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## The Incompatibility of COIN Warfare and Nation-Building in Iraq and Afghanistan

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### **Winning All the Battles and Losing the War: The Incompatibility of Counterinsurgency and Nation/Peace-Building in Iraq and Afghanistan**

In considering why great powers fail to vanquish much weaker foes in war, as has been the case in ongoing Western counter-insurgency (COIN) efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is crucial to recognize several variables, notably the changes in the nature of warfare that have occurred since the late twentieth century, the contexts in which these conflicts have taken place, and recent innovations in measuring power that have manifested themselves in contemporary International Relations (IR) theory. While realist theory predicts without controversy that the most powerful state or balancing coalition will prevail in a military conflict (Waltz, 1979; Mearsheimer, 2001), recent empirical evidence from American involvement in the War on Terror, as well as past experiences, notably that of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, belie this expectation.

With this in mind, this essay explores the question of why great powers lose wars against smaller and weaker adversaries as is currently occurring in Afghanistan, and as occurred when America was bloodied in the context of the war in Iraq. Beginning with an overview of the changing nature of warfare, specifically as it pertains to the rise of asymmetric conflict, guerilla warfare, and non-state military actors in the post-colonial period, the essay notes how the manner in which such groups are impervious to deterrence, and impossible to defeat through traditional force-on-force combat, has changed the ontology of war. Concomitantly discussing context, the essay notes how the majority of recent conflicts, in which a great power has been defeated by a smaller force, have occurred in either states without stable governments, or in the throes of an overarching great power rivalry in which another powerful state has provided aid to the weaker force. On this basis, the essay thus argues that fundamental incompatibilities between the most kinetic elements of American COIN doctrine and the nation-building mission inherent to these emergent forms of conflict lies at the root of these ongoing difficulties.

On this basis, the essay shifts to empirics by first engaging in a brief overview of the Soviet experience in Afghanistan during the 1980s. While it does not directly pertain to ongoing difficulties vis-à-vis American COIN doctrine, it nevertheless represents a baseline of failure against which ongoing American involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq can be compared. Moving forward to case studies of the incompatibility of COIN and nation-building in Afghanistan and Iraq, the essay moves forward by proposing that the reasons underlying great powers' defeats in wars against weaker states are caused by a nexus made up of the increasingly asymmetric nature of warfare propelled forward by non-state actors, of the geopolitical and domestic-level contexts in which these conflicts take place, and of our discipline's antiquated and unrealistic conceptions of power.

In the specific case of NATO's current floundering in Afghanistan, the use of tactics like night raids and drone strikes, albeit successful in their kinetic intent, are portrayed as detrimental to the type of civil society reconstruction necessary to winning a war in a society as ethnically and tribally complex as Afghanistan. Similarly, the Iraqi case demonstrates an American intervention which was dichotomized into military and civil components which were not effectively coordinated in any reasonable sense of the term. Because of this both interventions suffered significantly, and brought about high body counts, because of the specific disjuncture between their kinetic COIN components and

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their nation-building ones. In concluding, the essay thus notes that IR must shed its traditional obsession with parsimony and mono-causal explanation, and accept that the defeat of great powers in small wars must be explained via idiographic rather than nomothetic theories. In this regard, the case study emerges as a logical vehicle for such exploration, and for more broadly understanding and refining the process by which COIN and nation-building can be brought to exist in effective congruence.

## **The Changing Nature of War: Implications for IR Theory**

As context for this analysis, it is crucial to note that in the twentieth century, and specifically in the post-colonial period, intrastate wars have supplanted interstate wars as the dominant form of military conflict in the international system (Brown, 2001). With this, the dominant reality of contemporary military conflict has changed from large-scale force-on-force engagements, like those associated with the wars of attrition and maneuver respectively embodied in WWI and WWII as well as in Korea, to wars predicated on the combating of an insurgency, defined by Fearon & Laitin (2003: 79) as a “technology of military conflict characterized by small, lightly armed bands practicing guerilla warfare from rural base areas.” Moving forward, Kaldor (2006) refers to the new types of conflict being fought by great powers as “New Wars,” in which conflicts occur in areas having suffered a complete breakdown in the power of the state to maintain its sovereignty over its territory, and in which identity politics, specifically social cleavages based on identities, have emerged as the dominant causal forces underlying conflict. Thus the nature of war itself has changed and, with this, the strategies and tactics used by great powers have become inimical to success in defeating the new enemies that democracies face in places like Afghanistan.

Tangibly speaking, the changing nature of war has led to a context in which, when intervening in smaller and weaker nation states, great powers have had a historical tendency to fight traditional wars of attrition or maneuver, in contrast to weaker states’ adoptions of strategies of “direct defense” or guerrilla warfare. In this context, the great power will emerge victorious, from a military point of view, if it adapts its military strategy to the context it is in, and fights the guerrilla force on its own terms. In contrast, if it continues to adopt the strategies and tactics associated with a war of attrition or maneuver, the enemy will dramatically win the conflict as, in the words of Henry Kissinger, “the guerrilla wins if he does not lose” (Arreguin-Toft, 2001). With this, then, there is a clear indication that the strategies and tactics used by great powers in fighting conflicts against weaker entities or states are incongruent with success. Providing tangible empirical support for this assertion, Lyall & Wilson (2009)’s meta-analysis of counterinsurgencies from the nineteenth century to the current day comes to the interesting conclusion that, until WWI, the superior firepower of great powers led them to win most such wars.

In contrast, in the post-WWI period, great powers have lost most such conflicts. The authors propose that the mechanization of warfare, specifically the use of tanks and armored personnel carriers, is responsible for this state of affairs for multiple reasons all centered on decreasing levels of contact with the population of the country in which the war is being fought (Lyall & Wilson, 2009). In a nutshell, because contemporary COIN infantry operations are based on either ground or airborne mechanization, infantrymen do not interact with the population, thus seeking to win proverbial hearts and minds, as frequently as they did in earlier wars. Because of this, the great power is incapable of building rapport with the locals, of gaining intelligence from them, and of using them to their advantage in defeating the opposing force (Lyall & Wilson, 2009).

With this, the tactics used by non-state actors in these asymmetric conflicts can often be difficult for Westerners to understand on the basis of their own traditions and cultural priors. For example, a recent high profile article by Pape (2003) makes the suggestion that suicide terrorism is not an inhumane aberration, but rather a rational response on the part of weaker parties to fighting against superior military forces, often belonging to liberal democracies that would otherwise force them to relinquish territory. With this, it is easy – within the confines of mainstream IR theory – to demonize combatants in the conflicts that great powers lose as being alien, uncivilized, and irrational entities. The fact of the matter, however, is that their rationality is simply informed by different worldviews than our own (Pape, 2003).

In sum then, the changing nature of war has led to a dramatic shift in the effectiveness of various war-fighting tactics and strategies. With this, the reasoning underlying great powers’ defeats in conflicts against less powerful foes, like

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the one occurring in Afghanistan, is that their use of strategy and tactics has not evolved to take into consideration this changing nature of warfare and, consequently, of the enemy being fought. With this, not only do practitioners of foreign policy and war-fighters need to adjust their approaches to conflict, but theorists of IR also need to revisit their conceptions of power, as existing metrics do not provide an adequate empirical portrait of great powers' abilities to prevail in the military conflicts that they predominantly face today.

## The Nature of COIN Warfare

With this changing nature of warfare in mind, COIN doctrines have emerged, in the Vietnam War period and afterward, to enhance military effectiveness in the contexts of these new conflicts. In the United States Army's Counterinsurgency manual, written by Petraeus (2006), the emergent doctrine emphatically stresses the importance of protecting civilians from insurgents, building rapport with local leaders, and creating conditions germane to the endogenous development of responsible governance structures and civil society. Thus, according to Kaplan (2014), COIN embodied an attempt to change the American military's baseline culture, and facilitate its participation in the new bevy of operational types brought about in the wake of the Vietnam War. Given that latter's failure, as it pertained to American strategic victory, Kaplan (2014) thus argues that the development of COIN doctrine represented a longitudinal adaptation to the changes which America would face in a period of declining inter-state war.

With this, COIN is heavily focused on a population-centric approach to war which conceptualizes these types of conflicts as involving multiple stakeholders, with the target country's population representing the most important of these. Indeed, the Department of the Army's "Stability Operations" manual written by Caldwell (2008) notes that soft power must be a focus of COIN operations at both the strategic and tactical levels. With this, it is clear that an integral element of COIN warfare, in a context where such a heavy focus is placed on winning hearts and minds, also exists in terms of broadening America's military posture to include components germane to minimizing the kinetic components of its operations. Writ large, COIN doctrine as conceptualized in the contemporary American military thus represents a middle ground between civil and military operations, of which the express purpose is to use force only inasmuch as it is necessary to build a structure germane to the stabilization and potential later reconstruction of a given conflict zone (Greene-Sands & Greene-Sands, 2014).

## Prelude: The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan

Moving forward to empirics, the Soviet experience in Afghanistan is instructive in understanding the floundering which the NATO coalition is currently experiencing in Afghanistan. While their initial conquest of Afghanistan was relatively bloodless, the Soviet force soon became bogged down in fighting an insurgency that, while initially short on military capabilities, seemed endless in terms of the number of *Mujahedeen* willing to lay their lives down to defend Afghanistan (Edelstein, 2008). While the Afghan resistance fighters soon began to receive relatively large covert arms shipments from the American government, as the latter turned Afghanistan into another Cold War proxy conflict, the *Mujahedeen* never gathered enough strength in military terms to allow for them to do any more than give the Soviets a proverbial black eye (Edelstein, 2008).

The difficulty encountered by the Soviets then, in their occupation of Afghanistan, was not related to the intensity of the conflict itself, despite the losses of armored vehicles and helicopter gunships that they sustained subsequent to the introduction of American heavy weapons into the hands of the *Mujahedeen*. Rather, Edelstein (2008) attributes the Soviet defeat to the difficulties inherent to the occupation of any country in the modern area. Tangibly speaking, he proposes that the rise of nationalism that has occurred in the twentieth century, when combined with the fact that occupied countries like Afghanistan more often than not contain very little material wealth, leads to two consequences. In the war zone itself, resistance groups buoyed on by the ideational power of nationalism are willing to lose significant numbers of their own forces so as to preserve the existence of their nation. Simultaneously, because there is no material "treasure" to be gained from the occupation of failed states and most authoritarian regimes, the domestic population of the intervening and occupying state quickly loses patience and resolve with regards to the losses being taken by its country's forces, because of the perception that no gains are to be accrued from continued commitments to such contexts (Edelstein, 2008).

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When these processes occur concurrently, as they did in Afghanistan, the occupying force is likely to be repelled, as the Soviets were, because of the sapping of the occupying government's resources, and of diminishing public will in the domestic sphere of the occupying country to continue fighting the conflict. Indeed, and given that the Soviets did not make use of any nation or peace-building components in the context of their invasion and occupation, their success was even further detracted from.

## **Lessons Learned? American Experiences in Iraq**

Beginning with America's recent experience in Iraq, Kaplan (2014) notes that, after an initially smooth path to Baghdad, conducted on the basis of armor and mobile infantry operations, the insurgency which eventually took hold in the country largely took American leaders by surprise. Indeed, the increasing body count of the war, which occurred in the context of American governorship of the country, notably through the mandate afforded to Bremer in the context of the Coalitional Provisional Government, dramatically affected American support for the war at home. As noted by Evans (2011), high-ranking members of the American military were torn with regards to how to proceed in reconstructing the country. With Kaplan (2014) noting that the American Administration had uprooted and destroyed much of the Hussein-era Iraqi governmental capacity through the dismantling of its military, Iraqi civil society and government were in shambles at the war's apex. As such, America created a dualistic civic and military imperative for itself in Iraq on the basis of its actions vis-à-vis the Hussein-era Iraqi state apparatus. During this time, Kaplan (2014) notes that American forces were seeking to both reconstruct the country through nation-building efforts, and hold off an insurgency which was growing bloodier on a day-to-day basis.

With this in mind, relief for America ultimately came in the wake of the surge commanded by David Petraeus in 2007. With Kaplan (2014) noting that it simultaneously involved the deployment of additional troops to the region, alongside an increased focus on kinetic operations concomitant to a decrease in civil reconstruction ones, the core of the surge was a purely militaristic application of COIN doctrine. In this context, and where Greene-Sands & Greene-Sands (2014) note that this kinetic pace increased even further under the later command of Stanley MacChrystal, it becomes clear that America's successes, as it pertained to defeating the insurgency and stabilizing the country, occurred when it diminished the degree to which it was involved in civil reconstruction and nation-building, and instead focused on the kinetic components of population-centric COIN doctrine.

With this, Evans (2011) notes that the implementation of Petraeus' (2006) version of COIN is what ultimately stabilized Iraq in the run-up to America's withdrawal. Thus, despite the grumbling from the officer corps, which Evans (2011) notes, as it pertained to traditional war-fighters being uncomfortable with this nascent and less-militarized approach – at least in comparison to the maneuver warfare which was expected and trained for during the Cold War – its implementation was ultimately successful in leveraging an exit strategy for America. This said, Greene Sands & Greene-Sands (2014) note that the surge, executed on the basis of Petraeus' version of COIN, saw a lesser degree of civil-military operations than had previously been the norm in the Iraqi theater. Indeed, while maintaining the military aspects of COIN as it pertains to population-centric and sensitive warfare, the authors note that American military forces lessened efforts pertaining to purely civil reconstruction and nation-building. Thus, the lessons of the Iraqi case lead to the compelling possibility that COIN can be most successful specifically when it is detached from the reconstruction-oriented peace and nation-building activities which occurred in the Bremer era. Indeed, these realities thus point to a potential case in which COIN is at its most effective when it is detached from nation-building, and wherein the latter is left in the hands of the home government of the state in which operations are occurring.

With this in mind, what becomes apparent from the Iraqi case as it pertains to the ultimate success of COIN in facilitating an American withdrawal is that the version of COIN implemented there was not a full and holistic one. Rather, in the surge and thereafter, Kaplan (2014) notes that, as the Iraqi government gained increasing powers, American forces began to engage in far more kinetic operations. From drone strikes to night raids, all conducted under the aegis of the Joint Special Operations Command, America shifted towards discrete and targeted kinetic operations oriented towards eliminating the insurgency's leadership. In so doing, it would appear that America increased the level of alienation present in some portions of the Iraqi population. At the same time, however, it also enhanced the efficiency by which it was capable of maintaining population-centric security. Thus, in reviewing America's performance in Iraq, it would very much appear that the success of its COIN operations increased as it

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decreased its participation in peace and nation-building activities. Ultimately, this thus provides initial support of a fundamental incompatibility between contemporary American COIN operations and the type of nation-building processes which the country has undertaken in terms of both the Afghan and Iraqi Wars which have been conducted under the broader aegis of the War on Terror.

## **The Current Day: NATO Floundering in Afghanistan**

Reflecting on the theoretical discussions presented above, as well as the Iraqi case and Soviet exemplar set in its own attempt to invade and conquer Afghanistan, the contemporary NATO coalition's foibles become easier to understand. Most tangibly, America and its coalition partners are, for all intents and purposes, fighting a conflict in which they are winning every single battle, yet still losing the war. Because high-salience kinetic operations engender sentiments of discontent amongst the population, all the while killing insurgents, they represent a "no-win" approach to fighting a conflict such as the Afghan one (Tomsen, 2011). Thus, even in adopting a counterinsurgency-based approach to the conflict in Afghanistan, the coalition is alienating the population, and thus facing the same endgame as the Soviets in terms of the impossibility of generating a safe and peaceful civil society.

Thus, like the previous Soviet adventure in Afghanistan, the coalition's ongoing struggles all pertain to the fact that tactics and metrics for victory alike are premised on an outdated notion of war that is not congruent with the realities on the ground in Afghanistan (Tomsen, 2011). With this, the coalition is, despite a doctrinal change embodied by works like that of Petraeus (2006), attempting to fight a war that is premised on the notion that the Taliban and the broader insurgency can be defeated. Using traditional military tactics that end up alienating the native population, alongside night raids and drone strikes which serve to generate tremendous antipathy in the population, America and the coalition are thus fighting a conflict in a manner that will allow them to win each of its battles, but which will ultimately and inevitably lead them to lose the war in the same way that the Soviets once did.

As one tangible example of these counter-productive tactical and operational choices, drone strikes are especially problematic in attempting to win the type of asymmetric conflict being fought in Afghanistan. Beginning with an overview of the nature of drones themselves, they are unmanned aerial vehicles, UAVs, which are typically armed with air-to-surface missiles and bombs. With most of these piloted from American shores, inside the comfort of air-conditioned bases found largely in Nevada and New Mexico, these drones have fundamentally changed the nature of war, and of the killing which takes place in it. While killing an adversary used to require staring at the whites of his eyes, and seeing his blood, all that is now required is the pushing of a button thousands of miles away from the site of the battle. With this, drones have served to dehumanize war and to make the decision to kill someone a less stressful one (Martin & Sasser, 2010). Thus, because using a drone for a military mission does not put a pilot at risk, and can be accomplished from half a world away, there is very little danger associated with the use of drones – at least not for the Americans who pilot them.

This said, drones have significant effects downrange, where they are used to conduct targeted extra-judicial assassinations. With this in mind, Scahill (2013) notes that drones have killed 4,700 individuals, from the Horn of Africa to Pakistan, with the greatest brunt of these casualties taking place in Afghanistan, since the beginning of the War on Terror. Out of these 4,700 casualties, a massive 1,500 of those killed have been innocent civilians, or what successive administrations have referred to as collateral damage. In this context, enormous antipathy has been generated amongst the Afghan population inasmuch as these civilian deaths have not only been seen as unnecessary, but also as having come about in a manner viewed as culturally dishonorable (Martin & Sasser, 2010). Thus, while drones do not put Americans at risk, they have a very problematic tendency, even when used to hunt a true terrorist, to kill innocent Afghan civilians, and to thus alienate the population.

With this, drones have represented a problematic addition to America's national security apparatus as the country fights the war in Afghanistan. While they were originally designed for surveillance missions and were unarmed, America has rapidly used these platforms as aerial killing machines oriented towards the targeted assassination of specific individuals (Martin & Sasser, 2010). On this basis, drones have thus emerged as a mainline tool of American foreign policy, and have been transformed into hunter-killer platforms in spite of their original designation as reconnaissance ones. In this role, they have killed thousands of innocents in the name of American foreign policy. In

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such a context, Scahill (2013) notes widespread instances where, in the wake of an American drone strike in a given Afghan village, villagers stopped cooperating with American civil and military officials and returned to the Taliban for protection. Thus, a direct causal linkage exists between these attacks and the decline of facilitating conditions germane to peace and nation-building activities.

Given that these targeted extra-judicial killings which America and NATO use in Afghanistan are very similar to political assassinations, Afghan dismay at their usage is unsurprising. They are embodied by the use of American and coalition military- or intelligence-based paramilitary forces so as to eliminate terrorist leaders via either remote drone strikes, as conducted by Predator and Reaper drones, or by special forces “wet teams” which conduct night raids on a regular basis across Afghanistan (Kessler & Werner, 290-292). These tactics, while previously used as methods of last resort against high value terrorist targets, have now become a mainstream U.S. policy in the context of the Afghan War (Kessler & Werner, 2008). As such, Scahill (2013) makes the case that as America says one thing through its civil relations arm, it does another far more kinetic thing through its military apparatus. As such, the narrative ultimately experienced by the Afghan population is one of confusion and inconsistency – two factors anathema to success in counterinsurgency.

Tangibly, the purportedly rigorous process underlying this tactic requires that the President of the United States – on the basis of his advisors’ guidance as well as the deliberations of a classified targeting tribunal featuring members of the Executive, Congress, and America’s armed and intelligence forces – issue a “finding” indicating that the targeted individual is beyond any reasonable doubt a terrorist who has committed acts of warfare against America, and who is beyond the reach of conventional military forces (Kessler & Werner, 2008). If the finding is issued, the military then attempts to eliminate the target all the while causing the least amount of civilian collateral damage that is possible, although civilian casualties are common during such operations (Kessler & Werner, 2008).

Problematically, however, drone strikes and night raids are two of the most significant forces involved in the coalition’s current war in Afghanistan as it pertains to the alienation of civilians. Tangibly, the struggles which the NATO coalition is currently experiencing in Afghanistan, even in places such as Kandahar, where pacification had previously been achieved by Canadian and other coalition forces, is resulting directly from the highly-kinetic policies adopted by the American military (Martin & Sasser, 2010). Thus, repeating the mistakes made by the Soviets two decades ago, the NATO coalition is losing the war in Afghanistan, while winning all of its battles, because it fundamentally misunderstands the realities of winning an asymmetric conflict. Indeed, its continued attempts to engage in nation-building, all the while losing civilian trust through kinetic operations, is creating a COIN-based paradox which is ultimately inimical either to victory or achieving the conditions necessary for a safe withdrawal.

In this regard, its failure to apply COIN doctrine to the same degree of relative success which occurred in Iraq, at least as it pertained to achieving an exit strategy, can be tied to the fact that America has continued to seek to instantiate civil-military programs pertaining to nation-building, all the while engaging in these kinetic operations (Greene-Sands & Greene-Sands, 2014). Indeed, with the Iraqi case demonstrating that America’s greatest successes occurred after a shift to military COIN predominance occurred, it becomes clear that America is repeating many of the Soviet Union’s mistakes in its continue pursuit of the Iraq War. In a context where Scahill (2013) notes that the potential state apparatus of Afghanistan is far less than it was in Iraq, America views the reconstruction of the Afghan state as a necessity. Problematically, however, the Iraqi case made it clear that highly-kinetic operations are incompatible with nation-building. As such, America will likely have to sacrifice the type of reconstruction which it has attempted in Afghanistan if it is to succeed in the withdrawal which has been forced about by pressure from its domestic political sphere.

## **Conclusion**

In the end, then, the theoretical examination provided above, buoyed and validated by the subsequent case studies, provides a clear indication that the defeat of great powers in conflicts against smaller states is a result of multiple independent variables acting in synergy. Beyond this, IR’s failure in predicting these defeats is a result of our discipline’s inability to truly understand the changing nature of military power in the international system, as determined by the changing nature of warfare itself. Merom (2003) perhaps provides the most parsimonious account

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of why great powers fail to win such wars in noting that success in such conflicts depends on three principle variables: the degree to which the great power's government is dependent on popular support; the level of divergence between the morality of the great power's elite and mass; and the degree to which public opinion constrains elite decision-making. The argument made here, in concluding this discussion, is that theories like Merom's are a significant element of the problem faced by our discipline.

The changing nature of war, and thus of the tactics that are effective within it, points to a need for a theorists of IR and practitioners of foreign policy to more broadly conceive of power in evaluating cases, and to focus on each great power versus weaker state conflict as a discrete empirical event, rather than as a component of a broader class. Simply put, the heterogeneity of these conflicts, manifested not only in the motivations underlying them, but also in the nature of the fighters involved in them, belies the discipline's traditional conceptions of power, which are themselves predicated on antiquated metrics. As such, there is a need to focus on the substantive and particular components of each conflict, within the overarching theoretical context of the changing nature of war, so as to properly evaluate the counter-intuitive and misleading question of why great powers lose wars against less powerful adversaries on such a regular basis.

From an empirical point of view, the disjuncture which exists within COIN operations as it pertains to the conflict imperatives associated with kinetic action and nation-building are also very salient in any such debate. As demonstrated above, COIN succeeded in Iraq when America lessened the degree to which it sought to rebuild the country, and engage in outright nation-building activities. In the Afghan case, where the country's previous status as a failed state left it bereft of governance capability, American forces have not necessarily had the luxury of adopting the more militaristic elements of COIN with such abandon. As such, the persistence of insurgent difficulties in Afghanistan can likely be attributed to America's attempts to engage in nation-building despite all the while sapping the population's trust and morale through the collateral damage of kinetic operations. Ultimately, this leaves American forces in Afghanistan between a proverbial rock and a hard place inasmuch as these two divergent components of the COIN paradigm make success in the ongoing conflict a dubious possibility.

In concluding, the theoretical discussion and empirical case studies presented above provide a compelling and multi-faceted account of the reasons underlying which big states lose ostensibly small wars. In bracketing this essay, it is crucial to note that despite the mainstream tendency to see parsimony as the dominant metric by which the value of a social scientific theory is measured, the value of this metric recedes when we consider the nature of contemporary warfare (Waltz, 1979). It is clear, from both the extant literature and the forays into empirical analysis engaged in above, that mono-causal explanations of conflict are insufficient in contemporary IR, especially when we are dealing with the so-called "New Wars" that have emerged in the late 20th century (Brown, 2001). With this, then, it is imperative that the dominant analytic frame used by IR to analyze military conflict, realism, takes heed of the ideational insights provided by approaches such as constructivism, and modifies its approach so as to more fully account for the synergistic effects of ideational factors on power within warfare. In doing this, the discipline will more clearly perceive the true ontology of war in the international system, and, with this, provide more accurate accounts of these conflicts.

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