovereign states plagued by disputes and conflicts, destabilization or armed struggle is being deepened. On the other hand, a characteristic feature of contemporary international relations is the desire of the international community to strengthen peace and international security. The symptoms of this clear trend included numerous international treaties, which concerned disarmament and arms control. More and more international organizations, institutions and bodies, as well as cooperation programs were created at the same time. A system of more efficient mechanisms of confidence-building measures, security and disarmament was also constructed. In addition to legal international solutions, striving to improve the climate of international relations was also of great importance. This was expressed primarily in the efforts of states to develop rules and policies that foster global security.¹⁹

Mechanisms for early warning and preventive measures, such as prevention and liquidation of disputes and conflicts, are used in situations that can transform into a crisis, including armed conflict. Hence the growing importance of instruments for monitoring and resolving international and internal conflicts. These include, among other things, preventive diplomacy, the creation of peace, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, disarmament, sanctions and peace enforcement. Preventive diplomacy, in simple terms, means any action to prevent the emergence of disputes and conflicts from developing, and limiting their extent once they occur. Making peace is defined as an activity that leads to an agreement between the warring parties with the use of peaceful means provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. Maintaining peace involves deploying UN forces (i.e. military, police and civilian personnel) in the field. This is the kind of technique that expands the possibilities for both the preven-

¹⁸ R. Łoś, J. Regina-Zacharski, *Współczesne konflikty zbrojne*, Warszawa 2010, p. 101.

¹⁹ W. Malendowski, *Zbrojne konflikty i spory międzynarodowe u progu XXI wieku. Analiza problemów i studia przypadków*, Wrocław 2003, p. 27.

tion of conflicts and establishing peace. The application of the above instruments of control and conflict resolution requires the agreement of the parties of the conflict. In contrast, sanctions and peace enforcement are coercive measures that do not require any consent to be obtained.²⁰

With the gradual end of the Cold War, a lot was said about the prospects for a „new international order“. As time has shown, not many people were aware of the importance this term would take. After the Cold War, a new international order was established, but in the sense that the bipolar order, formed after the Second World War, collapsed and ceased to exist. However, this was an order within an anarchic system of states, which is not necessarily a just order. For many, the new order had meant the beginning of something new – new and good, or even better. It had meant a kind of escape from the problems that accompanied anarchic state systems. One should ask the question, however, whether such a world is possible at all? One British historian wrote at the beginning of the Cold War, that the nation-state and the split atom cannot coexist on the same plane. According to him, in a world where there are sovereign states, in which the final form of defence is war, and the ultimate weapon the nuclear bomb, one thing must disappear and it would be best if that were the state.²¹

Nation states did not always exist; therefore, they do not have to exist in the future. Separate units and state structures have existed since ancient times, but larger nation-states functioning as essential participants in international relations developed only after the Renaissance. The Thirty Years War was, in some respects, still closer to the conflicts of the feudal period. Therefore, it is considered to be both the last conflict of the feudal era and the first war of territorial nation-states. The large nation-states that we know today have been participants in international relations for only a maximum of four centuries. Many futurists predict the twilight of such state organisms. They often foresee an international order which includes structures that would enable the problems of anarchy to be overcome. And so, since the Second World War, there have been five main ideas for alternative models of international relations that go beyond the creation of nation-states.²²

Global federalism - a trend in European political thought that has one of the longest traditions. Federalism hopes to solve the problem of anarchy through the creation of an international federation, through which the state would agree to give up

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ J. S. Nye jr., *Konflikty międzynarodowe, Wprowadzenie do teorii i historii*, Warszawa 2009, p. 358.

²² Ibidem, p. 359.

the maintenance of its specific national military capabilities and at the same time would accept a certain degree of authority from a universal world government.

Functionalism - born in response to the emerging weakness of federalism. It was particularly popular in the 1940s. It suggested that cooperation in social and economic spheres can lead to the development of communities that exceed state borders, which would eradicate wars and armed conflicts. In this case, sovereignty would be less important. At the end of the Second World War functionalistic thinking contributed greatly to the creation of some of the specialized agencies of the UN system, i.e. the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Regionalism – also known as the concept of regional integration, which gained popularity in the 1950s and 1960s. The chairman of the French planning commission claimed that a functional approach at the regional level should firmly bind Germany and France together, and thus prevent a renewal of the tensions that led to two world wars. In 1950, after the announcement of the Schuman Plan, the regional integration processes in Europe – the first manifestation of which was the integration of Western mining and metallurgy in the form of the European Coal and Steel Community – were initiated. Then, under the Treaty of Rome, the European Economic Community was established, which provided a progressive reduction of trade barriers and the harmonization of economic and agricultural policies, and which culminated with the creation of the European Union in 1992. Other regions of the world have also attempted to emulate European regionalism, an example of which is the free trade zone in the Western Hemisphere under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Environmentalism - this gave new hope for a different world order in the 1970s. It points to two issues as the basis for a new international order: the increasing importance of transnational and territorial actors and growing interdependence in conditions of scarcity of resources. Anti-colonialism, anti-racism, the pursuit of greater equality and concern for the preservation of the natural environment would lead not only to the consolidation of the majority in the UN, but also to the creation of new regimes for managing dwindling resources. The result would be education concerning international standards requiring peace, justice and ecological balance, and thus a new world order.

Cyber feudalism – some researchers argue that the information revolution flattens established hierarchy and replaces it with components of network organizations. They argue that the centralized bureaucratic systems of the twentieth century have turned into the decentralized institutions of the twenty-first century, and

the functions of government have responsibility over markets, as well as private non-profit organizations. In addition, it is believed that the decentralized organizations and virtual communities present on the Internet will penetrate territorial jurisdictions and governments will begin to create their own patterns of governance.²³

Of course, despite the presented models of the future world order, nation-states have not yet become obsolete. Those who think that way very often use simple analogies. It is claimed that the modern nation-states can be invaded both by using rockets and electronic messages that instantly transcend national borders. Just as gunpowder and infantry effectively seized medieval castles, the nuclear missiles and the ubiquitous Internet have made the nation state something obsolete.

Literature

- Budge E., Newton K., *Polityka nowej Europy. Od Atlantyku do Uralu*, Warszawa 1999.
- Cziomer E., Zyblikiewicz L. W., *Zarys współczesnych stosunków międzynarodowych*, Warszawa-Kraków 2001.
- Huntington S. P., *The Clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*, New York 2003.
- Harrison L. E., Huntingtona S.P., *Kultura ma znaczenie. Jak wartości wpływają na rozwój społeczeństw*, Poznań 2003.
- Kennedy P., *U progu XXI wieku (przymiarka do przeszłości)*, Warszawa 1994.
- Łoś R., Regina-Zacharski J., *Współczesne konflikty zbrojne*, Warszawa 2010.
- Malendowski W., *Zbrojne konflikty i spory międzynarodowe u progu XXI wieku. Analiza problemów i studia przypadków*, Wrocław 2003.
- A. Mencwel, *Wyobraźnia antropologiczna. Próby i studia*, Warszawa 2006
- Nye J.S. jr., *Konflikty międzynarodowe, Wprowadzenie do teorii i historii*, Warszawa 2009.
- Piątkowski K., *Wojna nowego typu?*, „Polska w Europie” 2002, no. 1.
- Regina-Zacharski J., *Wojna w świecie współczesnym. Uczestnicy. Cele. Modele. Teorie*, Łódź 2014.
- Rotengruber P., *Man In a World of Values. What is Applied Cultural Studies?*, „Journal of Applied Cultural Studies” 2015, vol. 1.
- Serfaty S., *Nieuchwytny pokój*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe” 1993, no. 3.
- Smith R., *The utility of force. The art of War in the Modern World*, London 2006.

²³ Ibidem, pp. 360–363.