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# Controversies over the economic nature of warfare

**Jacques Fontanel**

**Economists for Peace and Security  
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**Summary :** The notion of war is polysemous. As with many social issues, economists have sometimes approached the question of war only from its immediate empirical angle, concerning in particular the preparation of national defense, the management of military industries, the costs of research and development (particularly in the context of dual-use products) or the conversion of weapons. Thus, most of these economists make the assumption of market peace, which implies that the quest for national security is first and foremost a burden to pay for political developments in international diplomacy. Neo-classical economists always assume that compliance with market rules leads inevitably to peace, towards the "end of history". However, Marxist and socialist schools of thought consider war to be inherent to capitalism, consubstantial with the market based on self-interest. Other analyses highlight the fact that war can have positive effects on a country's economy, particularly in situations of social crisis or in the search for new security infrastructures. Today, the weakening of democracy in favor of a de facto plutocracy is creating new areas of conflict that are conducive to war between the major powers.

La notion de guerre est polysémique. Les économistes, comme sur de nombreux sujets de société, n'ont parfois abordé la question de la guerre que sous sa face empirique immédiate, concernant notamment la préparation, de la défense nationale, la gestion des industries militaires, les coûts de la recherche-développement (notamment dans le cadre de produits duaux) ou la conversion des armes. Ainsi, de manière récurrente, la plupart d'entre eux font l'hypothèse de la paix marchande, ce qui sous-entend que la recherche de sécurité nationale constitue d'abord un fardeau à payer aux évolutions politiques de la vie diplomatique internationale. Les économistes néo-classiques supposent toujours que le respect des règles du marché conduit inéluctablement à la paix, vers la « fin de l'histoire ». Cependant, les écoles de pensées marxistes et socialistes considèrent que la guerre est inhérente au capitalisme, consubstantielle au marché fondé sur l'intérêt personnel. D'autres analyses mettent en évidence que la guerre peut avoir des effets positifs sur l'économie des pays, notamment en situation de crise sociétale ou de recherche de nouvelles infrastructures sécuritaires. Aujourd'hui, l'affaiblissement de la démocratie au profit d'une ploutocratie de fait crée de nouveaux sujets de conflits favorables aux guerres entre les plus grandes puissances.

Guerre, économie de la guerre, paix, puissance  
War, Peace, war economics



The notion of war is polysemous when we add the qualifiers of terrorist, commercial, economic, cyberwar or, in the past, "cold" war. Traditionally, it defines armed conflicts between two or more states (or territories) or two or more ethnic or social groups? For Clausewitz, war is the pursuit of politics by other means. In this context, the warlike perception of public actions becomes a value judgment. It implies a conscious attack on the physical and mental integrity of the individuals and groups taking part (Fortman, 2000). This raises the question of the existence of a food war. Is it a political decision by one or more states to create a territorial space in the absence of the necessities of life, or is it the result of a highly unequal economic system that drives entire populations into poverty, either poorly integrated or dominated by economic powers with little concern for the well-being of the populations they exploit? Since 1950, poverty has caused more lethal situations than all the armed wars in human history. In this context, inequalities become weapons of "life and death" when the demands of the poorest countries clash with the rules set by the great powers, who reinforce an international system and order through the strength of their national economies and the imbalance of military and technological forces.

The relationship between economics and war is a complex one, as both are, in turn, ends and means. A war is already won in its preparation (*Si vis pacem, para bellum*), but this depends on a country's actual economic conditions. Too much focus on national security can considerably weaken a country's economy, through opportunity costs. The USSR's over-investment in the military was undoubtedly one of the most significant reasons for its collapse (Fontanel, Gaidar, 1998). The public economy is also a weapon, designed to impoverish or destabilize an enemy country, through sanctions such as an economic blockade, embargo or boycott. In this context, the state taking the decision (with the possible support of other allied states) is proposing a negative-sum game, with the highest price to be paid by the enemy thus attacked. The power of states calls into question the concept of global economic optimization promised by respect for capitalism at peace. In this context, all the players involved are expected to reduce their economic strength in this game of power, but these losses are supposed, at least in the short term, to make the target country more vulnerable.

Conceptions of war are often fundamentally ideological. In the merchant conception, following Montesquieu's notion of "sweet commerce", national and international economic exchange lead to peace, because all actors have an interest in free trade (Fontanel, 2014). In this context, war is a burden whose perpetrators are on the side of those who do not respect capitalism and its "virtuous" rules. On the contrary, in a rather mercantilist conception, war and economy are indissolubly linked by common interests and deep ties of interdependence. The military power of a state, capable of engaging in armed conflict or simply threatening war against countries that contravene its interests, influences the

strength of its national economy. It's no longer a question of opening up national borders to free trade, as this inexorably leads to interdependence which, for each state, becomes a factor of weakness, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the goods and services in question. Finally, war is also seen as the fruit of the exploitation of man by man, both in slave societies and in capitalism, which war extends into imperialism through the use of weapons and the laws put in place by the ruling class.

### **I. Armed or economic war: a primarily political choice**

For Sun Zi, those who do not understand the damage that war can cause will never understand its benefits (article 7). Today, armed conflicts are particularly destructive and therefore very costly. Preparing for war can be so onerous that it becomes an obstacle to a nation's economic development. Each participant must take into account the potential destruction (men and material) and productive losses caused by the war effort. For over 70 years, no nuclear-armed nation has directly threatened its adversary with the use of these weapons of mass destruction. Yet in the war between Russia and Ukraine, Vladimir Putin has clearly left open the possibility of their use if his legitimate fundamental interests were directly threatened. Until 2021, given the extreme seriousness of using nuclear weapons, states have developed economic weapons, the costs of which have rarely been concretely estimated, given the importance of the assumptions to be made. The exercise of economic warfare for power purposes is similar in form to that of armed conflict. What's more, preparing a country for armed conflict is costly, while its economic and political effectiveness is debatable.

For the Physiocrats and the English and French Classics, war is based on power relations between states, which wish to improve the scope of their prerogatives. To ensure the sovereignty and security of states, it is necessary to develop one's own military forces, in order to dissuade other countries from their predatory ambitions. It's all a question of scale. It is necessary to organize the defense of one's territory, but, according to Ricardo, uninterrupted growth in military spending inevitably leads to war, not least because the country that has invested too much in the military sector has undoubtedly lost economic power, which it can only make up for by using weapons of predation. Malthus hypothesizes that war is first and foremost the result of insufficient economic development in relation to population growth. While an increase in military spending may, in the short term, increase aggregate demand, in the long term, with the impoverishment it inevitably engenders, it becomes a fundamental source of conflict. If population control is assured, the forces of war will be more easily brought under control.

For mercantilists, the Prince's interest is the fundamental objective of any national economy, without any reference to the well-being of citizens. A country's

economic prosperity is first and foremost the driving force behind its power, since it needs a lot of gold (the ultimate expression of wealth) to build a reliable and even potentially dominant army in the face of foreign armies. The aim is to dominate the international scene by war, if necessary, and by all available strategic means, such as enslavement, colonization, slavery and other navigation laws. All international activity consists of increasing a country's capacity for enrichment and weakening the economic and military forces of all potential enemies. The economy is an instrument of power, and power leads, through predation, threat or armed intervention, to the strengthening of all economic variables. Power and the economy form an indivisible whole.

Today, by linking military effort to the technological development of the information industry, and diplomatic and cultural force to the domination of its economy and currency, Washington presents itself as the world's arbitral power, consolidating its global leadership through international organizations (charged with transforming the law of the strongest into international law) and the ideology of globalization. While the United States is presented as the center of neo-liberal capitalist values, economic objectives are based on military-political power, combining the goals of economic development and military power. The dollar is an international currency that owes much, at least originally, to the great victor of the Second World War. American economic policy has always been marked by geo-economic considerations, while its dominant discourse is that of the rise of impartial, apolitical free trade. For the White House, national security depends first and foremost on economic power, which influences developments and even the agenda of strategic considerations. Economic efforts to build military leadership are sometimes seen as brakes or burdens on national economic development. (Thurow, 1002).

For the neoclassicals, war is rejected from the field of study of economic science. A generalized system of free trade leads to the abolition of standing armies, assuming that international arbitration would be able to settle disputes between states (Fontanel, 2019). Economic science eliminates the foundations of war, which no longer has a future in developed societies. Fukuyama (1991) even instituted the idea of the "end of history", the end of wars, thanks to triumphant capitalism. In this context, military spending, with its weak and debatable knock-on effects, is a waste and a cost whose real effectiveness is questionable. However, this view is not universally accepted by late twentieth-century geopolitologists. While Ohmae (1995) sees the end of nations as part of the peaceful and rather benevolent logic of the market economy, Reich (1992), an advocate of positive economic nationalism, sees the inevitable disintegration of national economies as a risk of increasing insecurity and impoverishment.

Richardson's (1960) famous analysis model equates the main factors leading to conflict between states: the grievances expressed by the states thus in conflict, the overall and comparative size of the military expenditure involved, and the economic "fatigability" resulting from the considerable opportunity costs of

military expenditure, which thus reduce the potential for national economic development. The USSR paid for its commitment to the hegemony of Soviet socialism by spending heavily on the army, thereby reducing support for a civilian economy that bore all the available opportunity costs. In this context, the arms race is war-producing, since increasing budgets for war preparation (or national defense) increases the likelihood of war. The economy plays a moderating role, but if grievances are too great, war can intervene, provoking a human and economic disaster.

France has developed a "weak to strong" strategy with its nuclear force, and it can be considered that since the introduction of this strategy, the deterrence procedure has worked well, since it has prevented it from going to war with other major powers, particularly nuclear powers. The aim of deterrence is to reassure the opponent that, whatever his objective, his action will not be successful or will be paid for well beyond the advantages gained by the aggressor. However, many other countries in Western Europe have not had such a costly and sophisticated strategy at their disposal, without themselves having gone to war or even been threatened by greater powers.

However, in a world of relative scarcity and political-economic alliances, conflicts between states can also be expressed through economic weapons. Economic warfare has always existed, whenever countries' interests are contradictory or in opposition. Situations of military siege, embargo, boycott, blockade, economic terrorism or "scorched earth" are numerous in the history of mankind. In these cases, the aim is to coerce the enemy, and to seek dominance over the decisions of the adversary thus ill-treated. Many economic strategies are not aimed at the well-being or development of the national economy, but at weakening or even enslaving another public entity. Significant economic damage is then inflicted on the target state to force it to change its policies (apartheid, violation of minority rights, tyrannies or war). The aim is for the country declaring war to force its adversary to change its decision on a clearly expressed point of contention. Oblique strategies of dissuasion, economic retaliation, embargoes and boycotts are all powerful weapons, whose economic and political effects depend on self-defense measures, international solidarity and the potential for substitution.

In this context, the economy has become an instrument of state power, particularly when the nuclear powers are directly involved. In such cases, the strategy is one of "indirect maneuvering". While the economy provides the military means to fight the enemy, the economic weapon, designed to weaken the potential enemy, is often an integral part of warfare. Firstly, the state must control the sale of weapons that could be turned against it. This involves developing strategies to control the export of dual products, half-civilian, half-military, in order to prevent the opposing army from increasing its economic potential. The collapse of the Soviet economy was undoubtedly aided by the application of the strategy of impoverishment through the effort to prepare for war. The arms race

is a cost that the more developed countries can more easily afford. Less developed countries are impoverished more quickly. Under these conditions, the arms race first weakens the least economically powerful state, which may lead it to renounce power.

Firstly, the strategy of rupture consists in blocking part of the target country's trade or financial flows. A general or sectoral embargo (based on national consumption and production needs) is an instrument of retaliation designed to exert strong pressure on the sovereign decision of another state. In the absence of sufficient international consensus, this weapon is dangerous for its user. The main victims are not always those targeted. This policy is part of a "negative-sum game" for all the protagonists. Secondly, the strategy of political violence consists of seizing economic power in another country when it is hostile, and weakening its dominant social strata. It is then necessary to seek to control the political forces of the state apparatus and the trade unions, as was the case in the famous "green" or "orange" revolutions of the 21st century. Finally, the strategy of domination leads the dominant countries to influence the dominated countries in their strategic decisions, notably through the power conferred by the monopoly on the supply of goods and services vital to modernity (retention of exchange of modern technologies) or survival (notably the food weapon, still used in the war in Ukraine against developing countries).

Other, more subtle strategies can also be employed, such as the "encirclement" strategy, which aims to develop links of economic interdependence likely to guarantee peace. This strategy was proposed during the implementation of Brandt's Realpolitik in Germany. New economic solidarities are the best deterrent to aggression. However, this strategy has not yet been used effectively. Economic armament is costly and hard on all parties, but it has not yet achieved significant results in the 21st century. Religious, nationalist, political or autocratic values are sufficiently powerful to make the population of the country concerned bear the cost of this war, without changing, at least in the short term, the institutions, policies and men in power in the target states.

The political conflict of power leads to controversial situations. As Sun Zi reminded us, saving a country is better than destroying it, and the enemy's submission must be sought without military combat. Today's international economic relations are the product of a complex interplay of international power relations, involving international negotiations, international economic and political organizations, public and private capital flows, and collective or unilateral aid to the most disadvantaged countries.

Free trade, protectionism, economic sanctions or the control of strategic products are, at least in part, at the service of a state's political objectives. State power is measured by economic power, which favors the application of coercive measures in the economic order, if necessary, according to clearly defined modalities or in the exercise of restrictive national regulations. U.S. President Donald Trump's pressure on bilateral imports and exports is a case in point,



overriding the international rules laid down by the now disarmed World Trade Organization. In addition, the most powerful states are proposing to protect high-tech sectors and support national companies in difficulty on international markets as a result of subsidies from foreign states to their own companies. In this context, the competitor is multi-faceted, being both a partner and an adversary. With the end of the Cold War, the United States embarked on an undeclared economic war, applying extraterritorial sanctions to firms that did not obey international rules, in the areas of corruption and trade with "rogue states" (Sushcheva, Fontanel, 2020 a and b). Military imperatives sometimes make it possible to develop an industrial policy, through R&D subsidies. Economic factors often dominate the strategic agenda. The U.S. government has an extensive administrative apparatus at its disposal to influence international economic and strategic relations, notably through economic intelligence. The provision of a war room to defend national interests highlights the application of Sun Zi's Principle 102, according to which "no spy is too beloved and no reward too great for them".

Globalization is not a necessary step towards peace, as the First World War bears witness (Arrow, 2002). Today's military authorities combine an insatiable demand for new weapons with a heightened aversion to their use (Fontanel, Bensahel, 2012). If the nationality of a company seemed likely to lose its meaning, as currency, technology and factories easily crossed borders with fewer and fewer restrictions, making transnational firms and markets the main players in an international economy favoring the mobility of capital, relocation procedures and the rise of new technologies, the arbitration of the United States, which proposes to become the sole arbiter of a now globalized world economy, is today strongly contested.

Globalization is having an increasingly negative impact on the American economy, and Washington is not hesitating to adopt an industrial policy that it has never ceased to apply in the military field, under the guise of national security. In 2022, the Chips and Science Act (\$52.5 billion) and the Inflation Reduction Act (\$370 billion) offer significant subsidies for the microprocessor and renewable energy industries. The aim is to protect the distribution of high-tech goods to hostile countries and territories, and to build and protect energy transition tools at home. The Chips and Science Act requires companies to obtain an export license, in order to maintain a technological lead over China. This decision was taken in the name of US national security. The aim is no longer to produce at the best price, as the conditions of production must be taken into account, as part of their global economic and cultural hegemony (Fontanel, 2023). Globalization goes hand in hand with the regressive dynamics of capitalism (Serfati, 1999). Alongside islands of prosperity, the global economy is in crisis, and the gap is widening. Globalization, dominated by the richest countries and founded on inequality, does not lead to peace, but to war (with or without weapons) over the distribution of wealth.

## **War and military conflict, a positive factor for economic development**

"During the American Civil War, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln defended the interests of the industrial and financial power of the highly protectionist Northeast against the free-market agricultural South. Although the war was costly and bloody, it was nonetheless the starting point for the unbridled industrial development of the United States. This example illustrates the ambiguous relationship between economics and armed conflict. In the same way, the launch by the USA of the "Star Wars" program meant economic crisis and the end of the Soviet experiment. This time, economics dictated" (Fontanel, 2012).

Historically, war is a means (often considered natural) of acquiring wealth and power. Systems of predation, in all their forms (colonialism, pillage, slavery, effects of domination), were presented first as means of enrichment, then of economic development. For Sun Zi, while it's best not to kill a defeated enemy, it's only fair to reward the one who seizes his wealth. In the same strategic vein, Aristotle considers that triumphant war increases the country's wealth through the predation of the defeated country's goods, whose people are then reduced to slavery, an essential means of production in the Greek economy, while freeing the free man from the most degrading material tasks. In this context, the City grew richer, which improved the organization of work, innovations and living conditions, primarily for the benefit of the City's citizens.

The organization of the modern state has often been shaped by the demands of military organization. To increase their power, states have been driven to develop their military forces, using the technological and organizational means best suited to their potential for victory. Against this backdrop, monarchies were led to levy taxes and duties in order to obtain regular revenues to meet the necessary military expenditure, but also the national economic conditions required to finance it. The financing of war or national defense presupposes the availability of "pécunes", as Rabelais was fond of saying in the 15th century. In fact, war and economics are inextricably linked in the quest for enrichment and state power. For the German historical school, the need to finance war and national defense was at the origin of a considerable organizational and financial effort that fostered the European industrial revolution and the establishment of the capitalist system, thanks to the development of the productive forces. The military needs of armed conflict created the necessary preconditions for the development of capitalism. These included incentives and achievements for national industrialization, the pursuit of technological innovation, industrial concentration, standardization and the quest for economies of scale, thanks to a new rational organization of work necessitated by the creation of large markets and the centralization of orders. What's more, the creation of a modern army implied a quasi-military apprenticeship in social discipline, the enhancement of the competitive spirit and the pursuit of profit. It should also be added that the military effort led to state indebtedness, which in turn encouraged the financial sector to

flourish. Because of the scale of orders and economies of scale, the principles of mass consumption were first put in place in the military sector.

Developed European states supported the development of capitalism. Close to the warrior mentality, the entrepreneurial spirit born of a passion for gold and silver was also expressed in military expeditions, which made it possible to wrest by violence what was difficult to obtain by other means. War has been an essential factor in the economic development of colonial and slave capitalist countries. The imperialist state develops its economic activities in countries that are still underdeveloped, using both military coercion and predation. And yet, by adopting the mercantilist ideas of control over raw materials, it also feeds on new, cheap means of subsistence, to the detriment of the economic progress of the colonized countries. War, or the effects of domination under armed escort, leads to the establishment of imperialism, which leads to the misery of colonized countries in the absence of equal economic and social rights for the vanquished. Under these conditions, the army is a productive force that energizes national capitalism and leads to the underdevelopment and maldevelopment of countries thus under the tutelage of a violent and avaricious metropolis.

Historically, military production has always been a vector of development, due to the technological requirements of effective military means compared to those of potential enemies. What's more, military R&D resources are considerable, and can be applied in the civilian sector when military secrets are no longer needed. The economic interests of industrialists and the military are often shared, not least because industry has learned a great deal from war. With the Manhattan Project to build nuclear weapons, major military projects received essential support from modern science and technology, to the point of influencing the organization of production in the civilian sector. With the establishment of military secrecy on high technology, science, technology and the economy became hostages of political power. Today's economic development depends to a large extent on military technology choices made a few decades earlier. The choice of R&D funding or effective technologies is not apolitical; it depends in particular on the influence of the military sector, closely linked to state funding. War and its preparation have contributed to contemporary economic development. By creating artificial scarcity, armaments and war have encouraged the acceleration of industrialization and the expansion of markets (Mandel, 1972).

### **War as a factor of economic power**

Many economists have questioned the role of war and the threat of war in the comparative economic power of states. For Veblen (1915), nationalism and economic warfare are essential to the development of the capitalist system, at least within a national framework, more or less extended to colonial domains. For J.K. Galbraith (1968), there are no valid substitutes for the military functions of conflict in American capitalism. The threat of war is an effective instrument of

government stability, with the more or less open capacity, depending on circumstances, to control all or part (sector by sector, region by region) of the national economy and social relations. It is an indispensable means of controlling social disagreements and anti-social tendencies within the national system itself. The thesis of unequal exchange (Emmanuel, 1969), the theory of underdevelopment as a product of the development of the great powers, and strategic analyses based on game theory are all reflections that insist on the notion of power, as if economic development were to favor certain social strata and certain peoples to the detriment of other social groups or other Nations.

War is sometimes analyzed as the extreme manifestation of industrial competition (Attali, 1978), based on the results of twentieth-century wars. After the armed conflict, the revival of production profoundly transformed consumption patterns and social habits, maintaining high levels of national defense spending and automated self-monitoring networks. Market power has been altered within the national economy, but mainly in favor of the dominant industrial countries. When capitalism doesn't lead directly to war, it inescapably appeals to symbolic alienation, that of a market economy still performing well in terms of Gross National Product growth, an outdated concept in view of ecological, environmental and social issues (Guilhaudis, Fontanel, 2019). Within this framework, without taking into account the free non-renewable goods consumed, the owners of capital, open to reinforced economic globalization, develop fictitious growth based on "demonstration effects", and support the "trickle-down" thesis proper to economic development, in a universe of growing social inequalities thus justified. The threat of armed conflict provides the most effective means of achieving stability and control over national economies, since the permanent possibility of resorting to it, voluntarily or involuntarily, is one of the very foundations of stable economic systems.

The foundations of war are sometimes also ideological. Keynes (1934), a convinced pacifist, wanted to eradicate both war and communism (that "insult to intelligence"). While rearmament may lead to a temporary revival of the economy, it is only a stop-gap solution because, since it does not in itself meet social needs, it ultimately slows down the country's potential for economic development. It would be preferable to direct public investment towards building and public works, which are socially useful. Armaments production is in itself unproductive consumption. Security is also a matter for the economy, as economic crisis sometimes leads to the overthrow of democracies and the application of power politics. Economic development must be common to all peoples, which is why Keynes condemns the excessive compensation demanded by the Allies from Germany, since economic exhaustion and the humiliation of a great nation are not good foundations for a peaceful society. Germany's economic crisis is a threat to Europe's economic development and to democracy. Lasting peace is inconceivable without international economic solidarity between democracies, and this is an essential condition for economic development. Scientific knowledge

of economics is a factor for peace, in the face of totalitarian temptation and the personal, random games played by politicians. In hindsight, Russia's war in the Ukraine is more a response to an autocratic temptation for political power in the international arena. In this context, the war will have considerable economic consequences, but it is not based on respect for the economic criteria of development between the two peoples.

### **War is consubstantial to capitalism**

For Marx, war belongs to the field of superstructure, and is conditioned by the antagonistic social relations of capitalism. Only revolutionary class struggle leads to peace. These analyses were pursued by Rosa Luxemburg (1913) and Lenin (1916). For the former, the military effort was very useful to the development of capitalist economies, as a catalyst for primitive accumulation, an instrument of colonial domination and a hegemonic factor in the struggle between capitalist countries to share the world. For the second, the systemic nature of wars is inherent to the capitalist mode of production. Imperialism, the supreme stage of capitalism, is necessarily characterized by total war and capitalist exploitation of the world. Competition between developed states to share foreign markets and export capital is a necessity of the laws of the tendency of profit rates to fall and equalize, the fatal disease of capitalism. International conflicts are a consequence of the contradictions of capitalism, for the new sharing of foreign markets between the major capitalist powers. While Marxist thought is primarily marked by the concept of class struggle (which refers more to civil war), the concept of imperialism explains that, at a certain stage in its development, capitalism also produces conflicts between bourgeois states. More radically, for Jaurès, capitalism was already war.

For Baran and Sweezy (1966), capitalism secretes a surplus, defined as the gap between production and solvent demand. This surplus can be absorbed by capitalist consumption, by waste, by civilian government spending, but military spending is more effective in this role. It respects the rules of capitalism, by not redistributing income to those whose productivity is low, and it stimulates collective values, which ensure the continuity of capitalism. A high level of military spending, a major solution to the contradictions of capitalism, thus contributes to the prosperity of the United States. Colonialism is often seen as the original and permanent cause of underdevelopment. While on a global level, military spending is an enormous waste, military power enables the exploitation of other nations, either through the occupation of territory, intimidation, or the installation in power of national collaborators. Conflicts are immanent to capitalism, only their expressions evolve.

For Labarde and Maris (1998), globalization is universal, civil and permanent war. It's an oligopolistic and cartelized organization of the world, in line with financial logic, which defines a new organization of capitalist corporate work and

the freedom of capital owners to settle. Capital has always been international, stateless, more financial than industrial, more speculative than wealth-producing. Globalization can only assert itself by reducing social protection and solidarity. Politicians bear a crushing responsibility, by accepting financial instruments that give private operators the opportunity to wield the weapon of international financial warfare. Multinational corporations are the beneficiaries of this globalization. The WTO, the euro, privatizations, the liberalization of financial markets and social dumping are all the result of political decisions taken in response to market expectations, to the detriment of workers' expectations. Poor countries are being weakened by a globalization that does not call for global citizenship, let alone corporate citizenship. It's a daily and widespread civil war, sometimes even sanctioned by collateral conflicts with deadly consequences. Economic warfare seeks to weaken, debilitate or destroy the enemy. All means are mobilized, as in real war. With nuclear power, economic warfare is a social suicide (Fontanel, Bensahel, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

Today, war, in its strictest sense, is the subject of several contradictory theories. After the collapse of the USSR, economists considered that war was no longer an instrument for managing conflicts between states, as it was too costly, particularly in the context of states that had become increasingly organized in democratic forms. The threat of war is no longer a means of crisis management, if we recall the dangers of the ever-present nuclear weapon, due to its very existence. Yet armed conflicts continue to rage, even in Europe. The multiplication of the number of states, the absence of a supranational order and the inability of international law to be respected are all conducive to armed conflict. Today, numerous armed conflicts exist, and there are many risks of new outbreaks, not only in Africa, but also among the major nuclear powers who wish to escape the leadership of the United States, a state whose international actions are increasingly contested. The economy, a cause of war, is also a means of armed conflict. War" remains a recurring threat. It is becoming diffuse, based on political, economic and military variables. Economic warfare is to state terrorism what warlike destruction is to armed conflict.

The quest for domination by states over other states is still very much with us today, as every power also seeks "omnipotence". Without any viable colonialist approach, conflicts will arise among the world's major powers, and democracy, now weakened in the very countries that apply it, will take a plutocratic turn, a system that creates the conditions for social inequalities conducive, in the long term, to civil wars or wars between states. What's more, without proactive action on the part of mankind, global warming raises the question of mankind's survival, especially as technological innovation will not be able to resolve all latent social and societal issues. We need to change the rules of the game of global market

globalization, by implementing a green revolution that cannot develop without international security and greater social justice. Immediate financial interests ignore nationalist considerations. They take direct or indirect control of states, developing a de facto oligarchy which, under the guise of democracy, institutes a plutocracy, rather sensitive to the action of lobbies, particularly those today seeking to extend the market in fossil fuel resources. The third industrial revolution raises the question of the current mode of production and consumption, which in the near future will lead to the rise of natural ecological disasters, resource scarcity and widespread permanent insecurity.

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