

Third World Wars and the Militarisation of Underdevelopment

■ *Jim MacLaughlin*

Since World War II the Third World has engaged in massive militarisation and arms spending. It has become a theatre for proxy wars between US and Soviet interests and between capitalism and Marxist-Leninism. Such wars have become a means for the superpowers to assert hegemony without directly involving their own armed forces. The results have been underdevelopment and instability, massive civilian casualties and ecological damage.

Introduction

Definitions of war are as elusive as its causes. For the purpose of this paper it is large scale organised violence in which at least one state is actively involved. This definition is similar to that adopted by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which defines major war as 'prolonged combat between the military forces of two or more governments, or of one government and organised opposition forces, involving the use of manufactured weapons incurring battle-related deaths of at least 1,000 persons'.¹ These definitions have two merits worth noting. Firstly, they emphasise the fact that war is less an expression of delinquent state behaviour than a strategy for asserting hegemony in national and international arenas. Secondly, they suggest that war is central to international relations, not a deviation from a peaceful norm, nor a violent expression of state frustration.

Wars are also intrinsically geographical in that they have geographical causes and consequences. Since at least World War II, wars have taken on new environmental dimensions that are a threat to global ecology. Finally, war and arms exports are still a dominant feature of North-South relationships. This was particularly evident in the Gulf War. It is also evident in 'proxy wars' fought throughout Latin America and elsewhere in the Third World since the 60s.

The geopolitical origins of the Third World

The military origins of the colonial world have generally been ignored by historians who wrote war out of history by adopting a cultural diffusionist model of European expansion. Since 1945 the social sciences have also exaggerated the developmental origins of the Third World. In so doing they have neglected its geostrategic and geopolitical significance in Cold War rhetoric. The French demographer Sauvy first used this term in a paper entitled 'Three Worlds, One Planet' in 1952. In this paper Sauvy mixed development theory and western geopolitical concern over the Balkanisation of the world of European imperialism to construct a new paternalistic approach to problems of underdevelopment. Exposing the limits of European liberalism in an area of great geostrategic significance to the West, Sauvy recognised that 'What interests each of the two developed worlds, is to conquer the third, or at least to have it on its side.'²

The geopolitical origins of the Third World have always revealed Western paranoia about Soviet expansionism. Fear of the latter emerged as the prime concern in Western thinking about underdevelopment during and after the McCarthy era. In 1963 Brzezinski, a prominent Sovietologist who later became national security adviser in Carter's administration, argued that:

The engagement of these Communist states in Africa is part and parcel of their global political and ideological aspirations. In this age of national independence and political subtlety, efforts to extend domination and control are no longer blatantly displayed. Alliances, close co-operation and peaceful co-existence are the new labels for what are often very one-

sided political and economic relationships. But in many ways the competition is more intense than ever, and the aspirations of the protagonists more comprehensive, for the struggle between the two blocs involves not only their power relationships, but the clash between two images of the world: one that reflects the political and ideological experience of the Communist world and one that corresponds to the more amorphous and pluralistic vision of the West. Africa is thus an important arena of political and ideological conflict, and one side's gain is seen by the other as his loss.³

Viewed thus, Third World countries were to become prizes in an East versus West zero-sum game. It was thus that the Third World became a popular topic with American social scientists. From the start it was twinned with the concept of modernisation and both were loaded with profound geopolitical and geostrategic significance.

The popularity of these terms did not derive from their precision as vehicles for scholarly communication. It stemmed instead from their ability to evoke generalised images of the underdeveloped world, and because they fitted with the US doctrine of manifest destiny. This stated that it was the destiny of the US to modernise the world, or at least police it and defend it from Communism. Modernisation theory was the social scientific community's response to US geopolitical interests in the underdeveloped world. It attained hegemonic status within the social sciences when the US was asserting its hegemonic status in the international arena.⁴ Modernisation theory and 'Third Worldism' signified American social sciences' 'coming of age'. It coincided with the dawn of nuclear power, the collapse of White rule in the colonial world, the emergence of the US as a global power (and not just a power in the western hemisphere) and the extension of Cold War logic into development theory. Modernisation theory did not so much analyse the problems of underdeveloped countries as group them together and categorise them as the Third World.

Militarism and paternalism defined US attitudes to the Third World from the start and prescribed subservient roles for its component parts in the new world order which it sought to construct. Domination and subordination, including military rule and 'strong government', were the West's response to insubordination and political unrest in the Third World. They contained racial and class conflict and outlawed social rebellion throughout the Third World. Under President Truman,

counter-insurgency became the principal goal of US foreign policy in the Third World.⁵ Initially support was confined to governments promising 'top-down' reform of their societies. Once 'bottom up' struggles gathered momentum after the Cuban revolution, support went to military regimes regardless of their civil rights or social reform record. Faced with unprecedented revolutionary violence throughout the Third World, the US attempted to squeeze it into the familiar framework of Communist conspiracy. It supported military regimes and, under the guise of fighting Communism, helped wage war against reform movements across the Third World.

The Cold War became a war against the Third World. It was used to extend the global reach of western capital and to extend US geopolitical interests in the Third World.⁶ In the late 60s US support for Third World wars was justified by President Johnson on the grounds that 'the old distinction between civil war and international war had lost much of its meaning'.⁷ A classic example of this doctrine in action occurred in 1965, when US marines were sent to the Dominican Republic to prevent insurgents taking control of the state. Earlier examples included Guatemala (1954), Indonesia (1958) and British Guiana (1962). Subsequent examples of US covert and overt support for counter-revolutionary and anti-reformist struggles have included Grenada, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Chile, Peru, the Philippines and Cambodia.

The nuclear age saw a new justification for Third World war which insisted that the conduct of war was best left to US- and Soviet-supported troops in Third World war arenas, preferably using military technology imported from the North. Gradually wars in the Third World became proxy wars for the defence of the *status quo* in Third World countries, which also helped to extend the geopolitical reach of the US and the Soviet Union in the Third World. After World War II Stalin and Communism replaced Hitler and Nazism as new spectres that haunted the 'Free World'. Leading 'hawks' in the US military-industrial establishment urged war against the Soviet Union as the best way to deal with Communism immediately after World War II.⁸ In the event Cold War advocates argued that the war against communism was best fought with the new weapons of political and economic leverage. With military aid, they could also be used to defend Soviet and US interests in the Third World.⁹ The Marshall Plan allowed the US to sponsor the revival of free enterprise capitalism in western Europe. It sought to 'revive a working economy in the world and to permit the emergence of

political and social conditions in which free institutions could exist'.¹⁰ Elsewhere, social radicalism and political instability were met with a combination of strong rule and military force. These were deemed optimum strategies for holding the Third World for the free world and for protecting western investment and trade with the Third World. They had the added advantage of maintaining political stability in a major zone of the world economy charged with socio-political instability.

As the Cold War progressed the protection of the North's investment and trade links with the South provided legitimation for *holding* the Third World for the free world. This placed the US in a paradoxical position as the defender of free world values in the Third World. Its geopolitical and economic interests were best served by military regimes created *by* or dependent *upon* the US – sponsored militarisation of the Third World, including the progressive militarisation of Third World aid. This meant that defenders of freedom in the developed world defended military regimes in the Third World just when they were inflicting 'exemplary violence' on the poorest and most oppressed sectors of the world population.

The militarisation of the Third World

As in the period when white rule was being extended throughout the colonial world, in the neo-colonial environment of post-World War II, war frequently became an extension and *a substitute* for politics in the Third World. Thus since the 60s the transfer of arms from rich to poor nations became a dominant feature of North-South relationships. Moreover, the tendency to use the arms trade to further foreign policy objectives has created complex patterns of North-South alignment. In addition to exacerbating the conflict between the Soviet Union and the US, arms flows heightened tensions *between* Third World countries and allowed those with favoured nation status to become regional powers. Since World War II the latter have included South Africa, Israel, Iran during the period of the Shah's rule and, more recently, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.¹¹ However, as Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan also show, the control of arms gave superpowers power literally to make or break nations in the Middle East and elsewhere, notably in the

Caribbean Basin and South America.

Post-World War II arms dispersal policy coincided with the progressive militarisation of the Third World and transformed it into a zone where struggles for social reform could be forcefully resisted. Militarisation also stemmed from the tendency of the US and the Soviet Union to resort to European-style battle tactics and low intensity warfare to contain class conflict and ethnic unrest in the Third World. This has added a new twist to the spiral of poverty in the Third World. Thus the Palme Report found that Ethiopia and Somalia imported more arms in 1979 than did all five Nordic countries plus the Netherlands. It went on to state:

Arms imports were worth less than 0.1 per cent of the national income of the six European countries but about 14 per cent of the national income of the two African countries. Their cost was equivalent to the income of 36,000 in the European countries but of 5,000,000 people in the African countries.¹²

The numbers living under military rule have also increased markedly, rising from 356.5 million in 1960 to 670.9 million in 1976.¹³ Almost 12 per cent of the global population was under military rule in 1960. By 1981 this figure had risen to 15 per cent, and 20 per cent had known some form of military rule in their lifetime. This was due to a growing militarisation of the underdeveloped world and is not simply attributable to population growth. It was particularly evident in Central and South America, where only 4 out of 19 states had *not* known military rule between 1945 and 1982. In the latter year, military leaders were effective heads of state in Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Panama and Guatemala. They were also rulers in 21 African countries.¹⁴

Military expenditure also keeps Third World countries poor by diverting resources from public investment and social welfare towards the security requirements of military regimes. Thus there are opportunity costs associated with military investment due to the fact that expenditure on security is not available for financing other programmes. Some Third World countries allocate as much as 10-15 per cent of GDP, and others spend as much as one quarter of their central government budget, on the military. In the late 70s and early 80s these included Mauritania, Egypt, Iran, Laos, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Vietnam and Mongolia. Most of these were spending more on defence than

on development or capital formation. In some cases, they spent more on military requirements than on food and housing. Among those diverting the same proportion of their GDP to the military as the US and Great Britain, were Peru, Chile, Morocco, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, the Congo, Sudan, Ethiopia, Zambia, Iraq and Pakistan.¹⁵

While some argue that military expenditure enhances economic growth, studies show that there are much more efficient means for using existing resources that would bring greater benefits.¹⁶ This is particularly true of underdeveloped countries.¹⁷ As George has shown, Third World developing nations that borrowed heavily in the 70s and 80s have stayed poor because of their debt crisis.¹⁸ Arms spending has exacerbated this crisis while facilitating the construction of 'warfare states' in the Third World. This has placed the developed world in a paradoxical position in relation to the underdeveloped world. Just when welfare issues were high on the political agendas of the US and the USSR, both superpowers were giving direct and indirect support to anti-reformist regimes throughout the underdeveloped world. Indeed by the 80s it appeared that the welfare state was the prerogative of the developed world, while many of those most in need of welfare were compelled to live in warfare states in the Third World and the Middle East. Military expenditure and arms dispersal thus prevented the spread of welfare politics to the Third World. The Brandt Report of 1980 found that the cost of a ten year programme to provide essential food and health in many underdeveloped countries was less than half of the annual global military budget.¹⁹ The proportion of national income going to the military at this time increased by 50 per cent in Chile, Argentina, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Evidence suggests that gaps between military and welfare expenditure in many Third World countries have not narrowed since the 70s. Thus a recent UN report on human development found that some of the poorest countries in the world are still spending twice as much on arms as on health and education.²⁰ These included Pakistan, Angola, Peru, Uganda and Zaire. It also showed that the cost of ten days of the recent Gulf War would have paid for the immunisation of all Third World children against vaccine-preventable diseases for ten years.

The ratio of military to medical personnel ranges between 1:2 and 1:3 in the North. The corresponding figures for Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ethiopia are 13:1, 21:1, 25:1 and 122:1 respectively.²¹ The sophistication of resources devoted to the

international military order is thrown into sharp relief when measured against resources devoted to food, housing and health. Thus the World Health Report of 1982 found that the cost of a single air-to-air missile equalled the annual livelihood of 10,000 inhabitants of the Himalayan enclave of Bhutan.

Development of underdevelopment through arms dispersal

The vast majority of weapons used in the Third World originate in the developed world. Global arms expenditure was estimated at 6 per cent of global GDP in 1980, and arms exports accounted for 17 per cent of global exports.²² Similarly, a large proportion of arms produced since the 70s have gone to Third World and Middle Eastern arms markets. In the US, arms production for the export market was actively encouraged under the Reagan administration.²³ Then the geopolitical and economic interests of both superpowers were strongly focused on the oil-rich countries of the Middle East which had the ability to pay for sophisticated weaponry. This area has experienced unprecedented modernisation *through* militarisation since the late 60s. As in the Third World generally, the post-War emergence of new states in the Middle East was accompanied by their militarisation. Here, as in neo-colonial Africa, nations literally were forged on the anvil of warfare. Thus modernisation did not close existing class or ethnic divisions but utilised them in the construction of multi-ethnic states policed by 'ethnic soldiers'.²⁴ Here countries passed from colonial to military rule without the experience of democracy.

In 1990 the US and the Soviet Union alone accounted for 60 per cent of Third World arms sales while the European Community accounted for a further 16 per cent of the total.²⁵ Some Third World countries have become arms producers in their own right. They include Brazil and India, both of which are capable of becoming lower order hegemonic powers within the Third World through their arms export policies. Moreover, the global *reach* and *destructive capacity* of modern war systems 'are such that arms spending and preparations for war have become a source of global insecurity, and not just its reflection'.²⁶ If Third World arms producers increase the destructive capacity of their weapons, particularly by switching

to low cost chemical weapons, they could redraw the geopolitical map of the Third World. They could also further militarise and destabilise it.

Despite the proportion of government expenditure diverted to the military, we have comparatively few studies of the economic effects of arms spending in the Third World. Most accounts of the economic effects of arms spending deal with the military-industrial complexes of developed societies and focus on relationships between defence contracting and high-tech industry in the core areas of the world economy.²⁷ They fail to examine the military and political establishments of Third World countries, where lack of opportunity in industry often tilts the highly motivated into a career in the military. Similarly we have seen that military regimes in industrially-backward countries are drawn into dependency relationships with the military-industrial complexes of the developed world. This type of dependency has scarcely been commented upon by dependency theorists, despite the fact that the benefits of Third World arms spending accrue to the developed world. The costs, on the other hand, including opportunity costs and the effects of modern weapon systems are carried by underdeveloped countries. While we should not ignore the role of indigenous elites in counter-revolutionary wars, we should also recognise the degree of superpower complicity *in*, and proxy nature *of* many wars in the Third World and the Middle East. As Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq clearly indicate, the entry of many Middle Eastern countries onto the world political arena has been accompanied by wars that were directly or indirectly sponsored by arms producing countries in the developed world.

Third World wars

The period after World War II has been ethnocentrically categorised as the post-war period. Nevertheless there have been over one hundred wars, each involving a minimum of one thousand and some involving hundreds of thousands of deaths, between 1945 and 1990.²⁸ If we consider small wars, i.e. those with war-related fatalities of less than one thousand, there were approximately three hundred of these between 1945 and 1982. In 35 major armed conflicts still active in 1989 over five million people were killed.²⁹ By adding major wars like Algeria, Nigeria, Vietnam, Iran-Iraq and the Gulf war to this list we arrive at an

approximation of war-related fatalities in the Middle East and the Third World since World War II. The total number killed is possibly as high as 30,000,000, a figure comparable to total casualties in all theatres of World War II. Just under 5,000,000 people were killed in 1988-89.³⁰ The majority of those killed in war since 1945 were civilians in developing and underdeveloped countries. This 'civilianisation' of modern war fatalities dates from World War II and was central to the logic of that and subsequent wars that were fought in the Third World. Thus civilians were two-thirds of war-related fatalities in World War II, a marked increase from the figure of 14 per cent for World War I.³¹ Blitzkrieg bombing during World War II greatly exacerbated the civilianisation of war casualties. It climaxed with the Allied bombing of Dresden in February 1945. The city had no military installations but between 100,000 and 300,000 people died as a result of Allied action.³² In World War II racism was welded to militarism to add a new destructive dimension to modern warfare. As the examples of Algeria, Vietnam, Iraq-Iran and the Gulf War clearly show, this is still a feature of Third World wars. These have literally been racial wars waged with state of the art technology. Perhaps nowhere is modernity more evident in the Middle East and the Third World than in its war arenas.

It is possible to classify modern wars into two groups, those fought between contestants for *domestic* state power and those fought between states in struggles for *regional* hegemony. This is a simple classification that is by no means mutually exclusive. Wars that begin as domestic struggles for power often become proxy wars with high degrees of external involvement. Indeed the *internationalisation* that was such a marked feature of World Wars I and II has also been a feature of 'post-war' wars in the Middle East and the Third World. By supplying weapons and war systems, core nations in the developed North crucially determine the duration and destructiveness of these wars. In so doing they have contributed to the destabilisation of the Middle East and the Third World. This has been particularly evident in US involvement in armed conflict in Central and South America and in the Caribbean Basin. It was also evident in Soviet involvement in war in Afghanistan, and in the Gulf War.

Superpower involvement is also obvious in the case of international conflict for regional hegemony. Such proxy wars differ from domestic wars not only in scale but also in their objectives. They have international rather than national objectives and for that reason attract the attention of

superpowers. The Arab-Israeli conflict is a classic example of a proxy war. Like all proxy wars it ultimately serves the economic and geopolitical interests of the sponsoring superpower by extending its hegemonic field, without having to use its own security forces. Superpowers are usually more interested in achieving their own objectives in such struggles than in removing the sources of conflict.³³ Since World War II the US has been forcefully extending its global reach. Thus the aftermath of the war saw it carve out a new world order from the disintegrating British, French and Japanese empires.³⁴ Since the 60s it has also been defending and *extending* its influence in developing nations throughout the Middle East and South East Asia.³⁵

US efforts at constructing new spheres of interest outside the Americas was one way of waging Cold War.³⁶ As we have already suggested, it was also a source of East-West conflict in the underdeveloped world. The US had its interests more widely spread than the Soviet Union and the focus of its geopolitical reach has changed significantly since the 50s. After 1955 the focus of US interest shifted from Europe to the Caribbean Basin and Central America. From 1965 on the emphasis shifted again, this time to the Middle East and North Africa. As van der Wusten shows, the changes in the geographical spread of the Soviet Union's political use of military power have been more straightforward.³⁷ There was a gradual downward trend in military involvement in Europe and more interventions in the Middle East after the mid-60s. Like the US the Soviet Union became more of a global power between 1965 and the late 1980s. It was also more concerned with establishing buffer zones around the Soviet Union than extending its hegemonic reach deep into the Third World.

The 'civilianisation' of Third World war fatalities

Civilian casualties have far outnumbered military casualties in most wars fought since 1945, as noted. Contrary to exponents of precision warfare, this is not an unintended side effect of war or a reflection of the fact that wars are still fought along traditional lines. It is a consequence of fundamental changes in the ends and means of modern warfare. Destruction, including the indiscriminate killing of civilians, has been central to the

logic of modern warfare since at least World War II. It has certainly been central to the logic of war in the Middle East and the Third World. It also reflects the strong racial element in modern warfare since 1939. The logical roots of modern war are traceable to a nineteenth century military philosophy which argued that war was 'a continuation of political intercourse with the addition of other means'.³⁸ This paper shows that war in the underdeveloped world is a substitute rather than simply an extension of politics and that it frequently prevents political discourse where most it is needed, such as in the Middle East, the Third World and Northern Ireland. Clausewitz argued that war is 'a test of moral and physical forces by means of the latter' and suggested that victory comes after the defeat of the enemy's morale rather than simply his troops.³⁹ The objectives of war in the Third World and the Middle East are no different to those of nineteenth century strategists. Victory has always involved killing the enemy's troops and destroying their morale or willingness to fight. Destruction of human and natural environments has been a crucial factor in military victory since at least World War II. It is still crucial to military and paramilitary victories in Third World and Middle Eastern wars.

Living with war has been a way of life for many in the Third World and the Middle East. War rages around people as they go about the daily business of life. This is particularly true of Northern Ireland, Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Lebanon and El Salvador. In certain instances militia groups become warrior castes divorced from the society and causes that spawned them. Thus Hirst has categorised the Lebanon as a Militia Republic where, after years of war, a collective conclusion to its crisis appears as far off as ever.⁴⁰ Violence and sudden death have thus become ineradicable ways of life in Lebanon, Northern Ireland, El Salvador, South Africa and Sri Lanka. Here the cult of violence becomes part of everyday culture and one passes from an acceptable level of violence to an acceptance of the insolubility of what are seen as racial and ethnic conflicts. Racism and ethnocentrism pervade this view of the insolubility of ethnic conflict. It also pervades western perspectives on wars by attributing their roots to the social psychological attributes of combatants and the fanaticism of their causes. Grimly ignoring World War II, it also suggests that war here is a world apart from traditional European wars. As such it is something not so much to be *resolved* as *contained*.

In zones of conflict in the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean Basin, Asia and Africa the latest generations of

fighters are so young, and war has gone on for so long, that in 'ordinary experience as well as intellectually, they have less and less idea what words like secularism and pluralism, the very stuff of political discourse, really mean'.⁴¹ Military and paramilitary forces often suffer far fewer casualties than the civilian population. They fight, but rarely kill one another, except in planned military engagements. In the circumstances military and paramilitary action becomes an unpredictable ritualistic sport in which those who are best armed are often the least hurt.

Wars have also been sanitised and reduced to discourses on the sophistication of modern war systems. This was particularly noticeable in televised accounts of the Gulf War. Here Patriots and Scuds were the personifications of good and evil and were more prominent than civilian and military fatalities. In this, as in other Middle Eastern and Third World conflicts, the destructiveness of modern war systems massively contributed to the civilianisation of war casualties. It also exacerbated the refugee problem. These are adequate enough reasons why arms exports to Middle Eastern and the Third World countries should be ended and why wars there should be stopped. The case against war is as simple as that.

Modern war systems and their environmental consequences

Since World War II progress reports on weapons have been written from a Soviet or US perspective. They have also focussed on nuclear war as the major threat to human survival. In so doing they have ignored lower order conventional weapons that have been responsible for approximately 30,000,000 war-related fatalities since 1945. While nuclear weapons have the potential to eliminate humankind, conventional weapons have been killing millions of people in the 'post-war' period. This fact has been ignored by most students of the arms race and by peace groups in the developed world. They also ignore the fact that in the Third World and the Middle East the arms race is a race to obtain conventional weapons and non-nuclear war systems.

Until recently most weapons used in Third World wars were relatively unsophisticated. Indeed many were leftovers from World War II.⁴² Now, however, developments in conventional

weapons, and the increased use of sophisticated weapons in the underdeveloped world, have posed two new challenges to world peace. In the first place the spread of new weapons is endangering an increasing number of civilians in the Middle East and the Third World. Secondly, the indiscriminate use of these weapons is endangering the social and ecological environments of developing and underdeveloped countries.⁴³ We have seen that most countries in the underdeveloped world are compelled to import weapons from the developed world, or from friendly Third World countries. They also engage in their own form of arms racing, importing increasingly sophisticated and expensive weapons. This results in increased dependence on arms exporters in the developed world. The latter, due to the tightening in their domestic markets, produce more and more for the Third World. When governments in underdeveloped countries fail to keep pace with developments in military technology they often fall behind in the arms race. This can result in loss of domestic power to guerrilla forces or, as the case of the Malvinas war clearly showed, geopolitical failure and hegemonic decline.

When Third World states try to de-link from the arms trade by developing their capacity to produce cheaper alternatives such as mustard gas and other chemical weapons, the North imposes trade sanctions in chemicals and technology necessary for their production. It could be argued that governments and arms exporters in the North are more opposed to the *manufacture* of biological weapons in underdeveloped countries than to biological *warfare*. Opposition has far less to do with the *morals* than the *political economy* of biological warfare and the threat that it poses to the geopolitical interests of the US and its allies. Since Vietnam the US, Europe and the Soviet Union have been directly and indirectly responsible for chemical warfare in the Third World and the Middle East.⁴⁴ Changes in design and deployment of anti-personnel weapons during and after the Vietnam war have brought an entirely new generation of weapon systems onto Third World and Middle Eastern war arenas. Many of these, like the 'fire and forget' missiles that were first tested in Vietnam, cushion their users from their destructive effect.⁴⁵ They not only maximise civilian and military casualties, they also inflict maximum destruction on the built and natural environment. Anti-personnel mines with no metal parts can now be deployed over extensive areas by aircraft and by military shelling. Research and development in this field suggest that area weapons will cover increasingly large areas and

that their destructive capacity will increase accordingly. Such weapons have become the norm in battlefields as far apart as Cambodia and Mozambique. Tens of thousands of people were killed by these weapons in the Afghanistan war after some 30,000 mines were sown in the soil of Afghanistan.⁴⁶ The number of these that are still active constitute a threat to returning refugees, while it has been estimated that removal costs in human terms would include 6,000 fatalities and 12,000 seriously injured.

Environmental destruction has also been a feature of war in Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Peru, Angola, Ethiopia and the frontline states of southern Africa. Mozambique's war against South African-backed MNR guerrillas resulted in the destruction of their greatest economic asset, their conservation parks. Five game parks and four national parks covering an area equal to that of Austria were destroyed in this war.⁴⁷ Elephant tusks have also been traded for weapons to fight this war. In 1987 19,700 tusks worth \$13 million dollars were found in MNR guerrilla bases alone. Trade in tusks so devastated the elephant population of the country that their numbers fell from 36,000 in 1972 to an estimated 24,000 in 1981.⁴⁸ War has also been creating environmental disaster in Guatemala and El Salvador. Some 2,000,000 El Salvadoreans have been displaced by war and counter-insurgency activity. Most of these have fled to the forests of Guatemala, Honduras and Belize where they are clearing trees for crops and to sell as firewood in the cities. Before the war El Salvador had one of the richest flora and fauna environments in the world and was particularly rich in hardwood rain forest. As a result of the war wildlife and plants have fewer and fewer zones of retreat and the country now has the lowest level of biological diversity in Central America. It is also among the worst environmental disaster zones in the western hemisphere. War here has literally been waged against the built and natural environment. As in Vietnam, the modification and destruction of the geographical milieu have become preludes to the widespread destruction of peasant communities living in war zones.⁴⁹ Thus environments, including urban environments, have become legitimate targets in wars in the Middle East and the Third World. Ecological warfare, the bombing of dykes and dams, destruction of road and rail networks and saturation bombing of urban centres means that whole regions and countries can literally now be 'taken out'. This was the intended lesson of the Gulf War.

Conclusion

Colonial societies were forged on the anvil of warfare. War and arms spending still contribute to the underdevelopment of the Third World, not least by linking it to the global arms market. Since World War II there has been a massive militarisation of the Third World and the Middle East. The road to modernisation has often led through the officers' mess and the battlefield. As in nation-building Europe in the nineteenth century, war has been central to the logic of state formation in the Third World and the Middle East.⁵⁰ Arms spending and war have also contributed to the peripheralisation of the Third World while simultaneously linking it into the world economy.

This paper suggests that the Third World is not simply a development category. Neither is it a relic left over after we have defined the First and Second Worlds. It is a geostrategic category that has its roots in Cold War geopolitics. The Third World emerged at a crucial stage in the restructuring of the world economy when the US had hegemonic intentions on Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia. One way to hold these areas for the Free World, while at the same time making them safe for US and western capital, was to support strong government in the Third World. This was done by dispensing military and economic aid, thereby gaining political influence throughout the Third World. The geostrategic, geopolitical and economic significance of the underdeveloped world meant that countries here passed from colonialism to neocolonialism without having experienced radical reform. Counter-insurgency became central to the logic of Third World states after the anti-colonial struggles of the 60s. The Third World became a zone of conflict where proxy wars were fought to extend and defend US or Soviet interests. Third World countries were prevented from developing their own alternatives to the global ideologies of capitalism and Marxist-Leninism. The history of armed conflict in the post-War period has been a history of racial, ethnic and environmental wars waged almost exclusively in the Third World and the Middle East, with the support of arms exporters and governments in the North.

Footnotes

1. 1989 *Yearbook*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Uppsala, Almqvist and Wiksell, p.7
2. A. Sauvy (1956), *Les 'tiers monde', sous -developpement et developpement*, Paris, Pousser Universitaires de France.

3. Z. Brzezinski, 1963, *Africa and the Communist World*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, p.7
4. W.R. Louis, (1978), *Imperialism at Bay: the US and the Decolonization of the British Empire 1941-45*, New York, Oxford University Press
5. D.S. Blaufarb, (1977), *The Counter-insurgency Era*, New York, Free Press
6. N. Chomsky, (1982), *Towards a New Cold War*, New York, Pantheon Press
7. R. Bamet, (1974), *Intervention and Revolution*, London, Paladin, p.142
8. R.S. McNamara, (1968), *The Essence of Security*, New York, Harper and Row
9. I. Wallerstein, (1984), *The Politics of the World Economy*, and (1991), *Geopolitics and Geoculture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
10. C. Kindelberger, (1984), *Financial History of Western Europe*, London, Allen and Unwin, p.219
11. W. Burchet, (1978), *Southern Africa Stands Up*, New York, Urizen Books; K.W. Grundy, (1987), *The Militarisation of South African Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press; F. Halliday, (1979), *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, Harmondsworth, Pelican; Y. Peri, (1988), *The Israeli Army in Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
12. O. Palme, (1982), *Palme Report*, London, Taylor and Francis, p.64
13. M. Kidron and D. Smith, (1983), *The War Atlas*, London, Pan Books, p.32
14. A.S. Banks and W. Overstreet, (eds), (1981), *Political Handbook of the World*, New York, McGraw Hill
15. R.L. Sivard, (1980), *World Military and Social Expenditures*, Leesburg, World Priorities Annual
16. M. Kaldor, (1981), *The Baroque Arsenal*, New York, Hill and Wang; A. Markusen, (1985a), 'Defense spending: a successful industrial policy?' in S. Zuklin, *The Politics of Industrial Policy*, New York, Praeger; A. Markusen, (1985b), 'Defense spending and the geography of high tech industries' in J. Rees, (ed), *Technology Regions and Policy*, New York, Praeger
17. D.P. Hewitt, (1991), *The Costs of Military Spending*, Washington, Fiscal Affairs Department, IMF
18. S. George, (1988), *A Fate Worse than Debt*, Harmondsworth, Pelican
19. W. Brandt, (1980), *North-South: A Programme for Survival*, London, Pan Books
20. *UN Human Development Report 1991*, UN Development Program, New York, UN
21. *World Health Report*, various years, Geneva, WHO; Kidron and Smith, op. cit.
22. Kidron and Smith, (1983), op. cit., pp 36-42
23. A. Markusen, (1984), 'The military remapping of the US', *Built Environment*, Vol. 11,3, pp. 171-80
24. C. Enloe, (1980), *Ethnic Soldiers*, Athens, University of Georgia Press.
25. SIPRI, (1991), op.cit.
26. Kidron and Smith, (1983), op.cir.
27. Markusen, (1985a, 1985b), op.cit.
28. C. Ahlstrom, (1991), *Casualties of Conflict*, Uppsala, Peace and Conflict Research Centre, p.7
29. SIPRI, (1990), (1983), op.cir.
30. Ahlstrom, (1991), op.cir.
31. Ibid.
32. M. Middlebrook, (1980), *The Nuremberg Raid*, London, Allen Lane; (1985), *The Bomber Command Diaries*, London, Viking; (1990), *The Berlin Raids*, Harmondsworth, Pelican
33. J. O'Loughlin and H. van der Wusten, (1989), 'Geography, war and peace: notes on a contribution to a revival of political geography', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol.23,2, pp26-43; P. O'Sullivan and J.W. Miller, (1983), *The Geography of Warfare*, London, Croom Helm

34. W.R. Louis, (1978), op.cit.
35. W.R. Thompson, (1983), 'Uneven economic growth, systemic challenge and global war', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol.7,3, pp.41-55
36. W. Loth (1988), *The Division of the World, 1945-55*, London, Routledge; R. Menon, (1986), *Soviet Power and the Third World*, Yale, Yale University Press; B.D. Porter, (1984), *The USSR in Third World Conflicts*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; R.E. Kanet and R. Menon, (1980), 'Soviet policy towards the Third World', in Donald R. Kelley, (ed), *Soviet Politics in the Brezhnev Era*, New York, Praeger
37. H. van der Wusten, (1985), 'The geography of conflict since 1945' in D. Pepper and A. Kenkins, (eds), (1985), *The Geography of War and Peace*, London, Blackwell
38. C. von Clausewitz, (1940), *On War*, London, Macmillan, p.27
39. Ibid., p.97
40. D. Hirst, 'Where violence and sudden death become ineradicable', *The Guardian*, 29 August 1985
41. Ibid.
42. G. Best, (1983), *Humanity in Warfare*, London, Methuen
43. Ahlstrom (1991), op.cit.; M. Lumsden, (1975), *Incendiary Weapons*, Uppsala, Almqvist and Wiksell; M.T. Clare, 'Wars in the 1990s: Growing firepower in the Third World', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May 1990
44. A.H. Westing, (ed), (1985), *Explosive Remnants of War*, London, Taylor and Francis; M. Macksoud, (1988), *Traumatic War Experiences*, Columbia University, Centre for the Study of the Effects of War on Children; M. Bedjouai, (1986), *Modern Wars: The Human Challenge*, London, Zed Press
45. C. Campbell, (1982), *War Facts Now*, Glasgow, Fontana
46. Ahlstrom, (1991), op.cit.
47. P. Simons, 'The war that is a waste', *The Guardian*, 14 February 1989
48. Ibid.
49. Y. Lacoste, (1976), 'An illustration of geographical warfare', *Antipode*, vol.4, 3, pp.1-13
50. J. MacLaughlin, (1986), 'State-centred social science and the anarchist critique', *Antipode*, vol. 18, 1, pp.11-38

