

Title: The Impact of Wars on World Politics, 1775–2023

Subtitle: Hope and Despair

Foreword

History is littered with wars, and human suffering. The reasons of wars, as well as the extreme emotions they generates, are complex. Terror is intertwined with admiration, and fascination, all of which seems so contradictory and irrational. But it is the historical reality that cannot be denied. The history of humankind cannot be studied without learning about wars in depth, about how societies shaped wars and wars shaped societies. Wars have caused terrible loss of life and devastation, as well as contributed to great advances in technology and medicine, thus also improving the wellbeing of people.

It helps to imagine what would have happened if previous major wars had produced different results. How would they have affected the way we live today? Elation of victory, as well as humiliation of defeat, are fundamental emotional consequences of all wars. They need to be studied and reflected on to learn about human development.

For better or worse, competition and conflict have been part of the behavior of all living creatures throughout history. But it was not until the nineteenth century that Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer helped us to understand nature's ground rules with their groundbreaking works. Darwin introduced the concept of "natural selection" in his theory of evolution. Spencer coined the term "survival of the fittest" [The Complicated Legacy of Herbert Spencer, the Man Who Coined 'Survival of the Fittest,' Smithsonian Magazine, April 29, 2020]. Both insights have been misunderstood and abused to justify war, even though they support the opposite, namely global cooperation, if only understood correctly.

To understand this complex field of study, insights into the psychology of war are necessary, for only then can the causes of wars be examined, and ways thought of to recover and rebuild. Ironically, even in times of peace, human beings cannot stop thinking about war, so they prepare for future conflicts and spend vast amounts of money on defense. This illustrates the extent of human obsession with war. With the march of technology, the methods of war have become increasingly deadly, and the consequences more destructive.

To argue that modern wars are fought with precision weapons that minimize death and destruction seems pointless. Mercifully, there has not been a global war comparable to the

two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century. But consider all wars in their totality since 1945, and we begin to comprehend the true picture. The great powers of today – the United States, Russia, China – have preferred not to go to the kind of war that would commit their armies to confront and destroy each other, and anything that comes in their way. Instead, their chosen method of modern warfare in the nuclear age is through proxies. And their motive is the same as before – to expand their realm of domination. Nuclear deterrence may have avoided annihilation so far. But the way has remained open for protracted regional wars, with the involvement of external powers, in almost every part of the globe, and this with terrible consequences.

Deepak Tripathi captures these realities brilliantly in *The Impact of Wars on World Politics*. He takes a long view of the topic since the American War of Independence, beginning with the clashes in Lexington and Concord in 1775 that turned into a full-scale revolutionary war against Britain a year after and culminated in the founding of the United States of America. With his interest in great power politics, which he documented in several seminal books examining wars, Tripathi is more than qualified to undertake this vital study, and he does so with his typical succinctness and clarity. This book should be read by all scholars and researchers, policymakers, and general readers.

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