

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF WAR: AN APPROACH TO POLITICAL REALISM

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Abstract

Utilizing the secondary sources of data and the realist theory, the paper examines the art of war and the science of war. Wars have remained a part of the historical attribute of human existence in the bid to survive in a competitive environment. Though the new international does not subscribe to war as a means and instrument of realizing national interest of states, the demonstration of military might resulting to wars have at various times been a means of attaining interests, especially by the big powers with the capacity. To overwhelm the enemy, superiority in preparation and execution of military activities becomes imperative. War materials starting from weaponry and other logistics remain product of science and moreover the complex nature of prosecution of war explains the role of military science. The art of war technically expresses the policy preparation and conduct of war, the translation of military science into military strategy, tactics, operational art or military action generally, particularly within clearly defined policy, goal or limit. The paper concluded that superiority in terms of art and science of war remains a prerequisite for successful execution of war even in a modern international system that frowns at war as means of actualizing the interests of states.

Key words: Art, Political realism, Science, War

L'ART ET LA SCIENCE DE LA GUERRE: UNE APPROCHE DU RÉALISME POLITIQUE

Abstrait

Utilisant les sources de données secondaires et la théorie réaliste, le document examine l'art de la guerre et la science de la guerre. Les guerres font partie de l'attribut historique de l'existence

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humaine pour survivre dans un environnement concurrentiel. Bien que la nouvelle internationale ne souscrive pas à la guerre en tant que moyen et instrument de réalisation de l'intérêt national des États, la démonstration de la puissance militaire qui en a résulté a été à diverses époques un moyen de réaliser des intérêts, en particulier par les grandes puissances dotées du pouvoir voulu. Pour écraser l'ennemi, la supériorité dans la préparation et l'exécution d'activités militaires devient impérative. Le matériel de guerre provenant d'armes et d'autres moyens logistiques reste le produit de la science et, de plus, la nature complexe des poursuites de la guerre explique le rôle de la science militaire. L'art de la guerre exprime techniquement la préparation de la politique et la conduite de la guerre, la traduction de la science militaire en stratégie, tactique, art opérationnel ou action militaire en général, en particulier dans le cadre de politiques, objectifs ou limites clairement définis. Le document concluait que la supériorité en termes d'art et de science de la guerre demeurerait une condition préalable à la réussite de l'exécution de la guerre, même dans un système international moderne qui se désolait de la guerre comme d'un moyen de réaliser les intérêts des États.

Mots clés: Art, Guerre, réalisme politique, science,

Introduction

In international relations war has remained a subject for continuous discussion which has come to occupy a significant place due to the competing interests of states. War has been part of society, since the emergence of groups. Right from the conception of society where man existed in groups there have been continuous disagreement, conflict and eventually agreement in a bid to realize varying interests (Barash & Webel, 2008). Some of these conflicts result to wars; which eventually entail well laid down plans to completely overwhelm or deter the enemy. There have been arguments whether the wedging of war remains an Art or Science considering the nitty gritty of prosecution of warfare effectively and the need to adequately overwhelm the enemy in battles (Aja, 2006).

The strategy of war across history has centrally revolved round the objective to hurt and defeat the enemy towards submission. Whether war is observed to be a science or an art the fact remain that both views complement each other, considering that where one stops the other eventually continues, all aimed at the effective prosecution of warfare with minimum loss if possible. The need to be prepared to protect the citizenry, territory and effectively actualize varying interests in a very competitive international system has made nations and states across history continuously prepare for wars through military budgets even when there was no war perceivable (Holsti, 1995). This has made the prosecution of warfare a very delicate one which requires adequate preparation in terms of strategy and logistics. War materials starting from weaponry and other logistics remain product of science and moreover the complex nature of prosecution of war explains the role of military science.

According to Aja (2006) the art of war is common to the works of such masters of strategic thought like Sun Tzu, Moltski, Clausewitz among others. Across the years whereas the postulations of these foremost military strategists have remained the basic foundation of art of war, there have also been notable developments in the description of art of war. The art of war technically expresses the policy preparation and conduct of war, the translation of military science into military strategy, tactics, operational art or military action generally, particularly within clearly defined political goals or limit (Aja, 2006). Military science occupies a central place in the art of war.

Technically competent scientists, strategists, and engineers policy makers, geographers and military commanders work together to provide plausible or alternative directions to the development and use of military force. Though many other explanations abound according to epochs of what constitute art of war, in its broadest term, art of war explains everything about war, from its conception; through its preparation and conduct to its termination. Though the new international system does not subscribe to war as a means and instrument of realizing national interest of states, the demonstration of military might resulting to wars have at various times been a means of attaining interests, especially by the big powers who have the capacity (Betts, 1999). To overwhelm the enemy and suppress the opponent, superiority in military preparation and execution of military activities becomes a prerequisite (Snyder, 1993). Hence states will readily put up huge military budgets in readiness for situations that may warrant the demonstration of military might in the attainment of their interests.

Conceptual Discourse

The Art of War

Foremost in conceptualizing the art of war remain renowned military strategists like Sun Tzu, Jomini and Clausewitz among others. War remains a serious business considering the cost of prosecution and the unavoidable losses to be incurred both on the offensive and the defensive sides. Considering the need to defeat and destroy the enemy at a minimum cost the art of war remains a very essential concept in the prosecution of warfare. According to Aja (2006), the art of war technically expresses the policy preparation and the conduct of war. Both the policy preparation and the conduct of war itself fall within clearly defined political goals or limit which aimed towards the defeat and destruction of the enemy. It captures the development, sustenance and prosecution of war by parties involved and eventually termination of war. This emanates from policies embarked upon by the state and war budget when war is viewed upon as the best instrument to realize such policies. The art of war by extension will include military strategy available, troop management and eventually battle management. The capacity of a nation's resources to support policy on war without a relative damage on the ability to provide the basic needs of the people remain observable in situations of war. As such it becomes a hallmark of poor statesmanship when a nation's external military commitment outweighs her domestic capabilities.

In the broadest sense, art of war connotes everything about war from its conception through its preparation and conduct to its termination (Igwe, 2007). Definitions have remained varied on what actually constitute the art of war, whereas all center on the conduct of war. In a wider sense the states policy on war, creation of troops, arming, equipping them, operational art in the battle front, battle management and strategy all add up to art of war. According to Igwe (2007), the art of war would include tactics and operational strategy and logistics, economics, diplomacy, science and technology that relate to war. Considering the complexity of the new international system, an epoch where science and technology in methods or means of prosecuting wars effectively have shifted to air and nuclear space, the art of war have eventually given more focus to the science of war (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2008).

Science of War

War and the threat of war have been one of the most persistent features of human societies (Northedge, 1986). Every era has its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions and its own peculiar preconceptions. Each period therefore, would have held to its own peculiar way of

executing war. The development of atomic and nuclear weapons with different countries embarking on nuclear programmes even when the United Nations frown at such, suggests the complexities of science of war. War is not just about the possession of weaponry and weapon training but entails more than this (Creveld, 1991). Logistics, military writings and theories, communications and method of instruction and procedure come to play.

Aja (2006) described the science of war as the application of scientific and methodological principles, theories and military doctrine to realize the political goal of defense and security. Once there is a systematic approach to knowledge of behavior or action, there is science. Each party or state involved in war understand and understudy the opponent to find out the weakness and strong points as regards to strategy and tactics and this eventually enables plans to be on course to defeat the opponent. The study of conduct of war as a systematic law governed process with many of the scientific attributes of enquiry, such as generation, prediction, objectivity and valid neutrality describes the science of war (Igwe, 2007). In modern times, it is important to emphasize that there is hardly an experienced Statesman, Leader or General who believes that war is a random undertaking, guided by no principles and governed by no laws and which no possible outcomes can be foreseen or predicted accurately once certain conditions exist.

Theoretical Framework

For the Purpose of this study the realist theory was used as an instrument to analyze the art and science of war in the contemporary international system. Realism is a set of related theories of international relations that emphasizes the role of the state, national interest, and military power in world politics (Burchill, Linklater, Devetak, Donnelly, Patterson, Reus-Smith & True, 2005). Among classic authors often cited by realists are Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Max Weber. Realism as a self-conscious movement in the study of international relations emerged during the mid-20th century and was inspired by the British political scientist and historian E.H. Carr. It subscribes to the use of military power in the maximization of national power. The realist theorists view war as an instrument of attaining national interest, especially in a competitive international system.

According to Asogwa (2009), the theme of realist paradigm is power supplemented by the concept of national interest. States acting through their various statesmen act in terms of national interest which expressly is described as power. The amount of power controlled through a superior art or science of war dictates the extent a state will eventually use war as a means of maximizing national power (Morgenthau, 2012). The United States and Russia are continuously engaged in activities hinged around superiority in both art and science of war; though recently the activities of some Asian countries like Iran, North Korea and even China explains the role of art and science of war in international politics. The ability of the State of Israel to defeat the combined forces of the Arab nations in a six day war occupying the Sinai peninsula, the Golan Heights, the West Bank of Jordan River and even the city of Jerusalem is centered on a superior artistry and science of war aimed at overwhelming the enemy (White, 2012). States in their bid to maximize national power may subscribe to war as a means though the present international system frowns at such. Where eventually war becomes an activity towards maximization of national power; art of war and science of war complementing each other becomes really an issue that cannot be neglected, as the state who has superior fighting power and better artistry of war would eventually become the winner

though sometimes various other factors would sum up to really determine the direction of a war.

Art and Science of War before and within 21st Century International System

War remains a subject that has continuously attracted growing attention among scholars, policy-makers and militarists. Despite the underlying contradictions and implications, the history of human civilization has been plagued with war. Military science predates the 21st century revolution on military science and the age of nuclear war. Whereas the art of war is the translation of military science into military strategy, science of war remain a systematic effort to coordinate all the activities implying art of war combined with the consideration of every other necessary factor that would ensure victory over the enemy. War studies in ancient military studies stretched through Middle East, Asia, Africa, Australia and America. The only distinguishing features within these periods remain geographical location and weapons of warfare but the conduct of warfare followed relatively similar forms. Whereas the weapons were crude, military strategy at various times were limited by geographical theaters of warfare. These weapons were either on the offensive or defensive and were all deployed in war situations to overwhelm the enemy. Across time the growth of innovations of tools of war through military science and the development of a more progressive military art became really a factor that cannot be neglected (Momah, 2005). Warfare irrespective of era at view remain an exercise that is purposefully organized and coordinated by parties involved with an objective that remain uppermost during its conduct.

Superior fire power in terms of weaponry and art of war had a major role in deterring the enemy and at times demoralizing the opponents' fire power psychologically. The ability to understand the needed technology to use to outsmart and overwhelm the enemy, and also have the capacity to actively utilize the technology as an advantage becomes really necessary. War requires tremendous energy; it involves mental, physical, and socio-economic strength (Aja, 2006). It is often believed that strategic superiority determines the victor in the prosecution of warfare. The uncertainty attribute of warfare to some extent disagree with this notion. The defeat suffered by the US in the Vietnam war as well as the failure of the US and its allies to conclude the war in Iraq have given credence to the argument whether strategic superiority in terms of military might is a major prerequisite to win wars. Despite the asymmetric power relation between Iraq and the US led allied forces; the war in Iraq has remained more prolonged than expected with more casualties each day on the side of US and its allies (Kasali, Onyenonu & Durujaye, 2013).

Smith (1989) maintains that strategic planning and strategic evaluation in terms of prosecution of warfare revolve around art and science of war in a bid to gain advantage in actualization of political objectives. Indeed, the interrelatedness between the art of war and the science of war is very strong; though one is art and the other is science, both employ scientific and methodological principles, theories and military doctrines to confront the political goals of defense and security. Where one starts the other readily compliments considering the complexity of war situations. Art of war is no ordinary artistry devoid of a well articulated and coordinated plan of deterring, waging or prevailing in war or battle. The same is true of science of war, which does not operate always on predictable situations, but respond also to behavioral considerations of war such as the places of morale, valor, courage, bravery, perception, logistics and leadership which add up together to produce victory or defeat. There is also science of war in seeking alternative conflict or dispute resolution means, than the commitment to the use of force, once there is a systematic approach to knowledge of behavior

or action, there is science. There is also art in thoughtful and diligent application of science to meet specific political goals by the definition of national security considerations (Creveld, 1991). Military science measures practical military intellectualism, particularly on the technicalities of strategy, tactics and operation art.

The complex technical aspects of war derive from organic specialization beyond the narrow military lens. The US-Russian military strategies in the post cold war era remain a product of both art and science of war as both try to strike a balance in the capacity to destroy with the nuclear atoms. In contemporary strategic studies, the new world order represents alteration of balance of power from bipolarity to uni-polarity, either in the UN system or outside it emphasis is no longer on the strategic balance of power between Washington and Moscow but the hegemonic influence of Washington on a global scale due its superior art and science of war. The coming on board of a nuclear age characterized by its improved art of war and complexity in science of war eventually came with the problem of stockpiling of destructive nuclear weapons whether chemical or biological weapons (Igwe, 1989). This ultimately hangs the survival of mankind on a narrow destructive plain. Though it has been argued that nuclear wars cannot be fought and won, yet nations are readily engaged in the buildup of armament especially nuclear armament in preparation for war. In discussing the politics of maintaining minimum capacity for self defense, nations readily have a war outlook in its bid to optimally realize various national interests. Even in the international system ongoing crusade in disarmament, efforts toward the realization of national interest still influence the interest of nations in respect to control of nuclear weapons, especially the super powers (Hugill, 1999). The complexities associated with the 21st century art and science of war have eventually resulted to mutual suspicion and distrust among nations especially those that have the capacity to develop nuclear weapons. With the increasing violation of nuclear test and weapons inspection efforts, it is really important to emphasize that this is a result of the advanced commitment to improve on art and science of war to gain a comparative advantage in terms of prosecution of wars.

When contradictions can no longer be addressed through political processes of deliberations, negotiations and diplomatic measures war ultimately becomes a resort by parties in a bid to actualize their interests. Diel and Goertz (2000) maintained that conflict between two groups, each of which attempts to kill and maim as many as possible of the other group in order to achieve some objective which it desires as the reason for which men fight revolve around generally on power or wealth. War has been described to be the sanctioned use of lethal weapons by members of one society against another with the goal of destruction. It is carried out by trained persons working in teams that are directed by a separate policy-making group and supported in various ways by the non-combatant population. Considering the need to defeat and destroy the enemy at a minimum cost the art of war remains a very essential concept in the prosecution of warfare.

From the historic ancient military era to the nuclear age era where the theater of warfare have technically shifted from the conventional theatres of land and sea to the air and cyberspace which include the electromagnetic sphere two key factors stand out in changing the technology of weapons development and the conduct of war .These are the technological innovations in weapons of warfare and equal technological ability to kill and destroy with greater intensity has made the art of war to generally depend on the impacts of technology of war weapons. With the capacity to kill more people with a single weapon at increasing distances and accuracies the science of war has redefined the art of war. For sure, it has

resulted in mounting casualties, both absolutely, and as a significant percentage of soldiers and civilians at war. Technology of war weapons have succeeded in expanding warfare frontiers and military strategy from a horizontal level involving nation against nation to group of nations by virtue of alliances or coalitions and as such this is possible by the corresponding vertical level of military alliances and coalition buildings. In terms of communication which remain very necessary in battle management the use of conventional signals, sounds and markings have been replaced by innovations of military science thereby strengthening the initiation of aggression on time and on point to really overwhelm the enemy. Advancement in technology of warfare derived logically from the evolutionary development of communication means such as signal codes, heliographs and other logistics, including the mobile medical team to bear on the battle field have really redefined and repositioned the art of war in the contemporary times (Eland, 2005).

The science of war has optimally contributed to military professionalism thereby promoting organization behavior, which is centered on military discipline and military action. The management of the military ensures adequate and regular learning, training, drilling, and a situation of combat readiness. Defense Ministries, Defence Colleges, Military Academies and Battalion Formations; provide the institutional frameworks for the leadership trainings, economics of defence, including taking good care of the basic military needs of the infantry, navy, air force and the other non-military personnel, whose duties promote the political health of the defence institution. All these have witnessed a turnaround towards ensuring the timely prosecution of warfare and defeat of the enemy if not to deter the enemy. Weapons and the strategy of engagement of weapons make the power of an aggressor felt principally during combat situations as this is measured by strategy, tactics and operational art adopted to decisively outrun and overwhelm the enemy.

War remains a technological challenge in innovation and art to improve upon the quality of weaponry and concise attack in conflict situations. Though even in periods when states seem to be at peace to an extent measures are put in place to continuously strengthen the military capacity through development in science and art involved in effective prosecution of war, both in times of peace and war its really necessary to channel effort to the development of military resources to gain comparative advantage over others (Diel & Goertz, 2000). Starting with major scientific breakthroughs during the 1930's, countries have developed weapons that are based on nuclear energy. The use of nuclear weapons reached its height with the outbreak of World War I and II, as well as the Cold War (*Linklater, 2011*). In this case, two of the world's major superpowers, the USA and Soviet Union, threatened each other with the use of nuclear weapons, which was referred to as the Cold War. It is observable that across all epochs in human history the development of warfare have always revolved around the need for a superior art and science of war as a means to realize the interests of conflicting states or parties.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Though the International community has continuously frowned at idea of war, it still remains and has always been part of society. This can be traced to the emergence and existence of groups in the society and the problem of utilizing and allocating the very limited resources among these groups. The contemporary International system just like the ancient societies where man lived in groups and competition in search of available but limited resources always led to conflicts which eventually metamorphose to wars; states within the international system have various interest which is grouped as national interest which they compete in a

competitive international system to actualize. These interests at times would eventually entail the maximization of national power to achieve these interests which are also political objectives.

Nations and states across history have continuously prepared for wars even when there was relative peace and no wars perceivable. The need to be prepared to protect the citizenry, territory and effectively actualize vary interests in a very competitive international system have made the prosecution of warfare a very delicate business, which require adequate preparation in terms of strategy and logistics. War materials starting from weaponry and other logistics remain product of science, while the complex nature of prosecution of war explains the rule of military science. The move from land and sea as theatres of warfare to air and space have really portrayed the changing trends in militating science and operational art. Nations cannot wage war successfully without incurring both human and financial cost as the strategy of war across history have centrally revolved round the power to defeat and hurt the enemy towards submission. In order to prosecute war effectively with minimal cost, as well as overpower and overwhelm the enemy, a superior art and science of war becomes really necessary.

It is therefore recommended that states should engage in military research and technology development to enhance the capacity to operate from a point of superiority in international issues. Though diplomacy as supported by idealist has been highlighted as the best option in the realization of varying interests, states should have in mind the demonstration of power at times ensures quick compliance and as such military budgets should reflect the military needs of the state to ensure readiness, effectiveness and efficiency both in times of peace and times of war.

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